

INFORMATIONAL CONFERENCE CALL TRANSCRIPT

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Lifespan Respite Care Program: State Program Enhancement Grants

Moderator: Greg Link

Held on April 29, 2022 at 3:00 pm ET

Coordinator: Thank you for standing by. I'd like to inform all parties that today's conference is being recorded. All participants are in listen-only mode. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. Please keep in mind that all lines are open and interactive, and we ask that you use your mute button when you are not speaking to prevent any background noises. I would now like to turn the call over to your host. Mr. Greg Link. Thank you. You may begin.

Greg Link: Hello. Thank you. This is Greg Link, the Director of the Office of Supportive and Caregiver Services at the Administration For Community Living. I want to welcome those of you who have dialed into hear and discuss with me in a few minutes, the funding opportunity announcement entitled Lifespan Respite Care State Program Enhancement Grants.

This is the only funding opportunity announcement that we will be discussing on this call today is the funding opportunity for the State Program Enhancement Grants. And the purpose of this call is to walk interested applicants through a select part of the funding opportunity announcement to make sure that you're aware of specific requirements that ACL has for this grant program.

If folks could mute their lines that would be great. Thank you. The goal here is to walk folks through the program announcement, point out some key aspects of it that you should be paying attention to as you prepare your

applications. Once I walk through the funding opportunity announcement, then we'll open it up for questions again. Again, If folks could please mute their lines so that everyone can hear, that would be much appreciated.

Hopefully, you all have the funding opportunity announcement document open and available to you to scroll through or flip through if you've printed out a hard copy of it. I will be referring to specific page numbers in the document, so having it there next to you can always be a useful thing, or hopefully you'll take notes and reference the page numbers that I'm calling out.

So the first page that I want to call out to you and make sure that you're aware of is page 2 of 50 in the PDF document and that is really just the cover page. It ends the table of contents ends. There's a couple of dates that I want to point out to you that you should be very aware of. The first is the due date for letters of intent. If you intend to apply these are optional but greatly appreciated.

As -- and I'll talk a little bit more about the letters of intent, a little bit later on, but the due date for those is May the 13th. And then the due date for the applications is June the 14 of 2022 at 11:59 pm. That due date is hard and fast. There are no exceptions to it and any application that is received after June the 14 at 11:59 pm will not be considered for review. So I'll talk a little bit more about the application submission process a little bit later in the call.

Starting on the top of page three, there's just the executive summary, that kind of gives a very high level overview of this funding opportunity. ACL has been funding the Lifespan Respite Care Program since 2009 and this year we are offering two types of grants. We have grants for new states and states who are seeking to rebuild or restart their programs.

We had a call like this to discuss that funding opportunity on Wednesday, and then we have this particular funding opportunity announcement which is really talking about states who are wishing to do some program enhancement to their existing programs. It is very important. The second paragraph of the executive summary lists the states that are eligible to apply for this particular funding opportunity.

Those are the only states that are eligible to apply for this particular funding opportunity. And so, please be sure that you are one of those states listed if you intend to apply for this particular funding opportunity. These are for five-year projects. This particular grant will be for a period of five years with five individual budget years.

We expect to fund up to two grants off of this funding opportunity announcement. So it's very reasonable to think that not all states that apply for this particular funding opportunity will receive an award because we have very limited funds available this year, but we will fund up to two grants off of this funding opportunity at a level of up to two \$199,500 each year for five years.

And we believe that this five-year length of a project will be -- is sufficient enough time and also a generous amount of time for states to really think about a very sustainable and robust approach to enhancing their state lifespan respite care programs.

At the top of page four, we get into the actual funding opportunity description itself. We provide a little bit of a history of ACL's involvement with the actual funding opportunity description it. At the bottom of page four we give an overview of the Lifespan Respite Funding, kind of the policy environment in

which it's currently operating, how the respite environment has evolved over the past 10 or 12 years or so and particularly the impact that the coronavirus pandemic has had on the delivery of all direct care services and support for family caregivers.

We also at the bottom of page five acknowledge the work that is being done to implement the respite assist, include support and engage or raise the Family Caregivers Act. And the fact the Family Caregiving Advisory Council really determined that raising awareness about what constitutes respite is important and actually strengthening the service of respect across the agent disability spectrum is one of the key things that will be featured in the National Family Caregiving Strategy when it's out later this year.

And so, pages five and six talk a little bit more -- in more depth about the Family Caregiving Advisory Council and the Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and how they have focused on the importance of respite in supporting family caregivers.

And so, it's very, very conceivable that if you're awarded a grant under this lifespan respite program funding opportunity that the work that you do will have some very direct connections to the respite recommendations and actions that are in the National Family Caregiving Strategy.

At the top of page seven, we talk about several program priority areas. And the overarching goal of these funding opportunities to enhance existing state systems and capacities to deliver respite care.

So this really is about a state who has been working on a lifespan respite grant for some time or maybe has had several lifespan respite grants from ACL looking to move that needle and their ability to provide systemic systematic

respite programs and services that are high quality, have an adequate workforce and can truly fill gaps in where funding stream or program may not exist to address the specific need of a particular group of family caregivers.

So to be competitive, applicants, as an applicant, you should describe your approach for how you're going to take your lifespan respite program from where it is today and look out five years and see how will these funds be applied to really enhancing your state's respite system.

In several priority areas, there are actually six of them. One is direct service provision. We expect that all states funded under this funding opportunity use some portion of their annual budget to provide direct services for respite. That must be evident in your proposal, in your work plan and in your budget. How are you going to use a portion of your grant funds to provide direct respite services across the agent disabilities spectrum?

Other priority areas that we're looking at is for continued systems development, strengthening existing collaborations and partnerships, developing new collaborations and partnerships, focusing on paid and paid provider and volunteer respite provider training. The identification, ongoing identification and work to reduce gaps in current service delivery and then targeting of underserved and underrepresented populations across the lifespan.

That is the focus on underserved populations is a key priority of the Biden Administration and this program is seeking to advance that work to really address the needs of underserved communities.

So on page seven, we provide a little bit more in depth discussion of each of those six priority areas. So page six, seven, eight, all the way down to the bottom of page nine, we really flesh out what we're looking for in each of

those priority areas for focus. And it would -- I would really encourage you if you are going to apply for this program, that you really look at each of the six priority areas and give careful thought to how you're going to implement each of those priorities.

At the bottom of page nine, I want to call your attention to something that is absolutely critical. The Lifespan Respite Act is very specific in its requirement that every application that is submitted to ACL for funding include a copy of the state's memorandum of agreement between the state agency that's applying for the funds, and we'll go over who is eligible in a moment.

So an MOU or a memorandum of agreement between the state agency and the state's non-profit, statewide respite coalition or statewide organization. There must be a copy of this MOU in the application at the time it is submitted. If that MOU is not there, included in the application, the application will not be reviewed, and it will not receive any consideration. And I'll talk a little bit about that in just a second because I think it bears repeating.

We've had a number of states in the past who submitted really good applications but failed to include or execute a memorandum of agreement and the application could not move forward because it did not include a statutorily required element and that is the memorandum of agreement.

At the bottom of page 10, we -- in addition to the priority areas, we talk about some additional application elements that should be addressed in your applications. One of those is program performance and outcome measurement. We expect all applicants to propose measurable outcomes that they hope to achieve over the course of their project.

So be sure that when you're developing your outcomes, that they actually aren't outputs, you know. An output is you know, we will serve 15 caregivers with 25 hours each of respite, but that's an output. The outcome of that is that caregivers will report a reduction in stress over time as the result of receiving respite services.

So it's the outcome is what is the impact of the service on the individual sort of answering the questions, so what? So please be sure that you propose measurable outcomes as part of your application. We do expect at the bottom of page 11, that grantees will participate in technical assistance that's provided.

Grantees, applicants are permitted to budget a portion of their great funds to attend the annual National Lifespan Respite Conference, that is permissible. We believe the training and technical assistance is an important part of program development.

And so the ARCH National Network and Respite Center who is funded by ACL to provide technical assistance to the grantees as part of an amazing annual conference. And we encourage grantees to attend that conference to network and to learn the latest about respite program and practices.

So and throughout the year, ARCH does a number of other amazing technical assistance activities and is really a tremendous source of information and support for grantees.

At the very bottom of page 11, we also give -- allow for the provision of subgrants and subcontracts. We recognize that the grantees, you know, the lead agency while you know has tremendous capacity that oftentimes the need

to sub-grant or subcontract a portion of the project to another entity is necessary. That is permissible.

We provide all of the requirements for making sub-grants and sub awards, and we also want the grantee to know that they are responsible for monitoring the work of the subgrants or subcontracts over the course of the project.

At the -- in the middle of page 12, we begin to talk about some of the awarding information. Like I had mentioned earlier we expect to award up to two grants off of this particular funding opportunity announcement. The award ceiling the maximum annual amount will be about two \$299,500 per year. The length of the project is five years. And that \$299,500 is five per year for five years.

So that is, you know, we believe a five-year project like I said earlier will give a maximum opportunity to really develop robust programs. Eligible applicants for this program by statute are the only entities that are eligible to apply for lifespan respite programs are either the state office on aging as designated under the Older Americans Act, the state Medicaid agency, the state's disability agency or another state government entity that the governor designates is eligible to apply for funds under this program.

And then again, at the bottom of the page 13, we have indicated which states are eligible to apply for this particular funding opportunity announcement. So if your state is not listed here as an eligible state, then we would encourage you to look at the other funding opportunity that is out there for grants to new states because that one -- you would be eligible to apply for.

Also, note that this funding opportunity is not intended to fund individual projects at a particular site or location. Often times we get inquiries from local

providers or programs. Are they eligible to apply for the lifespan respite grant program? And the answer is no, they are not eligible for these. The only eligible applicants are state entities.

At the top of page 14, we talk about the cost sharing or match requirements. There is a 25% match that is required of the grantees. It is 25% cash or in kind non-federal -- only non-federal sources of match can be used and though the match that is put up cannot be used as a match for another federal grant. So you have to be very careful about the match that you are, that you're using, you know, that it's not used as a match for another grant. So please be very careful about that.

At the top of page 15, Section 3, Responsiveness and Screening Criteria. The application responsiveness criteria is critical and there are only two of them, but they are big ones. The first one, the application will be looked at is the application from an eligible state agency and earlier I stated who those eligible entities are. So you must be from one of those entities to be eligible.

And the other one, the second responsiveness criteria is the inclusion of that memorandum of agreement between the eligible state agency and the statewide respect coalition organization. If either one of these responsiveness criteria are not met, the application will not be considered for funding, and it will not receive a review.

Then there's some administrative screening criteria that really looks at the sort of the format of the application. Narratives can be no longer than 30 pages. Any page number over 30 in the project narrative will not be included in the application package that moves forward for review. So please make sure that your narratives are tight/concise, so that you stay within that 30-page limit.

Note that the project work plan letters of commitment the V-Day or resumes of key personnel are not part of the project narrative limit. So the project narrative is simply the 30 pages that you have to lay out how you are going to structure your project and manage the program. And the notice of the funding opportunity a little bit later talks about the required elements within the body of the narrative, and I'll touch on that in just a minute.

On Page 15, at the very bottom application submission information begins several pages of absolutely critical information. ACL only accepts grant applications through the grants.gov system. So it is important that you are registered on grants.gov, and that you have your (SAMS) number already in place. If you are not -- if you don't have a (SAMS) number, if you are not registered on grants.gov, please, please, please do that now because it can take several days to get registered.

And what you don't want to do is wait until the very last minute to try to get registered because if your registration doesn't come through on time, you will not be able to submit your application.

And also, if you have technical issues with grants.gov, there's an 800 number in the funding opportunity announcement to call for technical assistance to work through any technical problems with grants.gov that is not an ACL system. We can't help you with it. We do not have access to the Grants.gov system to correct any issues that you're having.

So please start early, start now and make sure that if you have technical problems with grants.gov that you call grants.gov directly to ask for technical assistance. So all of these technical details go on down through the bottom of page 17 where we have the letter of intent request. Letters of intent again are due on May the 13th. They're not required, but we sure do like them.

They don't have to be anything fancy. You can simply send an email to Lori Stalbaum, the program officer indicating your intent to apply, that's all we need or if your state or agency requires something a bit more formal, that's certainly fine as well. But we use letters of intent to number one know how many -- approximately how many applications we're going to get so that we can select the appropriate number of grant reviewers, so we have enough people to do that job.

And then also to make sure that we aren't setting ourselves up for any conflicts of interest between who's reviewing the grant and the entities that have submitted the application, So letters of intent are not required, but they're really helpful in keeping the process -- the grant review process streamlined.

The top of page 18 going on for a couple of pages, we get into some of the detail that goes into the project narrative. And we go -- we explain section by section what the narrative should address and include. Please make sure that you read through from pages 18 on down through about page -- let's see the bottom of 22. Those four pages lay out exactly how you should structure your project narrative, the types of things that should be included. Please pay attention to that.

The top of page 23, we talk about the budget narrative, the budget justification. In addition to the SF4 which is the standard federal budget request application. We do -- ACL does require that applicants submit a budget narrative that describes in more detail within each of the budget categories how the funds will be spent and on what.

We are asking or requiring that no less than a 0.20 of an FTE is devoted to the state's grant project director. So no less than 0.20 FTEs should be allocated to

the state's project director for the grant. It certainly can be more but not less than 0.20.

The budget narrative should be a budget narrative for each year of the grant. So five separate budget narratives for each year of the grant and then one comprehensive budget narrative that encompasses all five years of the grant. So your budget narrative, when it's complete, will actually consist of six documents, one for each year of the project and then one cumulative budget narrative.

The work plan also is another key document that should be included with your application and the work plan should be detailed. It should cover each year of the project. It should outline all of the tasks, the objectives, who will be working on them, and reasonable time frames for completing each of these -- the tasks that you all are proposing.

At the back of the funding opportunity announcement are templates for both the budget narrative and the work plan. You're welcome to use those. You can modify them a bit or if you have -- if your agency has standard budget narrative and work plan templates you're welcome to use those as long as you include all of the required elements of the -- that ACL requires for both the budget narrative and the work plan. That's fine.

Failure to include either a budget narrative or a work plan with your application will result in that entire section being scored a zero on the -- in the review. So that can really ding you, so please make sure that you include those documents in your applications.

Grant reviewers, believe it or not look at that, and they see well, you know such and such an agency has said that they're going to work with these 10

partner organizations and each one of them is going to bring something meaningful to the project. So letters of commitments are important. And so, if you're going -- if you include them which we hope you do that, they are relevant and specific to the work of your project.

I want to jump down to Page 25, at the bottom. The due date as I said before is June the 14th, 2022. So please -- it's at 11:59 p.m. of June 14h. So please make sure that you start working to submit your application.

We usually recommend that you start your submission process two or three days before the deadline. Just to make sure that if there are any glitches with grants.gov, that you can get those addressed. So please make sure that you start early in submitting your applications.

At the bottom of page 26, I just want to point out the funding restrictions. These -- the construction or rehab of buildings, basic research or the continuation of existing projects without expansion or newer innovative approaches will not be funded. So please make sure that you're not proposing to use funds for construction or rehab, basic research of things of that nature.

And then there are significant prohibitions on the use of grant funds for meals. So please make sure that you read and understand that.

At the bottom of Page 27 begins the application review criteria and that goes on for about three pages. We lay out here the exact criteria that the panel of independent third-party reviewers will use to score, review and score your applications.

There are a series of yes and no questions that look at all aspects of your application. Please, if you can -- if you finish your application, and you apply

each of these questions to your application, and you can answer yes to every single one of them, then there's a fairly good chance that your application is really complete.

It doesn't guarantee that it's going to be funded because of course how it scores relative to other applications of course determines who the winning grant applications will be. But we've intentionally tried to be detailed in the grant review -- in the application review criteria so that you all have a roadmap to use in really looking back on your work to make sure that you're submitting a complete, well-rounded, and detailed application.

So use the application review criteria as a tool to make sure that you're being complete. So the application review criteria concludes at the top of page 31.

As I said before, at the top of page 32 the review and selection process, we have -- we will be setting up review panels of independent third-party, so non-government reviewers, not affiliated with an ACL program. They will be reviewing your application against the review criteria.

We anticipate to be making awards, notifying successful applicants sometime in mid to late July of this year for a program start date of about 8/1/2022. That's an estimate depending on the workload that we have and the number of applications we receive. But successful applicants should be receiving electronic notices of award that will have all the terms and conditions outlined in the grant, right around the middle to the end of July.

So with that and then the rest of the funding opportunity announcement from Page 31 to the end is general legal information, other grants policy information that you all should be aware of. Grantees are required to report to

us semi every six months on the work of their grant project. All reports are submitted electronically throughout the grant solution system.

Because these are cooperative agreements, the program officer, Lori Stalbaum will be substantially involved in your work and will be available to you as a resource throughout the life of your project. And so with that, if there are -- I've kind of gone through the major portions of the funding opportunity announcement that I'd like to cover.

So with that if anybody has any questions, I would be happy to answer them for you. So you can unmute your line and just say who you are, where you are calling from, and we will be happy to answer your questions. Hello?

Kathy Maples Smith: Hi. Greg, this is Kathy Maples Smith in South Carolina.

Greg Link: Oh hey.

Kathy Maples Smith: Hey. My question is related to the ceiling on funding that includes both direct and match dollars right?

Greg Link: No, the award ceiling is the amount of federal funds that are available. So your match would be in addition to that. So you have to look at the total. You can request up to the ceiling in federal funds, but then when you compute your match on the total budget.

Kathy Maples Smith: Right. Okay. That's good. But I wasn't sure that that's the way it used to be. I think the last grant had it a little differently. So I just wanted to clarify, so that's good to know.

Greg Link: Okay. Sure. Any other questions. Okay. I just did want to clarify one thing I said. Earlier I said that these are cooperative agreements. That was incorrect. In fact, they are grants. Grants and cooperative agreements are essentially two kinds of grants. Cooperative agreements have a lot more substantial involvement by ACL with the grantee.

These particular projects under the state enhancement grants are grants. So while we'll be involved and certainly available to provide guidance and technical assistance because these programs -- because your states are already -- should be fairly well established in the program, and you understand how it works, we don't anticipate the need for the level of involvement that would normally be under a cooperative agreement.

So these are grants which is a little easier you know in terms of the amount of work and interface with ACL that might be required. So -- but still we are always available for technical assistance. Other questions?

Kathy Maples Smith: Greg, this is Kathy again.

Greg Link: Sure.

Kathy Maples Smith: This is Kathy again, clarifying the grant versus the cooperative agreement. With the regard to the six priority areas, do these grants need to address all six or could do -- can we select key ones that really relate to what we're doing or are you really looking for grants that address all six?

Greg Link: So it's important to note that I don't -- the Lifespan Respite Act has five required services and three optional services.

Kathy Maples Smith: Right.

Greg Link: Where grantees or applicants definitely have to address the five required services, but then you know within these priority areas, there may not be the necessity for equal you know, focus on those -- you have to look at kind of the needs of the state and sort of what you're trying to accomplish.

Kathy Maples Smith: Okay. Great.

Woman 1: I have a question about the differences between the like state program enhancement grants and the grants to new states and re-establishing the core respite infrastructures. Would it be possible for a state to apply for both if they like they qualify for the state program enhancement grants, but they really feel maybe like they're more reestablishing, or you know...

Greg Link: We would advise against -- I mean, are you trying to make sure that you have as many opportunities is that...

Woman 1: It's not sort of which grant would be the more appropriate one to apply for.

Greg Link: So which state are you calling from?

Woman 1: New Jersey.

Greg Link: New Jersey. So as I recall, New Jersey had a grant several years ago. Right.

Woman 1: Yes.

Greg Link: You know, so the grants to new states and to states who wish to reestablish their respite infrastructures, well is designed number one for states who have never had a grant under this program. That's number one.

And then we are aware of a number of states who may be, were funded early on in the program history, like in 2009 and 2010 who had maybe made some good inroads and then for whatever reason, after federal funding stopped, there were changes in staffing and shifting in priorities.

And so, things kind of, you know, sort of withered a little bit, this would be -- that would be the opportunity for a state to you know, sort of pick up where they left off, and maybe you know, reinvigorate some things. You're maybe not quite ready for more robust work in the state enhancement grants.

So you kind of have to look at, you know, sort of where the project was when New Jersey finished and then kind of what's happened in the intervening year to make that decision. I wouldn't recommend applying for both.

Woman 1: Right. Okay. I think you answered my question. Thank you.

Greg Link: Okay. Sure. Other questions? All right. Well hearing none, I want to thank those of you who tuned in for this call. We will be posting a transcript of this call on the ACL.gov website, the grants portion of the website in association with this particular funding opportunity announcement, or it will be on the grants.gov site, I'm sorry in association with this particular grant opportunity in about 10 days or so.

It takes us a few days to get the transcript, and then we clean them up so that they're readable, and then we post that so that you have this as a reference. Lori Stalbaum is the program officer of record for this program. Please reach out to Lori with specific questions, you know as you're working.

We're limited as to the amount and the depth of questions that we can answer because we have to -- ACL has to remain impartial. So we, you know, have to avoid, you know, giving one applicant information that another one doesn't have. That's why we do these informational calls so that all of those who are interested hear the same thing at the same time. But we can answer technical questions and things of that nature along the way.

But as far as you know helping, you know, bouncing around program ideas and things like that, that is no something that we could do, but technical questions are certainly fine as you're working.

So if there are no other questions, I'll give one more offer of time to ask questions. Okay. And hearing none, I want to thank you all. Have a great weekend and best of luck to you as you start down the road of preparing your applications.

We look forward to seeing your submissions. So thank you and have a great weekend.

Woman 1: Thank you.

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