

NWX-HHS-AOA-1

Moderator: Victoria Wright
May 8, 2017
8:42 am CT

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time all participants are in a listen-only mode until the question-and-answer session of the call. To ask a question during that time please press star followed by 1.

Today's conference is being recorded. Any objections you may disconnect at this time. I would now like to turn over the meeting to Victoria Wright. You may begin.

Victoria Wright: Thank you very much (Angela). I wanted to welcome all of you to this teleconference to discuss the funding opportunity announcement for the 2017 Lifespan Respite Care Program. Grant to new states opportunities.

The purpose of this call is to provide interested applicants with some background information on the program. Walk through the announcement itself and highlight particular things you should pay attention as you develop your application as well as answer any outstanding questions that you may have.

As our operator mentioned, this conference call is being recorded and a printed copy of today's transcript along with the audio recording as well as the questions that are asked at the end of the call will be available at the ACL Web site within a week or so.

Again my name is Victoria Wright. I lead the National Lifespan Respite Care Program currently available in 35 states and the District of Columbia.

The Lifespan Respite Care began – I am sorry the Lifespan Respite Care program is an important component of the state's long term service and support system.

There are more than 43 million caregivers nationwide have provided and paid care and support to older adults and people with disabilities.

The Lifespan Respite Care Program enables the array of caregiver support program in the state to come together to address challenges caregivers – the challenges caregivers and the recipient face throughout the course of their lives.

Joining me today is another project officer who leads the Aging and Disability Resource Center which is the ADRC and the No Wrong Door Program. His name is Joseph Lugo.

And I have also the grant specialist who is assigned for this Lifespan Respite Program and her name is (Sherlonda). Joseph.

Joseph Lugo: Hello everyone this is Joseph Lugo with ACL. So I am very excited to be here with Victoria to help kind of answer questions after Victoria kind of

provides an overview of the grant opportunity. So just thank you for the invitation.

Victoria Wright: Great. And like I said, I have (Sherlonda) as well and she is our grant specialist for the Lifespan Respite Program. (Sherlonda).

(Sherlonda): Hi during this process I just wanted to give a reminder not to wait until the last moment to apply. Applications are handled through grants.gov and ACL is not an administrator of that Web site.

So if you experience issues in the application process then you will need to contact grants.gov. So just a reminder to get ahead of the application due date and make sure you don't wait until the last moment.

Victoria Wright: Thank you (Sherlonda). So just a quick background. As many of you know, Congress passed Lifespan Respite Act in 2006 and in 2016 Congress appropriated \$3.36 million for the Lifespan Respite Care Program.

This funding was used to expand the reach of the Lifespan Respite Care Program to two new states to provide grant funding for states expanded access through respite services and to test the delivery system they developed after receiving new state grants like this one.

Also a critical component of our support structure is the technical Assistance Resource Center which is the ARCH Respite Network.

Moving onto the funding opportunities that you are here to learn about. I would like to run through some key dates for each of you to keep on your radar or calendar.

So first, the Letter of Intent to apply for this opportunity are due – I am kind of giving a little bit of a leeway. It will be due this Friday, May 5th. But if you are ready to submit feel free to send it to me either via email or fax.

The Letter of Intent will help us plan and review process which designed to base on the number of applications we anticipate receiving. If you think you may submit an application it will be helpful to receive a Letter of Intent.

The Letter of Intent can be faxed or emailed to me. Again my name is Victoria Wright and my email address is Victoria.wright with a W @acl.hhs.gov. And my fax number is 202-205-0414.

If you are planning to fax it please let me know so I can – if you can just send me an email so I can go to the fax machine and make sure that I find that Letter of Intent.

The next thing is applications are due 11:59 pm Eastern Time on June 14th. They must be submitted electronically via grants.gov and the Web site is at www.grants.gov. Again application are due at 11:59 pm Eastern Time on June 14th.

Now the due date of June 14th is non-negotiable. Applications received after this date will not be considered for funding. We will talk a little bit more about some specific application submitting instruction and the overall opportunities.

We anticipate funding up to two states through this funding opportunity with final decision being contingent about the availability of funds and at the discretion of the administrator of ACL.

We expect to announce the awardee early August for a September 1, 2017 start date. We have a little bit of time between now and then to get everything in order and be able to hit that start date.

As you see the funding opportunity announcement these are the key dates to keep in mind as you develop your application.

Next I would like to provide a brief overview of the Lifespan Respite Care Act and the philosophy of the Lifespan Respite Care Program. In a nutshell, the purpose of the Lifespan Respite Care Act is to expand and enhance respite services, improve coordination and improve respite access and quality.

Lifespan Respite Care Program look at the service of respite for caregivers and work to make it more accessible, more widely available and higher quality regardless of age of the caregiver or the recipient.

Eligible recipients of respite include family members, foster parents or other adult providing unpaid care to adults who require care to meet basic needs or prevent injury. Or to children who acquire care beyond that required to meet the basic need of a child.

The Act is unique in that it addresses caregivers and respite needs across the Lifespan without reference to a particular group.

In fact, Congressional intent requires that state ensures that respite is made available and accessible regardless of age or disability of the care recipient. So that's just a brief overview in reference to Lifespan Respite Care Act.

Before working on your application I encourage you for those who will be developing an application or those developing an application on your behalf to really read a full language of the act.

Likewise, as you convene your stakeholder group and discuss the application and program development it would be a great idea to ensure that each of them has read the Lifespan Respite Act as well. That way everybody is on the same page and informed regarding the intent of this program.

I have actually provided a direct link on the Act in the funding opportunity announcement. And you will find them at the bottom of Page 3.

As I mentioned earlier, we will have a printed transcript of this call posted on the ACL Web site and this will also include the access to the audio recording and a copy of the question that were asked during this call along with answers to those questions.

I would like to talk a little bit later about the actual grant submission process and you will want to begin preparing for that as soon as possible. We will go over some of why that is but first we will jump to an overview of the program announcement.

I am just going to walk you through page by page and try and call attention to some of these issues that I believe to be of greatest importance. If I don't answer your question during this time we can move to that at the Q&A, the question-and-answer and we will have our operator facilitate some questions at the end of the call.

So first and foremost please be aware that this particular announcement is only available to states who have never been before received a grant under the Lifespan Respite Care.

Therefore, application will be only accepted from those states who have not received funds from ACL for this activity before.

As we jump into the funding opportunity announcement, Page 1 you will see the due dates that were mentioned earlier. There is also an executive summary that provides the brief overview of the opportunity and again who is eligible to apply.

On Page 2 starts the actual description of the funding opportunity. I tried to provide enough background and history here so that applicants understand the intent and purpose of the funding opportunity as well as the content in which they might be working to get funded.

Page 3 at the very bottom has the link that mentioned earlier, the Lifespan Respite Act and you will see by reading the law that much of what is in the law is actually laid out throughout this announcement.

Near the bottom page of Page 4 and on top of Page 5 you will see the section titled, Activities and Recommended Approaches which outline how funds should be used.

These requirements are taken directly from the statute. So please be sure to address them in your application and please be sure to design your program so that all required activities and services are going to be delivered.

The Act is not specific with respect to how much of each service is provided. So it will be up to each state or applicant to determine the appropriate service mix.

On Page 5 lays out the additional required application element that must be in your application. Again these are mainly drawn from the statute but reflect the priorities of the acting administrator – the acting administrator here at ACL.

Page 6, Item 4 talks about stakeholder involvement in partnership and discussed more fully in the next section on that page. I think we have seen – we have seen that in the Lifespan Respite activities and programs are successful.

Therefore, also happen to be strong collaboration among all relevant stakeholders. So please be sure to address these in your application.

Another item that is important on Page 6 near the bottom. You will see a block letter where it is important. Your application must include a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding or agreement between the eligible state agency which I will get into a minute and states respite coalition organization.

The Act requires that the application includes a memorandum of agreement or understanding regarding the joint responsibilities for the eligible agency program between that agency and the public or private non-profit statewide respite coalition organization.

I would encourage you to write the memorandum so as follows. So as to follow flexibility to all parties as the project unfolds.

And for example, if you spell out specific role or responsibilities of all parties within the Memorandum of Understanding you are going to want to include across allowing modification by any of the parties within your agreement or your Memorandum of Understanding.

If your state does not have a formal respite coalition, an organization in that state that provides or coordinates respite could also be used. If you do not include the MOU, the Memorandum of Understanding with your application, the application will be rejected and not reviewed.

So it is critical important to include a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding or a Memorandum of Agreement.

Moving onto Page 7 which includes a required and – which includes required and encourage a (CBC). So please be sure your application addresses a (CBC) described here.

The section pertaining to products, infosharing and collaboration, technical assistance efforts were expanded somewhat in the past few years and we are continuing to expect this of all successful applicants.

Note on Page 7 in the third paragraph of this section, the semiannual reporting and project evaluation that funded applicants will be expected to submit program and progress reports semiannually using the ACL template and processes.

Additionally, because this grant will be forward funded, grantee will be expected to report semiannually on the specific progress towards each of the project goals and objectives.

Forward funded means that the grantee will receive the full funding for this three year project at the start of the grant in September 2017.

On Page 8 near the top we have a section called, Grant and Subcontracts. Grantee may carry out the required and optional activities described in the funding opportunity directly or by a subgrant to or contract with public or private entities.

However, the state agency or the applicant must demonstrate an active role in the program development implementation as well as the management of the overall project. So please do not purpose a project that simply passes funds into another entity.

We will not fund pass through projects. If you do decide subcontract specific activities be sure to clearly describe the process for this and how as the grantee will continue to be able to lead the role.

Also be sure to describe the role of the project director and the role and the makeup of the stakeholder group.

Finally at the top of page 8 we would like to encourage you to budget resources, attend the National Respite Conference. This will provide you with an excellent opportunity for training and networking, meeting fellow grantees and learning from those states who had been in your shoes.

You can see at the bottom of Page 8 and nearly onto Page 9 it begins in Section 2 to outline the award information. We plan to fund up to two grants under this opportunity at a maximum of \$200,000 for a 36 month project – project and budget period.

Please keep this in mind as you are developing work plans and budgets for 36 projects – 36 month project period. The rationale behind the 36 project length was to give states who are not as far along in their development of the Lifespan Respite Care Program or who may not have begun the work necessary to bring all relevant stakeholders together.

The adequate time and resources to plan and implement their programs were necessary opportunity to supplement respite services.

And the time is really to do this work well. Again building lasting sustainable Lifespan Respite Care infrastructure and partnerships.

For those states that are little further along you can be using 36 months project period to fine tune your program increasing your reach and your approach to meet the state's respite needs and fill gaps for more effective leads.

We have used similar funding strategies in the past for the aging and disability resource center grant and I believe that – I believe some of that initial (unintelligible) grant out of ACL were funded this way as well. And it is really proven to be successful approach.

Moving along to Page 9. Only those applications ranking the highest in a third party review will be recommended for funding. Application will be reviewed and scored by an independent review panel of at least three individuals.

The independent review panel review will be – I am sorry the independent panel who views the application review information on Page 18 through 21 to score the application.

We will review this section in a few minutes. It is anticipated that not all applications will be funded. During the course of the application review it is possible that we may come back to an applicant to negotiate the size of the actual award.

Keeping in mind that we can never award more than you ask for. We can however award less than what you request based on the scope of the work you proposed relative to the funds that are requested and the funds that are available.

Please note again the funding (unintelligible) is \$200,000. I would encourage applicants to focus on that amount as well developed a project with – I am sorry, which meets the funding amount levels.

ACL anticipate active collaboration with each funded grantee throughout the life of the project. As the project gets underway we will devise a communication system to keep you updated from the federal perspective and likewise we can use regularly scheduled conference calls for technical assistance, updates and general programmatic discussion.

ACL will work with each of the grantees to develop and finalize your work plans. Any adjustment to your work plan will be completed within 45 days of award.

Now in the middle section here on Page 9 and I believe on top of Page 10. Under Section 3, Eligibility Information. Just please make sure that you read and understand the requirements especially who is eligible to apply.

So I will talk a little bit more about screening applications against the responsiveness criteria in a minute. But we do end up doing that before we sent application onto review panels.

And this is again the first thing that we look at your – I am sorry, first thing that is looked at in your application whether or not application meets the application requirements as specific in the statute.

Applicant agency must be the State Agency on Aging, the state Medicaid agency or another state agency identified by the governor to administer the Lifespan Respite Program. No other entities are eligible to apply.

If you are listening on the call now and you are not the state agency you will not be eligible to apply. If that is the case, you should contact and work with the eligible entity in your state to encourage them to submit an application.

Additionally, the eligible agencies must be connected to the aging and disability resource center or no longer a system in their state and must work in collaboration with a public or a private non-profit statewide respite coalition organization.

In this case if there isn't a formal respite coalition in place, a respite organization working on the state's behalf of the entire state would suffice.

And just note that the final step of eligibility criteria is that eligible state agency must demonstrate an ability to work with other states and community based agencies.

They must have an understanding of respite care and family caregiver issue across age groups, disabilities and conditions and must have the capacity to

ensure meaningful involvement of family members, caregivers and care recipients.

And there may be some questions as to the ADRC requirements. States are required by statutes to have such entities. The ADRC requirement is in the program announcement. It is drawn directly from the Lifespan Respite Act itself.

If you are concerned about whether your state has an ADRC, look at the definition and determine whether there is an entity in your state that meets that criteria outlined in the Act.

The Act defines Aging Disability Resource Centers as an entity administering the program established by the state as part of the state's system of long term service and support to provide coordinated systems for providing comprehensive information on the public and private long term service and support programs.

Options and resources, personal counseling to assist individuals in assessing their existing or anticipated long term care needs. And developing and maintaining a plan for a long term service and support designed to meet their specific needs and circumstances.

And to provide consumer access to the range of publicly supported long term care program for which consumer may have eligible (unintelligible) at a convenient point of entry of this type of program and services.

So you want to be sure that you have an entity in the state that is part of the state long term service and support system. And that provide those three things that I just highlighted. Information, counseling and access.

So based on the Act, the definition and description of an ADRC you should be able to determine if your state has such entity and describes how the entity will work in your project.

Make sure you write to the definition and function of ADRC as if it is in the Act and make sure that reviewers have a full appreciation of how your state meets the criteria for an ADRC.

And how that entity will be involved in the administration of the Lifespan Respite Care Program under statewide basis.

Again on the bottom page of Page 9 of the announcement there is just another important issue that I wanted to raise with you which match by the statute cost sharing as – I am sorry, by the statute cost sharing or matching is at 25% cash or in-kind level.

Congress has not permitted waivers to this match requirement. And as with most other federal grants, match must be from non-federal forces. Either our two types of match, cash and in-kind.

Cash match comes from a non-federal fund such as cash contribution from individual or organization. And in-kind contribution are non-federal third party, non-cash contribution made directly to the grant project and include things like donated time, real or not expendable properties and goods and services.

Be sure your match is based on the project's total cost not the amount you requested from the federal government. This essentially requires that you

develop your project work plan and budget first before determining how much to request from the federal government.

Detailed instruction for calculating match are in the announcement Page 27 of 36. This is important that the 25 is the – I am sorry the match is 25%. Applicants frequently calculate the match amount incorrectly.

Earlier I alluded to responsiveness and screening criteria on Page 10 on the funding opportunity and announcement. You will see more details related to that. Please be sure your application addresses the responsiveness and screening criteria outlined here.

We will be screening each application internally to ensure that both screening and responsiveness criteria are addressed before giving the application to the reviewer.

We are still on Page 10. Failure of the application to comply with either the responsiveness or the screening criteria will result in an application elimination from further review or consideration for funding.

The responsiveness criteria includes verifying that the applicant one is an eligible applicant as outlined in Section 3-1 or -1 of the program announcement.

Item 2 has included in the application package memorandum of agreement between the eligible state agency and the statewide respite coalition or organization.

And Item 3 does not propose conduit or pass through funding for another agency to lead the project. If all of those conditions have not been met your application will not be reviewed.

Please be sure to incorporate this element as you are preparing your application. The application screening criteria that is just below that section is a little more technical in nature.

As you can see, it includes things like the margin, the correct size – I am sorry, the correct size. Did the application arrive on time? Is the narrative within the page limit of 20 pages? Did the applicant use the correct size font?

If your application misses on any of this application screening criteria your application cannot be reviewed.

Moving forward to Page 11. Of the funding opportunity announcement merely provides guidance on where to get the application package. But do remember that your application must be submitted electronically through grants.gov.

On this page it also includes some helpful information should you require assistance with using grants.gov including a toll free number to call if you have any questions or problems.

So again the program announcement gives specific instruction and all steps that you need to follow to be sure you are properly registered on grants.gov.

And additionally that you have a DUNS number. That is D-U-N-S. From time to time they have been issues with grants.gov with respect to it locking up or freezing during submission.

Should this occur please use toll free number to call for assistance. ACL grants office is not able to assist with grants.gov issues because unfortunately it is not an ACL Web site.

Moving onto Page 11. Page 11 and Page 12 you will get some additional information on obtaining that DUNS, D-U-N-S number and registering at the central contractor registry.

Again starting this process early to make sure you get done on time. If you are planning to submit an application we recommend you start the process today.

Moving forward on Page 12 as I mentioned earlier, the Letter of Intent is due this Friday, May 5th. But again if you have it ready feel free to forward it to me.

On Page 12 to 13 describe the structure of your project narrative. So the narrative is really the heart of your application. This is where you get to tell your story and lay out your project.

This is your opportunity to tell the reviewer what you will do. So remember you only have 20 pages in which to do this so plan carefully in your writing.

We will be using independent reviewer panels – I am sorry, we will be using independent review panels to review and score applications. And again your narrative is that main opportunity to fully describe your project and respond to the element included in this program announcement.

I do not – I mean I do want to call your attention in the Section titled, Problem Statement and Support Intervention. In the project narrative instruction this both describes elements that must be included in your narrative.

They are taken directly from the Lifespan Respite Act itself and the law requires applicants to address each one of these elements in their application.

So we are moving along. We talked a bit more about the narrative and some of the structure moving forward to other elements of your application.

There are templates that are included as part of the funding opportunity announcement which outlines some of the topics within the narrative as well as other materials that you would like to be submitting or required elements like the work plan.

Remember that you must include a work plan that covers all three years of the project. As we move further along with the funding opportunity have the narrative description Page 16 and 17.

You will see they explain the other required elements of the application (unintelligible) and I do draw your attention towards the template that are included. Those I just mentioned.

At this point I just wanted to reiterate something that is important for all applicants and it has to do with the forward funding nature of this particular announcement.

For ACL to fund grants in this manner, Department of Health and Human Services requires us to get an approval for deviation from our standard grant management policy and procedure.

Which are typically for three year project and one year budget period. Who will be funding this application up front is a departure from the standard grant management practices.

It is not wrong or bad policy but it is a deviation nonetheless. And just to reiterate that because I do believe I stumbled through it. It is a bit of the different process than what we have three years project that are forward funded.

So you do receive that funding amount starting September 2017 and that will be the amount for the three year project period just to be clear. So as a result of the forward funded nature the department expects that there will be additional monitoring done by ACL.

So to help us with this please be sure that your work plans are clear in the way that they propose what you will be accomplishing each year of the project and that it is easy to track each of those tasks under the objectives rather than under your budget and work plan.

We are being required to monitor more closely your progress on each task proposed in each year in order to ensure that the funds are being extended properly.

You will notice (unintelligible) may reflect some additional monitoring requirements language as we begin to work with you on that. So the final page of the funding opportunity roughly 18 to 20 lays out the exact criteria against which your application will be forwarded.

Again this is crucial important as you are designing your application. Reviewers will be using these listed elements when scoring your application. My suggestion would be to make sure your applications answer each of these questions included under each of the five sections of the application review section.

So keep in mind that these are only criteria against which reviewers will be scoring in your application. Bottom Page 22 gives you an overview of the reporting process under Item 3.

So I believe pretty much that is what I have and thank you for your interest in the Lifespan Respite Program grant to new state funding opportunities.

I think I still have about what 15 minutes for any question and answer. So (Angela) you may open the line for question-and-answer.

Coordinator: Thank you. We will now begin a question-and-answer session. If you would like to ask a question please press star 1 and record your name clearly.

I am showing no questions at this time.

Victoria Wright: Okay I can share our experience from last year. I have like some question that was asked so maybe this will be helpful.

But I just wanted to let everybody know who is on the line that if ever you still have questions because right now you won't have any questions because you are not – you are still in preparation of your application.

But if there are any question that you have lingering please you can send it to me via email and then we will post it on the ACL Web site.

Again from the 2016 FOA for the new state grant the first question that they asked was what needs to be included in the Letter of Intent? All I need is the name of the applicant entity. This information is more just to give us an idea of how many potential applicants we have.

So we are not overloading a particular review panel with too many applications. So basically it is just basic information we need to know who is basically applying. Who is the entity?

The second question was a coalition not being a non-profit or said it could be a private organization. What does this mean? I think what might be helpful is actually reviewing the language in the Act.

On the bottom of Page 3 is the legislation link and I think that might be the best way to make sure that your entity aligns with what is included here. I mean included there.

The other question is basically regarding the coalition and the MOU. It is likely that there are entities that are working in this domain and I think it should like if there is an interest on behalf of our state to pursue that opportunity.

So I would be looking at making sure that the organization that can come together to create this coalition are representative of individuals across the Lifespan.

In some cases it is an entity that is a new entity that became formed as a result of this particular opportunity. In other places it has been an entity that has been existence that may have focus on particular population.

But through working with other stakeholders have developed more comprehensive look at the population to be served through the respite care and again really representative of all population across the Lifespan Respite.

In short, you may place this entity have not existed prior to the development of the Respite Care Program. In some cases they have – so I think you are making sure that you are and I mean first and foremost going to be addressing all population as part of the stakeholder group and that your coalition is able to work statewide.

And I think that is the main focus of the new state grant application. I hope that answers that regarding coalition and MOU question.

So do we have any questions?

Coordinator: Yes we do have one that came up.

Victoria Wright: Okay great.

Coordinator: Nancy Meyer. Nancy your line is open.

Nancy Meyer: Okay thank you. Again this is Nancy Meyer in North Dakota with Aging Services Division. So we have two questions. The first one is that it says that the applicant should use part of their funds for the provision of evidence based quality respite care services.

And I am wondering if you could explain a little bit what you consider to be evidence based?

And then the second question is we were wondering on Page 36 of the application it says there is instructions for completing the project summary abstract. But then there is nothing after that when you print out the award. So are we missing some of the pages if we only have 36 of them?

Victoria Wright: Well thank you for that question. On the abstract part I am going to try and look at what happened when we submitted it to grants.gov. And we will answer the question once we put it on the ACL Web site.

Joseph Lugo: Yes and your first question. This is Joseph Lugo is a really good one in terms of what evidence based program. And I think what we will do the best approach is to add that to the official FAQ and then list a series of evidence based respite programs under that.

Because I think this came up a lot with our evidence based care transition program with ADRC. So we can list a series of them and then other states came to us and said well there are others out there.

And so we want to make sure we respond to that correctly. So we will add that question to the FAQ and provide a list of those programs. But that is a great question.

Coordinator: We do have another question on the line. Tammy your line is open.

Tammy Rosa: Hi thank you. My name is Tammy Rosa with Aging Services in Michigan and I am just – quick question. I think you have answered it for me but – so it is the state that has to be the lead on this application correct?

Victoria Wright: Yes.

Tammy Rosa: The state aging offices okay. They do have to go ahead and – they have to be the entity that submits. Correct?

Victoria Wright: Yes.

Tammy Rosa: Wanted to clarify that. Thank you.

Victoria Wright: Thank you. Any more questions?

Coordinator: No further questions.

Victoria Wright: Great. Thank you very much (Angela) for your help with the call and I think that we thank you all for whoever joined us today. Thank you for your time and we look forward to seeing everybody's application.

So have a good day. Thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you for your participation on today's conference. Please disconnect at this time.

END