Human Services Division
1685 Main Street, Room 212, Santa Monica, CA 90401
tel: 310-458-8701 • TTY: 310-458-8696 • fax: 310-458-3380
website: www.smgov.net/ccsgrants

FY 2015-19
Human Services Grants Program

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

updated 2/24/2015

Note: Program Budget FY 15-16 has been updated to correct a formula in the Administrative Indirect Cost line item in Section I as of 2/13/15.

Q: Will Capital Improvement Grants be offered during this grants cycle?

A: No

Q: What is the maximum % of indirect cost allowed to program budgets?

A: The City does not prescribe an amount. The agency determines the amount requested for Indirect Administrative Costs for each program. However, excessive administrative costs are a red flag and may be reviewed during contract negotiation and fiscal monitoring.

Q: The Checklist requests a copy of case management procedures and guidelines for the program. Our program does not provide case management services directly to clients. How should we respond?

A: If your program does not provide case management services directly to clients, please describe your referral process. Provide a document that describes your procedures and guidelines for referring clients to other providers, including follow up and documentation that linkages to services have been established.

Q: Do currently funded agencies need to provide the supporting documents listed on the checklist, i.e. Organizational Chart, Board Roster, IRS Determination Letter, etc.?

A: No. Currently funded agencies that are recommended for funding in the FY2015-19 cycle will need to submit current documents during the contracts negotiations process.

Q: On Page 8, describing Opportunity Youth, the RFP mentions psychological/social issues and/or an identified mental illness. Can this include youth with physical disabilities?

A: Yes

Q: My agency is new and does not have a history of funding goals; only projected and proposed numbers. How do I complete this section of the RFP?

A: Put N/A for columns predating your organization and include all information for the years where information is available.

Q: For the Program Plan, do I complete the Schedule of Proposed Fees if our organization does not charge for services?

A: No. If your agency is not charging for services put N/A.

Q: For the Outputs and Outcomes, within SMPP, is it necessary to distinguish between subpopulations?

A: No, you do not need to differentiate the subpopulations, but do make sure that the subpopulations are SMPP.

Q: Is pagination necessary for whole document or just the narrative?

A: Pagination is helpful for the entire document, but not required.

Q: If we are partnering with another organization, who submits the proposal?

A: The lead agency submits the application and the partnership structure, roles and responsibilities should be detailed in Program Plan.

Q: We have a fiscal sponsor and are not yet a 501c(3), how does the application process work?

A: The fiscal sponsor submits the application and the partnership structure, roles and responsibilities should be detailed in the Program Plan.

Q: My agency has restricted funds. Should these be included in Section IV, Agency Funding History?

A: Yes

Q: Is the criteria of having 12 Board Members required?

A: Yes, this is a minimum eligibility requirement as stated in the RFP.

Q: You talk about "innovation" and "best practices", but often innovative approaches are new and not backed by research. Which is more important – "innovation" or "best practice"?

A: Many best practices are also innovative, and would address a need in a new way. As stated, we are emphasizing the use of researched best practices. Please note that if you choose to innovate by applying a best-practice to a different population or in a new way, you should be very clear in describing how your modification does not undermine the basis of the best practice approach.

Q: We have many different types of volunteers and interns, who work a variety of hours. For the Staffing Plan, are we required to list the title, job description and %FTE for each volunteer and intern?

A: No, you may aggregate this into one line by including the total FTE for all volunteers/interns.

Q: How does the review process work and how is application strength judged? Are the reviewer names public?

A: The raters will review, rank, and prioritize applications. A list of raters can be requested after the Council budget adoption.

Q: Please elaborate on the requirement to provide culturally appropriate and/or relevant services.

A: Cultural competency can mean many things. For example, while we look for multi-lingual staff, if staff is not available you should have a plan in place for translation capacity. Cultural competency is ultimately about the flexibility of your program to deliver services in a different way to meet the needs of a diverse population.

Q: Is the RFP process inclusive of SHP CoC from LAHSA?

A: Yes, for the City's Coordinate Case Management and CoC Permanent Housing programs (Serial Inebriate Program) only. This RFP does not replace or supersede the Continuum of Care NOFA issued by LAHSA.

Q: The checklist mentions Audited Financials for 2012, 13 and 14. Our financials for 2014 will not be available until later this year. Assuming that you want the last 3 years, should we include the financials for 2011, 12 and 13?

A: Yes, please submit the three most current audited financial statements.

Q: Do we need to include a letter/form from the Board naming the individual who is authorized to sign the application or is his/her signature on the cover page enough? If you do need a formal letter, do you have a specific form we should use?

A: No, applicants are not required to include a letter or form from the Board of Directors naming the individual who is authorized to sign the grant application. Please make sure you receive formal approval from your Board of Directors to submit a proposal.

Q: In regards to partnerships, should we submit MOUs or LOAs relevant to this application or is a list of partners sufficient? If you want the partnership letters, do they need to be specific to this application?

A: MOU's are not required with your proposal. Agencies recommended for funding will need to submit MOU's during the contract negotiation process. Partnership structure, roles, and responsibilities should be detailed in the Program Plan.

Q: Is the Grievance Policy you request on the RFP for the clients we serve or the one for our employees?

A: We are asking for your program's process for responding to client grievances.

Q. Can we submit a proposal if our agency did not attend the bidders workshop on February 10, 2015?

A. Yes.

Q: We currently receive City funds. Should we base our proposal budget on the current grant amounts?

A: The program budget is a proposed budget, and your City grant request should be based on your proposed program funding needs, and should be reflective of the proportion of eligible Santa Monica participants you intend to serve.

Q: Please elaborate on the new required match (as opposed to previously considered leverages). For example, we have received a fund from the City every year to do home modifications, are we now required to match that fund with other dollars?

A: Yes, the grant funding associated with those program activities are subject to the cash match requirement. The cash match requirement applies to the entire grant amount.

Q: If our agency is interested in applying for funding across several program areas, should each program type be a separate application?

A: Each program must submit a separate application; however, as stated, it is up to your agency to determine/define what a "program" is.

Q: Are there guidelines/requirements for how you want us to reflect program collaboration among agencies? For example, is it preferred that one agency request funding for a program and then the partnering agencies share that funding?

A: The collaboration must identify one lead agency. The lead agency submits the application and the partnership structure, roles, and responsibilities should be detailed in Program Plan.

Q: When asking about the utilization of volunteers and interns, are you referring only to the program we are applying for or agency wide?

A: The requested information regarding utilization of volunteers and interns is program-specific.

Q: On page 12, it states that "Services to older youth must address the following three areas". It is not clear what "three areas" are being referred to. Please clarify.

A: There are two areas listed. The "three" is a typo.

Q: Can any agency serve as the lead on a Wellness Center proposal? Or must it be the primary medical care provider?

A: A collaborative application should identify a lead agency that is appropriate based on best practices for the proposed scope of work.

Q: Given an agency that has had 2 grants in the past, is it OK to re-apply for both and also submit a 3rd proposal as a part of the Wellness Center application?

A: Yes, there is no limit on the number of proposals an agency may submit.

Q: I am working on the budget and there are protected cells that cannot be written over. Can these cells be unlocked?

A: Shaded cells in the budget worksheet contain static formulas that will calculate key totals as you fill in your detailed budget. These cells are locked for editing by City staff to preserve the accuracy of the formulas.

Q: If we are planning to collaborate with other city-funded agencies on a project, would all agencies identify the same outcomes in each program plan and count the same kids in their reports? Or would one agency be responsible for tracking and simply name the other as a community partner?

A: Agencies working in collaboration must have unique outcomes about a shared population and must articulate specific services (outputs) and explain how efforts will not be duplicated.

Q: As opposed to direct service providers, our organization has a unique service model and has historically submitted a modified program plan. When submitting the RFP, may we skip the demographics overview chart and count numbers of participants and their agencies as we have in the past?

A: If proposed services are not directly targeted toward a Santa Monica resident population but services provided are for agencies at large, then list "n/a" in the demographics section.

Q: Regarding our schedule of proposed fees (Program Plan-Section II-Item 2.e.), is it okay to submit an attachment rather provide a narrative description or a copied image?

A: Yes, you may include this as an attachment. Please clearly reference the attachment in your narrative.

Q: We currently operate an HMIS through LAHSA. If our proposal is funded, would we be required to establish a second HMIS through the City of Santa Monica?

A: Yes. If funded, we would discuss this during contract negotiations.

Q: Do new and existing residents of a housing program need to have lived in Santa Monica prior to entering a Santa Monica-based program?

A: Not necessarily. However, program participants must meet the Santa Monica Priority Participant criteria at the time of enrollment into a City-funded program (see RFP for criteria for low-income, youth and homeless populations).

Q: Would the City of Santa Monica be open to funding individual "beds" in a housing program (e.g., 6 out of 12 beds)?

A: Yes, the City is open to funding a portion of a larger program.

Q: Is there a funding range by program size or number of clients served, or is there a formula we can use to determine how much we should request?

A: No. You may ask any amount based on your program needs, as long as the request meets or exceeds the cash match requirement.

Q: Can you offer more detail on the amount of funding that could be requested for scholarships and stipends?

A: There is no guidance for the amount that can be requested for each program activity. All components of your program plan will be evaluated during the review process.