

Moderator: Jesse Moore
June 16, 2017
10:00 am CT

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time all participants are in a listen only mode. During the question and answer session you may press star 1 if you would like to ask a question. Today's call is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. I'd now like to turn the meeting over to Mr. Jesse Moore. Sir, you may begin.

Jesse Moore: Okay. I want to welcome you to the teleconference to discuss the funding announcement for the FY 2017 Strengthening Coordinated Transportation Systems for People with Disabilities and Older Adults. This call will only cover the FOA. The purposes of the call is to provide interested applicants with some background information of the program, walk through the announcement itself and highlight particular things you should pay attention to and answer any questions you may have.

This conference call is being recorded as stated. A printed copy of today's transcript, including the questions and answers at the end of the call, will be available on the ACL's Web site within a week or so. My name is Jesse Moore and I'm the Aging Services Program Specialist here at ACL in the Office of Supportive and Caregiver Services. I am the program officer for this new program.

For this program, my responsibility will be to insure that the grantee work within the requirements for this program, and the funding announcement and for the life of the project. I will be your go to person for all programmatic issues related to this project. Joining me on this call is Sherlonda Blue who is the Grants Management Specialist. Sherlonda will be handling the business

functions between CIP and the grantee that is selected. You will interact with her on questions about the budget, reporting, funding drawdown and other things.

This call is scheduled to go for about an hour, during which I will go over the program announcement and point out key things to be aware of as you consider applying, and hopefully clear up any lingering questions that you may have. Following that, we will open the lines for questions and answers. To get the most out of this call, I really recommend having a copy of the FOA in front of you, as I will go through section by section, and that way you are able to jot down any questions.

As with the funding and opportunity announcement issued by ACL, this one contains all the information prospective applicants need to know about why the opportunity exists and then how to go about completing the application. This FOA is divided into several sections, each of which will be important for you to carefully review and understand. So let's get started going through the FOA. At the top of page 1 you'll find the ACL center issuing this FOA, which is the Center for Integrated Programs.

You'll also find the FOA number and two absolutely critical dates for you to keep in mind. The first date to be aware of is June 20, 2017, which is this coming Tuesday. This is the date that letters of intent are due and I'll talk more about this in a minute. The next critical date is July 31, 2017, which is a Monday. This is the due date for all applications. Applications are absolutely due on this date, by 11:59 pm. No exceptions. I will also talk a bit more about this later in the call.

Page 1 also contains the executive summary. This provides a very high level overview of the opportunities, and more details are contained in the main parts

of the FOA. The actual funding opportunity description begins on the following page. Here you will find some background information for why ACL developed a funding opportunity, including the focus areas, program goals and desired outcomes. For the purpose of this particular program, ACL seeks to expand the nation's capacity to develop and deliver services to people with disabilities and older adults.

The goal of this five year project is to foster further the access and capabilities of states and communities to conduct inclusive transportation planning for older adults and persons with disabilities. The successful applicant will propose approaches that build on earlier successes in this arena, while focusing on the priority areas identified as essential for insuring maximum inclusion of relevant partners, including consumers and the planning process.

I will encourage applicants to clearly describe the current status of inclusive transportation planning in the US and clearly articulate how proposed approaches will further advance each activity within this context. Applicants should propose approaches for addressing the following priority areas over the course of this five year project - technical assistance and support, information dissemination, performance measurement and project evaluation and sustainability. That brings me to section 2 which is the award information.

You will see the ACL will be administering this grant as a cooperative agreement. What this means is that throughout the life of this project the grantee can expect substantial involvement by the ACL program officer, which is myself, and much of the work undertaken in this grant. The terms of the cooperative agreement for both the ACL and the grantee, are described in detail within the FOA. After the notice of award is made, ACL will work with the successful grantee to understand the terms of the cooperative agreement and answer any further questions the grantee may have.

We'll be making only one award, the maximum amount of funding for this first year is \$1 million. We will fund only the first year of the project at this time. Each year thereafter the amount of funding will be \$1 million each year. But keep in mind that years 2-5 is subject to availability of funds. Section 3 talks about who is eligible to apply for this opportunity.

The ACL will award one grant to a domestic public or private nonprofit entity which includes state and local government, Indian tribal governments or organizations, American Indian, Alaska Native and Native American, faith based organizations, community based organizations, hospitals and institutions of higher education, but no more than \$1 million per year, as mentioned, for a five year project.

Also discussed in this section is the match requirement. That is a 25% match requirement. There are two types of match, one is the nonfederal cash and two is the nonfederal in kind. In general, costs borne by the (applicant) and cost contributions of any and all third parties involved in the project, including sub grantees, contractors and consultants, are considered matching funds. Volunteer time, the use of facilities to hold meetings or conduct project activities, may be considered in kind third party donations.

Budgetary funds provided from the applicants' agency's budget or costs associated with the project, are an example of nonfederal cash match. If the applicant does not meet the minimum match requirement or applications with a match greater than the minimum requirement will not receive additional consideration under the review. The match is one of the responsive criteria as noted in section three, the application response (criteria).

The next critical aspect of this section for you to be aware of, is the application response (criteria). Applications will be reviewed to assess responsiveness to the following criteria - those that do not meet the required criteria will be administratively eliminated and will not be reviewed. One, is the national organizations as defined in section three, demonstrated national experience of coordinated transportation providers in their efforts to enhance state, regional or local coordinated transportation systems for people with disabilities or older adults. And any proposed contractors and sub grantees that possess experience in formulating and managing demonstration projects at the community level.

As included the required match in the budget and a description of the match in the budget narrative. I want to reiterate your applications must include each of these four criteria in order for your applications to move forward for review that's going. Failure to include each and every one of these criteria in your applications, will result in the application being rejected with no further considerations. There is also a bit of application screening criteria that must be met and those are stated.

All applications will be screened to insure a level playing field for all applicants. Applications that fail to meet the three screening criteria described below, will not be reviewed and will receive no further consideration. In order for an application to be reviewed, it must meet the following screening requirements - applications must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov by 11:59 pm on July 31st Eastern time, by the due date listed in section 5.3, submission dates and times.

The project narrative section of the application must be double spaced on 8.5x11 plain white paper with one inch margins on both sides and the standard font size of no less than 11 point, preferably Times New Roman or Arial. The

project narrative must not exceed 20 pages. The project narrative that exceeds 20 pages will only have the additional pages removed and only the first 20 pages of the project narrative will be provided to the (merit) reviewers for funding consideration.

Note, the project work plan that is a (unintelligible) of key private personnel, are not counted as part of the project narrative for purposes of the 20 page limit. Next, is the application and submission information. You must submit your applications electronically via Grants.gov as mentioned. You should be sure your agency is registered with Grants.gov now, before you are ready to submit your application. It can take several days to get registered, so please don't wait until the last minute.

Your agency must also have a DUNS number and be registered with SAM, the system for award management. Please start the process now. If your agency is not registered again it often takes up to 48 hours with SAM (unintelligible) to be available in Grants.gov. So don't wait until the last minute. It is very important - I nor anyone at ACL, can assist you with registering with Grants.gov, DUNS or SAM. We do not have access to those systems. They are not ACL systems.

If you need technical support for any of those systems, please call the toll free number listed in the FOA. Again, do not call me. I cannot help you with this area. Please be sure to read the following every step as outlined in section 4. As mentioned earlier, letters of intent are requested but not required, as well. Applicants are requested but not required to submit the letter of intent to (unintelligible) via email. The purpose of the letter of intent is to allow our staff to estimate the number of independent reviewers needed and to avoid potential conflicts of interest in the review process.

The letter of intent does not have to be anything more than an email indicating that you may be applying. They do not have to be formal documents unless this is standard practice under agency or organization. Letters of intent are necessary for me, when selecting the merit reviewers, as I mentioned. And I need to be sure I'm not selecting reviewers that might have a conflict of interest on reviewer applications. And also, submitting a letter of intent does not bind you to submitting an application.

The next area is the project narrative as mentioned. Your applications will get scored based on the information asked for in the project narrative. So it is very advisable that you pay close attention to the required elements of the narrative and address each of those sections. Again, the page limit for project narratives is 20 pages. The narrative does not include letters of intent, budget narrative, work plan or other supporting documentation to make with your application.

The most important thing to remember is that the project narrative is your one and only opportunity to describe how you plan to carry out the project. It is the only thing merit reviewers will have to go on. Please note, reviewers will not be contacting you for clarification or any additional information for the narrative. So you have one chance to develop and submit a complete and comprehensive narrative. The required documents should be very detailed and thorough so that reviewers get a good sense on how funds will be spent and for how you plan to carry out the tasks you propose and who will complete them.

Letters of commitment are also discussed. These go a long way towards rounding out your application and demonstrating how collaborating partners will participate in the project. Next, the FOA talks about submission dates. The due date for applications, again, is 11:59 pm Eastern on July 31st, which

is a Monday. Applications received after this date will not be accepted. The page lays out some important information on funding restrictions as well. In other words, what you can't use grant funds for.

Please be sure to adhere closely to these restrictions as you design and compose your project. The next set of pages lays out the exact criteria against which your applications will be reviewed and scored. You will see the way each section is given, the exact things merit reviewers will be looking for as they review and score your applications. This section is so important it can be an excellent tool for you as you write your application.

My suggestion to applicants is always this. After you've written your application, go through it using these criteria. If you can answer yes to every question you likely have a pretty good application to submit and that it covers a minimum of what we are looking for. Page 18, near the bottom, talks about the review and selection process. We will be using third party reviewers and panels of 3 to review and score each application. Only the top scoring application will be selected for funding.

Final award decisions are at the discretion of the ACL administrator. Finally, page 19, through the end of the FOA, contains routine award administering information reporting and requirement agency contacts, etc. I would encourage you to review this information completely and thoroughly, to be sure you understand all of the requirements for completing and estimating your application. That concludes my review of the FOA. So let's open the lines for any questions that you may have.

Coordinator: At this time, if you'd like to ask a question, you may press star 1. Please remember to unmute your phone and record your first and last name clearly when prompted. Once again, if you'd like to ask a question from the phone

lines, press star 1. One moment as we wait for questions. At this time there are no questions in queue. Once again, if you have a question please press star 1 and record your name. And there are no questions in queue.

Jesse Moore: Well I would like to thank everyone for today's call. And again, the transcript will be within a week or so, posted onto ACL's Web site.

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