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Learning Systems International  
FY 2021 - FGP/SCP Expansion Competition Training- Session 2

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15:32:12 >> This meeting is being recorded.

15:32:30 >> Good afternoon everyone and thank you for joining us today. Let's start with housekeeping notes.

15:32:37 All lines are on mute and we will keep them that way throughout the course of the call which means if you have a question at any time, let us know in the Q&A pod.

15:32:45 If you have technical issues, drop us a note in the checkbox making sure to send it to all panelists and attendees and our facilitators will help you out.

15:33:03 List test it out if you could hear me, let me know when you are calling in from -- send it to all panelists and attendees. Today's audio is being presented online and by phone.

15:33:26 If you're having issues with either forms of audio, I recommend trying the other end if you have visual problems, leave and come back and that should fix it and then lastly, we are recording the call and if you don't wish to be recorded, you could disconnect at any time. Recording in the slides will be made available on the FGP SCP expansion competition site.

15:33:30 It is cool to see where everybody is calling in from so welcome!

15:33:45 Thank you for learning with us today and my name is Anne Otih, and I'm joined today by Debbie Truchon, who you will see in the Q&A pod.

15:34:10 I want to share more preliminaries with you. I mentioned adding questions in the Q&A pod. We have a small group today so we should get to all questions but in case we don't, the email box on the screen is where you could go to send questions that don't get answered.

15:34:13 We have also shared on the screen the competition website.

15:34:32 This is webinar number two in our expansion competition cycle. We will be back next week to finish up the cycle learning more about Senior Companion Program, budget development and using our electronic grants management system to submit the application.

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15:34:56 All of the sessions are being recorded. They will be posted on the competition website so if you aren't able to attend next week's calls or not able to attend yesterday's call and want to listen, they will be posted on the website.

15:35:09 We will get kicked off with a couple of questions for you all. I want to know more about you. How is your organization received a federal grant before -- has your organization received a federal grant before?

15:35:23 I will give you a couple seconds to fill that out.

15:35:43 Let's close the poll and share results. Looks like majority of you have. Next question, how well do you know AmeriCorps Seniors formerly known as SeniorCorps?

15:35:52 Please select an answer.

15:36:06 Couple more seconds.

15:36:22 We have a good mix of people. We have some who are brand-new and some current grantees so welcome!

15:36:29 Next question, how would you describe your primary field of your organization?

15:36:47 Probably fall into more than one bucket but whatever describes your organization.

15:36:52 Couple more seconds.

15:37:02 All right. Looks like majority of you are in aging.

15:37:09 How did you hear about us?

15:37:34 All right, thank you. Last question, have you attended any of our other webinars in this series?

15:38:18 Okay. Let us share the agenda for today. It's our goal by the end of today's session, you will understand if the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP program is for you and will be able to develop realistic complete application for a Foster Grandparent Program grant.

15:38:38 Before we get into the content, I will give a refresher to go over what the program is and how it works and then we will get practical.

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15:38:40 We will look at national performance measures, focus areas and funding priorities and look at a couple program examples.

15:39:03 AmeriCorps Seniors are accepting applications for the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Program's and you could go into the system today and begin your application or submit application at any point between now and 5 PM, Eastern, on February 3, 2021.

15:39:36 We are looking to expand into geographic service areas that are listed on Appendix A, document that is on the competition website. On the next slide, you will see color-coded map of the open states in red, states for which there are open opportunities for the Foster Grandparent Program in green are the states where we look to expand the Senior Companion Program and in blue, states where we have both.

15:40:02 Those opportunities are listed on a table called Appendix A, which shows all the open funding opportunities this competition. We will talk later about how to propose what you and your organization would like to serve. This is a snapshot of some of the opportunities we have available right now through the Foster Grandparent Program.

15:40:48 Here are resources to get you through the application process. The NOFO, establishes competition and application requirements, your gateway to the competition, there are the grant application instructions, step-by-step guide to navigating electronic management system, Appendix A is list of available opportunities, Appendix B explains national performance measures and then we have workplan development worksheet that we will talk about today.

15:41:03 Then the list of FAQs. All of these resources are available on the homepage.

15:41:27 That is the basics out of the way. Now we will dive into the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program. We will talk about the program and hopefully giving you enough information to assess if this opportunity is right for you and build application that is realistic and responsive to all aspects of the program.

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15:41:51 Let's talk about program purpose. This is screenshot from NOFO. There's a lot of text on the slide. I want to spotlight this quoted directly from the regulations that establish the Foster Grandparent Program so it's important the program itself, the purpose of the program

15:42:14 Is to provide grants to qualified agencies and organizations for the dual purpose of engaging individuals 55 and older, particularly those with limited incomes in volunteer service and provide high quality experience that will enrich the lives of volunteers in the communities they serve.

15:42:44 Program funds are used to support foster grandparents in providing supportive person-to-person service to children with special and/or exceptional needs, in circumstances that limit academic social or emotional development. There's a lot in there and we will focus on a few things, dual purpose of engaging Americans in service while also providing high quality experience to the volunteers.

15:42:50 We have two beneficiary group, the community and volunteers and then finally the supportive person-to-person relationship.

15:43:19 Let's go to the volunteers -- volunteers under 200% of poverty line may receive stipend for service. Volunteers in the program don't have to be at the threshold we mentioned yesterday. You may have non-stipended volunteers but the program does have specific purpose of engaging Americans in service who often don't have the opportunity to do so.

15:43:38 Logic behind it is volunteering has concrete benefits for older Americans. Part of the program is to make sure that these individuals have equal opportunities to participate in the program. There's a stipend available that is set to three dollars per hour.

15:44:02 It is meant to offset potential costs of serving. There are other potential cost reimbursements available to volunteers. Including supplemental insurance, meals, transportation, recognition, physicals and other costs related to volunteers.

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15:44:26 For more information on these things, you may say what counts as income, how do I apply, how do I find what poverty level in my state is, we will show you where you could get more information right now and in particular we will draw on two resources, Code of Federal Regulations, online version and the foster grandpa operations handbook..

15:44:44 These links went into the chat, one will take you to the manage AmeriCorps Seniors page and the other one take you to the electronic Code of Federal Regulations.

15:45:04 This is the page we use -- it's the page we used to give operational resources to grantees right now so there's a lot there but I want to draw your attention to the program handbooks.

15:45:24 Current grantees uses to manage their grants and it provides answers to operational questions. These are public resources available to you right now. There are tools and templates in the handbook so great resource for any type of operational question you may have.

15:45:41 There's another thing that you could do and that is to look at the Code of Federal Regulations. 45 CFR 2552 is a portion of the code of federal relate -- of federal regulations dealing with AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program.

15:46:02 This is the official rulebook for the Foster Grandparent Program from the federal government. Many of you who are current grantees are familiar with this. It's a series of questions with answers and when you apply for the program, you are agreeing to abide by all these different rules.

15:46:18 If you're interested in learning more about the income guidelines that govern the eligibility for a stipend, you could click on 2552.43 right here and you would find the answer.

15:46:41 Let's move to the next topic, volunteer stations. This is where AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are out in the community. You could find the technical definition of a station in the handbook or in Code of Federal Regulations.

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15:47:06 This is where AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve or will serve. Most programs will wind up placing volunteers in community partners with their stations so for example, some stations include schools, head start, places like juvenile justice facilities or homeless shelters. Stations play important role in the program and they are responsible

15:47:29 For selecting the young people that will receive the services, working with the grantee to develop written assignment plan and any on-site orientation and training and supervision on-site. This is a synopsis of the more formal rules. You could find in the handbook and the Code of Federal Regulations.

15:47:48 Many organizations will wind up placing stations external to them, so placing AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in a school or organization that are external to the grantee, not all do that.

15:47:59 You could place foster grant volunteer programs in your own program so the grantee can be a station and take on these responsibilities, so we see both models.

15:48:33 What are the volunteers doing at the site? On the screen, you will see direct quote from Code of Federal Regulations. What requirements govern the assignment of foster grandparents. They shall provide to give direct services to one or more eligible children that results in person-to-person supportive relationships with each child served.

15:48:44 That is what we want to emphasize. Foster grandparents volunteer should not be a teacher's aide. It's about the one-to-one relationship.

15:49:06 On the screen, key terms in AmeriCorps Seniors, sponsor which we used interchangeably with grantee. Organization that receives the funding and is legally responsible for the grant funds.

15:49:14 And then the station, community partner or could be the organization where the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve.

15:49:35 A couple graphic representations -- of the program model so this is example of what Foster Grandparent Program that focuses on multiple issues

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inside of education or has multiple partners would look like, so you could see AmeriCorps Seniors would make the grant to the sponsor.

15:50:00 The sponsor would recruit volunteers and place them at external stations, other organizations. They could be conducting wide variety of activities. On the next slide, this is example of AmeriCorps Seniors making the grant to the sponsor that runs its own programs. They may be focused working only in a specific area of education.

15:50:18 The sponsor could then go and recruit AmeriCorps Senior volunteers to work on its own programs. Let's talk about performance measures.

15:50:44 I will start with a question for all of you. Why do we measure performance? Why is it that AmeriCorps that makes the funds available so interested in performance? Please add your answers to the chat, sending it to all panelists and attendees.

15:51:11 To ensure funds are being used effectively and efficiently, I like that. Any others? To monitor effectiveness of program, that's good.

15:51:56 These are good. To influence continuous quality improvement, make sure to send the check to all panelists and attendees so everybody could see but these are great. We are a federal program. You all are our bosses and you are also paying for these funds through your taxpayer dollars.

15:52:33 We do take that responsibility seriously. We are all stewards of taxpayer dollars at the AmeriCorps agency. If you receive an AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program, you become a steward of taxpayer dollars as well and that comes with certain responsibilities, including the responsibility to assess your impact, to know how you are doing and hopefully improve and to use the information to make greatest impact that you can.

15:52:48 Couple other good ones came in to ensure funds that are appropriately applied and to find best practices. Thank you.

15:52:53 Why do we measure performance? It's the things we talked about, accountability, improvement, also helps to identify things that could be replicated or scaled up or done elsewhere.

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15:53:07 Debbie and I are in a cool position because we get to work with partners like you all around the country. When somebody is doing something outstanding, it could be measured or shown to be measured.

15:53:21 Why would we not want to do that in other places? Also important part of how we tell our story of service. National performance measures system of measurement that we are about to talk about are a unified system.

15:53:39 Lets us take impact of AmeriCorps Foster Grandparent Program grantee in Utah let's say and added to the impact of the Foster Grandparent Program in Arizona and scale it up our National Service story.

15:53:49 We also use the same system that our colleagues in the other AmeriCorps programs use. This is why we measure performance and why it's so important.

15:54:10 So the specific system we use is called national performance measures. They are very uniform set of measures so we will look at a menu of measures and everybody in the National Service community uses some version of those measures.

15:54:20 This allows us to measure and assess your effectiveness and communicate it and supports that unified story of service.

15:54:45 National performance measures, they are made up of a number of different components. We will walk through the components of the performance measure kind of like a pyramid and that they start off broad at the bottom with focused area and then they get more specific as you go up the pyramid..

15:54:49 Let's talk about what each mean and then we will start with focus area.

15:55:09 The agency has six focus areas the key goal of capacity building, applicants to the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program must identify education as primary focus area of their projects.

15:55:26 Education is the primary focus area of the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program. Other available focus areas for Foster Grandparent Program grants our economic opportunity, and healthy futures but education is primary focus area.

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15:55:41 I will also note we have a couple funding priorities in this competition that you could learn about in the NOFO. You must have at least one service activity in the education focus area.

15:56:01 Objectives are general categories within each focus area. For education, there are two that you choose from, K-12 success and the school readiness.

15:56:20 Now we get to specific measures and those are reflected in outputs and outcomes. I like to use the corny metaphor output is like a seed that you plant and an outcome is the flower that blossoms from the seed.

15:56:27 You will work with certain number of individuals but most likely most of the time not all the individuals are going to achieve the social outcome they are looking for.

15:56:49 In our line of work, it's rare we get 100% success rate where we try to move somebody to a new way of life or create a change, so the people that you work with, those individuals would count as output and then number of individuals who experience the change would fall under outcome.

15:57:07 We have example from education focus area output ED 1 A individuals served and then outcome example ED 27 c-myc, number of students with improved academic engagement or social emotional skills.

15:57:39 National performance measures workplan -- workplan is specific part of it like a table. It mimics what some of you may know as logic model. That is the workplan. Any workplan that results in these national performance measures outputs and outcomes would be considered national performance measures workplan.

15:57:56 I will take a minute to highlight this, it's a screenshot of the workplan development worksheets. One of the tools that you can use to develop your application.

15:58:18 Work plans are a specific part of eGrants. It's a specific part of your application. They are built, constructed, it's not a narrative in the system so not a blank space to write what you want but you need to provide specific information.

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15:58:41 These columns look different inside the system but this is all the information that is asked. We will go through this in depth in session number five but I want to share because the key thing is if you want to experiment, you want to do it outside the system before copying and pasting to submit to us.

15:58:51 You could do it with this workplan development sheet.

15:59:14 You get to propose the funding amount that will best allow you to meet the needs of your geographic service areas. Regardless of the funding request, all applicants are required to follow calculation of one VSY for every \$6500 in their funding request.

15:59:44 We have proposed geographic service areas of Montague and Capulet counties. Let's say in order to meet community needs, we need 40 VSYs to meet the community needs so we take the 40 and multiply it by 6500 and that gives us maximum amount we can request, which is \$260,000.

16:00:13 To be in compliance with the conditions of this NOFO, for every \$6500 in annual base federal funding, at least one VSY must be placed in work plans that result in national performance measures outcomes and -- in the education focus area.

16:00:45 You will find those outcomes in Appendix B. Those are performance measure instructions. Appendix B starts with table on top that shows you focus areas, breaks down different points we just went through so focus areas, objectives, and output outcome pairings that fall under each objective.

16:01:15 Further into the document, you will see definitions of those specific measurements. Thinking back to Montague and Capulet counties, if organization wanted to propose 40 VSYs, they could allocate those VSYs to as many work plans as they want. In this example they had three but as many pairings.

16:01:49 As long as they meet one VSY for every \$6500 that they request is in education workplan. The organization we used as example, might request 50 VSYs, one thing I wanted to touch on is let's say for the 40 VSYs, \$260,000 is maximum that they can request.

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16:02:19 If they had a couple more VSYs so maybe five extra but still followed the one VSY for every 6500 fell into education focus area with whatever was remaining, they could allocate those VSYs into economic opportunity workplan or another community's workplan.

16:02:38 One counterintuitive point I wanted to make sure I touched on because it came up yesterday is that when you book in eGrants, you will see fields that say unduplicated volunteers.

16:02:56 Unduplicated volunteers for the purposes of your application equals VSYs. It's not intuitive because eGrants is legacy computer system but if you see unduplicated volunteers in the system, think VSYs. We are counting hours and not people.

16:03:01 That is one quirk written in resources and hopefully you will see it and hopefully you will be able to navigate.

16:03:21 My question is -- what determines a successful application? You could answer in the chat what you think makes a successful application. Send it to all panelists and attendees.

16:04:11 Complete well structured and measurable is what I see. Any other thoughts?

16:04:28 I will give you a hint of where you could find the answer, it's in the NOFO and I saw Wendy came in with work plans that include focus area education, cool. The

16:04:41 we have screenshots of the notice specifically page 10 where you could find application review information and the review criteria.

16:04:52 We give you specific criteria that reviewers will use to evaluate applications and this is what determines successful application.

16:05:17 And then we provide detail about what they mean. The strength of your workplan is important part. The way you reflect national performance measures instructions so it's important to take the work that you want to do and the impact you want to see and translate it into AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program lingo translating it into our performance measures.

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16:05:30 At this point, we will play a video on the Foster Grandparent Program. While that is playing, please add questions to the Q&A pod.

16:06:52 [Video playing]

16:09:29 [End of video]

16:09:50 >> All right. That concludes our prepared content for today and now we switch over to the Q&A portion. Feel free to add your questions to the Q&A pod.

16:10:23 We also have a poll up on the screen if you could fill it out for us, that would be helpful.

16:11:20 Is there an average number of hours that volunteers would spend with each student in a pre-k setting? I am not sure. There is a minimum amount of hours that volunteers serve weekly or annually but I cannot answer how much time they spend with individual children, sorry.

16:11:25 Any other questions?

16:11:56 This is webinar number two and next week we will start off with Senior Companion Program and then on the 13th budget development section should be exciting. I will be joined with colleagues from office of grants administration who will facilitate that.

16:13:13 I saw a question but I cannot find it and I think it asked about the type of organization we're looking for. We are looking for organizations that are nonprofits or tribal entities or government agencies who are interested, local government agencies who are interested in bringing the AmeriCorps Seniors FGP to their geographic service area.

16:13:34 Any other questions?

16:13:50 If there are no other questions, I will stress how excited we are to offer this opportunity.

16:14:01 We hope you will be able to take advantage of it and we are excited to see some applications come in. I am excited to know that folks in our AmeriCorps Seniors family are interested in expanding their work and I am excited to see new folks as well.

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16:14:16 We will go ahead and sign off. This session was recorded and we will have it up on the website along with yesterday's session by close of business on Friday. Have a great evening and good luck!

16:14:24 [End of session]

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