

NWX-CNCS

Moderator: Tamika Becton
April 2, 2015
1:00 pm CT

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time, all parties are on a listen-only mode until the question and answer session of today's conference. At that time, if you'd like to ask a question, please press Star 1. Today's conference is also being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. I would now like to turn the meeting over to Ms. Kara Balcerzak. You may begin.

Kara Balcerzak: Thank you. Welcome to our second Technical Assistance Call for the 2015 Foster Grandparent Program and Senior Companion Program Indian Tribes Competition. My name is Kara Balcerzak. I'm a Program Officer in the Minnesota State Office of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

I'm joined today by Lisa Guccione, our Area Manager; Jill Sears, Program Officer in our New Mexico State Office; Tamika Becton, Associate Program Officer for Senior Corps; and Katharine Gregg, Senior Program Officer for Senior Corps.

During this call, we will provide a very brief overview of the Corporation for National and Community Service, CNCS, and Foster Grandparent Program and Senior Companion Program, to give you some context for this competition.

Then we will review the highlights of the Notice of Funding for the 2015 FGP/SCP Indian Tribes Competition and show you the resources available to you on the Notice of Funding Web site. At the end of the call, we'll have time to answer any questions you might have.

The Corporation for National and Community Service is an independent federal agency that houses federal domestic volunteer programs. Our mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.

In our first technical assistance call, we discussed in detail the Corporation for National and Community Service, as well as the Foster Grandparent Program and Senior Companion Program.

If you were not able to participate in that call, the replay information is available on the competition's Web site. You can also learn more about our programs by visiting our Web site www.nationalservice.gov.

Now we'll talk briefly about the Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Program. I'm going to include only a brief overview, again, because each program was discussed in detail on the first technical assistance call. And you can access that replay information on the competition Web site.

So briefly, the Foster Grandparent Program began in 1965. Its volunteers provide direct service to children and youth in their communities. The goal is

primarily to help improve educational outcomes for those children and youth, and service locations primarily are schools, Head Start centers, or after school programs.

The Senior Companion Program began in 1974. Volunteers provide direct service to adults, including frail seniors and persons with disabilities. The goal is to help older adults and individuals with disabilities live independently. And service locations primarily are the private homes of the clients being served.

Both programs require a Project Director. Volunteers must be age 55 and older. They serve between 15 and 40 hours per week, and volunteers serve at volunteer stations within the geographic service area.

Finally, volunteers receive a tax-free hourly monetary stipend of \$2.65 an hour, if they're eligible. And eligibility is determined by their income, which cannot exceed 200% of the poverty level.

Now we'll go over the highlights of the Notice of Funding. Please keep in mind that these are only the highlights. Participating in this webinar is not a substitute for reading the entire Notice of Funding in detail, as well as reading the grant application instructions, frequently asked questions document, and other technical assistance resources. Those resources can be found on the competition Web site at www.nationalservice.gov/tribalgrants.

There are two key dates associated with this funding opportunity. The due date for the Notice of Intent to Apply is Friday, April 17. The Notice of Intent to Apply is not required but is highly encouraged. Please send your Notice of Intent to Apply to fgpscp@cns.gov. In your email, please include the name of the applicant organization, your address, the contact person, phone number, and how you heard about this competition.

The second date is the application due date, which is Thursday, May 14, 2015, and the deadline is 5:00 pm Eastern time.

Only federally recognized Indian tribes can submit an application for this funding opportunity. An Indian tribe is defined as a federally recognized Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Native village, regional corporation, or village corporation, as defined under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Indian tribes also include nonprofit organizations controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by one of the entities described above.

An application from a nonprofit organization must be accompanied by a tribal council resolution, authorizing the nonprofit to act on behalf of the tribe or multiple tribes for the purpose of conducting the activities and providing the services described in the application.

Organizations that have been convicted of a federal crime or that engage in lobbying activities under section 510(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code are not eligible to apply. Previously receiving federal funding is not a prerequisite for submitting an application for this competition. And on Pages 4 and 5 of the NOFA, you'll see the specifics on eligibility.

In your application, you will define the geographic area you propose to serve through the Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion Program. Non-tribal grantees operating these programs have service areas that are defined geographically by county, and may include one or more counties.

If a current FGP or SCP grantee already serves the county, then you can propose to serve only tribally held lands within that county, as long as no

other tribal grantee is currently serving those lands. If no current FGP or SCP grantee serves the county, then you may propose to serve that entire county. Appendix A on the Notice Web page for each competition, FGP and SCP, lists all of the current grantees and their service areas.

Your proposed funding level will be based on the number of Volunteer Service Years, or VSYs, you propose. One Volunteer Service Year is equivalent to 1,044 hours of service. The relationship between the number of Volunteer Service Years you produce and the number of individual volunteers you engage depends on how many hours each volunteer serves.

For example, ten individual volunteers who serve 40 hours per week all year long would produce 19.92 VSYs, but that same number of volunteers, ten individuals, who serve just 15 hours per week for only 40 weeks out of the year would produce just 5.75 volunteers.

And keep in mind that volunteers serving in schools will probably not serve for 52 weeks each year. The Notice states that the minimum VSYs for FGP applications is 60 and the minimum for SCP is 40; however, we do want to note that you may propose lower numbers, if you wish.

The grant amount you request is directly related to the number of VSYs you propose to produce. In the Foster Grandparent Program the funding amount is \$4,550 per VSY. In the Senior Companion Program the funding amount is \$4,650 per VSY.

Applicants suggesting an evidence-based programming model with a moderate or high level of evidence may propose a higher funding amount. You must include information about the evidence-based programming you propose to use in your work plans and budget narrative.

Another important budgetary requirement is that at least 80% of the amount of the CNCS grants must be used for cost reimbursements for volunteers. These reimbursements can include stipends, insurance, transportation, meals, physical examinations, and recognition. The source of this 80% can be the CNCS grant or matching or excess cash or in-kind funds.

Additionally, applicants must contribute at least 10% of the total project cost. This can include cash or in-kind support. This match requirement continues at 10% for years two and three of the project. I want to mention here that we provided incorrect information about the match amount on our last call. The match in years two and three does continue at 10% and does not increase.

Now we'll walk through one quick example of how to determine the various components of your budget. An FGP applicant who proposes 60 VSYs would request a grant of \$273,000, that's 60 x \$4550, the per VSY grant amount. The 10% match requirement would be \$30,334, resulting in a total project cost of \$303,334.

As you've heard, 80% of the federal grant amount must be used toward volunteer cost reimbursement. In this scenario, that would amount to \$218,400. The source of these funds can include the CNCS grant or matching or excess funds.

If only the minimum 80% were used for volunteer cost reimbursements, that would leave the remaining project funds, in this case \$84,934, to be used for administrative costs, including salary for a program director.

The project period for grants awarded through this competition is three years. Grants are eligible for continuation funding for years two and three as long as

they: One, demonstrate satisfactory performance that indicates the grant is on track to achieve the proposed performance measures at the end of the three-year period; two, demonstrate the capacity to manage the grant; three, are in compliance with grant requirements.

This includes terms and conditions of the grant, the requirement for twice yearly reporting of performance measures, and securing the required non-federal share of the budget. And, four, the availability of Congressional appropriations.

The work plan section of the application outlines what your volunteers will do, and what outputs and outcomes you will report on. All applications must meet the national performance measure requirements and other criteria established in the notice.

For the Foster Grandparent Program, most volunteers will serve in the Education focus area. Grantees report on both outputs and outcomes. Outputs are the number of children served by the volunteers.

Outcomes include those students' gains in social and emotional development, improved literacy skills, improved math skills, improved academic engagement, or increased school attendance. For more information, please see Appendix B on the competition Web site.

For the Senior Companion Program, all volunteers serve in the Healthy Futures focus area. Grantees report on both outputs and outcomes. Outputs include the number of homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities receiving food, transportation, or other independent living services.

The other possible output is the number of caregivers receiving respite services. Those caregivers can be serving homebound or older adults and individuals with disabilities. The outcomes of the program are the number of clients served who report having increased social ties or perceived social support, or the number of caregivers who report having increased social ties or perceived social support. Again, you can find more information about performance measures in Appendix B.

All applications must be submitted through eGrants, CNCS's online grant submission system. We recommend that you begin the process of submitting your application in eGrants early. Create an eGrants account and begin your application at least three weeks prior to the deadline. We also recommend starting your application in a word processing program and then copying and pasting it into eGrants no later than ten days prior to the deadline.

If extenuating circumstances make it impossible to submit an application through eGrants, a paper application is available. The national service hotline is available to answer any technical questions related to eGrants. Their hours are Monday through Thursday, 9:00 am to 7:00 pm Eastern Time.

Please also submit all required attachments by the application due date. When working on your application, keep in mind also that FGP or SCP must be included in the project title and must be used in promoting the program throughout the duration of the project.

A list of required attachments for your application can be found in Part 4, Required Documents, in the grant application instructions. Email all required attachments by the deadline to fgpscp@cns.gov.

We encourage you to submit your attachments well in advance of the deadline. You do not need to wait until your application has been submitted to email the documents. In the subject line of your email, please include your application ID.

The application page limit is 25 pages as they print from eGrants. This includes the executive summary, project narrative, and the cover page or face sheet. It does include the budget or national performance measure work plan.

We encourage you to check the printable version of your application in eGrants prior to submitting so you know that you are within the page limit. Reviewers will stop reading applications after Page 25.

Applications must include a DUNS number, as well as an Employer Identification Number, or EIN. If your tribe receives other federal grants, you may already have a DUNS number registered.

All applicant organizations must be registered with the system for award management as well. We urge you to begin this registration process as soon as possible. You can see further details in page 6 and 7 of the notice.

CNCS may consider an application after the deadline, but only if this is due to technical circumstances. So please submit an email explaining the extenuating technical circumstances which caused the delay. Advance requests to consider late applications will not be considered. The email must be sent to lateapplications@cns.gov within 24 hours after the deadline.

All applications will be assessed against the selection criteria questions in the Notice. Here you see the selection criteria categories and they're respective weights. Program design is worth 50% and broken into the subcategories of

strengthening communities, which is worth 35%, and recruitment and development, which is worth 15%.

Organizational capacity is worth 35% and is broken into the subcategories of program management, worth 15%, and organizational capability, worth 20%. Cost effectiveness and budget adequacy is worth 15%.

Each selection criteria response is assessed as Excellent, Good, Fair, or Does Not Meet. And on pages 10-13 of each notice, you can see a list of all the selection criteria questions that fall under each of those categories.

The review and selection process includes several distinct stages. Pages 13-15 of the notice describe the review and selection process. First, CNCS staff will review all applications to determine compliance. Next, panels of CNCS staff reviewers will assess applications for FGP or SCP grants based on the selection criteria.

The results will be reviewed for fairness and consistency. Some applications may be selected for a quality control assessment. In the risk assessment evaluation, CNCS will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each application, including conducting due diligence to ensure an applicant's ability to manage federal funds.

During clarification, applicants may receive requests to provide clarifying information to resolve questions and issues. In the program staff review stage, CNCS staff will determine which applications to recommend for selection.

Finally, the CEO selects the final portfolio, based on the results of the review and selection process. Following grant award, each applicant will receive a

summary of feedback pertaining to their application, and award announcements are anticipated in August.

There are a number of technical assistance resources available to you, and they're listed in the notice. We'd like to highlight a few of them on this call. Any questions about this competition can be submitted by email to fgpscp@cns.gov.

The answers to submitted questions will be added to an FAQ document posted on the Web site. Additional technical assistance calls will be held while this competition is open. Dates and times for those calls are also listed on the Web site.

Also on the Notice Web site, you can find a copy of the two Notices, one for the Foster Grandparent Program and one for the Senior Companion Program; grant application instructions; eGrants visual instructions that will help walk you through the eGrants system; Appendix A, the list of geographic service areas currently being served by FGP or SCP grantees; Appendix B, the performance measure instructions; financial management forms, including the aggregate dollar amount of funding form, contact information with DUN, FFR user form, a financial management survey, and the 1199 direct deposit form and 1199 instructions.

There will be an FAQ document, which has not been posted yet but should be coming in the next couple of days. There will also be, or there already are, resources for applicants as well, including the eGrants link, the work plan development worksheet, regulations, and a few tutorials on the performance measurement requirements and work plan entries.

And finally, you can also find the technical call dates and times, as well as links to replays of technical assistance calls that have already happened. So here are the technical assistance Webinars that are remaining.

On April 16, we will hold an FGP Webinar and an SCP webinar that will go into greater details about the performance measures and work plans for each program. On April 23 and April 30, we will provide webinars on using eGrants. The April 30 Webinar will be a repeat of the same presentation from April 23.

We will also be holding an in person tribal application training in D.C. next week, April 8-10. We've already invited individuals who have attended the previous webinar, submitted a Notice of Intent to Apply, or been in contact with our state offices about applying for this competition.

We have a small number of spaces remaining in the training, and they are given at first come, first served. So if you're interested in attending, please let us know as soon as possible by emailing fgpscp@cns.gov.

Our agency is paying for one person per tribe to attend this training. Attendance is not mandatory, and all information presented at the in person training will also be made available on our Web site after the training is over.

Again, applications are due Thursday, May 14, 2015, no later than 5:00 pm Eastern time. And now we'll open the line for questions. (Troy), can you open the line and give everyone instructions?

Coordinator: Absolutely. And if you'd like to ask a question at this time, please press Star 1. Be sure to unmute your line and record your first and last name clearly

when prompted. Once again, if you'd like to ask a question, please press Star 1. One moment to see if we have any come up in queue.

Kara Balcerzak: While we wait for those questions, I'm just going to show you all the Web site that we've been talking about. Here is the Foster Grandparent competition page. We have a separate page for FGP and SCP.

You can see here some background information about the program, the application deadline, information about the Notice of Intent to Apply, and then the NOFA that we've been discussing, as well as the application, the links we talked about, and then at the bottom, information about the upcoming technical assistance calls and the replay information right here for the first call that was held two weeks ago.

The Senior Companion page also is laid out very similarly. So those two resources are available for you. (Troy), have we had any questions come in yet?

Coordinator: Yes, we do have questions in queue. One moment while I gather those names.

Kara Balcerzak: Thanks.

Coordinator: You're welcome. And our first question comes from Ms. (Flores). Your line is now open.

Ms. (Flores): Hi there. Thank you so much for this training. It's been really helpful. The question that I have, my first question is what if a Foster Grandparent volunteer can't serve at least 15 hours in a week from time to time for various reasons?

Kara Balcerzak: So for somebody to enroll, they do have to be able to serve 15 hours a week.
Can someone else...

((Crosstalk))

Ms. (Flores): Yes, I was just thinking, you know, they say, "Yes, I can definitely do 15 hours a week." But, you know, maybe they get sick one week or just different things that might happen. I just wonder, you know, how you hold folks accountable or what the consequences might be if they couldn't serve those 15.

Katharine Gregg: Hi. This is Katharine Gregg from the Senior Corps program. This is something that you would write into your policy and procedures for your project. So you would have six to eight. Is that something that you foresee as an issue? And it's an occasional issue?

Lisa Guccione: Katharine and folks, this is Lisa Guccione. I'm the Area Manager in the North Central region. And what we generally see is that Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion projects, per Katharine's comment, have a policy in place.

One of the things you'll be asked to do is to develop your own policies and procedures for the program. And as part of that, we expect that you'll have a reasonable sick leave allowance in there. And so there is allowance to have an occasional week where somebody might fall under 15 hours, or if they, as Kara mentioned, sometimes you'll have months or time when school is out when, you know, a Foster Grandparent wouldn't be serving.

So we do expect that you would incorporate that into how you're managing your VSY level. There was a slide early on in the presentation that talked about how your VSYS, you know, match your budget. So we'd ask you to be

sure you're managing it there. And we just expect that your policy would be reasonable and would allow for some sick leave and not excessive.

Ms. (Flores): That's really helpful. Thank you. And then my second question is how do projects go about creating the term length for each volunteer?

Kara Balcerzak: You mean as far as how many weeks out of the year they would be serving?

Ms. (Flores): Correct.

Kara Balcerzak: So that would really be determined between you and the stations where the volunteers serve. So you would work with, you know, schools for Foster Grandparent Program, you'd likely be working with schools or after school programs. And you would determine with them what their needs are for the volunteers.

And then similarly with Senior Companion, it would be between you and the station, so whether it's with some sort of social service agency or a department within a tribe that would be the liaison for providing those services, you would work with them to determine what the needs of their clients are.

Ms. (Flores): Perfect. Thank you. And then my last question was I think on our last training with this they said that the award date would be around October 1, give or take maybe a couple of weeks. And I was just wondering if that might be challenging for service date, volunteer stations that were school sites when we know schools are starting in August or September.

Kara Balcerzak: Right. Katharine, do we have an update on that or is that still what we've anticipating?

Katharine Gregg: Yes, unfortunately we don't have any update on that.

Kara Balcerzak: So the one thing I can say to that is that we are anticipating being able to notify grantees in August. So hopefully you would be able to, you know, if there's staff available to do that, to be able to start putting those - you know, having those conversations with schools and letting them know that the program will be starting. But, unfortunately, they wouldn't be able to be serving from the very beginning of the school year, unfortunately.

Ms. (Flores): Okay. Thank you so much. That was really helpful. Those were all my questions.

Kara Balcerzak: Great. Thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you. And our next question comes from (Jessica Haas). Your line is now open.

(Jessica Haas): Hi. I am wondering if tribes may apply to serve just their tribal members and other Natives in the area, or should they plan to serve the entire county?

Kara Balcerzak: So you should plan to serve the tribal area, so whether it's a reservation or a pueblo, it should really be geographically based. And then anyone living within that service area would be eligible to be served, or if you were serving a school within that area, any of the students at the school would be eligible, regardless of whether or not they're members of the tribe.

(Jessica Haas): I see. Okay. Thank you very much.

Coordinator: Currently I'm showing no additional questions, but once again if you do have any, please press Star 1 at this time.

Kara Balcerzak: While we wait to see if there are any more questions, did any of my colleagues on the phone want to add anything else?

Lisa Guccione: Nothing here.

Jill Sears: Hi, this is Jill. I don't have much to add other than, again, I think this call is generating a lot of great questions. And we're really looking forward to seeing the applications come in.

Coordinator: And currently I'm showing no additional questions at this time.

Kara Balcerzak: All right. Well, if you think of any questions after the fact, please don't hesitate to email them to fgpscp@cns.gov. And thank you all so much for your interest.

Coordinator: Thank you. This now concludes today's conference. All parties may disconnect at this time. Speakers may hold for post-conference.

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