

Pre-Application Teleconference
Date: October 8, 2008 11:00 am
Review of Grant Proposal

Roll Call:

On the phone: Joe Parrish, Anita Hazell- Parrish, from SAGA; Cathie Clements, Joie Brown, Margaret Hoffman, Kevin Schaffer, Ellen Kazary, from RurAL CAP

ASCSC Staff: Nita Madsen, Margy Hughes, Colleen Stuvick

Facilitator: Margy Hughes

Review RFP application instructions ACC09, ACC09-C, EAP 09 and answer questions.

Section One

Program Information:

Corporation's 5 strategic initiatives –

- ❖ It is suggested for competitive programs to address at least one of the Corporation's initiatives, as special consideration will be given on the national level for those projects.

New requirement –

- ❖ It was noted that a new State requirement for this RFP includes a \$2000 line item for Staff Travel must be included in the budget.

Q: Can the \$2,000 be in match?

A: Yes.

Q: Does this include the EAP programs?

A: No.

Section One questions?

Q: Page 5, table 2: Where is a more detailed chart?

A: A more detailed chart can be found at:

http://www.americorps.gov/for_organizations/manage/commcenter_detail.asp?tbl_pr_id=964

Section Two

Program Information,

Enrollment, 3-month period :

- ❖ It was noted that programs must have all members enrolled within a three month period.

Q: When a member leaves early without completing over 30% of their time, does this also fall within the 3 month period?

A: No, This requirement only applies to open enrollment dates.

Section Three

- ❖ Deadline October 31, 2008 @ 4pm.
- ❖ New piece: Performance Measures (PM); two PMs are now required to the State Commission. Submit a paper version with your hard-copy proposal; do not put in WBRS or E-grants unless it is also a PM for the Corporation.

Q: Does this include EAP programs?

A: No, not at this time.

Q: How are we going to evaluate this? Many members may have a disability but will not disclose it.

A: A well written PM is the evaluation bar. If a program is funded, we will use the PM to gauge success as a recruitment tool. According to AmeriCorps's demographic tracking for disabilities, a program may 'count' a person who has self disclosed their disability OR staff has observed a disability.

Q: If we recruit but do not attract any members with disability, is that counted a success?

A: Yes. This is a work in progress. This PM is a plan for inclusion and can be adjusted to become more successful.

Q: Is a learning disability considered a disability for this PM? What is considered a disability?

A: The Corporation's definition / guidelines for Disability inclusion can be found at:

<http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/index.php?page=ld>

http://www.nationalservice.gov/home/site_information/accessibility.asp

- ❖ The State realizes that persons with disabilities do not have as many opportunities to volunteer and serve. This is our effort to reach out to that population.

Q: Can we design a PM that lives in both worlds, what the Corporation and the State require?

A: Yes, that would be great

Q: On page 15 – Do we need to start working on PMs now since we don't have to submit until after awarded?

A: Its a good thing to work on now as Performance Measures shape the program, not the other way around. The Commission is offering training next week on writing performance measures.

Q: How do you want the State's PM organized?

A: The same as the Corporation. Next week's training will have a tract on PMs. For more information on this training, contact Margy Hughes at margaret.hughe@alaska.gov or call 907.269.4674.

- ❖ Start Dates: Programs cannot plan to start prior to June 15, 2009.

Review of Appendix D: Application Content and Format

- ❖ Page 22 – workers compensation – the wording in this Appendix D is too specific and does not properly reflect the State's 'gray area' on this matter. The State's classification of AmeriCorps members is not specific. We are waiting for clarification from the Department of Labor. If we do not get clarification before Monday, October 13, we will reword the Worker's Compensation section to match previous RFPs which allow for members to be covered under Alaska Worker's Compensation OR Occupational Death/ Dismembership coverage. If we change the wording on this section, the Commission will put out an amendment to Appendix D. It will be posted on our website www.servealaska.alaska.gov.
- ❖ Page 23 – State Commission 1% Fixed Amount Option: The Commission is NOT exercising this option with this RFP, it may become an issue in the future.

Q: 1% indirect for Admin 5% allowable is already tough to meet even a 1% is a hit for us because the programs are highly administrative. Are there any other opportunities for the Commission to find funding?

A: The Commission just wanted to let everyone know of the possibility; it is not implemented through this RFP. The Commission is not expected to exercise this option any time soon and plenty of notice will be given if it is considered. Notice would be given in an RFP process, not after an award.

Other Questions:

Q: On page 14, letter F it says to submit the report according to Section 7. Section seven is Budget. Is this correct?

A: No. On further review, the correct wording should direct you to Section V: Documents.

Q: On page 5 first paragraph "you may not exceed 71,000 characters in the 3 sections." What do this mean since there are 6 sections A-F?

A: The 71,000 character limit is for all sections, except for your budget.

Q: On page 7 is section B; where is section A?

A: It is a formatting inconsistency. A is under #1 Rationale and Approach on page 5.

More Suggestions for a strong proposal:

1. Use data local to your program; localize the program and needs
 - a. If not it may confuse National reviewers that don't understand Alaska's geography and region's.
2. If you use Alaska terminology define it (e.g. "Ulu")
 - b. Suggestion: ask an outside evaluator to review your proposal to understand what you are trying to say. Best if you can use someone from out of state and not familiar with AmeriCorps. Use an Aunt or friend.
3. Avoid "fluff" that may confuse the reader
 - c. Keep to the point and use the grant guidelines in Appendix D.

Q: What is "fluff"?

A: Too many superlatives. This is a grant proposal, not a novel. Too many descriptive words and too many 'big' words can confuse a reader and dilute the true meaning of a proposal.

Q: For a Continuation Request (ACC09-C) – Do we recite retention and data from our previous grant cycle?

A: Yes. But note that this data is from an earlier program cycle.

Q: Do you want the hard copy of the application?

A: Yes. As stated in the RFP, Section III: Submission and Form of an Application

Q: Is there a place to list program accomplishments?

A: No. We could not find any. If we locate something we will post it on the ASCSC website.

Q: The new "Above the line / Below the line" Match requirement has gone away, correct?. We can adjust our match accordingly now?

A: Correct. There is no longer a Corporation hold on Member Services section.

After this teleconference all questions concerning this RFP must be in writing and email to Margy Hughes at margaret.hughes@alaska.gov . The questions will be posted on the ASCSC website at www.servealaska.alaska.gov .

Check website for updates.

Application due date is October 31, 2008 at 4pm Alaska Time.

The last day the Commission will receive emailed questions concerning this RFP is October 22, 2008 at 4:00 pm, Alaska time.