

FISCAL YEAR 2017/18 DISPARITY FUNDS PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions

Posted September 22, 2017

- 1. What is the intent of the Disparity Funds Program?**
 - a. The purpose of the program is to award funding to regional centers and community-based organizations (CBO) for projects to address identified areas of disparity in the purchase of regional center services and access to services.

- 2. Who is eligible to apply and receive funding?**
 - a. Regional centers and CBOs.

- 3. What are CBOs?**
 - a. For the purpose of this program, a CBO is defined as a public, private nonprofit or private for-profit organization that represents and advocates on behalf of a community, or significant segments of a community, including family support groups. Each proposal from a CBO must describe it's organizational structure and how it meets the aforementioned definition of a CBO.

- 4. Is a CBO that is vendored by a regional center eligible to receive grant funds?**
 - a. Yes. However, projects must address the needs of a broader community than currently served.

- 5. Where do I find information regarding or examples of existing disparities?**
 - a. Purchase of Service (POS) data and the annual disparities report is posted on each regional center's website. In addition, the Department of Developmental Services' (DDS) home page posts public comments on barriers to service access, and is located at: <http://www.dds.ca.gov/RC/disparities.cfm>.

- 6. Are proposals approved from last year available for review?**
 - a. Proposals approved by DDS in Fiscal Year (FY) 2016/17 are available on the DDS website by following the following link: <http://www.dds.ca.gov/RC/disparities.cfm>. Please note that the application process been altered this year to include CBOs

- 7. When are project proposals due for the Fiscal Year 2017/18 Disparity Funds Program?**
 - a. Proposals must be received by DDS by 5:00 PM on November 6, 2017. Guidelines and related materials are located at <http://www.dds.ca.gov/RC/disparities.cfm>.

- 8. Are CBOs required to have a qualifying Employer Identification Number (EIN)?**
 - a. CBOs are not required to have a qualifying EIN. However, CBOs that do not have an EIN must use an approved Financial Management Services (FMS) provider or partner with one of California's University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD). See page 6 of the Guidelines for Applicants for additional information.

- 9. May regional centers or CBOs submit a proposal in collaboration with other entities?**

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- a. Yes. Regional centers and/or CBOs are encouraged to collaborate to address identified areas of disparities. CBOs from different counties/regions may also submit joint proposals. However, for collaborative projects only one proposal should be submitted to the DDS.

10. Is there a maximum approval amount for disparity projects?

- a. No. DDS will approve proposals based on merit, proposed funding, and available funding.

11. Are CBOs required to submit disparity proposal(s) to DDS and the regional center?

- a. Yes. Proposals must be submitted concurrently to DDS and to the local regional center where the CBO is located. Regional centers are required to provide DDS with input regarding CBO proposals prior to DDS making a final determination.

12. Why are CBOs required to submit proposals to DDS and the regional center?

- a. This is a requirement set forth in Welfare and Institutions Code Section 4519.5(h)(3).

13. How do I find out which regional center to submit my proposal to?

- a. Proposals should be submitted to the regional center serving the geographic area(s) corresponding to the community the project intends to serve. There are 21 regional centers throughout California. To access the regional center directory, please visit: <http://www.dds.ca.gov/RC/RCList.cfm>. For the Los Angeles area, a zip code directory is also available: <http://www.dds.ca.gov/RC/regionMap.cfm?view=laCounty>

14. How do I notify DDS of any changes to my original submission?

- a. Written notification to DDS is required for changes to projects. For changes needed after a project has been approved, DDS must approve the change prior to its implementation. Please submit written notifications to:

Department of Developmental Services
Attn: ABX2 1 Disparity Funds
1600 9th Street, Room 340, MS-12
Sacramento, CA 95814
RCB@dds.ca.gov

15. How long will DDS take to review funding proposals?

- a. DDS is required to approve/deny requests for funding within 45 calendar days from the date proposals are due to DDS.

16. Will DDS contact my organization during the review process?

- a. If clarification is needed or there are questions about a proposal, DDS will contact the requestor. Proposals must be complete and contain all necessary documentation to justify the requested funding amount.

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17. Are there criteria for evaluating proposals?

- a. Yes. DDS will review proposals applying the scoring guide provided in the Guidelines for Applicants. See Attachment F, page 30 for details on scoring criteria.

18. How will I know if DDS has approved or denied my proposal?

- a. DDS will send formal written notice to all applicants regarding whether a proposal has been approved or denied.

19. Will payment for the projects be paid from the regional center?

- a. No. Funding and payment will be made by DDS.

20. When will funding for approved projects be available?

- a. Upon approval, DDS will notify applicants of funding details.

21. What are the reporting requirements during the life of the project?

- a. Evaluation reports will be required on a quarterly basis, regardless of the project amount. Reports will be due to DDS on the last day of the month following the end of each quarter. For example, the first report will be due on April 30, 2018, and will cover the previous quarter (January 1 through March 31, 2018). Additional details can be found in the "Reporting Requirements" section of the Guidelines for Applicants.

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22. How do CBOs submit proposals to regional centers?

- a. Proposals may be submitted to regional centers by email or by postal mail.

23. How do CBOs provide proof that a copy of the proposal was sent to regional centers?

- a. DDS will confirm receipt of proposals with regional centers. CBOs may also copy DDS (RCB@dds.ca.gov) via email when sending proposals to a regional center.

24. Some regional centers have a spam filter setting which may not allow certain emails to be received. How will DDS ensure that regional centers are receiving proposals from CBOs?

- a. DDS will inform regional centers about this concern. Additionally, if necessary, DDS will forward copies of each proposal to the appropriate regional center(s).

25. How will DDS obtain input from the regional centers regarding CBOs' proposals?

- a. Upon receipt of a CBO's proposal, DDS will forward a copy to the appropriate regional center(s) and request input regarding the proposal as soon as possible. DDS will request from regional centers information regarding whether the proposed project addresses a need in the catchment area that can be supported by data and input received from the local community.

26. May a CBO submit project proposals that covers more than one county/region?

- a. Yes, proposals can be submitted for projects that will be implemented in multiple counties or regions. The CBO must submit proposals to all associated regional centers where the project will be implemented (if a project will be implemented statewide, the proposal must be submitted to all regional centers.) A list of regional centers, by county, is located at: <http://www.dds.ca.gov/RC/RCLookup.cfm>.

27. Does DDS have a preference of who submits (CBOs or regional centers) project proposals?

- a. No. The Department equally encourages CBOs and regional centers to submit proposals. DDS will use the scoring criteria to guide the review process regardless of who submits the proposal. See Attachment F, page 30, for details on the scoring criteria.

28. Can DDS help with writing proposals?

- a. CBOs or regional centers can request information and clarity on the program guidelines ; however, DDS will not help in the writing or development of proposals.

29. Are CBOs required to hold community meetings?

- a. No. However, proposals should indicate how the project would address and incorporate the input of the local community.

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30. Are regional centers required to hold community meetings for previously approved projects?

- a. No. Community meetings are only required for new projects.

31. For regional centers applying for continued funding for an approved project in FY 2016/17, is Attachment B the only requirement?

- a. Yes. Regional centers must complete Attachment B to apply for ongoing funding for previously approved projects.

32. Is funding guaranteed for projects that request funding for salaries across multiple fiscal years?

- a. No. The State budget process does not allow DDS to guarantee funding beyond FY 2017/18.

33. If the project is expected to last two years, should the budget reflect two years?

- a. Yes. A completed "Budget Worksheet" is required with each project proposal and should include the amount requested for the full duration of the project.

34. Can CBOs submit proposals for projects with a duration of up to three years?

- a. DDS encourages projects with a duration of up to twelve months; however, projects beyond this period will be considered.

35. When can project implementation begin?

- a. Upon approval from DDS, regional centers and CBOs will be notified as how funding will be made available and when it can be accessed.

36. How much was awarded to regional centers in FY 2016/17?

- a. Proposals are published online and are located at:
<http://www.dds.ca.gov/RC/disparities.cfm>.

37. Is there a spreadsheet that shows how much funding was approved compared to what was originally requested?

- a. An approval matrix is available at: <http://www.dds.ca.gov/RC/disparities.cfm>. The DDS webpage also has links to each regional center's proposal, which includes details about requested amounts.

38. Can projects serve individuals over the age of three?

- a. Yes. Funding is intended to address purchase of service disparities, regardless of the age of consumers.

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39. What type of activities is allowed through the Disparity Funds Program? Can funding be used for bilingual stipends?

- a. The intent of the Disparity Funds Program is to provide assistance for projects that aim to increase service equity. Proposals approved in FY 2016/17 illustrate some types of allowable activities. These proposals can be viewed through this link: <http://www.dds.ca.gov/RC/disparities.cfm>. DDS will consider all proposals that meet the application requirements and address the needs of the local community.

40. What if the project requires technology? Can this be an itemized expense?

- a. DDS will review the project, taking into consideration the needs of the project, including technology needs.

41. What if the project aims to serve multiple groups? Is more than one proposal required?

- a. If the project intends to address different groups, only one proposal is required to be submitted. Proposals should list/identify each group/target population the project intends to serve in the application package.

42. What type of data collection should CBOs collect during project implementation?

- a. The type of data will vary by project. The data should include both quantitative and qualitative data to document the project's success. For example, if the project involves conducting workshops about accessing regional center services, *quantitative data* may include the number of attendees and workshops, survey results indicating what individuals learned through the workshop on a scale of one to 10, and/or the average increase in POS expenditures for workshop participants; *qualitative data* may consist of notes from interviews with participants regarding how they believe the workshop will affect their ability to access needed services. Please send any questions to RCB@dds.ca.gov.

43. Can projects include a training aspect that covers generic resources in addition to regional center services?

- a. Yes, DDS will consider all proposals that meet the application requirements and address the needs of the local community.