



Department of Developmental Services

Promoting Service Access & Equity Grant

Fiscal Year 2020-21

Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

1. What is the intent of the 2020-21 Promoting Service Access and Equity Grant?

The Promoting Service Access and Equity Grant supports projects that aim to increase equity in service access. Proposals must link to an identified issue or barrier in the local community or statewide, which has been identified through purchase of service (POS) data, stakeholder feedback, and/or Regional Center (RC) plans and recommendations to promote equity and reduce disparities.

2. Who is eligible to apply for Promoting Service Access and Equity Grant funding?

RCs and community-based organizations are eligible to apply.

3. What is the definition of a Community Based Organization (CBO)?

For the purposes of the Promoting Service Access and Equity Grant, a CBO is defined as a public or private nonprofit, or private for-profit organization that is representative of and advocates for a community or significant segments of a community. Each CBO must describe its organization and clearly state how it meets the definition of a CBO as part of the application process.

4. Are CBOs required to have a qualifying Employer Identification Number (EIN)?

Yes. If your organization does not have an established EIN, you may partner with an agency that does have an EIN. Otherwise you must use a financial management service (FMS) for invoicing and payments. The costs associated with an FMS must be included in the budget you submit. A list of vendored FMS agencies by RC catchment area is listed [here](#).

5. Where do I find information about RCs purchase of service (POS) authorization, utilization, and expenditures?

The Department of Developmental Services (Department) maintains links to the RCs' most recent POS reports [here](#). RCs are also required to publish their POS data on their website and this information is listed in [Attachment D](#).

6. Is there a maximum approval amount (cap) for each proposed project?

No. However, the impact of the proposed project should be aligned with the Budget request. The Department will review proposals based on the Proposal Review Process section of the [Guidelines](#). Project funding may only be used for activities that are not otherwise funded or required by statute or regulation. During the review process, the proposed budget is evaluated to ensure that expenses are allowable and not prohibited by laws, regulations, or grant guideline requirements. The budget is also evaluated to ensure that costs are reasonable for project activities, related to the project goal, and that expenditures will be adequately documented. Grant budgets may not be used for activities that the organization is otherwise funded to conduct.

7. Are approved proposals from previous years available for review?

Yes. Proposals approved by the Department in fiscal years 2019/20, 2018/19, 2017/18, and 2016/17 are available [here](#).

8. How do I contact the Department if I have grant application questions?

Send grant application questions SAEgrantprogram@dds.ca.gov. The Department can respond to general questions regarding the grant application process but cannot give advice on your proposal since this is a competitive process.

9. Who should I contact if I have technical support questions about the grant application process?

Send technical support questions to: applicantssupport@grantvantage.com.

10. What do I need before I start the application process?

Applicants should do the following:

- Review the FY 2020-21 [Guidelines](#)
- Watch the DDS Applicant Video at the Department's website [here](#)
- Review the DDS Application Instructions found in [Attachment A](#)
- Download and print all of the required [Attachment B](#) and [Attachment C](#)

[Grant Requirements and Proposal Development](#)

The following categories are in alphabetical order.

Budget/Financial

1. What should I include in my online budget template?

Applicants should include all budget line items required to fulfill the goals of the project:

- Personnel (e.g. salary/wages and benefits)
- Operating expenses (e.g. materials, advertising or subcontractor)
- Administrative expenses/Indirect costs (e.g. online services, payroll services)

2. What is the difference between a budget template and budget narrative?

The budget template identifies the dollars associated with each budget line item and the total funds requested for the grant. The budget narrative provides the detailed explanation for the calculations and description of each budget line item. The applicant's budget must be directly tied to the proposed grant activities and reflect reasonable and allowable costs by direct and administrative costs. For personnel, you must identify as part of the budget narrative if it is an existing position and what percentage of their time will be used in the grant.

3. If I am using a subcontractor, where do I include them on the online project budget template and budget narrative?

A subcontractor is not an employee of the applying organization. Subcontractor costs should be included under the direct cost operating expenses if providing direct function or service for participants. If the subcontractor is providing an administrative function, then the cost should be included in administrative costs. Deciding whether a subcontractor cost is a direct administrative cost or indirect cost depends on if the subcontractor is directly working for this project or serves in varied functions for the applicant organization. If the subcontractor serves in varied functions only the percentage serving this grant is applied to this project budget. If the subcontractor is providing an administrative function, whether direct administration for this project only or indirect, it is part of the 15% allowable administrative costs.

4. What kinds of expenses do I include under operating expenses?

Operating expenses are costs incurred as a result of activities performed as a service to the target population. Direct administrative costs are those costs for an administrative function serving specifically this project only. i.e. dedicated organization staff that handle administrative functions of the grant. Examples of operating expenses can be found in the [Budget Details and Restrictions](#).

5. What is a direct cost?

A direct cost (personnel and operating expenses) can be associated with only one project or program. Deciding whether a cost is a direct administrative cost or indirect cost depends on if the cost supports direct work for this project only or supports varied functions for the applicant organization.

6. What is an administrative/indirect cost?

Administrative expenses/indirect costs are organization-wide, general management costs (i.e., activities for the direction and control of the organization as a whole) that benefit more than one program/project. Indirect costs are costs that are not identifiable or incurred for the benefit of one project. Deciding whether a cost is a direct administrative cost or indirect cost depends on if the cost supports direct work for this project only or supports varied functions for the applicant organization.

7. What is an allowable expense?

Allowable expenses are expenses that are not prohibited under state laws, regulations, or disparity grant program requirements; reasonable costs for project activities; related to the goal of the project; and be adequately documented.

8. Which expenses are not allowed?

A list of non-allowable expenses can be found in the [Budget Details and Restrictions](#).

Catchment and Community Input

9. What if a CBO proposes to serve more than one RC?

The project must specify all RC(s) that will be served in its catchment area. In addition, list all cities, and counties that your project proposes to serve. If the project proposes to serve the City of Los Angeles, include the zip codes that will be served.

10. How do I collect community input for my proposal?

Community input can include but not be limited to meetings with the RC or other stakeholders, and/or focus groups with the proposed target population.

11. Can a project have multiple activities to achieve the project's goal?

Yes, projects may consist of more than one activity. In developing your project, please be mindful of how proposed activities are necessary to meet your project's goal. Each applicant will identify a single primary objective that the project will accomplish. Proposed grant activities should be described in a clear and concise way with sufficient detail about the expected benefit or impact to the targeted population.

Grant Reapplication

12. How do I know if I should complete the grant reapplication section?

You are required to complete the grant reapplication section if you are proposing to continue a previously awarded project without changes to the target population, geographic area, activities, goals or objectives; OR if you are proposing to expand a previously awarded project into other target populations, geographic areas, activities,

goals or objectives. You must click “not applicable” in each reapplication question if you are a new applicant.

13. What if my current project ends in December 2020, can I still submit a grant reapplication?

Yes, the Department anticipates to execute grant agreements by March 2021, which is also the anticipated start date for new projects.

14. If I completed the Grant Reapplication Information section, how does that information differ from the General Application section?

In the Grant Reapplication Information section, you provide fiscal and project information for your previously awarded project, including project impacts and outcomes. In the General Application section, you will provide project information for your proposed project.

15. If my current grant has funds remaining due to delays as a result of COVID, can I still apply for a new grant?

It depends. If your available grant funds will sustain your current project through June 2021, you should wait until the next grant cycle to apply for a grant. However, if you have the capacity to implement two different grants, you may apply for a new grant but you must consider your project’s capacity to start a new project and that you are able to meet your objective and measures and activities in both projects.

POS Data

16. Where can I find POS data for the RC(s) in my proposed catchment area?

Links to the RC POS data can be found [here](#).

17. Where do I find the RC POS reports that include recommendations and plan to promote equity and reduce disparities?

Links to the RC POS Annual Reports can be found [here](#).

Project Duration

18. Can projects have a duration of up to two years?

The Department encourages projects with a duration of up to twelve (12) months. However, certain project types may require longer durations and the Department will consider projects up to 24 months if necessary, to achieve project goal and activities.

19. Do I need to submit a proposal for each catchment area that I want to serve?

It depends. If the same project proposes to serve multiple RCs, then you only need to submit one proposal. If you are proposing multiple projects, then each project will need a separate proposal.

20. What date should I list as the project start date?

The Department anticipates it will execute grant agreements by March 2021, which is also the anticipated start date for projects.

Project Type and Target Population

21. How do I determine the project type and target population for my project?

All proposals must link to an identified issue or barrier in the local community or statewide, which has been identified through POS data, stakeholder feedback, and/or the RC plans and recommendations to promote equity and reduce disparities, which are a component of the RC POS annual report. Links to the RC POS data and POS annual reports can be found [here](#).

22. Is the target population limited to current RC consumers and their families?

No, the target population can also include individuals and families that may be eligible for RC services; however, the proposal must indicate how the target population is underserved using POS data or other supporting evidence, and how the project will address the identified disparity.

23. May a proposal have more than one project type such as engagement/outreach, and education and training?

Yes. The application allows up to three project type selections. If your project will have more than one project type, you will determine the first, second, and third project type based on the project goal(s) and activities. In the target population, the proposed number impacted will be for the primary project type only. A proposal may have multiple project types but may only have one budget.

24. If an identified need for a target population is independent facilitation for Self Determination Program, can I propose a grant activity that includes independent facilitation?

Yes. Applicants may propose a project that includes developing independent facilitators to assist with implementation of a Self-Determination Program as a project activity.

Proposal Certification

25. What is a proposal certification?

The organization's authorized representative certifies the truth and accuracy of the proposal by signing the certification. If you have subcontracting organizations, you will certify that each participating organization has reviewed your project and agrees to their assigned activities, measures, and the budget.

Proposal Submission

1. How do I submit a proposal?

You will submit your proposal online through [GrantVantage](#).

2. What browser can I use to complete my application on GrantVantage?

You must use Chrome, Firefox, or Edge browsers. Internet Explorer is not supported in the GrantVantage System.

3. Can multiple users review and contribute to one application?

Yes, more than one user may contribute to an application in the GrantVantage system. The user must be included on the Applicant Profile contacts for that application. Once a grant is awarded, a primary user will be determined.

4. When are project proposals due for the Fiscal Year 2020/21?

Proposals must be submitted online through GrantVantage by 5:00 p.m. PST on December 2, 2020. Guidelines and related materials are located [here](#). Keep in mind that GrantVantage support is not available over the Thanksgiving holiday (November 26 to November 29), and will be available until November 30th.

5. What if I submit my proposal after 5:00 p.m. PST on December 2, 2020?

GrantVantage will not accept applications after 5:00 p.m. PST on December 2, 2020. Late applications will not be accepted. We encourage all applicants to submit their applications as early as possible.

6. Can I revise my proposal after I've submitted it?

No. However, the Department may request additional information regarding the original submission.

7. How will I know that my proposal was received?

You will receive a confirmation email from GrantVantage when you submit your proposal.

8. Are CBOs required to submit a copy of the proposal(s) to the RC?

Yes. CBOs are encouraged to discuss their projects with the local RC prior to submission. CBOs must submit proposals to the local RC where the project will be implemented and to the Department at the same time as indicated in Welfare and Institutions Code Section 4519.5(h)(3). RCs provide the Department with input regarding CBO proposals prior to the Department making a final determination. The RC directory is available [here](#). The Los Angeles area zip code directory is available [here](#).

9. How do CBOs submit proposals to RCs?

In your communication with a RC(s) before you apply, you may ask the RC(s) where to submit your completed application. At the end of the GrantVantage application process, CBOs will be able to download a PDF file of their completed grant application, objective activities, and budget template. CBOs attach this information and email it to the RC(s) connected to the proposed project using the contact list included in the guidelines.

10. How do CBOs provide proof that a copy of the proposal was sent to RCs?

CBOs should copy the Department on the email sent to the RC at SAEgrantprogram@DDS.ca.gov.

11. If a CBO is proposing a statewide project, does the proposal need to go to all 21 RCs?

Yes. Applicants must submit the proposal to all 21 RCs.

12. If I submit a proposal in collaboration with other CBOs, am I required to provide letter(s) of support from those CBOs?

Yes. Applicants must provide letters of support from CBOs you propose to collaborate with.

[Review and Notification](#)

1. What does the review process consist of?

The Department will use a scoring criteria in the FY 2020-21 [Guidelines](#) to ensure each proposal receives a fair, equitable, and objective review.

2. How will I know if the Department has approved or denied my proposal?

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

3. How will the Department receive input from the RCs?

The Department will contact the appropriate RC(s) and request feedback.