



Department of Developmental Services

Employment Grant Program

Revised July 27, 2022

Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

1. What is the intent of the 2022 Employment Grant Program?

The purpose of the grant program is to increase competitive integrated employment opportunities for individuals served by regional centers. DDS seeks proposals that will utilize new, innovative, best, or promising practices to support career pathways for youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and provide opportunities for competitive integrated employment. If a proposal is engaging consumers and/or their families, consumers must be active in the RC system.

2. Who is eligible to apply for Employment Grant Program funding?

This is an open application to organizations with strong ties to the developmental services system, including, but not limited to community-based organizations, colleges and universities, and employment providers.

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

For the purposes of the Employment Grant Program, 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 grantees required to have a qualifying Employer Identification Number (EIN)?

Yes. If your organization, or any of your partners do not have an established EIN, you must use an FMS. The cost of an FMS provider varies and must be included in the budget under operating expenses. The FMS must also be listed on the Payee Data Record form (STD 204) when the proposal is submitted. For grantees considered for a grant award of \$200,000 or more, DDS will consider the grantee's capacity to administer

state funds adequately and appropriately. After consideration, DDS may require a grantee to utilize a fiscal or management agent as a condition of award. For more information about FMS services, please refer to the appropriate RC for a list of FMS agencies.

5. 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. DDS will review proposals based on the Proposal Review Process section of the Employment Grant 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 objective, and that expenditures will be adequately documented. Grant budgets may not be used for activities that the organization is otherwise funded to conduct. Allowable expenses are available in [Attachment D](#).

6. How do I contact DDS if I have grant application questions?

Send grant application questions to: employmentgrant@dds.ca.gov. DDS can respond to general questions regarding the grant application process but cannot give advice on your proposal as this is a competitive process.

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

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

All applicants must read the GrantVantage Applicant Instructions, located in [Attachment A](#). The Applicant instructions will inform applicants how to begin, complete, and submit an application.

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

Applicants should do the following:

- Review the [2022 Employment Grant Guidelines for Applicants](#)
- Watch the [DDS Applicant Video](#)
- Review the GrantVantage Application Instructions found in [Attachment A](#)
- Review the DDS Instructions for Project Objectives, Activities and Measures in [Attachment H](#) and the GrantVantage Budget Instructions in [Attachment G](#)

Grant Requirements and Proposal Development

The following categories are in alphabetical order.

Budget/Financial

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

Applicants should include all budget line items required to fulfill the objective 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)

10. 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 as outlined in [Attachment G](#). 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.

11. 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.

12. What types 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 [Attachment D](#).

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. What is an allowable expense?

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

16. Which expenses are not allowed?

A list of allowable and non-allowable expenses can be found in [Attachment D](#).

Community Input and RC Service Areas

17. 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.

Service Model Transformation Projects must also include a plan to make two community presentations to key stakeholders and community members. The first presentation is to receive feedback about the proposed changes within the agency. The second community presentation is to present the completed action plan.

18. What if an applicant proposes to serve more than one RC?

The project must specify all RC(s) that will be served. 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.

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

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

Project Duration

20. What is the duration of projects?

Project terms considered for funding are 12 months to 18 months.

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

DDS anticipates it will execute grant agreements by December 2022, which is also the anticipated start date for projects.

Project Type and Activities

22. How do I determine the project type for my project?

Applicants are asked to select one of the five project types that best describes their activities from the list below:

- Business Focused Practices
- Employment Preparation Services and Supports
- Service Models for Individuals with High Support Needs
- Service Model Transformation
- Training and Implementation: Professional and Staff or Family, Adult and Youth

Proposed grant activities should be clear in their design and detailed about the expected benefit or impact to the targeted consumer and/or family, provider, and employer experience. All grant activities that are planned to occur in-person need to have a clear safety plan for grantee staff and participants to comply with all state and local health guidelines.

23. Can a project have multiple activities to achieve the project’s objective?

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 objective.

Each applicant will identify a single primary objective that the project will accomplish. Proposed grant activities should be described clearly and concisely with sufficient detail about the expected benefit or impact to the targeted population.

Proposal Certification

24. 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.

Additionally, organizations and subcontractors submitting proposals must be in good standing with the California Secretary of State, California Franchise Tax Board, and/or California Department of Tax and Fee Administration to be considered for review. Organizations vendored with regional center(s) must be compliant with [W&I Code Section 4652.5](#).

Proposal Submission

25. How do I submit a proposal?

You will submit your proposal through the online application process in [GrantVantage](#). You will also submit your proposal to each of the RCs in the catchment area of the proposed project. The RC contact list where you will send your proposal is available in [Attachment B](#).

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

You must use Chrome, Firefox, Edge, or Safari browsers.

27. 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.

28. When are project proposals due for the 2022 Employment Grant Program?

Proposals must be submitted online through GrantVantage by 5:00 p.m. PDT on August 24, 2022. Please refer to the [DDS website](#) for more information about the 2022 Employment Grant Guidelines for Applicants and other related materials.

29. What if I submit my proposal after 5:00 p.m. PST on August 24, 2022?

GrantVantage will not accept applications after 5:00 p.m. PDT on August 24, 2022. Late applications will not be accepted. We encourage all applicants to submit their applications as early as possible.

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

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

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

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

32. Are applicants required to submit a copy of the proposal(s) to the RC?

Yes. Applicants are encouraged to discuss their projects with the local RC prior to submission. Applicants must submit proposals to the local RC where the project will be implemented and to DDS at the same time. RCs provide DDS with input regarding proposals prior to DDS making a final determination. The RC contact list where you will send your proposal is available in [Attachment B](#). Please refer to the [DDS website](#) to look up RCs in the Los Angeles area by zip codes.

33. How do applicants submit proposals to RCs?

At the end of the GrantVantage application process, applicants will be able to download a PDF file of their completed grant application report, objective report, and budget report. Applicants attach this information and email it to the RC(s) connected to the proposed project using the RC contact list at in [Attachment B](#).

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

Applicants should copy DDS on the email sent to the RC(s) or forward a copy of the email sent to RC(s) to employmentgrant@dds.ca.gov.

35. If an applicant 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.

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

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

37. Will GrantVantage provide technical support on the final day of grant submission?

Applicants are encouraged to submit applications at least two hours before the Funding Announcement closing time to ensure sufficient time for the technical assistance team at GrantVantage to respond to any system errors reported. Applicants that encounter what they believe are system errors must report to the GrantVantage Support desk with

screenshots and a summary explanation using this email: ApplicantSupport@grantvantage.com. On August 24, 2022, technical support questions to GrantVantage are only accepted until 3:00 pm PDT.

Due to the variance of applicant internet speeds, applications with attached documents will take time to process. Applicants are cautioned to submit their application at least 20 minutes before the closing time to allow the application to process through. If you submit your application minutes before the announcement deadline time, the announcement may close in the middle of processing your application. If this occurs, the agency will not receive your application.

Examples of events that are NOT considered 'System Errors' within GrantVantage:

- Failure to follow funding announcement instructions
- Failure to follow Application Instructions
- Local internet challenges at the time of submission on deadline day
- Unable to see final application "Submit" button
- Forgot Username or password credentials
- Security locked out of system resulting from forgetting password – too many wrong attempts
- Failure to notify the GrantVantage Support Desk (ApplicantSupport@grantvantage.com) 2 hours prior to the submission deadline
- The Funding Announcement closes in the middle of the application submission process while the "Processing" indicator is still active. This occurs when applicants try to submit too close to the deadline time and the Funding Announcement closes. If this occurs, we did not receive your application.

Review and Notification

38. What does the review process consist of?

DDS will use the scoring criteria in the [2022 Employment Grant Guidelines for Applicants](#) to ensure each proposal receives a fair, equitable, and objective review.

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

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

40. How will DDS receive input from the RCs?

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