Application Report

Applicant Organization:	Ally Comprehensive Services LLC
Project Name:	Ally's Service Access and Equity Project
Application ID:	App-22-687
Funding Announcement:	FY 22-23 Service Access and Equity Grant
Awarded Amount:	$195,000

Project Summary: To increase participant's understanding of regional center services, alternative service models including the self-determination program and participant directed services, computer literacy, individual leadership skills development, generic resources, rights and responsibilities, and the importance of leadership and advocacy skills for self-advocates, loved ones, and others within the community in order to bridge the gap on disparity; while building strong connections with the appropriate individuals and agencies to ensure success.

Authorized Certifying Official: Katie Ramirez   kramirez@allycs.org   -

Project Director/Manager: Katie Ramirez   kramirez@allycs.org   -

Project Manager/Coordinator: Katie Ramirez   kramirez@allycs.org   -

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Section Name: Applicant Eligibility

Sub Section Name: Applicant Information

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1. Applicant Question: Project Title

What is the Project Title?

Applicant Response:

Ally's Service Access & Equity Project

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2. Applicant Question: Awarded Amount

What is the total amount awarded for the project?

Applicant Response:

$195,000

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3. Applicant Question: Organization Type

Choose the response that best describes your organization.

Applicant Response:

Community Based Organization, non-501(c)(3) EIN

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4. Applicant Question: Description of Organization/Group

Provide a brief description of the organization or group. Explain what experience your organization has managing a project similar to the proposal and state the outcomes of that project. You may upload your brochure or add a website link.

Applicant Response:

Ally Comprehensive Services LLC (Ally) was created in early 2020 with the purpose of supporting the intellectual and developmental disabilities community. Ally's mission is to ensure individuals with developmental disabilities live fulfilling and meaningful lives. Using a person-centered approach, Ally strives to empower individuals with developmental disabilities and their loved ones by breaking perceived barriers and providing the tools, information, and support needed to develop strong, informed advocates. This is a re-application for funding to continue Ally's Access and Equity Project in the Kern Regional Center (KRC) and Central Valley Regional Center (CVRC) areas. Since 2020, Ally has worked closely with both catchment areas and found the need of for additional trainings/education and coaching/tech support in English and Spanish to better support individual and their loved ones with navigating and accessing the intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) service systems.

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5. Applicant Question: Applicant in Good Standing

Is the applicant in good standing with the California Secretary of State, California Franchise Tax Board, and California Department of Tax and Fee Administration? Please upload confirmation letter(s) or proof of good standing.

Applicant Response:

Yes

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6. Applicant Question: Subcontractors in Good Standing

Are the applicant's subcontractors in good standing with the California Secretary of State, California Franchise Tax Board, and California Department of Tax and Fee Administration?

Applicant Response:

Yes

Section Name: Grant Reapplication Information
Sub Section Name: Grant Reapplications Only

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1. Applicant Question: Previous Award(s)

Did your organization receive DDS grant funding in fiscal year 2020-21 or 2021-22? If yes, go to question 2 to complete each column. If no, skip this category and go to category 3.

Applicant Response:

Yes

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2. Applicant Question: Previous Grant Award(s)

Since fiscal year 2020, complete a row for each DDS Service Access and Equity grant your organization was awarded funding.

Applicant Response:

Year Awarded	Project Title	Grant Number	Award Amount
2021-2022	Ally's Access & Equity Project	21-C03	$148,000.00
2020-2021	Ally's Access & Equity Initiative Program	20-C03	$148,419.00

3. Applicant Question: Previous Grant Outcomes

Provide a brief grant summary of your project outcomes for fiscal year 2020-21 and/or 2021-22.

Applicant Response:

To increase the individual's understanding of regional center fundamentals, alternative service models such as the self-determination program, participant-directed services, supported decision making, generic resources, other agencies that serve individuals with developmental disabilities, individual's rights, and the importance of leadership skills within the community in order to bridge the gap on disparity. Ally has also conducted computer literacy classes which were well received; however, regular classes need to be scheduled to better support the Spanish speaking community looking to access various programs including the self-determination program.

4. Applicant Question: Project Transition

If awarded, how will your current project(s) transition into the 2022-23 proposed project? Does your proposed project expand or continue your current project, if so how? What activities, measures, or target groups are being added? Provide a summary of the differences and reasons why you are proposing the change.

Applicant Response:

Under Ally's current project, trainings are held monthly in English & Spanish and referrals are being made in the CVRC/KRC community. The Self-Advocate Access to Services Group is meeting twice a month to discuss various topics ranging from employment to transportation and SDP and more. Leadership training is needed to support these individuals tell their story and provide testimony. There continues to be new individuals and families that are in need for education and training in both large and small group settings. Ally will continue to provide these comprehensive trainings to individuals, families and loved ones, as well as professionals in the area that serve and advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Ally's goal is to expand the current project and develop culturally & linguistically competent training curriculum, tools, & resources to meet the unique needs of the community with a focus on Introduction to Person-Centered Planning, Regional Center Eligibility, IPP and Services, Self-Determination Program 101 with workshops that will provide tools/resources, Alternative Service Models, Leadership 101). Ally has worked closely with other community partners such as the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) Sequoia Office, Parlier, Selma, EFC, & CVRC/KRC staff. Ally has received feedback from participants and community partners and has determined that hybrid model is preferred with options in-person and virtually.

For the 2022-23 project year, Ally would continue to work in collaboration with the Sequoia Office & with Kern EFC to provide ongoing training and education for the community. During the new project, Ally will work closely with KRC, CVRC, Kern EFC, and the SCDD Sequoia office to develop and provide culturally and linguistically competent resources, materials, tools, will make appropriate referrals, and provide technical assistance/coaching support for individuals who need it. this project will also strive to increase engagement

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Section Name: General Application

Sub Section Name: Proposal Summary

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1. Applicant Question: Project Type

Choose the project type that best describes your activities from the list below:

Applicant Response:

Education and Training

Applicant Comment:

Ally's proposed project for the 2022-23 grant year will continue to expand it's outreach and education and training both virtually and in-person. There has been a larger emphasize on in-person efforts because of the disconnect expressed by many clients and families. Especially after the pandemic, individuals voiced concerns with feeling isolated from one another as well as from their community and agencies that are intended to serve them. There are also many rural areas that lack information and access. Ally has worked closely with other community agencies that have received SAE Grant funding in order to share their information and make referrals. During this grant year, Ally was able to connect groups from both CVRC and KRC to the regional center in order to enhance access. For example, during our SDP informational training session, clients and families shared their concern with accessing the SDP orientation virtually through KRC's virtual learning platform. Ally gathered everyone's information who was interested in the program and reached out to KRC with the concerns and requests. After further coordination, KRC scheduled and in-person orientation in Spanish for the community that was highly successful. Clients and families are also in need for computer literacy sessions as a mini series that can show them the basics from writing an email, to creating an account, and some much needed support with how to navigate Zoom, and DocuSign. Ally was also able to identify groups desperately needing support from the regional center in the CVRC catchment area. Ally made the necessary referrals and conducted a joint training with CVRC to foster these connections between the community and the RC and other community agencies.

Ally's goal is to continue educating, supporting, and connecting individuals to the regional center and other agencies. Ally would like to focus on supporting self-advocates enhance their leadership skills. The Self-Advocate group has done a wonderful job of discussing their successes and concerns. The goal is to expand their leadership skills by learning the basics so that they can share their story and provide testimony. In the future with support and preparation we would like them to participate in committee meetings, boards, support groups, and more. Self-Determination is also a program that many individuals, especially minorities are struggling with. The Spanish speaking community is requiring more in-depth sessions that can break down each step and help them work through the process. Sessions have been requested that are geared toward self-advocates and caregivers. Individual coaching/technical assistance is a new need that has been identified to ensure participants learn the necessary information and are guided as they apply what they learn through the training opportunities. The goal is to increase awareness and engagement with our target population in the CVRC and KRC communities in-person and via online platforms in order to maximize Ally's efforts and reach.

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2. Applicant Question: Duration of project

Choose the duration of your project.

Applicant Response:

12 months

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3. Applicant Question: Regional Centers

Choose the Regional Center(s) that your project will serve. Check all that apply. If you are proposing a statewide project, select the All Regional Centers/Statewide option.

Applicant Response:

- Central Valley Regional Center
- Kern Regional Center

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4. Applicant Question: Counties Served

List the county or counties your project proposes to serve. Check all that apply. If you are proposing a statewide project, the select All Counties / Statewide option.

Applicant Response:
- Fresno County
- Kern County
- Madera County
- Mariposa County
- Merced County
- Tulare County
- Kings County

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5. Applicant Question: Community Based Organizations

Will you be working with one or more Community Based Organizations? If so, provide the name of the organization and how you will be working together.

Applicant Response:

Ally will be working with the SCDD Sequoia Office and Kern EFC to provide trainings and events in the community. Kern EFC will make available their computer lab, provide computer literacy, and other workshops and will continue to support Ally with hybrid model trainings. Ally, Kern EFC, and the SCDD Sequoia Office will partner with KRC and others to host a community conference in 2023.

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6. Applicant Question: Multiple Organizations

Does your project include partnership with one or more organizations either as a co-applicant or subcontractor? If "yes", please upload a letter of support from each organization, that includes an explanation of their role in the partnership.

Applicant Response:

Yes

Attachment:
SCDD Letter of Support_Ally (2022).pdf - PDF FILE
EFC_Letter_of_Support (2022).pdf - PDF FILE
KRC_Letter of Support_Ally_Final (10-2022).pdf - PDF FILE
CVRC_Letter of Support. Ally 10-22.pdf - PDF FILE

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7. Applicant Question: Strategies and Sustainability

How will your project continue its work after the grant funding has concluded?

Applicant Response:

The project will provide education and training that is specific to the community and that will enhance their access, level of understanding, confidence, advocacy, and leadership which will support their individual efforts in accessing services and sharing their knowledge and personal experiences with newer and/or less informed participants/families in their community. Ally will also develop materials and curriculum tailored to enhance self-advocate and families leadership skills. These individuals will be able to share their story and provide testimony, participate in community events, and eventually be part of a committee, support group, etc. Also, by focusing on enhancing our community engagement and reaching more of our targeted population, these individuals will stay connected and informed not just with Ally but with other pertinent agencies intended to support and serve them.

Sub Section Name: Target Population

1. Applicant Question: Ethnicity Groups Served

Select the ethnicity group(s) the project will serve. For "Indian", "Pacific Islander", "Slavic" or "Other" use comment section to list specific groups.

Applicant Response:

- African American
- Hispanic
- Other (list)

2. Applicant Question: Ethnicity Group(s), Language(s) and Number of Individuals Served

For each ethnicity group, provide the number of individuals your project intends to serve and the related language(s).

Applicant Response:

Ethnicity Group(s)	Individuals Served	Language(s)
Hispanic	200	Spanish & English
African American	20	English
Other	50	As identified

3. Applicant Question: Age Group(s) Served

Select all Age Groups the project will serve.

Applicant Response:

- Three to Five
- Three to 21
- 16 to 21
- 22 and older
- Birth up to Three (Early Start)

Section Name: Project Application

Sub Section Name: Project Application

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1. Applicant Question: Project Summary and Organizational Experience

Provide a clear and concise project summary that includes a defined target population, catchment area, and project design. Specifically describe what your project will accomplish and how it will benefit the community served. In your answer, include what experience your organization has working with the target population and how your organization will work with the local RC(s).

Applicant Response:

With former regional center experience, and working with the underserved community, Ally has witnessed first hand, the difficulties that this community has with accessing the services and supports needed. Ally has worked closely with CVRC and KRC through the self-determination program and grant activities. Participants and families want to learn about the regional system as a whole, including SDP, and want to enhance their leadership skills.

Ally's project will continue to partner and collaborate with other community agencies such as the SCDD Sequoia Office, Kern EFC, Parlier School District, and Selma School District, with the primary goal of equipping Hispanic, African-American, and other underserved participants within the KRC and CVRC catchment area with information and training needed to navigate the regional center system, have access to self-determination, and enhance their leadership skills in a culturally competent way to increase service access and equity. A new component for technical assistance/coaching will be added this year to better support/guide those in need after being trained. Ally will accomplish this by partnering with others to provide participants with various trainings, workshops, & community events including meet & greets that will be offered in both English and Spanish. Participants will gain a better understanding of the key components of the regional center system as a whole including the Individual Program Plan (IPP) process, purchase of service and service utilization, rights and responsibilities, other community agencies, person-centered approaches, alternative service models, and the importance of leadership within the community. Ally will also continue to make the necessary referrals of individuals to the regional center, and other agencies for support with SSI, IHSS, SDP, etc.

Ally will expand it's curriculum to develop linguistically and culturally competent leadership workshops for self-advocates & families as a direct result of the Self-Advocate Group that is providing input during this current grant year. In addition, Ally will create a series of workshops that expand on other topics such as the Self-Determination Program & other models such as Participant Directed Services. The goal is to create and develop easy to use and understand tools, handouts, and materials, that self-advocates and families can easily use as they navigate these new programs. Ally has been requested to provide many SDP informational sessions but participants/families want regular sessions where they can continue to learn and be supported through the process. Ally will also like to support and offer scholarships for clients/families wishing to participate in Kern EFC's conference in Spanish in 2023. This conference will be open to CVRC/KRC participants and families and will be filled with various trainers and opportunities to connect with others and empower them. Ally will increase it's engagement through online platforms and in-person.

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2. Applicant Question: Data and Community Input

Explain why you have selected your priority population(s) using RC POS data and other data as supporting evidence of the disparity or inequity. Include how your organization used input from the community, target population, and RC to design the proposal.

Applicant Response:

In accordance with FY 2020/2021 data for CVRC, total per capita expenditures for all ages by race/ethnicity are as follows from lowest to highest:

1. Other- $7,697

2. Native Hawaiian- $8,061

3. Asian- $9,333

4. Hispanic- $9,545

5. American Indian- $21,031

6. African American- $21,253

7. White- $26,958

In accordance with FY 2020/2021 data for KRC, per capita expenditures by race/ethnicity are as follow from lowest to highest:

1. Hispanic- $10,095

2. Other- $10,607

3. Native Hawaiian- $15,674

4. Asian- $16,674

5. African American- $20,478

6. American Indian- $22,665

7. White- $24,431

Through the current training sessions and events held by Ally's Access & Equity Project for 2021-22, participants express the need for more education and training for alternative service models such as self-determination since the traditional model has not always worked and individuals are left without services and many unmet needs. They have also requested sessions that will empower them to advocate for themselves and their loved ones by gaining more confidence in their skills of telling their story and providing testimony. Spanish speaking participants in particular would like more in-depth computer trainings so they can actually access programs like self-determination. Much of the work for this program is completed virtually using Zoom and DocuSign. Ally's agency has seen first hand this struggle and need. Without tailored classes and some technical support, participants feel frustrated and discouraged.

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3. Applicant Question: Uniqueness

How is the proposed project unique from a currently funded grant (e.g., strategies, activities, and goals) in the proposed RC catchment area? If the project is similar to a currently funded grant listed on the Department's website, how is the proposed project different?

Applicant Response:

Although training sessions may not be unique in the efforts to reduce purchase of service disparities, Ally's proposed project is different given that the trainings will be developed and provided by a former Regional Center service coordinator and regional manager in partnership with other community experts and it will continue to focus on the specific community's needs through participation and community input. Ally also has extensive experience successfully supporting Spanish speaking families into the Self-Determination Program and has supported other regional centers with facilitating leadership training sessions. Ally's efforts in reaching rural and other communities that feel isolated has allowed for better communication, collaboration, and connection with their local RC as well as with other CBOs and DDS SAE Grantees. Ally has partnered with these RCs to share the communities concerns and proposed solutions. RCs have made efforts to meet these concerns, for example, KRC provided an in-person Spanish SDP orientation based on the referrals and requests submitted by Ally. CVRC also connected with other support groups in the area that felt disconnected from their center. Now they are meeting more frequently to support and coordinate joint efforts with Ally. Lastly, there will be at least three (3) community focus group meetings over the grant period that will explore perceived barriers, specific community needs, and encourage leadership and advocacy skills.

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4. Applicant Question: Improve Equity and Service Access

How will your project measurably improve equity, access, and reduce barriers to services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families?

Applicant Response:

Continuing and expanding Ally's Access & Equity Project in CVRC/KRC catchment areas will continue to provide knowledge, resources, and support as participants, their loved ones, and other professionals committed to being ally's for these individuals and their support team learn about the different service systems, their rights, roles and responsibilities, and how to seek help. Many times, individuals are not aware of the different service systems that exist and potential supports they are able to access.

During this year we have been able to bring into focus the Self-Determination Program which was something that most of the individuals we trained shared they hadn't heard of before our informational sessions. This has been a popular request from the community who shared that information is not making it to them. Clients and families who are interested in the program are requesting more in depth workshops, not just for SDP but also to empower them and enhance their leadership skills. Additionally our community events and meet and greets allow for clients and families to connect with their RC, Ally, and other CBOs in the community. We share with the community the various programs that are designed to help them gain access and be successful. Ally has also worked toward making referrals and connecting clients/families to the appropriate agencies and resources for additional support. By adding a technical assistance/coaching piece to this year's application, we can help more.

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5. Applicant Question: Support of RC Plan

Does the project support the RC plan to promote equity and reduce disparities in their catchment? If you are a RC, how does this project support your recommendations and plan to promote equity and reduce your identified disparities? How will your project collaborate with other organizations to promote community inclusion?

Applicant Response:

Ally is working closely the the cultural specialist and cultural team at the regional center. Together we discussed the barriers we see with marketing and advertising trainings and sessions to participants who need the additional support and we discussed the topics that are needed in the community. Regional Center staff from both CVRC and KRC have attended some of the training sessions and provided positive feedback. We have also been asked to support the RC in their efforts and have worked collaboratively to even co-facilitate trainings as needed. Engagement and outreach continue to be of concern for these centers. Ally will focus its efforts on using online platforms and in-person opportunities to reach more of our targeted population. The technical assistance component will also ensure success of our targeted groups.

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6. Applicant Question: Project Activities and Measures

Note: Before answering this question, applicants must complete the Activities Template located in the middle tab directly above.

The schedule of activities clearly and specifically demonstrates the steps that the project will take to achieve its stated objective and measures. Do the proposed measures appropriately track the project objective and activities, provide insight into the effectiveness of project, and demonstrate impact on the target population?

Applicant Response:

During the course of the initial grant year (2021-22) Ally continues to conduct outreach activities in order to reach more of the KRC & CVRC communities which helps us plan for future services/projects that are tailored to the community. Ally will continue to conduct these outreach and networking activities in order to build strong relationships with participants, community members, regional centers, the SCDD office, and other CBO's. Ally will subcontract with Kern EFC and the SCDD Sequoia Office again to continue to expand our trainings into workshops for self-determination, computer literacy, leadership, and more; tailored for self-advocates and families.

The SCDD Sequoia Office will also continue working with Ally to consult , co-facilitate, and conduct outreach / networking activities. This is working well and will continue as training material is updated and tailored to the needs of the community. Participants will complete training surveys at the end of each training and provide input on their overall satisfaction with the training, knowledge gained, additional topics of interest, etc. so that the data can be analyzed along with participant input during such trainings. With the current data, in-person sessions are working well. Clients and families have focused their recommendations of creating workshops and handouts and tools that can empower them as they choose to enter the self-determination program, especially in Spanish, from an agency that knows their community and has extensive experience. The self-advocate group also want to expand their leadership skills just like other family members have requested. Ally will continue to work in partnership with KRC, CVRC, SCDD, Kern EFC, school districts, and more to educate, connect and support these individuals so that they can access the services that are right for them. Further engagement and individual/technical assistance is also a need shared by the community. They would like to be able to connect after training sessions to discuss their personal needs and situation for appropriate referrals and guidance.

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7. Applicant Question: Budget Template and Narrative

Note: Before answering this question, applicants must complete the Budget Template located in the tab directly above.

The project budget is consistent with the stated project objective and activities, and clearly and concisely explains how the proposed expenditures support the overall project design and outcomes. The project budget costs are clearly associated with the activities and does not include non-allowable costs or costs funded by other sources.

- Budget Template example is located at Attachment C.

- Budget Details and Restrictions are available here.

Applicant Response:

The proposed measures offer a combination of quantitative, qualitative, and milestone data. Ally will track the number of trainings, individuals served, focus groups, curriculum and materials developed and translated, and individuals referred, and individually supported to ensure all benchmarks are being met. Narratives will be used to discuss outcomes, observations, and pre/post survey outcomes.

Section Name: Proposal Certification

Sub Section Name: Certification

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1. Applicant Question: Confirm Proposal Discussion with RC(s)

CBOs are required to discuss their proposal with each RC(s) the CBO is intending to serve. If you are a CBO, have you discussed your proposal with each RC you are intending to serve?

Applicant Response:

Yes

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2. Applicant Question: RC Contact

CBOs are required to submit their application concurrently to the Department and to each RC(s) catchment the CBO is intending to serve. If you are a CBO, state the name(s) of the contact person(s) at each RC you have emailed your proposal application. The RC contact list is available here at Attachment F.

Applicant Response:

Ally's Access & Equity Project application sent to:

KRC- Executive Director, Michi Gates; Community Services Director, Enrique Roman; & Cultural Specialist, Karina Proffer

CVRC- Executive Director, Ed Araim, Director of Case Management Services, Rachel Hagans, & Cultural Specialist, Natasha Ambriz

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3. Applicant Question: Code of Conduct

Grantee Code of Conduct

The Department is committed to supporting services and programs with integrity that foster collaboration and professionalism. Grantees are expected to conduct project activities in a professional and respectful manner that include:

- **Valuing Diversity and Inclusion**. Grantees should embrace diversity that includes but is not limited to: ability, race, language, national origin, citizenship, age, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, and religion.

- **Conducting Activities with Personal and Professional Integrity**. All activities with individuals, families, community organizations, regional centers, and state, local and federal agencies should be conducted with professionalism, dignity, respect, and fairness. Grantees should be open to listening to different points of view and fostering productive communication.
- **Providing a Positive Work Environment**: All projects should foster a positive and respectful work environment with their colleagues and other grantees.

Applicant Response:

- I acknowledge that I have reviewed the Code of Conduct.

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4. Applicant Question: Applicant Certification

By submitting this application, the Applicant is certifying the truth and accuracy of the proposal. The applicant also certifies that if you have subcontracting organizations, each participating organization has reviewed your project and agrees to their assigned activities, measures, and the budget.

Applicant Response:

Yes