

Funding Announcement Title: Service Access and Equity Grant

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Announcement Narrative:



Department of Developmental Services

Service Access and Equity Grant

Service Access, Equity, Inclusion and Reducing Purchase of Service Disparities for Californians with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Grant Guidelines for Applicants

Fiscal Year 2024-25

Our Vision

Our vision is that Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities experience respect for their choices, cultures, language preferences, beliefs, values, goals, and needs, from a person-centered service system made up of a network of community agencies that provide high quality, outcome-based and equitable supports and services.

Background

California's landmark 1969 Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act provides an entitlement to services and supports for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, spoken language, or economic status. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25, the state's 21 nonprofit regional centers (RCs) are expected to support approximately 460,000 individuals. Persons served by RCs reflect the diversity of California, comprising at least 23 ethnicities and more than 45 languages.

Annually, RCs collaborate with the Department of Developmental Services (Department) to gather and report data related to purchase of service (POS) authorization, utilization, and expenditures for each RC per Welfare and Institutions Code (W&I) Section 4519.5. This POS data indicates there are disparities based on race, ethnicity, and language. RCs conduct activities to identify disparities and barriers to equitable access to services and supports, and to develop recommendations and plans to reduce existing disparities. RCs are required to report annually to the Department: 1) actions taken to improve public attendance and participation at community partner meetings related to POS data; 2) copies of minutes and attendee comments; and 3) the RC's recommendations and plan to promote equity and reduce disparities in POS, if the data indicate a need to reduce disparities. Applicants are advised to use the most current posted RC POS reports and recommendations to submit their grant proposals.

The Department is committed to using the lens of cultural and linguistic competence to focus on disrupting social injustices and racial inequities within the developmental services system. As California builds upon its investments in equity, the Department reinforces its efforts to advance service access and equity to support people with developmental disabilities from marginalized and under-resourced communities. Successful Service Access and Equity Grants focus on measurable progress in reducing disparities, advancing equity, and shifting the developmental services system to attain improved outcomes for diverse communities.

In March of 2022, the Department contracted with Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC) to conduct an independent evaluation of the Service Access and Equity Grant Program with focus on the impact and future direction of the grant program. NCCC's recommendations are reflected in these guidelines.

Grant Focus for FY 2024-25

The purpose of this grant funding is to reinforce strategies that achieve and strengthen community-based services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Key grant priorities from statewide community partners and individual and family testimony include:

1. **Culturally and Linguistically Competent Services:** Create and/or cultivate meaningful engagement to increase access to culturally and linguistically competent services that meet the interests and needs of diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic communities across disability groups.
2. **Early Start:** Building capacity and improving access to Early Start services, resources, and education for diverse and marginalized communities.

3. **Navigation Support for Families:** Provide person-centered assistance to families and/or peer-to-peer support to self-advocates, to assist in accessing information, to include but not limited to, regional center services, generic services, transition age activities, and mental and emotional support.

The Department seeks proposals that are innovative, demonstrate the capacity to carry out proposed activities and result in sustained strategies and collaborations after completion of the project. Proposals must address a local community or statewide issue/barrier identified through POS data, community partner feedback, and/or RC plans and recommendations to promote equity and reduce disparities.

Available Funding and Project Term

The FY 2024-25 grant cycle includes a total of \$11 million in funding. Language Access and Cultural Competence funding may be used to enhance the total amount awarded for Service Access and Equity Grant projects. Project terms are for 24 months. For more information on previously awarded grants, go to the Department's webpage [here](#).

Request for Proposal Timeline

The Department is seeking proposals from organizations with strong ties to the developmental services system. To be considered for funding, applicants must apply online at [GrantVantage - Department Application Process](#). All proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. PST on Friday, August 9, 2024.

Timeline:

- June 24, 2024: Release of 2024-25 Service Access and Equity Grant Guidelines
- June 27, 2024: Bidder's Conference for interested applicants.
- August 9, 2024: Proposals due by 5:00 p.m. PST
- November 2024: Proposal evaluation and selection process completed.
- December 2024: Notification of grant awards will be made to all applicants and will be posted to the Department's website.
- January 1, 2025: Projects are anticipated to begin on January 1, 2025. Actual start dates will depend on the date the grant agreement is completed.

Online Application

For the FY 2024-25 Promoting Service Access and Equity Grant application process, applicants will submit proposals using the Department's online grant management system at: [GrantVantage - Department Application Process](#).

- Applicants are required to watch the Department Applicant video to complete the application process [here](#).

- FAQs for the FY 2024-25 grant cycle will be available on the Department's website [here](#). and will be updated based on questions received.
- Applicants will be required to follow a series of steps to submit their application:
 1. Create an Applicant Profile
 2. Complete Applicant Report Template
 3. Complete an Activities Template
 4. Complete a Budget Template
- For technical support, email GrantVantage: applicantssupport@grantvantage.com.
- For grant application questions, email DDS: SAEgrantprogram@dds.ca.gov.
- RCs are encouraged to partner with a CBOs for any proposals submitted. This recommendation is intended to increase cultural knowledge, enhance meaningful collaborations, and promote equity in resource allocation, and acknowledge the inherent knowledge within diverse communities.
- CBOs are required to submit their application concurrently to the Department and to each RC(s) catchment the CBO is intending to serve. At the end of the application process in the GV system, CBOs must do the following:
 1. Download a PDF file of the completed grant application that includes three reports: (1) Application Report (2) Objective Report; and (3) Budget Report; and
 2. Submit all three downloaded reports for the application to the RC(s) the project will serve. The RC contact list is available [here](#) at Attachment F.

General Information

- Organizations that plan to work together are strongly encouraged to submit one application rather than separate applications from multiple organizations.
- University of California and California State University organizations applying for grant funding must complete a Model Agreement concurrent with the application proposal. The Model Agreement template can be found at the Department of General Services' webpage [here](#). Please note that the Department will require changes to the terms listed in the University Terms and Conditions.

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.

Project Types

All grantees are expected to conduct outreach and engagement with their priority population. Applicants will select one of the two project types that best describes their activities from the list below:

1. **Education and Training:** Increase self-advocate/family knowledge about topics relating to service access, the regional center system, leadership development, business development, advocacy, independent facilitation, implicit bias, and developmental disabilities. Diversify and increase cultural and linguistic competence of regional center and/or service provider staff.
2. **Community Connector:** Utilize community leaders, family members, and self-advocates to provide individualized support to assist families with accessing services. Promotora, Navigator, Peer/Parent Mentor or Independent Facilitator are examples of community connector projects. Community connector projects require focused supplemental training, reporting, budgeting, and monitoring components throughout implementation. Grantees are required to report on persons supported with navigation services in quarterly reports.

Grant Activities

Proposed grant activities should be clear in their design and detailed about the expected benefit or impact to the focused population's consumer and/or family experience. All proposed activities shall have embedded cultural and linguistically competent practices. All grant activities that are planned to occur in-person need to have a safety plan for grantee staff and participants to comply with all state and local health guidelines.

Language Access

Applicants are required to consider language access and linguistic competence in their proposal such as: plain language, language translation, and interpretation needs of their project and include any related expenses in their proposed budget.

Grant Measures

All projects are required to report data to show progress and outcomes of activities. Projects will provide quantitative and qualitative data.

- Quantitative data can be measured, such as the number of participants in Community Connector program, pre/post surveys that are scored with numbers, and comparison of POS expenditures before and after participation in a project.
- Qualitative data is a description, such as what participants say they learned in an orientation. Qualitative data is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons and motivations and uncover trends in thoughts and opinions. Qualitative data may be collected using open-ended written or verbal questions in surveys, focus groups, and interviews. Findings from qualitative data are typically summarized in writing.

Standardized Measures

All projects must use the Department's standardized set of measures which are located [here](#) at Attachment B. Grantees may also collect additional information for these projects. Standardized measures may be updated as needed during the grant year.

Grant Budget

Proposed budgets need to be directly tied to proposed grant activities and reflect reasonable costs. Grant budgets may not be used for activities that the organization is otherwise funded to conduct. Administrative costs are limited to 15% of the grant total. A list of allowable and unallowable expenses is located [here](#).

Quarterly Progress Reports

All grantees are required to submit reports every quarter over the course of the project and are due to the Department on the last day of the month following the end of each quarter (e.g. January 31, April 30, July 31, and October 31). Quarterly reports will be submitted in GrantVantage by updating performance measures, activities, and financial data. The reports will be used to assess performed activities and whether the project is on target with the approved work plan. The Department may request additional information regarding progress and supporting documentation.

Final Reports

All grantees are required to compile their data and complete a final report within 45 days of the end of a project. All grantees are required to submit a final report including projects continuing to the next grant year. Final reports will be posted to the Department's website pursuant to [Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 4519.5](#).

Proposal Review Process

Applicant Eligibility

Proposals from organizations and subcontractors 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.

The Department will use the following links to verify organizational standing:

- [Secretary of State](#)
- [Top 500 Tax Sales delinquent](#)
- [Top 500 Past Due Balances](#)

Reapplications

Reapplications are proposals that will continue an active project awarded in FY 2022-23 or FY 2023-24 without changes to the focused population, geographic area, activities, or objectives; or will expand a previously awarded project into other target populations, geographic areas, activities, or objectives. Reapplications for projects that have remaining funding from either FY 2022-23 or FY 2023-24 that is sufficient to continue activities in the 2025 calendar year will not be considered for new funding.

Applicants proposing to continue an active grant project that was funded in FY 2022-23 or FY 2023-24 will be asked to provide information about their current grant and for the following questions:

1. Provide a clear and concise explanation of the current grant's project activities and key accomplishments to date. Include data and participant experiences or other information that demonstrate the current project outcomes and impacts in serving the target communities.
2. Provide a clear and concise description of project activities and measures that remain to be completed and reasons why.

Applicants proposing to continue an existing grant must have a consecutive start date. For example, if a FY 2022-23 project ends on January 31, 2025, and the same project was awarded funding for FY 24-25, the new project cycle must begin on February 1, 2025. If the current grant is a continuing, grant activities may not be duplicated.

Reapplication Evaluation

Each question above will be rated as follows:

- **Exceptional** - Exceeds the minimum requirements and describes progress made and what has been accomplished, how the activities impacted the community, description of activities and transition plan.

- **Adequate** - Satisfies the minimum requirements and generally describes progress made, how previous year funding has impacted community, description of activities and transition plan.
- **Inadequate** - Does not satisfy the minimum progress or impact requirements or activities to be completed and transition plan.

If the reapplication receives more than two inadequate ratings, the reapplication will not be considered for funding.

All Applications

All applications that pass the previous evaluations will advance to a panel review. A review panel will evaluate and score each proposal. The scores from all reviewers will be averaged into a final score for each proposal. Proposals scoring 70 points and above out of 100 total possible points are eligible for funding and may be awarded. The Department may consider applications scoring less than 70 points to ensure the needs of each catchment area are met. If identified, the Department will work with these applicants to modify and strengthen the proposal.

Application Scoring Criteria	Point Value
Provide a clear and concise project summary that includes a defined population of focus, 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 focused identified population.	20
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, focused population, and RC to design the proposal.	15
How does your organization collaborate with your local RC(s), or how does your RC work with your local community-based organization(s)? Describe your collaborative relationship.	15
How will your project measurably improve equity, access, or reduce barriers to services for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families?	15

How does your project support the RC plan to promote equity and/or reduce disparities in their catchment? If you are a RC, how does this project support your recommendations and/or plan to promote equity and/or reduce your identified disparities? How will your project collaborate with other organizations to promote community inclusion?	15
Describe your definition of equity and cultural and linguistic competence and explain how these practices will be applied in your project activities.	10
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.	10
TOTAL POSSIBLE SCORE	100

Funding Review

All applications achieving a passing score will be reviewed by the Department and assessed for funding within the \$11 million available. Reviewers will evaluate the proposals by intended target population, catchment area, and project type. The Department will prioritize funding projects that align with the identified focus areas, focus populations, the additional needs of each catchment area (after consideration of ongoing projects), and RC input. If necessary, applicants will be asked to clarify or adjust proposed objective, activities, measures and/or data collection methods.

Funding Review Scale:

- Meets - Satisfies the minimum requirements.
- Does Not Meet - Does not satisfy the minimum requirements.

Additional Considerations	1 = Meets 0 = Does Not Meet
The project's target population does not duplicate current efforts in the same catchment area; and/or the catchment area is presently not being served.	
The project has made measurable progress with the proposed target population and/or community.	
Regional Center input and support for the project's purpose, target population and/or design.	

Notice of Decision and Grantee Responsibilities

By January 1, 2025, the Department will notify all applicants of the final decision via email. If the applicant is awarded funding, a notice will contain a formal cover letter and a

grant agreement will be sent to the grantee. After final awards are made, approved project proposals will be posted on the Department's website [here](#). All grant agreements will be signed with DocuSign.

Invoicing and Payments for Grantees

Payee Data Record

Prior to the issuance of payments to grantees, a [Payee Data Record Form STD 204](#) must be submitted to the Department. The form is used to set up payments and tracking of payments issued from the State Controller's Office to the grantee.

Financial Management Services (FMS) Requirement

CBOs may utilize an FMS provider to increase program fiscal accountability. FMS providers can make payments on the organization's behalf and ensure that program funds are only used for authorized items.

CBOs must use an FMS if the CBO, or any of its CBO partners, does not have an established EIN. The cost of an FMS provider varies. The costs associated with an FMS 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 more information about FMS services, refer to the appropriate RC for a list of FMS agencies.

For CBO's considered for a grant award of \$200,000 or more, the Department will consider the grantee's capacity to administer state funds adequately and appropriately. After consideration, the Department may require a CBO to utilize a fiscal or management agent as a condition of award.

Payment Schedule for CBOs

Award Amount at or Above \$100,000

For a two-year contract with a project award amount of \$100,000 or more will be paid as follows:

- 1) An initial payment of 25 percent of the approved grant amount will be disbursed after execution of this Agreement and upon submission of the first invoice by the Grantee to the Department.
- 2) A second payment of 12.5 percent of the approved grant amount will be disbursed upon electronic submission of an invoice to the Department, subject to the fulfillment of the following conditions:
 - a) The Department has determined that the Grantee is meeting deliverables in accordance with Grant Application (Objective Report) and approves the first Quarterly Progress Report;

- b) The Department has determined that the expenses in the first Quarterly Expense Report are appropriate and in accordance with the approved Budget (Budget Report); and
 - c) The grantee has expended at least 60 percent of the initial advance payment.
- 3) A third payment of 12.5 percent of the approved grant amount will be disbursed upon electronic submission of an invoice to the Department, subject to the fulfillment of the following conditions:
 - a) The Department has determined that the Grantee is meeting deliverables in accordance with Grant Application (Objective Report) and approves the second Quarterly Progress Report;
 - b) The Department has determined that the expenses in the second Quarterly Expense Report are appropriate and in accordance with the approved Budget (Budget Report); and
 - c) The grantee has expended at least 60 percent of the prior payment.
- 4) A fourth payment of 12.5 percent of the approved grant amount will be disbursed upon electronic submission of an invoice to the Department, subject to the fulfillment of the following conditions:
 - a) The Department has determined that the Grantee is meeting deliverables in accordance with Grant Application (Objective Report) and approves the third Quarterly Progress Report;
 - b) The Department has determined that the expenses in the third Quarterly Expense Report are appropriate and in accordance with the approved Budget (Budget Report); and
 - c) The grantee has expended at least 60 percent of the prior payment.
- 5) A fifth payment of 12.5 percent of the approved grant amount will be disbursed upon electronic submission of an invoice to the Department, subject to the fulfillment of the following conditions:
 - a) The Department has determined that the Grantee is meeting deliverables in accordance with Grant Application (Objective Report) and approves the fourth Quarterly Progress Report;
 - b) The Department has determined that the expenses in the fourth Quarterly Expense Report are appropriate and in accordance with the approved Budget (Budget Report); and
 - c) The grantee has expended at least 60 percent of the prior payment.
- 6) A sixth payment of 12.5 percent of the approved grant amount will be disbursed upon electronic submission of an invoice to the Department, subject to the fulfillment of the following conditions:

- a) The Department has determined that the Grantee is meeting deliverables in accordance with Grant Application (Objective Report) and approves the fifth Quarterly Progress Report;
 - b) The Department has determined that the expenses in the fifth Quarterly Expense Report are appropriate and in accordance with the approved Budget (Budget Report); and
 - c) The grantee has expended at least 60 percent of the prior payment.
- 7) The final payment of 12.5 percent of the approved grant amount will be disbursed upon electronic submission of an invoice to the Department, subject to the fulfillment of the following conditions:
- a) The Grantee delivers its Final Report to the Department within 45 days of termination of the Project;
 - b) The Grantee invoices a reconciliation of the total amount received by the Grantee with a final accounting of actual Grant expenditures and delivers its reconciliation and accounting to the Department;
 - c) The Department has reconciled Grantee's invoices against its expenses, and the Department has determined that allowable expenses have not exceeded the payments to date by up to 10 percent; and
 - d) The Department has determined that Grantee has satisfactorily fulfilled all the terms and conditions required by this Agreement, including promptly providing any additional information requested by the Department.

For two-year projects, the payment schedule will consist of 9 payments (3 in Year 1 and 4 in Year 2), based on the approved budget. In year two, a final report must be submitted within 45 days of the completion of the project. All reports will be in a format determined by the Department.

REPORT SCHEDULE 24-Month Projects	PAYMENT SCHEDULE 24-Month Projects
Submit Initial Invoice	Receive first payment of 25 % of grant after grant agreement execution and submittal of first invoice.
Submit 1 st Quarterly Report	Receive approval of Quarterly Report. No invoice to submit.
Submit 2nd Quarterly Report	Submit second invoice for 12.5 % upon approval.
Submit 3rd Quarterly Report	Submit third invoice for 12.5 % upon approval.
Submit 4th Quarterly Report	Receive approval of Quarterly Report. No invoice to submit.
Submit 5th Quarterly Report	Submit fourth invoice for 12.5 % upon approval.
Submit 6th Quarterly Report	Submit fifth for 12.5 % invoice upon approval.

Submit 7th Quarterly Report	Receive approval of Quarterly Report. No invoice to submit.
Submit 8th Quarterly Report	Submit sixth invoice for 12.5 % upon approval.
Submit Final Report	Submit the seventh/final invoice for 12.5 % upon approval of Final Report

Award Amounts Below \$100,000

Award amounts under \$100,000 will be paid, upon receipt of an invoice, as follows:

1. An initial payment of 90 percent of the approved grant amount will be made after execution of the Grant Agreement and submission of the first invoice by the Grantee to the Department.
2. Final payment of 10 percent of the approved grant amount will be made after all of the following conditions have been met:
 - a. The Grantee delivers its Final Report within 45 days of termination of the project;
 - b. The Grantee invoices a reconciliation of the total amount received by the Grantee with a final accounting of actual Grant expenditures and delivers its reconciliation and accounting to the Department;
 - c. The Department has reconciled Grantee's invoices against its expenses; AND
 - d. The Department has made a determination that Grantee has satisfactorily completed all the terms and conditions required by this Agreement, including providing any additional information requested by the Department.

CBO invoicing and payments may be adjusted based on the approved total budget, the duration of the project, Department approved activities, and the needs of the approved project.

Payment Criteria and Invoice Submittal

Grantees must obtain Department approval of their quarterly report prior to submitting an invoice. An invoice is required for payment and the invoice will be submitted online using the SAE DocuSign templates provided to grantees.

Invoicing and Payments for RCs

RCs will invoice and receive payments through the existing allocation and payment process. RCs must track and report individual project costs in GrantVantage.

Supporting Documentation

Grantees shall maintain supporting documentation for all expenses for each line item. Supporting documentation may be requested to support expenses at any time and be

subject to audit during and after completion of the grant project. Examples of supporting documentation include but are not limited to the following:

- Timesheets
- Travel receipts (e.g., meals, hotels)
- Mileage logs
- Cancelled checks (stamped by the institution from which the money is drawn to indicate funds guaranteed on the check have been paid)
- Bank statements
- Purchase receipts
- Attendance records (e.g., workshops, trainings)

Project Change Requests and Amendments

All requests for project modifications and budget changes are required to be submitted and processed through the Department grant management system (GrantVantage). Prior to implementing a change, grantees must receive Department approval. Grantees are required to complete a request for a project modification for any amendments to the approved project activities, including, but not limited to: deviation from the initial intent of a proposed activity, unexpected obstacles or delays in project implementation, or changes to the line items in the approved budget.

The Department will review request(s) and work with grantees to identify necessary actions to address any modifications. The Department must approve any project modifications or amendments prior to implementation. A change request form must be submitted for approval on extensions to project end dates. Access to the Department grants management system (GrantVantage) will be provided to the grantee upon completion of the Department online certification program.

Definitions of Selected Terms Utilized in the Guidelines

There are many different ways to define the following terms which were selected to help applicants complete their proposal.

Community Based Organization (CBO)

For the purposes of this funding, 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.

Cultural Competency

Requires organizations to: (1) have a defined set of values and principles; (2) make sure that there are behaviors, attitudes, policies, and structures in place so that they can work with all racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic groups. Cultural competence is a developmental process – meaning it takes place over time. Both individuals and organizations have different levels of awareness, knowledge, and skills because cultural competence occurs along a continuum.

Linguistic competency

Linguistic competence is the capacity of an organization to be responsive to and meet the communication needs of the people and communities it supports and serves. The organization should have policies, practices, procedures, and dedicated resources (budget and staff) to ensure diverse populations can access and benefit from supports and services. This may include but is not limited to persons who experience I/DD including those who may be deaf and hard of hearing or may not use speech as primary means of communication, who are not literate or who have low literacy and health literacy skills.

Regional Centers (RCs)

RCs are private nonprofit corporations that contract with the Department to provide or coordinate services and supports for persons with developmental disabilities. There are 21 RCs in California. The RC contact list is located [here](#) at Attachment F.

Purchase of Services (POS)

Refers to authorization for and purchase of RC services for consumers and includes service authorizations and expenditures. POS expenditure data represent the cost of services that the RC paid to vendored service providers on behalf of the consumer and his/her family. RC POS data is located [here](#) at Attachment D.