Department of Development Services

Service Access & Equity Grant Program

Fiscal Year 2024-25

Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

1. What is the purpose of the 2024-25 Service Access and Equity Grant?

The Service Access and Equity Grant supports projects 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 Service Access and Equity Grant funding?

Community-based organizations and regional centers are eligible to apply.

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

For the purposes of the 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, or any of your CBO 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 CBOs 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. 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 are available here.

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

Send grant application questions to: 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: applicantsupport@grantvantage.com.

10. What do I need <u>before</u> I start the application process?

Applicants should do the following:

- ☐ Review the FY 2024-25 Guidelines
- ☐ Watch the DDS Applicant Video at the Department's website here
- ☐ Review the DDS Application Instructions found in Attachment A
- ☐ Review the DDS instructions found in Attachment B and Attachment C

Grant Requirements and Proposal Development

The following categories are in alphabetical order.

Budget/Financial

1. What should be included in the budget template?

As part of the application process, applicants should include all budget line items within one budget template that is required to fulfill the objective of the project. Only one budget will be submitted regardless of project duration. If you are proposing a two-year project, ensure all budget line items reflect costs for the two-year period and a justification. Your budget will have three categories:

- 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 as outlined in Attachment C. 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 budget?

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 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 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. They are reasonable costs for project activities that are related to the goal of the project and are adequately documented.

8. Which expenses are not allowed?

For a list of non-allowable expenses, go to this link: 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 counties that your project proposes to serve.

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 priority population.

11. 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 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, or objective; OR if you are proposing to expand a previously awarded project into other target populations, geographic areas, activities or objective. You must click “not applicable” in each reapplication question if you are a new applicant.

13. 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.

POS Data

14. 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.

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

Links to the RC POS Annual Reports can be found here.

Project Duration

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

Yes, projects must have a proposed duration of 24 months to achieve project objective and activities.

17. 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.

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

The Department anticipates it will execute grant agreements by January 1, 2025, which is also the anticipated start date for projects.

Project Type and Target Population

19. 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.

20. 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.

21. May a proposal have more than one project type such as education and training and Community Connector?

No, the guidelines require applicants to choose one of the two project types that best describe the activities of the project. You will determine the project type based on the project objective and activities.

Proposal Certification

22. 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 budget.

23. What is the Code of Ethics?

The Code of Ethics provides expectations for grantees to conduct project activities in a professional and respectful manner that values diversity and fosters a positive working environment. You will certify that you have read and understand the Code of Ethics at the end of your application.

Proposal Submission

1. How do I submit a proposal?

You 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 at Attachment F.

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 2024-25?

Proposals must be submitted online through GrantVantage by 5:00 p.m. PST on August 9, 2024. Guidelines and related materials are located here.

5. What if I submit my proposal after 5:00 p.m. PST on August 9, 2024?

GrantVantage will not accept applications after 5:00 p.m. PST on August 9, 2024. Late applications will not be accepted. We encourage all applicants to submit their applications as early as possible.

6. What can I do to support a timely application submission?

- Applicants are encouraged to submit applications at least one-hour before the grant closing time at 5:00 p.m. to avoid delays in uploading the application.
    - Example: Applications submitted near the grant closing time may overlap due to internet speeds of uploading attachments and result in DDS not receiving your application.
- Technical system errors must be reported to the GrantVantage Support desk immediately using this email: **applicantsupport@grantvantage.com**. GV will not be available to respond to inquiries after 5:00 p.m.

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

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

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

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

9. 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. However, CBOs are required to 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 contact list where you will send your proposal is available at Attachment F.

10. How do CBOs submit proposals to RCs?

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

11. 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(s) or forward a copy of the email sent to RC(s) to SAEgrantprogram@dds.ca.gov.

12. 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.

13. 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 2024-25 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 during the review process.