Frequently Asked Questions for the Financial Assistance Grant Program for the Round Three Application Process

(Posted 12/3/10)

General Questions

1. **Eligibility-Who is Eligible to apply for the grant?**

   Network Members who submitted an Organizational Assessment to our office and have not received a Financial Assistance Grant during the previous two rounds are eligible to apply. If you are unclear whether you are eligible, please feel free to contact our office (415) 348-0011.

2. **What is the definition of a direct service and why can't you fund these activities?**

   Direct services are activities that provide benefits to others such as counseling services, housing services, food services, salaries, transportation services.

3. **Can you give me some examples of what I can do with this grant?**

   All organizations have their own needs and challenges.

   Even though your Organizational Assessment may indicate that your organizational capacity needs are in one category, you are not confined to that category for this grant.

   However, you are confined to focus on capacity building needs that have been identified on the list that appears on our website and with the application.

   We suggest you review this list with your organization. If you see a category/subtopic that you feel can help you strengthen the capacity of your organization and that this activity can be done within the timeline indicated, we strongly suggest you apply.

4. **What if I do not see my question on the FAQ page? Who do I contact?**

   The deadline to complete this grant application is on January 7, 2011. It is strongly suggested you contact our office ASAP with your questions if you do not see your question raised in this document.

5. **The Calendar Section states that the grant period does not begin until February 2011. Does that mean that whatever I do before that date is not considered part of my grant?**

   Yes that is correct. This grant can only cover items that are preapproved by our office and AFTER you have signed the Grant Agreement with us.

6. **What is an oversight meeting?**

   Our funding source for the Financial Assistance Grant Program requires us to meet with grantees on a regular basis to review your accomplishments and answer any questions you may have. These meetings are referred to as Oversight Meetings.

7. **What kind of reporting do you require for this Program?**

   Again, our funding source requires us to provide regular feedback to them on how grant monies are being used and for what purpose. We therefore ask for your full cooperation during the entire grant program to provide us with the information requested on a timely basis so that we can meet our own deadline for paperwork submission.

8. **How much money can I apply for?**

   You can apply for a minimum of $5000.
   The maximum amount is $15,000.

9. **Where is the review criteria located on your website?**

   It is located on our website in the Financial Assistance section on the Request for Proposals page. You will find it on the far right hand side of the page under "grant review". The Request for Proposals page is also accessible by clicking here.

10. **Will you be ranking grants higher if they come from a particular region?**

    We will be using the stated criteria to score the grant applications. In addition, reviewers will be asked to rank applications by region to provide a geographic representation of all the areas we serve.

Part One

1. **Can you give me an example as to what you want to see listed in what the funding will be used for?**

   Yes. Again, it is strongly encouraged that you carefully review the list of categories and sub-topics to understand what is considered a capacity building project and what is not. If you are in doubt, do not hesitate to contact our office as we can clarify this for you and provide you advice as to how you may wish to succinctly state your needs in this section.

   Some examples of capacity building are:

   *Creating a management plan
   *Implement donor tracking software
   *Install IT infrastructure
   *Providing revenue development training to staff

Part Two

1. **Why do you need so much information on items that do not necessarily pertain to our work with your office?**

   The source of funding for this program has been made possible by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA).

   ARRA recipients are therefore required to report on budgetary, geographical and other information such as previous history in receiving federal funding. We would appreciate your cooperation in providing this information to us so that we can accurately report back to ARRA.

2. **How come organizations with an annual operating budget under $500,000 and agencies responsible for administering TANF funds receive priority?**

   Again, our funding source has listed this as a priority for funding.

Part Three

1. **Am I only limited to the five categories that are listed as Capacity Building areas?**

   Yes. Because this is a grant to help strengthen the capacity of your organization, we are limiting Network Members to focus in on one or two of the five categories stated. However, please be advised that there are a number of sub topics within each of the five areas that you may wish to pursue. Please see the list for further information or please feel free to contact our office.

Part Four

1. **Why do we need to describe the staff who will be working on the grant and why is it necessary to provide a profile?**

   We are required to describe staff participation in the capacity building project undertaken and what role will be played n the project.

Part Five

1. **What happens if we cannot gather all of the information you want in this section.**

   We realize that we are not allowing a lot of time to complete this application and we apologize for the short window before the deadline date. That is why we are making our staff available to you to work on this grant application.

   After you have consulted with your office on the category/sub topic that you wish to pursue, it is advised that you contact a company/companies that can help you pursue this endeavor and ask for price quotes and what type of timeframe is required to accomplish your project. The information that you indicate in your grant application can be revised to reflect accurate figures if your application is selected for funding. Here is an example of a capacity building activity:

   Organization CDE provides 8 direct service programs. One of their funders is now requiring them to track the number of individuals who use each program. However, the software that CDE currently uses does not provide for this type of data collection.

   The CFO of CDE therefore contacts the Nonprofit Center in Los Angeles to get advice as to the type of software they should consider purchasing. A number of programs are suggested and the CFO goes online to determine the price and what would be most suitable for the organization. After discussing this information with one of the software companies, the CFO has a good idea as to the cost of this endeavor and the time it would take to install the software and train staff. This information is then recorded in the Financial Assistance Grant Program Application under Part Five.

Part Six

1. **How should we evaluate how this activity strengthens the capacity of our organization?**

We do not require a specific method for evaluating your activities. However, it is good to create a plan that would be easy to follow and track within the specific time limit you are given to conduct this grant.

2. **Is there a standard procedure that you want all of us to follow?**

   Again, there is not specific procedure that is required to conduct your evaluation. It is good to start with a set of standards/expectations that you hope to achieve; document them and then determine at the end of your grant program if they have been achieved or not.