
NEW SAA CHECKLIST

Many new state administrators come to their positions with no prior experience in the agency. While they may have some knowledge of the justice system or federal grants, they may be unfamiliar with the inner workings of a state agency that administers federal grant programs. If you find yourself in such a situation, it is recommended you ask your staff the following questions. Questions in *italics* should be asked right away!

- ✓ *What federal grants does your agency administer?*
- ✓ *What is the dollar amount of each grant for the current federal fiscal year?* (Note that the federal fiscal year starts October 1 and ends September 30 of the following year.)
- ✓ *What is the remaining “life” of these funds?* (Note that federal funds may frequently be spent over more than a 12-month term. Most federal “block” grant programs have 3- or 4-year terms, with possibilities of longer terms if approved.) What about prior years’ awards?
- ✓ *Who in your agency is responsible for federal grants?*
- ✓ *What reports are required by the federal government? Are any of yours overdue? Are any due in the next 30 or 60 days?* Ask for copies of the most recent reports. These reports should give you a feel for the programs your agency administers.
- ✓ *What other documents (e.g., application, plan, compliance reports, etc.) are required? Is your agency up-to-date with these?*
- ✓ *Have all funds been allocated or awarded? If not, is there a plan in place for the use of those funds?*
- ✓ *Are funds being spent according to a plan? Are any funds expected to lapse? Is there a plan to prevent lapsing funds?*
- ✓ *Is there a planning cycle?*
- ✓ *What, if any, is the Governor’s role in the administration of federal grants?* (In many states, the Governor appoints an advisory board or shares his or her priorities for the justice system with administrators.)
- ✓ *What, if any, is the legislature’s role in the administration of federal grants?* (In most states, the legislature gives the state agency the authority to spend federal funds.)
- ✓ *Does the agency have advisory boards or a supervisory board for the federal grants? If so, what is the group’s role? Is it required by statute? Who are the members? How are they selected?*
- ✓ *When is the next advisory or supervisory board meeting?* (Ask for minutes of past meetings.)