

Date/Time: Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2010 @ 1:00 pm ET

Replay Info: 800-964-4547 available until 2/24/10 at 10:59 pm (CT)

Participants: 150

Welcome: We would like to welcome our newest partner: the Puerto Rico Commission and its Executive Director, Maria de Lourdes Lopez. Thanks to Patrice Dempsey and her staff in the Puerto Rico State Office for their support of the past several years. Also we thank Lisa Castaldo of the AL Commission for recently providing peer support. At the conclusion of the call Maria thanked everyone for their warm welcome. She is very much looking forward to working with all of us.

Topics

1. First Book Presentation - Mitali Chakraborty

- Please see the flier distributed with the call agenda.
- All questions should be sent to Mitali at: Mchakraborty@firstbook.org.

2. Volunteer Generation Fund Update – Mal Coles, Amy Borgstrom, Daniel Barutta

While the NOFA is still in the draft phase and not yet officially complete, here are the specifics at this stage:

- CNCS has \$4 million for FY 2010 for state commissions on a competitive basis.
- We are finalizing the NOFA that will have the following timeline of:
 - **March 23, 2010** – NOFA open for applications;
 - **May 18, 2010** – application due date;
 - **Mid-August** – award announcements.
 - **September 30, 2010** – Latest date for projects to start.
- Grants will have a minimum of \$75,000 and no maximum. CNCS does not want to stifle innovation with an upper cap. The minimum amount of \$75,000 provides the opportunity for a state commission to finance some quality. State commissions have the flexibility to conduct the initiative themselves directly or to use a sub granting process.
- There is a progressive match for grantees: 20% in Year 1; 30% in Year 2; 40% in year 3 and 50% in year 4 and any subsequent years. There are reimbursable grants.
- ***These initial grants will be for a three-year period three years, with funding in annual increments. Grantees will be eligible for continuation funding in the second and third year contingent on the availability of appropriations, compliance and satisfactory performance.*** This is an update from what was discussed on the call – we spoke of possibly a one-year grant period. Several callers were concerned with the limitations of a one-year grant period.
- The program design can include cross-streaming activities.
- All applicants will apply through eGrants.
- The NOFA will have all the nuts and bolts on how to apply.

3. CNCS State Office Update – Mal Coles – CNCS Area Manager, Atlantic Cluster

- Right now State Office staff is busy certifying the eligibility of current RSVP projects.

- This summer RSVP will be holding a \$2.7 million competition to allow current RSVP programs to expand and to give new organizations the opportunity to start projects.

4. AmeriCorps State/National Overview – Lois Nembhard, Acting AmeriCorps Director

A few notes:

- Although Headquarters is closed due to the snow, most program officers are working. If you cannot get in touch with them, please contact me. Peg Rosenberry can also be reached.
- We are excited about welcoming our three new program officers and are now fully staffed. The new staff will be integrated into GARP so they won't be taking on a portfolio for a few months.

2010 GARP

- The key changes: the new five priorities, full time fixed amount grant pilot, single competition
- Apps that came in numbers are still estimated:
 - 550 new and recompetete applications;
 - 367 for the combined;
 - 51 fixed amount pilot program;
 - 122 planning grant applications;
 - 13 Indian Tribes;
 - 3 Territories and states without commission;
 - 34 State & National EAPs;
 - Total requests: \$387.6 million; \$374 million is for the state combined;
 - Total 7.6 million EAP - new and recompetete \$3.7 million;
 - 217 Education Priority Area;
 - 129 Opportunity Priority Area;
 - 67 Clean Energy and the Environment Priority Area;
 - 81 Healthy Futures Priority Area; and
 - 17 Veterans Priority Area.
- Reminders: peer review starts now and goes through beginning of March.
- April 26 – May 28 clarification including finalizing performance measures.
- Notification by mid-June
- Planning competition is staff review only with clarification set for March and notification expected in early April.

Questions:

- Any initial feedback on consultation process: we've heard positive things. Commissions are receiving useful info they've never had before.
- In February each commission will receive a list from CNCS – we are still on track but just a few days behind – we will get the info out next week. We initially had Feb. 10 but we will adjust and have your response by the end of March.
- Will we go into eGrants to enter the info? Yes, there will be new eGrants screens where you will have input your comments – radial buttons with a short text box for supporting comments.
- What would happen if the commission did not know – we can follow up with either party – ask Rob.
- We will get an email that eGrants is ready? Yes.

- We were hoping to get funding announcements before mid-June – we are running up against the state budget deadline of June 30th. A plea to get some notification as early as possible. Lois – the Congressional Recess is impacting our announcement date.
- Clarification period: in order to distribute between do you ever negotiate a partial award? We do sometimes approve someone to clarify – possible that would come into play.

5. ARRA Awards Update - Sueko Kumagai & Jim Stone

- Thank you for all your work on the latest 1512 reporting. We were able to get them submitted on time! You will also notice you can make editions on your ARRA 1512 report – please do not do this – contact your Program Officer first. We are working with OMB to see how to handle the corrections.
- Other topic – thank you for the progress reports due at the end of last month. You will be getting feedback on these in the next few weeks.
- CNCS is now in the process of recouping funds and MSY – we are looking at grantees with large number of slots and MSY unfilled. We want to recoup the slots and funds to fully utilize the Recovery money. There are very few programs in the category – fewer than 10 at this point.
- Formula funds – if we know our formula programs cannot spend money, can we rework funding among our formula grantees. Another GARP? Sueko – we don't know if there is another GARP for recouped money. We may make the leftover money available on an emergency basis. The new Jobs bill may be a new competition.
- Can a formula Recovery grant be extended to allow programs to fill slots? We will let you know.

6. Office of Grants Management – Peg Rosenberry

- Keep your CCR registration current. If the registration expires, you will not be able to enter future reports in federalreporting.gov.
- Unexpended Funds in Continuation Grants
 - The Corporation will offset the amount of new competitive and formula funds awarded by the amount of unexpended funds in your grant.
 - In addition to your FFR due 4/30/10 in eGrants, you will be required to submit an unexpended funds worksheet to your grants officer.
 - The worksheet requires you to identify the amount of unexpended funds you will have available at the end of program year 2009-10.
 - Commission formula grantees will be required to describe plans for the use of the unexpended funds and identify the amount you cannot use and will relinquish to the Corporation. If the commission has plans to use those formula funds, they will not be reduced from the next award.
 - The unexpended funds worksheet and instructions will come with your 30-day FFR reminder letter on April 1st.

7. AmeriCorps Week - Amy Borgstrom

- **May 9-15** – We have been planning with our Public Affairs colleagues for the last month. Expect a kickoff email in the next few weeks. Will have presentation kits, video and photo contest, and event reporting tool as in years past. Kentucky will be hosting a grand opening in which some 500 beds will be built and outfitted in 24 hours. The DC commission is looking into hosting another event with our Major League Baseball Team. Other commissions are seeking sponsorship for a closing event. Alums very involved and committed. Will be surveying for impact after AmeriCorps Week

- **Question: availability of Presentation kits:** limited amount of presentation kits last year. It will be the same process as last year.

8. Question about applying for alternative match schedule for admin grant. This will be decided in March. Apply for the funding allocated at February 1st. See follow-up e-mail.

Two options: Apply for the amount you can match now and adjust the budget later if your request for the alternative match schedule is approved. Submit a budget based on the alternative match schedule and adjust later if your request is not approved.

9. Economic Challenges Facing Grantees – Bill Basl, ED, Washington Commission

The following is a synopsis of Bill's presentation and the ensuing discussion.

- The ability of commissions to meet the admin match during this time is problematic. Look at the number of commissions who are at the 48% requirement who cannot meet their admin match. Many commissions are taking or maybe facing possible mandatory monthly furlough days. The challenge then becomes how does a commission get more work done with less staff time? The Corporation's CEO should send a strongly worded letter to each governor saying that states need to meet grant requirements in order to run AmeriCorps programs through commissions.
- Bill suggests the Corporation should formulate a couple of working groups – one with state commissions, another that looks at accelerated match, the whole issue of match and fixed-price awards. Is it possible to waive and set back the accelerated match to what it was 3 years ago?

Comments

- Mary Alice Crofton (ME) – We need an alternative match schedule; there is no match waiver procedure across the board – internally CNCS has been skirted this issue for a long time. An alternative match schedule that states the dollar issues. Peg Rosenberry agreed to note this issue. There should be something in between.
- We need a re-emphasis of in-kind match is helping a lot. Contributions like bookkeeping services are not being counted. Where do you find, how do you talk about it with your partners? Peg's response: OGM has been coaching the commissions on different types of match – out with these within the next month.
- Barbara Thomas (NE) – What is the proper procedure for requesting consideration for the alternate match schedule for commission admin grants? Peg: we will issue guidance before Friday. **NB:** the guidance was issued the next day (February 11, 2010).
- Jason Patnosh (NACHC national grantee) – thank you, Bill – our national direct operates like a commission – we have had programs drop off because of the match. It's definitely an issue facing all of us. This also has an impact on recruitment and retention.
- Bill Basil – with an accelerated match the more successful you are the more match you have to find. We can't have well-run programs. Regarding fixed-price grants – we thought programs would convert to fixed-price but the cost of \$13,000 is so low. We need to raise the threshold to encourage more programs to opt for it.
- Toya Nelson (CO) – thank you, Bill – I would like to volunteer as a member of a working group.
- Rowena Madden (NJ) – thank you Bill – I also volunteer for a working group. Even with state admin funding, states may not be able to fill vacant state positions. Also is there a further response to Haiti? Lois Nembhard: no, not at this point. If you have specific questions please let us know. New Jersey, Florida and New York may have a big influx in Haitian evacuees.

Conclusion/Next Call: The call ended at 2:25 pm ET. The next grantee call will be early May.

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