**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Assistive Technology Alternative Financing Program**

United States Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Community Living

FY 2020 Funding Opportunity

**HHS-2020-ACL-CIP-ATTF-0426**

***Last update: April 24, 2020***

1. Question: Can we subcontract some or all Alternative Financing Program (AFP) grant activities?

Answer: Grantees, not the Federal Government, must decide whether it is in their best interest to subcontract some of the grant activities. That said, however, it is very important that the grantee realize that the administrative responsibility and oversight of all grant activities remains with the grantee. Thus, we recommend when subcontracting, the grantee retain sufficient funding to adequately fulfill the administrative, oversight, and sustainability responsibilities under the grant.

1. Question: Is there an upper limit on the amount of indirect costs that will be permitted?

Answer: No, but applications that reflect lower administrative expenses will receive more favorable ratings in that category. For each 12-month budget period, grantees must recalculate their allowable indirect cost rate, which is a percentage of the portion of the grant award that is used annually for program administration related to the AFP.

1. Question: What is the process for obtaining an indirect cost rate agreement with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)?

Answer: The DHHS Cost Allocation Services (CAS) is the cognizant Federal agency for negotiating an indirect agreement. Contact information and the application process are provided at the CAS website: <https://rates.psc.gov>

NOTE:**Indirect charges** may only be requested if: (1) the applicant has a current indirect cost rate agreement approved by the Department of Health and Human Services or another Federal agency; or (2) the applicant is a state or local government agency.  State governments should enter the amount of indirect costs determined in accordance with DHHS requirements.  **If indirect costs are to be included in the application, a copy of the approved indirect cost agreement must be included with the application.  Further, if any sub-contractors or sub-grantees are requesting indirect costs, a copy of the latest approved indirect cost agreements must also be included with the application, or reference to an approved cost allocation plan.**

1. Question: Is the AFP funding opportunity open to existing and new AFPs?

Answer: Yes.

1. Question: Can we apply for more than one AFP grant or are we limited to only one grant?

Answer: States and community-based organizations are not limited to the submission of only one AFP grant application. Final award decisions will be made by the Administrator, ACL. In making these decisions, the Administrator will take into consideration: recommendations of the review panel; reviews for programmatic and grants management compliance; the reasonableness of the estimated cost to the government considering the available funding and anticipated results; geographic distribution; program diversity; and the likelihood that the proposed project will result in the benefits expected.

1. Question: Can an application proposal support an AFP to serve more than one state?

Answer: There is nothing in the funding opportunity announcement that prevents a multi-State consortium from applying. Multi-state groups or consortia are eligible to apply.

1. Question: As far as the 12-month budget period is concerned, do we need to show the full amount of the funding request being used during this time or are we able to show that a portion of the Federal funds would be used in subsequent years to help sustain the program?  It seems that the future use is acceptable based on the budget example, however, the project/budget period language has one member of staff concerned that all funds must be accounted for being allocated to specific uses during the initial 12-month period.

Answer: The budget period for the Federal grant award is 12 months. The project period for the Federal grant award is 12 months. The full amount of the funding request should be reflected in the 12-month budget period. Please show the entire Federal grant award amount requested in Project Year 1 of the budget for the AFP grant application. Therefore, complete only the column for Project Year 1 to reflect the full award amount due to the one-year budget period of the AFP grant. An AFP grant applicant cannot know the amount of funds that will be provided for cash loans to purchase AT devices and services nor the exact expenditures needed to administer the program during the first year and beyond the 12-month project/budget period. The key to the 12-month project period is ACL’s intent for AFP grant recipients to draw down all of the funds within the first year. Yes, the allowance of funds for future use to administer the program is acceptable. ACL expects that AFP grant applicants will plan to draw down the entire Federal award within the 12-month project/budget period. Costs to administer an AFP are part of conducting required activities beyond the initial 12-month budget/project period. Applicants should propose sustainability strategies to sustain the AFP beyond the 12-month project/budget period.

1. Question: Are the Budget Narrative Justification and Budget Template included in the 24-page limit for the Project Narrative of the AFP grant application?

Answer: No, the Budget Narrative Justification and Budget Template are not counted as part of the 24-page limit for the Project Narrative section.

1. Question: What are the spacing guidelines for the Project Narrative of the AFP grant application?

Answer: The Project Narrative section must be double-spaced.

1. Questions about reviewers: How will the reviewers be selected? Will all reviewers have the chance to review all applications?

Answer: Reviewers are selected by recruiting technical experts in the field of the opportunity.  Proposed reviewers are eligible to review, if they have not served more than four consecutive years on the same opportunity.  Reviewers are not permitted to review applications when a conflict of interest exists.  Reviewers are formed into panels.  Each panel is composed of at least three reviewers plus one moderator.   Each panel reviews a select number of applications using the scoring criteria in the Funding Opportunity Announcement. All panel members review the same applications on the panel. Each panel meets to discuss the results of their independent review and are provided an opportunity to adjust their scores. Scores are normalized to remove any differences across reviewers. Scores for each applicant are ranked highest score to lowest score. Final award decisions will be made by the Administrator, ACL. In making these decisions, the Administrator will take into consideration: recommendations of the review panel; reviews for programmatic and grants management compliance; the reasonableness of the estimated cost to the government considering the available funding and anticipated results; geographic distribution; program diversity; and the likelihood that the proposed project will result in the benefits expected.

1. Question: There was something said about including information in your proposal about how previous award money was spent. Where would this be put? Would it be included in the narrative or would it be included in another question? Would it be reporting on the previous award or multiple past awards?

Answer: In section I. Funding Opportunity Description, under (3) Previous Grant Recipients on page 3 of the Funding Opportunity Announcement, applicants that have previously received an AFP grant award from ACL under a prior year opportunity must provide information on the amount remaining in the restricted account for financial loans and how the prior funding has been used, including the number of loans extended and individuals served, funding leveraged, and credit building activities developed. If applicable, the applicant submits a separate attachment that is not included in the 24-page limit narrative of the current proposal and provides information on the award(s) previously received from ACL under a prior funding opportunity or opportunities.