

**State Systems Interoperability and Integration Projects
HHS-2012-ACF-OCSE-FQ-0551
Potential Applicant Call**

June 28, 2012 – 3:30 – 4:30 pm Eastern

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time all parties are on listen-only mode for the duration of today's conference.

At the end of today's call we will have a question answer session at which time you may press Star 1 in record your first name only.

This call is being recorded. If you do have any objections please disconnect at this time.

I would now like to go ahead and turn today's call over to Ms. Sheila Drake. Ma'am you may begin.

Sheila Drake: Thank you (Jacqueline). First thank you. Welcome to the conference call for potential applicants for the state systems interoperability and integration projects, a Funding Opportunity Announcement which is offered by the Administration for Children and Families or ACF through the ACF Interoperability Initiative.

The ACF interoperability initiative is managed by ACF's Office of Child Support Enforcement or OCSE.

OCSE's Division of State and Tribal systems maintains responsibility for the competitive award process, administration, and evaluation of the Funding Opportunity Announcement we'll discuss today.

So the purpose of today's call is to clarify the information provided in the Funding Opportunity Announcement also known as FOA.

So please note that throughout the call I'll refer to the grant opportunity as the interoperability opportunity.

And you will note if you haven't already that a majority of today's call is scripted to eliminate the possibility of sharing information that would possibly provide an advantage to one applicant over another or be unfair to potential applicants that are not - were not able to join us today.

And please also note that the call is being recorded and transcribed. A transcript and recording will be placed on the ACF Interoperability Initiative Web site by July 13, 2012.

And the URL to the ACF Interoperability Initiative Web site is <http://transition.acf.hhs.gov/about/interoperability>.

And before we continue further I'd like to introduce myself and my colleague. With me today is Joe Bodmer who serves as the Project Manager for the ACF Interoperability Initiative.

And he is also the Director of the Division of State and Tribal Systems in the ACF Office of Child Support Enforcement.

And my name is Sheila Drake and I serve as a Team Lead for the ACF Interoperability Initiative as well as a Senior Management Analyst in OCSE's Division of State and Tribal Systems.

Today Joe and I will take turns presenting information on the call. And we've design the call to conform to the federal grants policy requirements.

The interoperability grants are competitive and as such OCSE must ensure that no applicant receives information that could provide a potential advantage over any other applicant.

And I'll read a statement from ACF's Division of Grants Policy that speaks to this point and "ACF does not provide direct guidance or instruction in the development of an applicant's project design or in writing their application.

Applicants should use their best judgment in determining whether they are able to meet the requirements contained in the FOA and whether they're able to develop an application they believe to be responsive to the FOA and in designing and writing their applications.

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by objective review panels using the criteria described in Section 5.1 of the FOA.

The review panels will use the FOA as their principle guidance available to them in the same way that it is the principle guidance for applicants."

So please keep this in mind today as you consider your questions for the live question and answer session.

Because the applicants must primarily depend on the grant announcement when preparing applications the staff here have worked incredibly hard to provide all information that is necessary and pertinent to the interoperability opportunity in the FOA.

So today's call will simply seek to better clarify the announcement. And given this you'll find that much of the information we present today will directly reference the open FOA.

And as I reference the FOA today I will note page numbers for you from the PDF version of the FOA that's available on grants.gov. So I encourage you to keep it available today during the call.

So the agenda of today's call is to first walk through some of the frequently asked questions about the grant opportunity and provide responses that we have researched in advance of the call.

And after we walked through the FAQs we will then open the phone line and take any further questions you have. And we'll provide more instruction on the live Q&A a little bit later.

Joe Bodmer: Thank you Sheila. This is Joe Bodmer. I will read through each of the FAQs and indicate the question and then Sheila will provide the response.

The questions range from basic grant information to more complex programmatic questions so please listen carefully.

Our first question is how do I submit an application? Sheila?

Sheila Drake: The answer please see Page 9 Section 4 application and submission information. All the applications must be submitted electronically at www.grants.gov.

ACF will no longer accept paper applications unless the applicant has requested and received an exemption in advance from ACF.

And any - please direct any questions you may have about the grants.gov system to the www.grants.gov help desk by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or by email to the email address support@grants.gov.

And that help desk is available 24 hours a day seven days a week. OCSE program staff are unable to assist you with questions related to grants.gov so if you contact the help desk it's also helpful to please retain your help desk ticket number.

Joe Bodmer: Our next question, what kinds of applicant organizations are eligible to apply?

Sheila Drake: And the answer is on Page 7 Section 2.1 eligibility applicants quote, eligibility is open to state human services agencies including the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Individuals, foreign entities, and sole proprietorship organizations are not eligible to compete for or receive awards under this announcement.

Joe Bodmer: Our next question, what is the length of the project period for this grant?

Sheila Drake: And the answer see Page 6 Section 2 award information. The project and budget period for this grant is 12 months.

Joe Bodmer: Our next question what is the total budget for this grant?

Sheila Drake: And the answer see Page 6 Section 2 which is award information. For the project period the award ceiling is \$1,125,000 and the award floor is \$750,000. The awards will be completed in fiscal year 2012.

Joe Bodmer: Our next question is there a cost sharing or match requirement from states?

Sheila Drake: And the answer is no.

Joe Bodmer: How is the Office of Management and Budget involved in this grant opportunity?

Sheila Drake: Answers see Page 1 which is the executive summary. The Office of Management and Budget also known as OMB Partnership Fund for Program Integrity Innovation provided by the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families funding for the state systems interoperability and integration projects opportunity.

And the grantees will plan to achieve one or more of the following OMB partnership fund goals, one to improve service delivery to clients, two reduce errors and improve program integrity or three improve administrative efficiency.

Joe Bodmer: And our next question what will the grant fund?

Sheila Drake: Answer please see Page 1 executive summary ACF through OCSE plans to fund awards designed to “explore and plan improved interoperability and integration and eligibility and enrollment, business process and workflows, case management, and other related functions across Health and Human Services information and technology systems.”

In other words you can also see Page 3 project purpose “explore and plan improved interoperability and integration and eligibility and enrollment case management and other related functions across human services information technology systems and explore integration with other programs.”

Joe Bodmer: Thank you Sheila. Our next question what activity will grantees complete as part of this award?

Sheila Drake: Answer see Page 1 executive summary. “Grantees will explore system design and implementation options to determine the costs and benefits of different options and develop concrete implementation plans.

Grantees will produce a public report to inform other states considering similar systems integration and interoperability issues.

Grantee reports will detail at a minimum the enterprise architecture used envision business process, and workflows, programs involved, privacy and confidentiality framework developed to support appropriate data sharing, potential outcomes and impacts, and a roadmap for implementation by other states.”

Joe Bodmer: Our next question what are some examples of potential state systems interoperability and integration projects?

Sheila Drake: Answer see Pages 3 and 4 Section 1 funding opportunity description. The following are potential project examples but applications are not limited to these examples, quote, states could explore options relating to human service business process and systems coordination or integration in light of investments that states may already be making such as to support the Medicaid expansion in the health insurance exchange.

Second - the second example states quote, states could explore their retrofit or enhancement of existing integrated health and human services systems with additional functionality such as adding data warehousing capabilities with

data analytics and decision support or perhaps modifying existing systems to populate case files with common participant numbers beyond master or client index.

And the third example “states could explore the options around and project planning for meeting the requirements of Section 4003 of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012.”

Joe Bodmer: Our next question what are the required components of the projects design?

Sheila Drake: Answers see Pages 4 through 6 Section 1 funding opportunity description quote, this section describes the for project design requirements for grantees, A interoperability plan, B project management plan, C planning and participation in key events, and D reporting.

Please also note for Page 6 Section 1 funding opportunity description that “reporting is a significant component of this grant award.”

And to - sorry, and also quote, see Section 6.3 for details. Section 6.3 reporting is covered on Pages 32 through 36 of the FOA.

Joe Bodmer: Our next question what are the application requirements?

Sheila Drake: Answer please see Pages 10 through 27 Section 4.2 through Section 4.6 content and form of application submission and related subtopics.

The chart on Page 15 offers the applicant with a quick overall grant of that application package component and the page limitation requirements.

Details cited in Section 4.2 through 4.6 include reference to the following one the project summary abstract is limited to one page, single spaced.

The project description is limited to 30 pages, and this must include the following items at a minimum. The table of contents, interoperability plan, project management plan, number four planning and participation in key events, and five reporting.

Appendices are limited to 50 pages and it must include the following items at a minimum. One resumes and summary of experience or project manager and other key personnel, two proposed format and content sections of the monthly progress report, and three proposal format and content sections of the final report.

Finally the budget justification may be single spaced and in 12 point font and is limited to ten pages and will not count against page limitations.

With the exception of the required standard forms all application materials must be formatted so they will print out onto a 8.5 by 11 inch white paper with 1 inch margins.

Joe Bodmer: Our next question will I be penalized if the full project description in my application is shorter than 30 pages?

Sheila Drake: Please see Page 16 Section 4.2 general expectations and instructions. And that states “project descriptions are evaluated on the basis of substance and measurable outcomes, not length.”

Joe Bodmer: And next how will applications be evaluated?

Sheila Drake: And the answer there is please see Pages 27 through 29 Section 5.1 criteria. Applications will be evaluated based on the following five categories of review criteria, one the interoperability plan, a maximum of 30 points, two, project management, a maximum of 20 points, three planning and participation in key events maximum ten points, four reporting maximum 30 points, five budget and budget justification maximum 10 points.

So we're now ready to transition to the live Q&A. And before we begin that session section I'd like to just reiterate that ACF OCSE may not provide applicants with advice or guidance on program design.

So just reiterate this point I'm going to again read the following statement from ACF Division of Grants Policy.

“ACF does not provide direct guidance or instruction in the development of an applicant’s project design or in writing their application.

Applicants should use their best judgment in determining whether they’re able to meet the requirements contained in the FOA, whether they’re able to develop an application they believe to be responsive to the FOA, and in designing and writing their application.

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by objective review panels using criteria described in Section 5.1 of the FOA.

The review panels will use the FOA as the principle guidance available to them in the same way that is the principle guidance for applicants.”

So given this we - please be aware that we may elect not to answer questions that could be directly related to the design of your particular project.

If you would like to send me any questions not answered for further consideration you can do that.

My email is sheila.drake@acf.hhs.gov and that's Sheila S-H-E-I-L-A. Drake D-R-A-K-E again @acf.hhs.gov and my information is also written out in the FOA.

And now the operator will open the line for questions. And what we'll do is we will collect the questions first so the operator's going to assist us by walking through each question and we're going to note the questions as we walk through.

And then we may go on mute and step off-line for just a few minutes and review the questions and answer the ones that we are able to and we'll - so we might just need a few minutes to do that.

So (Jaclyn) operator, if you could get us started on Q&A please?

Coordinator: All right and if you would like to ask a question from the phone line it is Star 1, un-mute your line and record your first name only.

If you need to withdraw your question it is Star 2. So again please press Star 1, un-mute your line in record your first name only. It'll take just a few moments for those to come through.

Our first question comes from (Darrell). Your line is open sir.

(Darrell): Hi. My question is on Page 30 prohibition against process. What would we need to have a vendor cooperate just - and be a partner with this - a vendor

from the private sector where they would certify that no access allowable direct or indirect costs were charged? How do we do that? Thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you. And our next question comes from (Karen). Your line is open.

(Karen): So this grant it seems to say that it funds salaries of state staff. And no other grant I've read has said that, at least to the best of my knowledge.

So let's say hypothetically I was working on it on the project management and I make, you know, X. And I spend 50% of my time would it cover let's say I made 40 would it cover 20,000 of that?

Coordinator: Thank you. And our next question comes from (Paul). Your line is open.

(Paul) Yes hello. It says that for eligible applicants they are state human service agencies.

Is there an assumption that the applicant is a collection of state human service agencies or the entire state Department of Human Services or just one agency?

Obviously that could be a judgment call for the applicant but is there some implication here about a coalition of applicants?

Joe Bodmer: (Paul) this is a clarification. Could you cite the page number that you're referring to?

(Paul): I believe it said Page 7.

Joe Bodmer: Thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you. And I am showing no other questions but again as a reminder it is Star 1 and record your first name.

Sheila Drake: If there are no other questions right this moment if you could bear with me I'm going to put the line on mute while we review the questions so it could take a few minutes if you'll just - appreciate you holding.

(Jaclyn) hi. This is Sheila. We're back on the line and we're going to respond - or to the three questions that we received.

Coordinator: All right.

Sheila Drake: Thank you. The first one was a question regarding Page 30 regarding prohibition against vendor in the proposal regarding being for profit the applicant, whether the applicant had to be - cannot be for profit and whether you could have a vendor within the application?

Joe Bodmer: ACF does not take a position on state procurement processes necessarily. The state has to be the applicant. If the state has a contract with a vendor to support the state's work in this effort, that is between the state and the corporations that they've hired.

Sheila Drake: And the next question was regarding funding. If the grant award could be used to fund salaries of state staff since within the application it does mention a project manager. And the answer for that?

Joe Bodmer: At this time OCSE elects not to answer the question.

Sheila Drake: And the third question was regarding some clarification on eligibility and the state human services agency whether that means one agency, a whole entity,

or a collaboration of some human services agencies, and the response to that is from Joe.

Joe Bodmer: The response to that question is that the reference to state human service agency could be the entire department, it could be a program or programs within the department. That is a program design question for the state to decide how they want to build their application.

Sheila Drake: So at this time we do - we appreciate the questions. And of course we're aware that we might not be able to answer some of the questions due to the grants policy requirement but we hope this has been helpful.

And we appreciate you joining us today and we wish you luck on preparing your grant applications and we look forward to reviewing those.

As a reminder a transcript and a recording of today's call will be placed on the ACF Interoperability Initiative Web site by Friday, July 13, 2012.

And that Web site again is <http://transition.acf.hhs.gov/about/interoperability> or you can do just a basic search on the Internet for ACF Interoperability Initiative and you should be able to find that Web page.

Thanks and we appreciate it.

Joe Bodmer: Goodbye. Thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you for participating in today's conference. You may now disconnect at this time. Have a wonderful day.

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