



Administration for Children and Families

Office of Community Services

Division of State Assistance

Pre-Application Technical Assistance Call

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) – Training and Technical Assistance Program:

State Eligible Entity Training and Technical Assistance
Services (SEETAS)

HHS-2015-ACF-OCS-ET-1007



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Agenda

- **Welcome / Introductions and CSBG Program Overview**
 - **Josezetta Alexander**, Community Services Program Specialist, Division of State Assistance, Office of Community Services

- **Overview of the Community Services Block Grant Program (CSBG) and the CSBG Network**
 - **Seth Hassett**, Director, Division of State Assistance, Office of Community Services

- **State Eligible Entity Training Technical Assistance Services Funding Announcement Overview**
 - **Isaac Davis**, Program Specialist, Division of State Assistance, Office of Community Services

- **Closing Remarks**
 - **Seth Hassett**, Director, Division of State Assistance, Office of Community Services



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COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (CSBG)



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CSBG Overview

The role of the Office of Community Services (OCS), as it relates to the Community Services Block Grant Program (CSBG), is to provide assistance to states and local communities working through a network of CSBG-eligible entities for the reduction of poverty, the revitalization of low-income communities, and the empowerment of low-income families and individuals to become self-sufficient.

CSBG provides states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, U.S. Territories, and federal and state-recognized Indian tribes and tribal organizations, Community Action Agencies (CAAs), migrant and seasonal farm workers, or other organizations designated by the states, funds to alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty in communities.

The funds provide a range of services and activities to assist the needs of low-income individuals including the homeless, migrants, and the elderly. Grantees receiving funds under the CSBG program are required to provide services and activities addressing employment, education, better use of available income, housing, nutrition, emergency services, and/or health.



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Statutory Authority

This program is authorized by Sections 674(b)(2)(A) and 678A of the CSBG Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 9903(b)(2)(A) and 9913).



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Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are eligible entities as defined by Section 673A(c)(2) of the CSBG Act, 42 U.S.C. §9902(1), CSBG-eligible entities, or statewide or local organizations or associations, with demonstrated expertise in providing training to individuals and organizations on methods of effectively addressing the needs of low-income families and communities.

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



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How Many Awards Will be Made?

- OCS expects to fund 1 cooperative agreement



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How Long Will Grant Projects Last?

- The projected project period is 17 months (17-month Project Period with one 17-month Budget Period).
- The overall program plan should be for the project period.
- Budget documents should be for budget period (one 17-month budget period).



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The Community Action Network – A Précis of the Players

Agencies (Eligible Entities)

Over 1,000 agencies provide anti-poverty services and advocacy in 99% of American counties. Approximately 80% of these agencies are 501(c)3 non-profits, and 20% are public entities, part of a city or county government. These organizations are strongly community-based, with local board control, addressing poverty in a place-based system. Agencies typically run multiple programs in their mission to address the causes and the effects of poverty.

Regional Performance and Innovation Consortia (RPIC) and State Associations

A key part of the Training and Technical Assistance network, State Associations provide member services, coordination, training and often host conferences. One Association in each region is designated as the lead agency (the RPIC) to coordinate communication and training in their ACF region, including sub-granting funds to the other State Associations.

State CSBG Offices

Housed within state governments, these are the offices with the responsibility to fund, support and monitor local agencies, passing 90% of the CSBG dollars directly to local entities. State Offices typically work closely with both the local agencies and the State Association, and are responsible for the State CSBG Plan, incorporating the agency plans for activities in their communities, as well as the annual reporting of outcomes.



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The Community Action Network – A Précis of the Players (Continued)

National Associations

There are currently four national associations, three of whom provide training and technical assistance (T/TA) to the CSBG Network under OCS cooperative agreements.

The Office of Community Services (ACF/HHS/OCS)

The federal Office of Community Services (OCS) partners with states, communities and agencies to eliminate causes of poverty, increase self-sufficiency of individuals and families and revitalize communities. In addition to the Community Services Block Grant Program, other OCS programs include the Social Services Block Grant Program, the Community Economic Development Program, the Job Opportunities for Low-Income Individuals Program, the Rural Community Development Program, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and the Assets for Independence Program.



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**State Eligible Entity Training
Technical Assistance Services
(SEETAS)
Funding Announcement Overview**



Purpose of the State Eligible Entity Training Technical Assistance Services (SEETAS)

OCS will support one cooperative agreement to coordinate the development and implementation of technical assistance plans involving to State CSBG Lead Agencies and CSBG-eligible entities and help achieve the CSBG program purpose to alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty in communities. The states' role of oversight and accountability is key to the administration and success of this program. A key focus for the successful grantee under this FOA will be to recommend strategies for enhanced coordination of T/TA supported at federal, state, and community levels to ensure the use of exemplary risk mitigation, quality improvement support, and administrative, financial and programmatic capacity development practices and policies.

OCS will work with the SEETAS grantee to identify priority States for targeted assistance.



State Eligible Entity Technical Assistance Services (SEETAS) Model

Projects funded through this announcement will:

1. Identify approximately nine high priority States to participate in targeted assistance projects;
2. Assess critical areas for technical assistance based on the circumstances for each identified State;
3. Develop a multi-level technical assistance plan for each State that includes recommended areas of assistance, resources for assistance, and funding sources for technical assistance;
4. Coordinate the implementation of customized technical assistance plans for up to one year as appropriate; and
5. Assess the results of technical assistance and provide recommendations for follow-up to States and OCS.



Core Functions of the State Eligible Entity Technical Assistance Services

The grantee chosen under this FOA will work in partnership with OCS to implement the core SEETAS functions. It is expected that tools and materials 1) foster an understanding of risk mitigation concepts, quality improvement, and capacity development strategies; 2) reinforce federal guidance related to organizational standards, internal controls, and accountability; and 3) support statutory and regulatory requirements and processes related to quality improvement, corrective actions, and terminating organizational eligibility or otherwise reducing the share of funding allocated to any CSBG-eligible entity when corrective actions and further technical assistance efforts are not feasible or appropriate.



Objectives of the State Eligible Entity Technical Assistance Services (SEETAS)

The selected grantee will work with OCS to employ a technical assistance strategy focused on the following:

- Develop a list of States in need of technical assistance.
- Development of a customized , technical assistance plan for selected States.
- Creation of a technical assistance infrastructure that will facilitate access to subject matter expert assistance in approximately nine States.
- Development of a cadre of consultants that are geographically disbursed to allow for ongoing assistance throughout the CSBG network.
- Development of a process to vet consultants based on expertise.
- Development of processes and procedures to coordinate the implementation of recommended technical assistance.



Objectives of the State Eligible Entity Technical Assistance Services (SEETAS) (Continued)

- Creation of tools and processes that includes substantial consultation and active responsibilities for State Lead Agencies, eligible entities, and stakeholder organizations such as State CAA Associations in the development and implementation of technical assistance efforts;
- Implementation of processes that routinely convene key partners, such as State CSBG Lead Agencies, RPIC grantees, State CAA Associations, and other CSBG technical assistance providers to develop state-specific technical assistance strategies and plans for State CSBG Lead Agencies.



Coordination with State CSBG Lead Agencies and National Technical Assistance Grantees

While the efforts of SEETAS will focus primarily on selected States, many of the tools and practices developed are expected to have broad national applicability across the CSBG Network. There may be challenges of varying degrees related to services to alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty in communities that affect the CSBG Network. It is expected that strengthening and expanding the ability of State CSBG Lead Agencies, Regional Performance and Innovation Consortium (RPIC) grantees, CAAs, and State CAA Associations to deal with these issues will lead to:

- Stronger planning and coordination that is more responsive to challenges that hinder efforts to effectively address the local needs and conditions of low-income individuals, families and communities;
- An increase in the use of innovative, effective, and legally sound risk mitigation efforts, quality improvement support, administrative, financial and programmatic capacity development.



Federal Involvement Under Cooperative Agreement Mechanism

In order to ensure that OCS meets its compliance and T/TA responsibilities for CSBG and continues its partnership with the CSBG Network, grants awarded under this FOA will be funded in the form of Cooperative Agreements. Federal involvement may include the following:

- Participating in a kick-off meeting, webinar, or conference call for State CSBG Lead Agencies, State CAA Associations, and RPIC grantees to introduce the CSBG State Eligible Entity Technical Assistance Services;
- Identifying approximately nine State CSBG Lead Agencies in need of technical assistance to strengthen State capacity;
- Convening in-person planning and coordination meetings involving CSBG T/TA providers to share information about proposed T/TA projects, identify areas for potential coordination of efforts, and identify priority areas for T/TA projects;



Federal Involvement Under Cooperative Agreement Mechanism (Continued)

- Convening routine (e.g., monthly) conference calls, reviewing project timelines and assessing progress in addressing goals among CSBG T/TA providers and other key stakeholder organizations;
- Reviewing recommendations and work plans to assess performance of TA projects in improving the quality of grantee activities and to assure coordination with other CSBG T/TA projects and activities;
- Identifying CSBG T/TA grantees that require targeted T/TA assistance in compiling innovative, exemplary practices related to a full range of services to alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty in communities; and
- Participating in webinars with CSBG T/TA service providers and facilitate the exchange of information that helps to identify common quality improvement issues.



Federal Consultation Process

- Initial call(s) with OCS program liaison within 30 days.
- Work plan submitted to OCS within 60 days.
- Project planning meeting in Washington, D.C. or via teleconference within 90 days. The SEETAS grantee should be prepared to make an oral presentation to OCS staff that describes and defends the work plan. The oral presentation should include details on the T/TA coordination activities, information dissemination approach, support of and collaboration with national CSBG T/TA providers to promote support for the implementation of organizational performance standards.



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Project Summary/Abstract

- Provide a summary of the application's project description. The summary must be clear, accurate, concise, and without reference to other parts of the application. The abstract must include a brief description of the proposed grant project including the needs to be addressed, the proposed services, and the population group(s) to be served.
- The project abstract must be single-spaced, in Times New Roman 12-point font, and limited to one page in length. Additional pages will be removed and will not be reviewed.



Outcomes Expected

- Identify the outcomes to be derived from the project. Outcomes should relate to the overall goals of the project as described in *Section 1. Program Description*. If research is part of the proposed work, outcomes must include hypothesized results and implications of the proposed research.
- Describe in detail the expected achievements from this project. Describe likely outcomes for CSBG-eligible entities, State CSBG Lead Agencies that receive proposed T/TA activities. Describe likely benefits for the CSBG Network due to the proposed T/TA activities.
- In describing the outcomes expected, demonstrate how the proposed project will meet the T/TA needs of the States proposed to be served. Identify how the activities will be coordinated with State CSBG Lead Agencies. Explain how the proposed activities will help address immediate T/TA needs, as well as the ways in which it will help OCS address long-term T/TA needs related to national T/TA coordination in the CSBG Network.



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Approach

- Applicants are expected to propose a plan that clearly and concisely describes how the proposed project will be accomplished.
- The plan will include efforts to address the core functions of the SEETAS, as well as the proposed approach to work with OCS, State CSBG Lead Agencies, CSBG-eligible entities, and leading national organizations associated with the CSBG program.
- Applicants are expected to propose a plan that addresses the overall goals of this project as described in *Section I. Funding Opportunity, SEETAS Purpose and Goals and Program Requirements*.
- *Cite potential obstacles and challenges to accomplishing project goals and explain strategies that will be used to address these challenges.*



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Evaluation

- The applicant must describe how the proposed plan for performance evaluation will help ensure that immediate T/TA needs are addressed as well as the ways in which creation of an enhanced infrastructure will help OCS address long-term T/TA needs related to quality improvement support in the CSBG Network. The applicant must describe how the proposed plan will evaluate and measure program effectiveness.
- Describe plans for evaluating effectiveness in disseminating T/TA materials such as toolkits, fact sheets, resource handbooks, publications on promising practices, and, when possible, existing technical assistance materials for activities related to collaboration, capacity-building, and exemplary practice.
- Describe plans for evaluating outcomes from workshops and training events.
- Describe plans for evaluating the impact of technical assistance activities on the management, strategic planning, performance assessment, and service delivery practices of organizations that receive technical assistance.



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CSBG Regional Performance and Innovation Consortium (RPIC) Funding Opportunity Announcement

| Criteria Sections | Points |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Objectives and Need for Assistance | 15 |
| Implementation Plan | 20 |
| Infrastructure and Procedures | 25 |
| Outcomes Expected | 15 |
| Budget and Budget Justification | 10 |
| Organizational Capacity | 15 |



Criteria Section 1: Objectives and Need for Assistance: (15 points)

In this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

- The project description is clear and complete and includes a timeline with specific and measurable goals and objectives. The project narrative of the application presents a clear statement of work to be undertaken and objectives for the period of the proposed work. (0 – 5 points).
- The applicant clearly identifies the need for assistance, the significant features and components of the RPIC, clearly states the goals (i.e., products of an effective project) and subordinate objectives (i.e., measurable steps for reaching these goals) of the project, and provides rationale for the project goals. The applicant clearly describes how the goals and objectives of proposed project activities will address the needs of State CSBG Lead Agencies, CSBG-eligible entities, and other organizations in the CSBG Network. (0 - 5 points).
- The applicant demonstrates its commitment to use funds only for activities as described in *Section I. Funding Opportunity Description*. (0 - 5 points).



Criteria Section 2: Infrastructure Development: (25 points)

In reviewing this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

- The applicant clearly and concisely describes a strategy for infrastructure development including an operational structure for SEETAS. The proposed infrastructure supports the core responsibilities of SEETAS as well as the proposed approach to work with OCS, State Lead Agencies, CSBG eligible entities and leading national organizations that support the CSBG program. (0-5 points).
- The applicant provides a description of a technical assistance infrastructure that clearly defines the roles, responsibilities, and core functions of SEETAS for targeted technical assistance to States and eligible entities. (0-5 points)



Criteria Section 2: Infrastructure Development: (25 points) (Continued)

- The applicant describes an approach for identification of approximately nine high priority states and eligible entities per project period to participate in coordinated State and local technical assistance projects based on a consistent set of national criteria, creating partnerships with States, eligible entities, and other stakeholder organizations to assess critical areas for technical assistance based on the circumstances for each identified eligible entity and State . (0 – 5 points).
- The applicant describes procedures for a customized multi-level technical assistance plan for each state that is based on a standardized template and includes recommended areas for assistance, recommended resources for assistance, and recommended funding sources. (0 – 5 points).



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Criteria Section 2: Infrastructure Development: (25 points) (Continued)

- The applicant describes technical assistance infrastructure that will be supported through the cooperative agreement and will facilitate access to expert assistance in assessment of State and eligible entity risk and operational issues and concerns. This description includes procedures for identification of a cadre of consultants that are geographically disbursed to allow for ongoing assistance throughout the CSBG Network as well as anticipated training of this cadre on SEETAS processes and procedures. (0 – 5 points)



Criteria Section 3: Implementation Plan : (25 points)

In reviewing this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

- The applicant presents a well-conceived overall approach to the project, including a preliminary design for the implementation and details describing how project will be implemented in an effective way to achieve the purpose and goals stated in *Section I. Program Description, SEETAS Purpose and Goals*. (0 - 5 points).
- The applicant describes anticipated actions to coordinate the implementation of recommended technical assistance efforts and to assess progress in addressing critical administrative, financial, and programmatic needs. These actions include creation of tools and processes that include substantial consultation and active responsibilities for the State CSBG Lead Agencies, eligible entities, and stakeholders organizations in the development and implementation of technical assistance efforts. (0 - 5 points).



Criteria Section 3: Implementation Plan: (25 points) (Continued)

- The applicant describes plans to convene key partners at the outset of each of the approximately nine selected State technical assistance projects and throughout the implementation of the technical assistance effort as necessary to ensure coordination of efforts and information sharing. Key partners include State CSBG Lead Agencies, State CAA Associations, and other CSBG technical assistance providers to develop state specific technical assistance strategies and plans for State CSBG Lead Agencies and CSBG eligible entities. (0 - 5 points).
- The applicant describes anticipated efforts to promote nationwide risk mitigation and quality improvement efforts, including identification of critical “lessons learned” from work with selected States, identification or development of necessary educational or technical assistance tools to help States and eligible entities to systematically identify, analyze, quantify, track, and mitigate risk and increase organizational efficiency, effectiveness and stability.



Criteria Section 4: Outcomes Expected: (15 points)

In reviewing the outcomes expected, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

- The applicant describes how the project will assure local eligible entities deficiencies will be resolved within planned timelines and State level capacity will be strengthened. (0 - 5 points).
- The applicant describes how the project will contribute to and promote improved identification of critical issues, analysis, quantification, tracking, and mitigation of risks as well as increased organizational efficiency, effectiveness and stability. (0 - 5 points).
- The applicant describes methods of securing participant feedback and evaluations of proposed project activities from both the State CSBG Lead Agencies and the eligible entities within the selected States. (0-5 points)



Criteria Section 5: Organizational Capacity: (15points)

In reviewing the organizational capacity, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

- The applicant provides strong evidence of sufficient experience and expertise in the program areas of this FOA. (0-5 points)
- The applicant describes the level of knowledge, skills and abilities of the proposed project director and primary staff members, and document show their specific qualifications and level of expertise will support the successful implementation of the proposed project activities. (0-5 points)
- The applicant clearly documents the roles, responsibilities, and time commitments of each proposed project staff position, including consultants, subcontractors and/or partners. (0-5 points)



Criteria Section 6: Budget and Budget Justification: (10 points)

In reviewing the budget and budget justification, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

- The applicant includes a budget that clearly outlines and aligns with the project proposal and includes a narrative justification for the amount requested. (0-10 points)



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Two-File Requirement

- **Each applicant is required to upload ONLY two electronic files, excluding SFs and OMB-approved forms.**
- **File One:** Must contain the entire Project Description, and the Budget and Budget Justification (including a line-item budget and a budget narrative).
- **File Two:** Must contain all documents required in the Appendices.

Adherence to the Two-File Requirement:

- No more than two files will be accepted for the review. Applications with additional files will be amended and files will be removed from the review. SFs and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.



Project Description

The **combined** page number limitation for the Project Description *and* the Appendices must not exceed 150 pages.

The Project Description must include the following items in this order. All items must be labeled, numbered, and organized clearly in the Table of Contents:

- Table of Contents
- Project Summary/Abstract
- Objectives and Need for Assistance
- Outcomes Expected
- Approach
- Organizational Capacity
- Dissemination Plan
- Project Timeline and Milestones
- Program Performance Evaluation Plan
- Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds
- Project Budget and Budget Justification



Project Description

The **combined** page number limitation for the Project Description *and* the Appendices must not exceed 150 pages.

The Appendices must include the following in this order. Please include a Table of Contents for all items provided in the appendices. All items must be labeled, numbered, and organized clearly in the Table of Contents:

- Table of Contents
- Proof of Legal Status of Entity/Proof of Non-Profit Status
- Logic Model
- Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information
- Third-party Agreements
- Letters of Support
- Resumes
- Other Supporting Documentation



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Review Process

- Late applications or those exceeding the funding limit will be returned to the applicants with a notation that they were unacceptable and will not be reviewed.
- Non-Federal reviewers will conduct objective review based on criteria identified in the program announcement.



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Submission

- Applications are due **July 13, 2015**
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit in advance of the deadline.
- Electronic submission required through <http://www.Grants.gov>
- Electronic applications received after 11:59 p.m. Eastern time will be disqualified.
- Applicants that do not have internet connection or sufficient computing may contact ACF for an exemption to submit in paper format.



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For Questions or Comments

Contact us at OCSReview@grantreview.org

or

(800) 281-9519