

**NYS Department of State
Division of Community Services
Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Workforce Development
Discretionary Grants- Consolidated Funding Application
Request for Applications #14-CSBG-8**

RFA Updates

Questions & Answers

Round 2

The responses to questions included herein are the official responses by the State to questions submitted by potential applicants and are hereby incorporated into RFA #14-CSBG-8 issued on May 1, 2014. In the event of any conflict between the RFA and these responses, the requirements or information contained in these responses will prevail.

Q1: I have a question, we have not been an operational NFP for 5 years, which seems to exclude us from this year's application.

A1: Yes, in order to be eligible for this RFA, the organization must have been operating continuously for at least five years.

Q2: At the workshop we were advised that 20% of the total award must be used to ensure participation opportunities for MWBEs. Other State funders require 20% of the awarded funds in the non-personnel category. Why is the DOS requirement different?

A2: There is no difference in the way MWBE goals are applied at DOS. The 20% MWBE goal is triggered when the total award will result in a grant contract that is \$25,000 or more. Budget categories such as personal services, rent, and utilities are not subject to the 20% MWBE goal; however, the 20% MWBE goal would still apply to any goods purchased or services rendered under the grant contract.

Q3: For the DOS grant in the CFA last year (or this coming year if you know this now), on Workforce Development – would the museum qualify as a CBO? We have a very strong internship training program which results in solidly job-ready alumnae each year and it seems to fit nicely. I’m seeing the definition as: Community-based organization, as defined in New York State Executive Law §159(4), shall mean any not-for-profit organization incorporated for the purpose of providing services or other assistance to economically or socially disadvantaged persons within its designated community. Such organization must have a board of directors of which more than half of the members reside in such designated community. I think this might include us, but not sure:

- **Our community (e.g. the Adirondacks) is economically disadvantaged and that is the target audience**
- **Our board is nearly all people who reside at least part-time and many full-time in the region; do part-timers count?**

A3: To qualify as an eligible CBO under this grant, an organization must be a 501c(3) that has been operating continuously for at least five years, and that fits the description of a CBO as defined in law. If the museum fits that description, they are eligible to apply... Please note, however, that a CBO must be “incorporated for the purpose of providing services or other assistance to economically or socially disadvantaged persons within its designated community.” If the mission of the non-profit fits this description and meets the other related requirements, then it is a CBO. Listing the Adirondacks as a target audience, however, is not the same as being “incorporated for the purpose of providing services or other assistance to economically or socially disadvantaged persons” within a designated community. To meet this standard, an organization must be providing direct services or other assistance to socially or economically disadvantaged persons.

With respect to the second part of the question, CBO’s are required to maintain a board with 50% of the board membership residing in the designated community. It is understood that a particular board member may have multiple residences. To meet the applicable requirement, however, an organization must be able to attest that at all times during the related contract period it will maintain a board with at least 50% of the board members actually living within the designated community.

Q4: Can a non-profit organization be eligible for funding if it provides state-funded services to low-income persons but its articles of incorporation do not specify a particular service area? If so, how would such an organization demonstrate that its board that allows for maximum feasible participation of the poor?

A4: If no service area is provided in the articles of incorporation or bylaws, then the geographic areas in which your agency is actually offering services, e.g. county, town, etc. would define your service area for our requirement regarding maximum feasible participation by board. Maximum feasible participation of the poor can be accomplished through the description of membership composition of your board.

Q5: How narrowly does DOS interpret the requirement that an organization be incorporated for the purpose of providing services or other assistance to socially or economically disadvantaged persons? Would an organization that is incorporated for the purpose of partnering with existing social service programs to provide training in a particular industry fit these guidelines?

A5: Your organization must be providing direct services or other assistance to socially or economically disadvantaged persons. An organization incorporated for purposes of partnering with existing social service programs does not fit these guidelines. These types of organizations may partner with an organization which does provide these services. The lead applicant on any partnership based application must be eligible to receive an award. See the RFA, pages 2-3 for eligible applicant information.

Q6: On the CFA site, I only see one area for an attachment, the Logic Model. The RFP also asks for M/WBE information, though. Should we include those forms in the same RFP as the logic model and upload them all together?

A6: There is a second download on the DOS website for MWBE forms (available online at: <http://www.dos.ny.gov/funding/rfa-14-csbq-8/index.html>).

Q7: Our program involves linking with others in the community. Is it sufficient to describe their commitments in narrative sections, or should we attach support letters/info from them, also in a .pdf combined with the Logic Model?

A7: For the purposes of this RFA, it is sufficient to describe the commitments of the community partners in the narrative section.

Q8: Q 3763, 3764 and 930 can tend to overlap. There is also very limited characters. Need I be concerned that if I have fully explained a point in one of those answers a reviewer will find it deficient when he/she doesn't see it fully explained in another answer? Thank you!

A8: Develop your answers as best as possible to fit within the character limit. Remember all applications are under the same restrictions.

Q9: Can you point me to information about this grant program, other than the brief description available in the CFA Resource manual? I do not see a webinar on the CFA site related to this program, there is a Workforce Investment Program webinar but the link goes to a discussion about funding for the arts.

A9: The Request for Application can be found at the Department of State at: <http://www.dos.ny.gov/funding/rfa-14-csbq-8/index.html>

The webinar is found at:

<https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa/help.cfm?section=programwebinars>

Q10: I would like to request application information/RFP for the Grant, specifically Entrepreneurial Development.

A10: The Request for Application can be found at the Department of State at:
<http://www.dos.ny.gov/funding/rfa-14-csbq-8/index.html>

Q11: Under Eligible Applicants, community-based organizations, it states that an organization must have a board of directors of which more than half of the members reside in the designated community where services are delivered. The organization I work for operates in NYC but has a national board, and fewer than half of its members live in the City. How does the review board define this "designated community," and must half of an organization's board members live in New York to be eligible for this CSBG opportunity?

A11: Designated community is the geographic area that is specified within your organization's articles of incorporation, or bylaws for the provision of services. If no geographic area is specified in the articles of incorporation or bylaws, then the designated community will be defined by the geographic area within which your organization actually provides services.

Q12: Regarding this sentence "A match of at least 25% of federal funds is required:" Do we need to match our proposed \$400,000 grant with federal funds? Or is it permissible to match our proposed grant with private foundation funds or State funds?

A12: Federal funds cannot count towards the local match, the 25% match must be from non-federal sources such as State, local, and private dollars. This can also include donated goods and services.

Q13: On the online application questionnaire, some text fields are labeled with a character limit such as "max characters: 100." Other text fields do not specify a character limit. If there is no character limit specified, does this mean we can answer the question with as much text as we want?

A13: Yes, if no character limit is specified, you may use as many characters as necessary to sufficiently answer the question.

Q14: It appears that CSBG funding is limited to Community Action Agencies, Community Action Programs, and migrant and seasonal farmworker organization. See quote below from the Department of State website: "CSBG provides federal anti-poverty funding to a statewide network consisting of community action agencies [CAAs], community action programs [CAPs], and migrant and seasonal farmworker organizations, as designated by federal laws. CAAs and CAPs were created in 1964 under the Economic Opportunity Act [EOA]. CSBG was created as a successor to EOA. The New York State network is comprised of 52 CSBG grantees serving all 62 counties, and which provide a range of services to meet the needs of low-income New Yorkers. Funding is also provided to 4 Indian Tribes/Tribal organizations, for a total of 56 entities." Given that the Urban League is not a CAA, CAP or M/S Farmworker organization, would the Urban League of Rochester be eligible to receive funding through this solicitation?

A14: To paraphrase the RFA, if your organization is a 501c(3) not-for-profit organization that has been continuously operating for at least five years and fits the definition of a community-based organization as defined in New York State Executive Law 159-e(4), you are eligible to apply for this RFA. Please refer to pages 2-3 of the RFA for complete eligibility information.

Q15: In reference to the information presented in the webinar – it was stated that a total of \$1,000,000 will be awarded each year for two years and that a total of 5 projects will be funded with a maximum award of \$200,000 per year. Does this mean that an application for less than \$200,000 per year is unlikely to be funded, or won't be considered?

A15: No. The awards will be based on the merit of the application submitted, so long as the funding requested does not exceed \$200,000 per year.

Q16: We are a nonprofit organization that typically delivers services through our staff. While the majority of our staff are women and minorities, as a nonprofit organization, we are not considered an MWBE. Should we ask for a waiver related to the FORM A -- MWBE Utilization Plan or complete the form with our subcontractors that are MWBE – which likely will not meet the goals of the contract. If we need a waiver – what is the process for requesting one? Does it need to be submitted in advance of the June 16 deadline for the grant application?

A16: The MWBE requirements stated in the RFA are made applicable to applicants through the RFA and subsequent contract process. Applicants must submit the MWBE Utilization Plan and Staffing Plan, available online at <http://www.dos.ny.gov/funding/rfa-14-csbq-8/index.html>, with the application. If considered for award, following application submission, a waiver process is available pre-contract. However, please be cautioned that such waivers are granted only in very limited circumstances.

Q17: I would like to confirm the length of the grant. Is it 24 months, so a potential award of \$200,000 could be spread over a two-year time period?

A17: The length of the grant is one year with the possibility of a renewal for a second year. The total award package, if renewed, would be up to \$400,000 for two years. The annual contract amount will be up to \$200,000.

Q18: I am writing in reference to RFA # 14-CSBG-8. My question is regarding the budget guidelines. As an applicant, does our organization need to have a federally approved indirect cost rate in order to include indirect costs in our proposed budget?

A18: Yes, you must have a federally approved indirect cost rate in order to include an indirect cost rate in the proposed budget. Absent of a federally approved indirect cost rate, the applicant may use their internally developed administrative cost rate. The use of an internally developed administrative cost rate will subject to review upon award of contract.

Q19: I am wondering if you would be able to tell me, what is the project period for the Workforce Development Grants from DOS? Is it a two-year period, or just one?

A19: The length of the grant is one year with the possibility of a renewal for a second year. The term of the award, including the renewal period, is January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2016.

Q20: Can you please confirm the length of the Workforce Development grant period, is it 12 months or 24 months. I did not see any recorded webinar for this specific grant opportunity. Also, is there a specific reference about the budget (I have an open grant application, so I see how you construct a budget, but items are allowable, and what is the indirect %, etc.)?

A20: The length of the grant is one year with the possibility of one renewal for a second year. The webinar is found at:

<https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa/help.cfm?section=programwebinars>

The budget should include only allowable costs. Indirect cost percentage refers to the approved federal indirect cost rate which is explained in OMB Circular A-122, Attachment A.

Q21: The maximum grant that an applicant may receive is \$200,000. There is a required local share match of 25%. What does this mean exactly? Who would have to come up with the match? My non-profit? A local county or town government?

A21: The 25% match must be from non-federal sources such as State, local, and private dollars. This can also include donated goods and services. The applicant must secure and document all local share match.

Q22: Can you tell me where the grant application is located for this grant?

A22: The grant application is located at:

<http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/>

Q23: We applied last year and received a 14/20 score on the budget section. I couldn't get more information as to what caused our score to be so low and as I am reviewing last year's numbers, I am trying to figure it out. Is the cost per participant considered? Is that a major factor? I completed the Program Budget section with the total budget for the program, above and beyond what the request was. For example, our total program budget was \$211,615 last year and the request was for \$100,000. I completed the form line by line with the total and true cost of the program, not just what portion would be funded by CSBG. I am thinking that may have been an error? Lastly, we did not specify what amount each funder would be responsible for in the budget line item. The formatting made it challenging and the column didn't specify but would you recommend that we do specify what amount per funder including CSBG in the "Indicate Source / Comments" column? This is assuming you want the entire program budget itemized.

A23: The time period for review of last year's application has passed. See page 8 of the RFA for debriefing guidelines for this RFA. The score for budget will be based on accuracy and maximum impact to deliver services. There is no scoring criteria based on cost per participant. The program budget should be based only on proposed CSBG funding. Failure to comply with the funding request limitation will result in disqualification of the application; see page 5 of the RFA, Pass/Fail. Source would be listed as CSBG (federal funds) or local share (source of non-federal funds and/or donations of goods and/or services). Comments (optional) should reflect anything pertinent for enhancing the budget presentation.

Q24: Our first question is related to allowable costs. I see on pages 6 and 7 of the Department of State RFA a list of ineligible costs that “include but are not limited to...” We would like to verify whether we may use these grant funds for OJT wages for individuals in Project Joseph.

A24: This cost may be allowable if it is not a cost specifically excluded, conforms to the purposes and goals of the CSBG Act, is allowable pursuant to the federal OMB cost principles referenced in the RFA, and is necessary and reasonable to service delivery. The question posed, however, does not provide enough information about OJT wages for individuals in Project Joseph to enable DOS to provide a specific answer.

Q25: I understand the Workforce Development Discretionary Grants RFP has applications due June 16th. Do you know when this solicitation will be issued again? Can you place me on the list to receive a notification of the next issuance?

A25: We do not anticipate to release this RFA again for at least two years. Yes, we will include your contact info for notification of future issuance. Future funding opportunities are also advertised on the DOS website at www.dos.ny.gov/funding.

Q26: We are an NYC non-profit in receipt of several workforce development grants, and in our experience, a typical cost-per-participant for job placement runs from \$2K to \$3K. Should we align our projected placement outcomes with this information, for example proposing 100 jobs for \$200,000 in funding? Can you provide any additional guidance on the number of job placements expected or desired?

A26: The number of job placements will depend on your organization’s capacity to serve, the number of available applicants and other factors.

Q27: Is it OK to request funding to support the continuation of services our agency is already providing, or must this proposal reflect new and/or enhanced service delivery?

A27: As per our RFA, you may “. . . expand an effective and successful existing project scope, or to initiate innovative new strategies . . .”

Q28: In the Logic Model, do we need to break down the resources to match each identified problem/need, or simply provide the overall information on funding sources?

A28: You may provide the overall information on funding sources.

Q29: My question is regarding the budget guidelines. As an applicant, does our organization need to have a federally approved indirect cost rate in order to include indirect costs in our proposed budget?

A29: Yes, you must have a federally approved indirect cost rate in order to include an indirect cost rate in the proposed budget. Absent of a federally approved indirect cost rate, the applicant may use their internally developed administrative cost rate. The use of an internally developed administrative cost rate will subject to review upon award of contract.

Q30: Are linkage letters required to document community partnerships?

A30: For the proposal, only a description of partners is required. Linkage letters may be requested at time of contracting.

Q31: Are matching funds needed for grant?

A31: Yes. Must show a local share match of 25% of the requested funds.

Q32: Can government funds be used?

A32: No federal dollars can be used as for matching. State, private, and volunteer services are acceptable sources of matching funds.

Q33: Can partnerships be used?

A33: Yes. The examples used in the slide show presentation and webinar were partnerships.

Q34: Do you work with Community Colleges?

A34: Community Action Agencies (CAAs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs), as defined in the RFA on pages 2-3, are eligible for this funding. Partnerships with entities such as community colleges, libraries, etc. are permissible. However, the lead agency must be the not-for-profit and only eligible applicants can be the recipient of grant contracts for this funding opportunity.

Q35: Are the grants only available to specific locations?

A35: No. Applicants from across New York State are eligible to apply.

Q36: Can a Grant be used to train EMS technicians, as they lost EMS service due to lack of volunteers?

A36: Please see page 3 of the RFA (Section III. Eligible Activities). Training, as stated in the RFA, must prepare participants to obtain full-time skilled employment. Applicants must also propose to serve the target population at 125% of poverty level and is delivered through a Community Action Agency or Community Based Organization as defined in the RFA, a job skills training program or certification program may be eligible for funding.

Q37: Can consortium based application be considered for training programs?

A37: If a consortium is proposed, the funding will go to the lead organization of the consortium ("lead applicant"), as long as the lead is a Community Action Agency (CAA) or Community Based Organization (CBO), a nonprofit 501C3 as defined in the RFA (see pages 2-3 of the RFA), and serves a target population with income levels of up to 125% of the federal poverty line.

Q38: For collaborative projects, do you look at two boards?

A38: The Department of State will review the Board composition of the lead applicant, which is the organization that would be considered the sole Contractor in the event that funding is awarded.

Q39: The Department of State seemed to be emphasizing that their programs were for chronically distressed communities, but the presentation only showed individuals who were poor and distressed with little reference to their actual communities.

A39: The funding would go to the CAA or CBO in the affected community and provide workforce development to people with income levels of up to 125% of the federal poverty line.

Q40: Can these funds be used for capital improvement projects?

A40: CSBG funds cannot be used for the purchase or improvement of land, or the purchase, construction, or permanent improvement of any building or other facility.

Q41. Can Federal Funds be used as matching funds for Department of State Opportunity Agenda offerings?

A41. No.

Q42. Are there any limits on funding if we were awarded monies in the past?

A42. No. A prior funding award does not place any unique or additional limits on the funding available to a successful applicant under this award. The funding limitations applicable to this award are set forth in the RFA.

Q43. Are MWBE goals applicable for all CFA offerings?

A43. Yes. See Attachment 1 of the RFA.

Q44: Specifically what kinds of funding are included under "local share"?

A44: No federal dollars can be used as matching or local share. State, private, in-kind donations and volunteer services are acceptable sources of matching funds.

Q45: Does expansion of an existing program qualify for funding?

A45: Yes.

Q46: These projects seem geared towards non-profits. How likely are small businesses to get funding for developing employees?

A46: Only CAA's and CBO's, as defined in the RFA, are eligible to receive this funding. A for-profit small business would not qualify as a CAA or CBO, and therefore would not be an eligible award recipient under this RFA. A for-profit small business may, however, be a partner to a qualified CAA or CBO applicant.

Q47: Are you only awarding 5 projects in the entire state? Or per region?

A47: The anticipated number of awards is 5 for the entire state.

Q48: Do last year's projects get preferential treatment?

A48: No.

Q49: You said you weren't measuring workforce development in terms of wages alone, do you really not look at wages at all?

A49: The Department of State does consider under Job Creation and Placement both obtaining full-time skilled employment and an improved opportunity for skilled employment as a measurement of increasing wages.

Q50. Regarding the Department of State Funding – can you match with State Dollars?

A50. State, private, in-kind donations and volunteer services are acceptable sources of matching funds. Federal dollars are not acceptable.

Q51. I am improving a building in a highly distressed area, is it considered a business investment allowable under this RFA?

A51. CSBG funds cannot be used for the purchase or improvement of land, or the purchase, construction, or permanent improvement of any building or other facility.