

# QUESTIONS/ANSWERS REGARDING RFP#G1636DLTC-LS PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE REGIONAL GRANTS

## Questions and Answers

### General Questions:

- 1. Question:** Are there any existing models or past projects that have been successful that applicant agencies could refer to for ideas for this RFP?

**Answer:** Since this is the first time this RFP has been issued, there are no specific models that could be recommended. Applicant agencies should refer to the Project Goals (1.3), Project Design (1.4) and the Regional Issue Areas (Appendix 1) for more information about the types of projects that could be considered.
- 2. Question:** Can potential proposers solicit feedback on their ideas from the person answering questions about the RFP?

**Answer:** No. No Pathways to Independence or Office of Independence and Employment staff member may provide feedback on proposals or ideas for proposals.
- 3. Question:** Are proposals required to address the Regional Issue Areas listed in Appendix 1 to be considered for funding?

**Answer:** Applicant agencies are not required to address the Regional Issue Areas in their proposals to be considered for funding, but additional points will be awarded to those proposals that do address those areas. Refer to section 6.0 on Evaluation Criteria, Potential Points to Be Awarded and Procedures for more information.
- 4. Question:** Can the distribution list for the RFP be provided to potential applicant agencies who would like to contact other agencies in their region about partnering on the RFP?

**Answer:** No, the distribution list will not be shared. Applicants may collaborate with anyone they choose. It is not necessary to work with only the agencies on the distribution list.
- 5. Question:** The RFP asks proposers to submit a copy of their proposal in electronic format. Is that CD, diskette, or some other format?

**Answer:** The electronic version should be on CD if at all possible.

### Section 1.6: Who may submit a proposal?

- 6. Question:** Could you clarify #1 under this section? Does this mean that proposers must do at least 50% of their business in those counties, or does the proposer have to provide 50% of the services being provided in that region?

**Answer:** Proposers do not need to provide 50% or more of the services or activities being provided to that region. Proposers must currently provide 50% or more of their services or activities in the counties included in the region for which they are proposing.
- 7. Question:** The RFP states that the applicant agency must currently be providing 50% or more of their services in the region for which they are applying. Does this mean disability services, and if so, what sort of disability services?

**Answer:** Proposers must currently provide 50% or more of their services or activities in the counties included in the region for which they are proposing, regardless of the type of services provided.

8. **Question:** Would an applicant agency qualify under the definition provided in Section 1.6 of the RFP if that agency provides services in only one county in the region for which they are proposing?

**Answer:** Yes, this agency would be able to apply. Applicant agencies should demonstrate an established presence in the region for which they are proposing, meaning they currently provide at least 50% of their services or activities in the counties included in the region for which they are proposing.

9. **Question:** How does the lead agency for the application or the fiscal agent obtain a certificate of good standing with the Secretary of State?

**Answer:** Applicant agencies are not required to submit a certificate of good standing with their proposal; however, copies of what is known as the *Certificate of Status* can be obtained through the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions (WDFI). Applicant agencies should contact the WDFI if there is a question about the agency's current status. This can be done through the department's website at <http://www.wdfi.org> (exit DHFS). From the home page select the *Search Business Records* link under *Quick Links* on the left side of the page and enter the name of the agency. Information about the agency's status will be provided. Tips on how to use this search function and a disclaimer about its use can be found at <http://www.wdfi.org/apps/CorpSearch/help.aspx> (exit DHFS). For further information, contact the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions at 608-261-7577.

10. **Question:** If an applicant agency provides services in four counties in a region and also provides services in one county that is another region, could they apply for the grant for the region in which they are serving four counties?

**Answer:** Yes. Since the applicant agency currently provides 50% or more of its services in the region for which it is applying, that agency may apply for the grant in that region. If that agency ends up providing services in a county outside of that region, that would be fine.

11. **Question:** Could an individual who is not affiliated with an agency or institution apply for this grant?

**Answer:** Individuals considering applying for the grant should refer to #3 under Section 1.6, which states that the lead agency for the application must hold a certificate of good standing with the Secretary of State or have a fiscal agent with such a certificate. Additional guidance is provided in Section 1.6.

12. **Question:** Does an applicant agency have to provide services in all of the counties in the region for which they are applying to be considered for this grant?

**Answer:** No, but applicant agencies must currently provide 50% or more of their services in the region for which they are applying.

**13. Question:** Can an applicant agency partner with a Pathways to Independence regional coalition on a proposal or would an applicant agency partner with organizations that are part of those coalitions?

**Answer:** The regional coalitions are not entities in the sense that they are organizations with a legal standing, so partnering with these coalitions would not be possible. It is possible to partner with organizations that have staff active within the coalitions.

**14. Question:** If an agency determined that they do not provide 50% or more of its services in the region for which they were considering applying, could they collaborate with an applicant agency that they currently have a relationship with on both writing and carrying out the intent and scope of the grant?

**Answer:** The applicant must be an agency that currently does at least half its work in the region for which it is applying. There isn't anything to prevent that applicant from partnering with any other agency it wishes, but the applicant must be the agency currently doing business in the region. Yes, this agency could collaborate with the applicant agency. In Section 1.3 on Project Goals, there are six key components of the strategic priorities of the Pathways to Independence Project listed. It mentions that successful projects will address those key components, and collaboration is one of those components.

### **Section 3.3: Salaries**

**15. Question:** Could an applicant agency that is receiving funding from another grant shift funds being used to pay part of a full-time person's salary who will then be working on activities related to the Pathways to Independence Regional Grants?

**Answer:** Yes. As long as the Regional Grant funds will not be used to supplant current salaries, this is acceptable. The person whose salary is being funded by the Regional Grant must be performing activities of the grant.

### **Section 4.0: Notice of Intent (Optional)**

**16. Question:** Is there a *Notice of Intent Form* in the attachments, or can a notice of intent be sent in letter format?

**Answer:** The decision was made not to use a Notice of Intent form, but the language was not changed in the RFP. The notice may be sent in letter format via mail or email to the addresses listed in the RFP.

**17. Question:** On page 9 of the RFP, under 4.0 Notice of Intent, it does not give a time for the deadline. Would the time for the deadline be 4:30 p.m. CDT?

**Answer:** Yes. The time for the deadline is 4:30 p.m. CDT on May 8, 2008.

**18. Question:** If an applicant agency indicated a region for which they intend to apply in their notice of intent and may be changing to a different region, will this be a problem?

**Answer:** No. There would not be a problem with changing the region from what was indicated in the notice of intent.

## **Section 5.0: Submittal of Application**

**19. Question:** Is the 10 page limit for applications firm?

**Answer:** Yes, the limit is 10 pages plus appendices. Applicants should refer to section 5.0 on page 10, which states that all applications must be typed, doubled-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font and should not exceed 10 pages plus appendices.

## **Section 6.0: Evaluation Criteria, Potential Points to Be Awarded and Procedures**

**20. Question:** Are proposals required to address the Regional Issue Areas listed in Appendix 1 to be considered for funding?

**Answer:** Applicant agencies are not required to address the Regional Issue Areas in their proposals to be considered for funding, but additional points will be awarded to those proposals that address those areas. Refer to section 6.0 on Evaluation Criteria, Potential Points to Be Awarded and Procedures for more information.

## **Part 11: Technical Specifications**

### **A. Application Summary**

**21. Question:** Item 0 asks the applicant to enter the Project Category you wish your application to compete in. What is meant by Project Category? Do you mean which Strategic Priorities are we addressing?

**Answer:** Project category refers to the section on pages 3 and 4 under 1.1 Available Funds. The project category is the region for which an applicant agency is applying.

**22. Question:** If project category refers to the Pathways region for which an applicant agency is applying, would that region be listed for Item 6 on the application, too?

**Answer:** Yes, an applicant agency would indicate the region for which they are applying for Item 6. Item 6 also asks for additional information such as the city(ies), tribe(s), county(ies) or region(s) to be served by the proposed project.

**23. Question:** Should applicants use the Application Summary form included in the RFP?

**Answer:** The Application Summary form, page 18 in the RFP, should be used. Applicants can type their responses into the electronic version of the form.

**24. Question:** Must all outcomes on Appendix 2 (Workplan) be measurable? Do you have an example of what Appendix 2 should look like?

**Answer:** Applicants should refer to Section 6.0 on Evaluation Criteria, Potential Points to be Awarded and Procedures, which starts on page 11. This section describes in detail how proposals will be evaluated. Specific information on how points are awarded for Project Outcomes and Activities and the Workplan is given in this section.

**25. Question:** Do applicants need to detail budget expenses for each detailed activity in the resource column of the Workplan? If so, do all of the figures entered in that column need to add up to the total budgeted amount requested?

**Answer:** Applicants should refer to the list of Workplan instructions provided on page 23. Resources refer to the partners, sub-contractors (if applicable), and the total requested project budget amount. You do not need to detail budget expenses for each detailed activity in the resource column on the Workplan. The budget template, which is page 24, is where applicants would provide the detailed budget information.

**26. Question:** Where does the total requested project budget amount go under the resources column of the Workplan?

**Answer:** The total requested project budget amount would be the last bullet point in the resources column.

**27. Question:** The RFP instructs applicants to use Appendices 2 and 3 as templates, but using Appendix 3 is difficult. Will it be okay to create essentially the same form in Excel or Word, include the budget lines relevant to my proposal, and all of the information requested in Appendix 3?

**Answer:** As long as the document created includes the same information included in Appendix 3, that would be fine. Removing budget line items is not recommended. That may lead evaluators to think that the budget is not complete in some way. Section 6.0 on evaluation Criteria, Potential Points to be Awarded and Procedures does outline how the points will be awarded. The details for the Budget/Budget Narrative are given on page 12. Using the Budget and Budget Narrative templates provided is part of the criteria for that section.

**28. Question:** If additional detail for a budget line is provided as a separate page, would that page be included in the 10 page limit for applications?

**Answer:** No, separate pages that provide detailed information about budget line items would not be included in the 10 page application limit.

**29. Question:** There is no place on the budget template for in-kind. Should this be included in the budget?

**Answer:** In-kind information can be included as a separate page that would not count as part of the 10 page application limit. It would be the same situation as including detailed information about a specific line item such as equipment. Those separate pages that provide detailed information about line items would not be included in the 10 page limit.

### **Questions and Answers from the Proposers' Conference Call on Friday, May 16, 2008**

Mr. Reiser led off the call with several remarks, as Director of the granting unit, the DHFS Office of Independence and Employment. He wanted callers to understand that the purpose of the grants is to advance the employment outcomes of people who are or might be eligible for Medicaid due to disability. No direct services to clients can be funded under the grants unless the services are part of a pilot or demonstration designed to test or prove the effectiveness of the services. Mr. Reiser also wanted to highlight that coordination and collaboration with any of a number of state agencies (Transportation, Vocational Rehabilitation, Public Instruction, DWD Division of Employment and Training DHFS etc) is always expected. He pointed out that these

agencies may already have projects underway that at least touch on what proposers are thinking of doing. DHFS expects that proposers will be aware of what these agencies are doing, and be prepared to address cooperation and collaboration if their proposal is selected for funding, as a condition of a final award.

- 1. Question:** On the Application Summary, what does category refer to? Also on the Application Summary, what do proposers need to complete for areas to be served? Does the Area Agency on Aging need to be named?

**Answer:** The category would be the region for which you are proposing. For the areas to be served, this information can be provided if it is known as well as other information such as the counties that the applicant agency is proposing to serve.

- 2. Question:** If an applicant agency submits a proposal to provide services only to people with disabilities, how is disability defined?

**Answer:** We are not defining “disability” specifically. Generally it is accepted that a “disability” is any medically determinable physical or mental condition that limits one or more daily activities. Within reason, we are willing to accept that a person who reports having a disability indeed has a disability. As we understand it done within the Independent Living community, we allow people to define disability for themselves and should not be required to self disclose the nature of their disability.

- 3. Question:** The RFP specifically mentions sustainability. Is this defined as meaning once a grant is over, it continues forward?

**Answer:** Sustainability means that the activities of the grant have an impact that will not end when the grant ends. For example, creating and maintaining a web site is not sustainable without on-going funding. Providing training is inherently sustained if you accept that people retain and use what’s been learned.

- 4. Question:** Are applicant agencies able to identify projects that are already going on and collaborate with them?

**Answer:** Yes. Collaboration is encouraged. Applicant agencies are reminded that funds from this grant can not be used to supplant funds that are currently being used to support similar activities. For more information on this, please refer to the last paragraph of Section 1.3 on Project Goals.

- 5. Question:** Could an applicant agency that currently provides services statewide, meaning it does not necessarily provide 50% or more of its services in one region, develop a statewide project and partner with an agency in each region which provides 50% or more of its services in that region?

**Answer:** Number 1 under Section 1.6 on Who May Submit a Proposal states that applicants must currently provide a substantial portion of services or activities in the counties included in the region for which they are proposing. In the scenario given above, the applicant agency would not meet this requirement, meaning that agency could not be the applicant agency and partner with other agencies in the various regions. This would essentially create a statewide, centrally administered program, which is not in keeping with the Regional perspective built into these grants.

- 6. Question:** Is a list of the new projects being funded by the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) in 2009 available to applicant agencies to avoid duplication of projects?  
**Answer:** The application for 2009-11 is being prepared, but everything is draft form right now. There is no way of knowing what projects will go into the submission to CMS at this point.
- 7. Question:** How many notices of intent were sent?  
**Answer:** We received 20 notices of intent to propose.
- 8. Question:** Is it possible to provide a breakdown of those notices by region?  
**Answer:** The original answer to this question has been deleted. Please see question 16 for the updated answer.
- 9. Question:** If an applicant agency provides services in five counties in one region and four counties in another region, would that agency have to submit two proposals? Do they have to provide services in all of the counties?  
**(Please note that the answer given on the conference call was not correct. The answer provided here is the correct answer.)**  
**Answer:** No, this agency would not necessarily need to submit two proposals. If the applicant currently provides 50% or more of its services in the region for which it is applying and demonstrates the capacity to provide services to a few counties in a neighboring region, this would only require one proposal to be submitted.
- 10. Question:** What are you looking for in letters of support?  
**Answer:** Letters of support should be obtained from meaningful entities who can speak to your ability to carry out the proposed activities. Letters of support should be obtained from anyone with whom you are collaborating. For example, if you are working on a transportation project, a letter of support from the lead agency for transportation in that area should be solicited. It is possible for a single entity to write multiple letters of support.
- 11. Question:** Do all of the counties in a region for which an applicant agency is proposing need to be included in the proposal?  
**Answer:** Including all counties in a proposal is not required. Being able to carry out the activities being proposed is important. Applicant agencies should explain why certain counties are included and others are not. If an applicant agency proposes to reach all of the counties in a region, the agency should explain how it will accomplish this.
- 12. Question:** Does the 10 page proposal limit include the appendices?  
**Answer:** The 10 page limit does not include the appendices. The abstract, outline, application summary and work plan are included in the 10 page limit. Information that will be needed to evaluate the proposal should not be included in the appendices. The evaluation panel will not look at the appendices for information needed to evaluate proposals.

**13. Question:** Will the grants be disseminated according to approved requests or will you determine how much goes into multiple awards?

**Answer:** If the top proposal in a region is worth the full award amount and that amount was requested, that applicant agency may receive the full award amount. If we determine that the top ranked proposal does not need the full award amount, we can negotiate with the applicant agency to determine the amount of the final award. In such cases, the second highest ranked application would be considered for funding in whatever amount remains.

**14. Question:** How soon will the unanswered questions from the call be answered:

**Answer:** We will check with the department to be sure that we are being consistent with the RFP. The answers should be available early next week (week of May 19<sup>th</sup>).

**15. Question:** How many people will be on the evaluation team?

**Answer:** We are looking at having nine people. We have asked for representation from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Public Instruction, Department of Transportation, Division of Employment and Training, and Department of Health and Family Services. There are no confirmations as of the conference call. The evaluation team will evaluate all of the proposals region by region.

**16. Question:** Would it be possible to indicate the areas that gave notice of intent:

**Answer:** The notice of intent was optional, so the number of notices received as well as the regions from which we received them does not predict how many proposal we will receive. Of the notices received, here is the breakdown by region:

Northern = 2

North Central = 3

Northeastern = 7

Northwestern = 2

South Central = 4

Southeastern = 2