Suicide Prevention in Higher Education Grant Program 7/25/18 Webinar Notes
Revised 8/3/18

Participants (alphabetical by last name, with organizational affiliation in parentheses)**:**

Don Bennett (Washington Student Achievement Council), Mark Bergeson (Washington Student Achievement Council, meeting facilitator), Maryann Brathwaite (Northwest Career Colleges Federation), Devon Crouch (Independent Colleges of Washington), Christian Crowell (Student at The Evergreen State College), Cameron Dalmas (Department of Licensing), Cody Eccles (Council of Presidents), Lindsey Frallic (Everett Community College), April Hendrickson (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education), Marny Lombard (Forefront), Donn Marshall (Senate Bill 6514 work group facilitator), Paul Nagle-McNaughton (Comprehensive Healthcare, Yakima), Tina Orwall (State Representative), David Shulman (Northwest Career Colleges Federation, Seattle Film Institute), Terri Standish-Kuon (Independent Colleges of Washington), Jennifer Stuber (Forefront), Peter Schmidt (Department of Veterans Affairs)

1. Introduction

- The objective of today's meeting is to learn each other's perspectives on various issues related to the grant program request for proposals and to develop some preliminary recommendations if possible.
- Background - The 2018 legislature passed [Senate Bill 6514](), which has 3 main components: a publicly available statewide resource, a data component, and a Suicide Prevention in Higher Education grant program. The grant program is a competitive grant program, which means that we will issue a request for proposals (RFP), review proposals submitted, and select some for funding. The purpose of today's webinar is to inform development of the request for proposals.
- The facilitator proposed, and nobody suggested changing, the follow guiding principles for group discussion, recommendations, and Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) decisions: inclusivity, flexibility, simplicity, and consensus. If we cannot reach consensus, the other 3 will guide.

2. Issue Discussion (Prior to opening the floor for discussion, the facilitator shared some implications and public input received to-date on each issue). Group members and the public participated freely in each discussion.

a. Should we establish maximum award amounts, and if so what should they be? Implications: Since the first six awards must go to public institutions, smaller award amounts make it more likely that private institutions could receive an award. For example, if we set an award ceiling of $60,000 and had $420,000 available, then we could make at least seven awards, meaning at least one would be available for another public or private institution after the first six. A lower limit may improve proposal comparability (i.e., it may be easier to compare proposals to each other within a narrow budget range than a broad one). Also, there may be a floor below which a project would not be effective. Public Input so far indicates support for establishing maximum amounts. Participant discussion of issue:

- Benefits of a maximum. A maximum would: help campuses in their planning; enable more institutions to access the grant; signal a need for focused use of funds; and be consistent with

legislative desire for the grants to be seed money for a number of institutions. Nobody spoke against having a maximum.

- From a reviewer's perspective having a minimum as well as a maximum helps frame the scope of the project. It is easier for reviewers to make reasonable comparisons if they have proposals for similar amounts. A minimum should be large enough to ensure an impact. But do we really need a minimum? Some applicants may have a $5k idea. The career sector has 35,000 students served by 300 schools, including cosmetology and truck driving schools. A school that needs help may come up with a good $5k idea.

- Potential minimum and maximum amounts - Suggestions tended to focus on a range of about $20k (minimum) to $60k (maximum), with most focus on the $20-$42k range.

- From a healthcare provider's perspective, the amount of funds necessary depends the size of the school and scope of the project. If you get it too small, you're going to put a Band-Aid on something that may need more intensive care. But in some cases providers may not require much funding. For example, if we are talking about using funds to leverage Medicaid or insurance coverage by expanding coverage to students who don't have Medicaid, funds for the healthcare provider would be minimal, such as the cost of setting up a secure location on campus. If we are talking about training, we would have training fee costs and materials, but those are pretty minimal. The amount depends on the extent to which the healthcare provider is already in the game in terms of partnering. For healthcare providers already partnering, it could be a matter of further expanding on campuses where they just need a boost or some ideas to get more services available around suicide prevention or behavioral health care.

- Representative Orwall likes the idea of a ceiling but noted that the legislature saw this as round 1, hoping there will be more $ in the future. She cautioned against having too low a ceiling and expressed hope that we would go a little higher than $42k.

- Institutions may partner to reach more students by working together, particularly those in close geographic proximity. These could be public-private partnerships or partnerships between 2- and 4-year institutions. If institutions can partner and combine their caps, then a cap in $40k range might help to motivate schools to partner together and would not inhibit larger projects. Rather, such a cap would just mean that larger projects would have to be more collaborative. If we allow optional partners, then Northwest Career Colleges Federation, which represents multiple colleges and schools throughout the state, could be a good example of a means for schools to partner together.

- There are a number of institutions receiving Garret Lee Smith or Jed funding. It could be helpful to reach out to them to see what they are implementing and what it cost. But we need to keep in mind that these programs may have differing purposes and goals than ours. The intention with our program is to help institutions begin to build capacity for mental health provision and suicide prevention planning work on their campuses.

b. Should we set aside a certain amount of money for each education sector (e.g. public, private, 2-year, 4-year, etc.), and if so, how much? Implications: Applicants from each sector would be able to benefit this year, but some proposals may get funded that were not as well done as others. Increases complexity. Public input so far is unfavorable towards set asides. Participant discussion of issue:

- Participants mentioned various drawbacks, and nobody spoke out in favor for this round of grants. Details:

- o For the first year there already is a certain amount of segmenting being done in that the first 6 awards go to public institutions. Dividing further will water down what we are trying to do. This is a first year, pilot type of program, and limiting it would not benefit the process.

- o Within the career sector, it's advantageous to open up ways to incentivize institutions to get grants, but with this small pot and the first 6 grants going to public institutions, dividing by sector is too difficult, at least in this first round. Maybe next round set asides could be something that could be more viable, and there might be a way of incentivizing institutions to work together to get types of proposals we normally would not get.

- o The House Bill 1138 task force's pretty strong intent was to focus resources on campuses that are really high need and low in resources. To do a sector set aside maybe begins to move against that idea.

c. Should we allow multiple applications per postsecondary education institution or limit applications to one per institution or one per campus? Implications: If we allow multiple applications per institutions, we may get a wider variety of proposals, but that increases administrative costs and may reduce the amount of funding available for grants. Public input so far is in favor of limiting proposals to one per campus. Participant discussion of issue:

- There are some reasons to limit applications to one per institution. Details:

  - o In terms of expanding access to the funds, allowing only one application per institution will spread funds around further and may lead institutions to look at where the most need is.

  - o Allowing only one application per institution makes a lot of sense, especially since we are focusing on campuses that have a need. We want to make sure that we are incentivizing some collaboration.

- A large institution may have to figure out which campus will most benefit from it.

- The facilitator noted that one Senate Bill 6514 Work Group member from a branch campus had mentioned prior to the meeting that she thought it would be useful to allow one per campus rather than one per institution.

d. Should we allow groups (consortia) of postsecondary education institutions to apply jointly? Implications: If we do, then we need to decide whether to allow an institution to apply both individually and as part of a consortium and whether the award ceiling amount for a consortium should be the sum of the individual ceilings or something else. We also need to decide whether an award to a consortium of public institutions counts as one award or multiple awards for purposes of the first 6 rule. Public input so far is in favor of allowing consortia. Participant discussion of issue:

- One participant wondered whether there was legislative intent or intent in the background discussions to encourage cross-institutional collaboration. No other participants were aware of such intent.

- Limiting to one application per institution would keep things simpler, but there is also a value to partnering.

- There could be some real benefits to the consortium approach for the career sector. Most schools don't have enough people on staff to do this sort of stuff. Only a few have the bandwidth.

- There is at least one instance in which and 2- and 4-year institutions are co-located. In doing the House Bill 1138 work, we recognized that, generally speaking, 4-year institutions tend to be better funded to do this work than 2-year institutions. In that spirit, there could potentially be some benefit to encouraging 4- and 2-year partnerships though that would be not simple.

e. Postsecondary education institutions and health care entities are required partners. Should we allow optional partners as well, and if so what type? Implications: This could enhance what the partnership is able to do but it also may tend to reduce the funding for the required partners. Public input so far is in favor of allowing optional partners. Participant discussion of the issue:

- Participants discussed various reasons for allowing (but not requiring) optional partners:

  o We should defer to the campuses in their proposals. For example the independent sector includes minority-serving institutions and campuses with a significant number of veterans. Their students could benefit from optional partners. Colleges and universities within the independent sector really want to make sure that their faculty have training resources. Often they are the frontline with students. Campuses are interested in supporting faculty development in this area. This is true of the career sector too.

  o It's important that we encourage new partnerships. We know that suicide prevention is not a mental health issue but a public health issue. So the more partners we can have involved the more successful we are going to be. We should take a look at incentivizing this when we look at review criteria – giving bonus credits to folks who are developing credits to address the issue.

f. From your perspective, what are the most important criteria proposal reviewers should focus on when scoring proposals, and how would you prioritize them?

- Deferred until the next meeting.

3. Public Comment

a. No public comment.

4. Recommendations (preliminary, can revisit at next meeting).

a. Maximum award amounts

- Deferred until the next meeting.

b. Sector set asides

- No, but please see the Independent Colleges of Washington comment below.

  o From the Independent Colleges of Washington perspective, the set aside does not make sense, but we want to ensure a chance for more than six grants. We have schools with significant needs based on their student populations. We can step aside on this one in favor of making sure the structure permits more than 6 grants.

    c. Multiple applications per institution

- Deferred until next meeting.

    d. Groups/consortia

- Yes, allow, but please see the follow-up issues below:

    o We'll still have to decide what to do with the award ceiling – should individual institution ceilings be cumulative or not.

    o Also, should a consortium award count as one or more than one for purposes of the first six go to public institutions rule if a consortium involves more than one public institution?

    e. Optional partners

- Yes, allow.

    f. Proposal review criteria

- Deferred until the next meeting.

5. Other

    a. What other questions and/or comments do you have?

- The Senate Bill 6514 data subgroup meets this afternoon from 2:00-3:00. Please review draft before the call.

    b. Next Steps

- WSAC will write up draft recommendations for review. We will continue discussion during grant group online meetings on July 20 and August 23, and Senate Bill 6514 work group meetings on August 9 and August 27. The August 9 meeting will be devoted to the grant program, and the August 27 meeting will be a regular quarterly meeting that will have portion of its agenda focused on the grant program. In between meetings, there is opportunity for written input via the grant program webpage.