

Suicide Prevention in Higher Education Grant Program 7/30/18 Webinar Notes

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

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1. Introduction

- a. Objective – To refine Request for Proposals (RFP) recommendations to-date and address outstanding RFP issues
- b. Review 7/25 meeting
 - i. We discussed 5 out of 6 issues identified so far that we need to resolve in order to develop the grant program RFP. We tabled the sixth issue, proposal review criteria, due to lack of time. We came to preliminary consensus on 3 of the other five issues. Informed by the discussion, staff subsequently developed some draft recommendations (see item 2a below).
 - ii. We are using 4 guiding principles-inclusivity, flexibility, simplicity, and consensus.
 - iii. The 7/25 meeting notes will be revised to fix typos (e.g. ceiling not celling)-no other revisions were suggested during the 7/30 meeting.

2. Discussion

- a. Review and revise the following draft recommendations (italicized below):
 - i. *The RFP should allow optional partners to be included in partnerships.*
 - Should we place any restrictions on what kind of partners are allowable?
 - No, because doing so could stifle creativity.
 - No, and we should permit individuals as partners. For example, in some rural areas there may be only one person qualified to do certain training.
 - We should ensure that the grant review team considers how relevant and valuable the partner is.
 - Could partners partner with multiple applicants?
 - Some healthcare providers have different offices in different geographic locations so allowing partners to partner with multiple applicants would be helpful.

- Nobody objected to allowing partners that are not postsecondary education institutions to partner with multiple applicants.
- ii. *The RFP should allow joint applications by consortia of institutions.*
- We need to ensure authentic community involvement, even in broad consortia that are not locally focused. We should address authentic involvement in how the proposal is worded and in proposal review criteria.
 - The relationships necessary for consortia take time to build. Large institutions may not move quickly enough for consortia to work, but small institutions may be able to. Northwest Career Colleges Federation is a consortium with relationships that already exist among members.
 - Should we allow an institution to apply both as part of a consortium and individually?
 - Reasons for limiting to one or the other: simplicity, limiting provides an incentive for institution to prioritize their approach, and fewer applications to process means lower administrative costs and more money available for grants.
 - Should consortia have the same award ceiling amount as individual institutions, or shall we allow consortia to apply for a higher amount?
 - Our approach should depend on the philosophy of the grant. If it is a pilot project then spreading the grant money broadly across individual institutions rather than concentrating it in a consortium makes sense.
 - How should an award to a consortium involving more than one public institution be counted with regard to the “first six awards to public institutions” rule?
 - This issue was deferred for future discussion.
- iii. *The RFP should not include sector set asides, but the structure of the RFP should enable more than 6 awards to be made.*
- “Ensure” is preferable to “enable” because it increases the likelihood that more than 6 awards will be made, thereby broadening access.
 - Maybe there is a way to emphasize the desire to get grants out to as many people as possible without limiting our ability to pick grants that are going to have the greatest impact on institutions. Avoid hamstringing ourselves.
 - We need to ensure that the RFP clearly indicates the scope of the grants and that the review criteria are appropriate to the scope. The first year of the grants is not necessarily the best venue for the “big idea.”
 - There is an expectation that funding will reach different parts of the state.
 - This issue is tied to the issue of whether or not to have a maximum award amount (cap).
 - We could address this issue by putting a period after “asides” and letting the discussion on caps take care of the issue.
- b. Address outstanding issues:
- i. Should we allow multiple applications per postsecondary education institution or limit applications to one per institution or one per campus?
- Reasons to limit applications to one per campus: simplicity and clarity (avoid having to define campus); inclusivity (spreading the money around to as many institutions as possible); and addressing greatest need (institutions would have to focus on what is most important to them).

- Reasons not to limit applications to one per campus: Larger institutions may not be able to make a difficult decision quickly, and campus environments may differ significantly so what works for one might not work for another.
 - California's California Community Colleges Student Mental Health Program limited applications to one per campus. We could specify what we mean by branch campus.
 - A majority of those who spoke were in favor of one per institutions, but the group did not reach consensus.
- ii. Should we establish maximum award amounts, and if so, what should they be?
- Maximum and minimum award amounts communicate the scope of the project we are looking for.
 - We want something big enough to "move the needle."
 - From a reviewer's perspective, having both a minimum and maximum gets all of the proposals in the same ballpark, so reviewers are comparing apples to other flavors of apples rather than crossing fruits.
 - Smaller grants could go a long way towards helping smaller institutions but may not be worth the trouble for larger ones.
 - Setting a minimum could discourage smaller schools from applying, but even if there were a minimum that was too large for an individual school, they could apply as part of a consortium.
 - It's a rare day when you set a maximum and people don't apply for it.
 - Would awards be all or nothing? In practice, Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) reserves the right to negotiate budgets as part of contract negotiations. For example, the proposal review process may uncover a questionable budget item that WSAC would negotiate out or ask that it be replaced with something more appropriate.
 - The RFP could include language about an expected range without explicitly setting minima or maxima.
 - It is important for us to collectively decide on the scope, what kind of impact we want a grant to make.
 - It is unusual for RFPs to set a minimum amount.
 - Keep in mind that the free resource created by Section 2 of the bill includes will be a source of training, including a conference and model procedures.
 - The group reached a consensus on setting an award ceiling of \$60,000.
- iii. 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 next meeting.

3. Public Comment

- a. No public comment.

4. Recommendations

- a. The maximum award amount should be \$60,000.
- b. The RFP should not include sector set asides, but the structure of the RFP should enable more than 6 awards to be made. [Note: during the meeting, a suggestion was made to remove the language after "asides." With a maximum award of \$60,000, that language is no longer necessary.]
- c. The RFP should allow optional partners to be included in partnerships, without restriction on the number of applicants a partner that is not a postsecondary education institution can partner with.

- d. The RFP should allow joint applications by consortia of institutions.

5. Other

- a. Next Steps:
 - i. 8/9/18 @ 10:00-11:30 Senate Bill 6514 work group online meeting focused on grant program
 - ii. 8/23/18 @ 1:30-3:00 grant group online meeting
 - iii. 8/27/18 (time to be determined) Senate Bill 6514 work group meeting with some agenda time for grant program.