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917 Lakeridge Way Southwest
Olympia, Washington 98502
360.753.7800
wsac.wa.gov

Senate Bill 6514 Work Group 8/23/18 Webinar Notes

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

Mark Bergeson (Washington Student Achievement Council, meeting facilitator), Maryann Brathwaite (Northwest Career Colleges Federation), Susan Colard (Department of Licensing), Devon Crouch (Independent Colleges of Washington), Christian Crowell (Student at The Evergreen State College), Tam Dinh (Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, Saint Martin's University), Cody Eccles (Council of Presidents), Lindsey Frallic (Everett Community College), April Hendrickson (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education), Joe Holliday (State Board for Community and Technical Colleges), Scott Latiolais (Clover Park Technical College), Marny Lombard (Forefront), Donn Marshall (Senate Bill 6514 work group facilitator), Earl Martin (Everett Community College), Paul Nagle-McNaughton (Comprehensive Healthcare), John Phillips (Department of Veterans Affairs), David Shulman (Northwest Career Colleges Federation, Seattle Film Institute), Alison Scherer (Whatcom Community College), Terri Standish-Kuon, (Independent Colleges of Washington)

1. Introduction

a. Objective - to inform RFP development

b. Reviewed 8/9 online meeting recommendations. No editorial suggestions for 8/9 meeting notes.

2. Discussion

a. Marny Lombard presented, and the group discussed, background information (Discussion Supplement item 1.a). When we disaggregate by race/ethnicity and gender, the populations most affected by suicide are Native American/Alaskan Native, White, and male.

b. Need

   i. It would be good to ask applicants to demonstrate need without requiring particular statistics.
   ii. Not having uniform requirements makes it hard for reviewers to objectively score proposals.
   iii. But even a statistic like counselor to-student ratio, which may seem objective at first, may vary widely across institutions in the way it is computed. For example, how do we count faculty counselors, who teach as well as provide counseling?
   iv. In the private career sector, staff do the best they can to help, but based on formal job descriptions, the Counselor to-student ratio for behavioral health counseling would likely be zero, which would be one form of demonstration of need.
   v. We should provide examples of how to demonstrate need, such as: examples based on the data in Discussion Supplement item 1.a, ratio of mental health staff to students, limited access to care due to geography (i.e. distance), or high percentage of veterans, older students (e.g. non-traditional or graduate students), or international students.
   vi. Middle-of-the-road suggestion: perhaps we could require demonstration of need, require certain information like the counselor-student ratio or other information thought to be objective, and also allow the institution to supply additional evidence it deems relevant.

vii. Consensus: Require demonstration of need and provide some examples but allow applicants to address need in the qualitative and/or quantitative ways they think are appropriate. Examples will include counselor-student ratio.

c. Partnership quality
   i. Discussion during prior meetings included the following ideas: consider how relevant and valuable the partner is, ensure authentic community involvement, and evaluate partnership quality based on potential for the partner to help the grantee achieve the objectives.
   ii. Consider alignment between the project's objectives and the partner's mission and/or resources.
   iii. Consider whether or not the partnership is real. Is the institution trying to go it alone or is it genuinely looking at establishing partners to accomplish its goals? We want to make sure institutions are selecting the right partners to accomplish goals for the grant rather than collecting partners just for the sake of having partners.
   iv. Consensus: Partnership quality indicators include relevant personnel expertise and how well the proposal demonstrates the potential for each partner to help the partnership achieve its objectives. But do not penalize education partners for limited suicide prevention or behavioral health expertise.

d. Should scoring favor an evidence-based approach?
   i. At the last meeting, we considered the idea of emphasizing either an evidence-based approach or a strong logic model but did not reach consensus.
   ii. We are in a dilemma because usually an RFP seeks expertise but in this case we are seeking need so we shouldn't hold lack of expertise or evidence against an applicant.
   iii. An evidence-based approach will help applicants avoid re-inventing the wheel. If there is an established evidence-based practice out there, we should encourage people to use it.
   iv. We could ask first "what's the logic model" and second "is there any evidence this approach works?"
   v. Typically a logic model includes steps and actions. To implement this program, we are going to do this step. If whatever applicants are implementing is an established evidence-base practice, hopefully they will indicate that.
   vi. An evidence base makes a logic model stronger. We could instruct reviewers to score higher if it looks like there's some clear evidence to support what the institution is proposing, i.e. good evidence that what is proposed will likely lead to desired outcomes.
   vii. If we have two applicants proposing relatively similar interventions and one's done more research and identified an evidence-based program or practice, that application should get credit. If we've got similar applications, the one that's put the extra effort into finding an evidence-based program or practice gets moved ahead.
   viii. Some approaches may not have an evidence base. For example, if a project is focused on outreach, such as outreach to students making them aware of on- or off-campus resources, there won't necessarily be an evidence base. Such approaches should not be penalized.
   ix. If applicants do not use an evidence-based approach, we could ask them to explain why. They can explain why they chose the approach they did.
   x. Some applicants will be operating from a lower knowledge base, so it will be a struggle for them to excel.
   xi. We should consider how much work it would take for an applicant to establish that there is not an evidence base (i.e. to prove a negative).
   xii. One approach could be to point potential applicants to some resources they can look at to see if there is something out there the might be a good fit for them. For example, the National Council

for Behavioral Health Care or Suicide Prevention Resource Center might point them to an evidence-based practice to target or modify to suit their needs.

xiii. We could add language encouraging institutions to seek and note evidence-based elements of their proposal.

xiv. From a reviewer perspective, the clear-cut question is whether or not reviewers should score a proposal higher if it uses an evidence-based approach. If an evidence-based approach is a good fit for some institutions but not others, how would reviewers take that into account and compare the two institutions in a way that seems fair?

xv. Consensus: Require a logic model as part of the proposal but do not require citations of evidence to support an approach. However, we encourage institutions to seek and cite evidence when available or provide a good explanation for lack of evidence.

e. Limit on number of applications – one per institution or one per campus?
   i. Reasons for limiting number to one application per institution: simplicity (avoids having to define campus); inclusivity (spreads money across more institutions); incentivizes institutions to prioritize; administrative cost (fewer applications lead to reduced proposal review costs).
   ii. Reasons for limiting number to one application per campus: different campuses have different environments and what works for one may not work for another; larger institutions may not be able to quickly make difficult decisions on which application to put forward.
   iii. An institution with multiple campuses could submit an application that covered all of them.
   iv. Not every location is necessarily a campus.
   v. Recent law changes removed branch campus terminology.
   vi. Some branch campuses are about as large as other institutions.
   vii. Consensus was not reached due to lack of time.

3. Public Comment

a. No public comment. As with the 7/25/18, 7/30/18, and 8/9/18 meetings, members of the public were free to join the discussion at any time.

4. Recommendations

a. New recommendations (based on 8/9/18 discussion)
   i. Require demonstration of need and provide some examples but allow applicants to address need in the qualitative and/or quantitative ways they think are appropriate. Examples will include counselor-student ratio.
   ii. Partnership quality indicators include relevant personnel expertise and how well the proposal demonstrates the potential for each partner to help the partnership achieve its objectives. But do not penalize education partners for limited suicide prevention or behavioral health expertise.

b. Prior recommendations (based on 7/25/18, 7/30/18, and 8/9/18 discussions)
   i. The maximum award amount should be $60,000.
   ii. The RFP should not include sector set asides, but the structure of the RFP should enable more than 6 awards to be made.
   iii. 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.
   iv. The RFP should allow joint applications by consortia of institutions.
   v. Keep the framing language in the RFP broad, and do not break the spectrum of work into multiple pieces with separate funding and scoring criteria for each.

vi. Apply the section 3(2)(b) criteria to all applicants.
vii. Let applicants establish their own objectives (consistent with the purpose language of the bill) and their own activities; and require their own evaluation plan to see how successful they are at meeting their objectives.
viii. Review criteria include:
   - Partnership quality
   - Need, with components related to high-risk student populations served and lack of resources to help those populations
   - Outcomes for Washington students
   - Cultural competency
   - Sustainability (but do not emphasize it)

5. Other

a. Next Steps – address remaining issues during grant program portion of 8/27/18 SB 6514 whole group meeting.