Suicide Prevention in Higher Education Grant Program
Pre-Proposal Orientation Video Script 9/17/18

Slide 1 Cover Slide
Hi everybody, this is Mark Bergeson, the RFP Coordinator for the Washington Student Achievement Council's Suicide Prevention in Higher Education Grant Program. Welcome to the pre-proposal orientation video. This video will focus on helping potential applicants understand our grant program and competitive award process.

Slide 2 Preliminaries
But first some preliminaries. Throughout this video, I will refer to the Washington Student Achievement Council by its acronym, which is W-S-A-C, pronounced "Wahsack." You will probably find it useful to have a copy of the request for proposals, also known as the RFP, in front of you as you watch the video. Also, on September 21, there will be a pre-proposal question and answer webinar at 11:00 a.m., followed by an RFP feedback webinar at 2:30 p.m. Finally, please note the disclaimer at the bottom of this slide: If there is a conflict between information in this presentation and information contained in the RFP, the information in the RFP prevails.

Slide 3 Learning Goals
The video is designed to help you understand the grant program's purpose and the competitive process we use to award grants. In short, it will cover the why, who, what, when, where, and how. To help you understand the "why," we will start out with some background information that leads up to the purpose statement made in RFP Section 1.1.

Slide 4 Background
In 2015, the Washington State Legislature created a Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in Higher Education Task Force. During 2015 and 2016, the task force worked to determine policies, resources, and technical assistance needed to support postsecondary education institutions in improving suicide prevention responses and access to behavioral health services. In November 2016, the taskforce published a report called "Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in Higher Education." A link to this report is available in the "Background" box on WSAC's Suicide Prevention Grant webpage. It makes good background reading, not only to help understand the program's origins, but also as a resource for ideas on suicide prevention approaches being used by others. In 2018, the legislature passed and governor signed into law Substitute Senate Bill 6514, which implements several Task Force recommendations. Throughout this presentation, I will refer to Substitute Senate Bill 6514 as "the bill."

The bill has 3 main components:

- The first component is a publicly available statewide behavioral health and suicide prevention resource for postsecondary education institutions. This resource will include an online component with trainings, crisis protocols, and promotional materials; plus an annual conference. The resource will be available by June 30, 2020. You'll find more detail in RFP Exhibit B, which mirrors Section 2 subsection (4) of the bill.

- The second component is centralized data collection. These data will help inform future suicide prevention efforts and will be disaggregated in the reporting process. Section 4 Subsection (2) of the bill lists data elements to be collected through December 31, 2022. Section 5 of the bill describes a process for identifying and reporting data on an ongoing basis.

- And the third component is a suicide prevention in higher education grant program, which this RFP helps implement. The legislature provided funding for the grant program through June 30, 2019. We anticipate being able to fund up to 7 projects with $60,000 budgets. The bill requires that the first six grant awards go to public institutions of higher education. Then either private or public institutions may receive subsequent awards. The bill casts a very wide net of institutions, and we estimate that well over 500 postsecondary education institutions are eligible to apply.

Now we'll move on to the grant program's purpose, which has its roots in the history I've just outlined and in the bill.

Slide 5 Purpose

The fiscal year 2019 grant program's purpose is for resource-challenged postsecondary education institutions to create partnerships with health care entities to develop student suicide prevention programs. To accomplish this purpose, the grant program will use a competitive process to determine which institutions to award grants to. During this process, postsecondary education institutions propose projects to accomplish this purpose. As long as the project design accomplishes this purpose, projects may choose the design that best addresses their institutions' suicide prevention needs within the constraints described in the RFP. By "institution" I mean postsecondary education institution. RFP Section 1.2 lists some sample strategies you may employ, but are not required to employ. Suicide prevention strategies include strategies for promoting behavioral health, which means promoting mental health and/or preventing and/or treating substance abuse disorder.

Next we'll look at various dimensions of the competitive process – specifically, the who, what, when, where, and how of the grant program. But before we leave this slide, please note the word "partnerships" in the purpose statement. This word underlies "who" may participate in the process.

Slide 6 Process – Who?
To be eligible to receive a grant, an institution must form a partnership that includes at least 2 required partners and may include additional optional partners. As the slide indicates, the required partners are a postsecondary education institution and a health care entity.

Postsecondary Education Institutions are public and private colleges and universities; private vocational schools; and cosmetology, barbering, and other schools authorized by the Washington State Department of Licensing. RFP Section 1.7 provides the official definition in terms of various Revised Code of Washington sections. RFP section 1.7 also defines health care entity.

Once it includes these two required partners, a partnership may include any number of optional partners.

Each partnership will be led by a postsecondary education institution that serves as the Lead Partner. Now let's see what it means to be Lead Partner.

Slide 7 Who? – Required Partners – Postsecondary Education Institution Lead Partner
The lead partner serves as the Bidder, Fiscal Agent, and main contact with WSAC throughout every phase of the project.

- In its role as Bidder, the Lead Partner submits the project proposal to WSAC. Each Bidder may submit only one proposal, whether or not the proposal involves a consortium of postsecondary education institutions. But each postsecondary education institution may be an optional partner in as many consortia as it wishes.

- In its role as Fiscal Agent, the Lead Partner negotiates a contract with WSAC, invoices WSAC for work done by the partnership, and resolves any billing disputes related to the project. In other words, it handles the legal and financial work.

- In its role as main contact, the Lead partner is the one that will have the most interaction with WSAC.

- The Lead Partner is also responsible for a couple of key jobs: first, ensuring that all other partners are aware of and follow all relevant general and program-specific legal and administrative requirements; and second, ensuring that all other partners fully perform their roles in the project.

- The Lead Partner employs the project director or, if applicable, at least one of the co-directors.

Other partners play whatever role the partnership deems appropriate. Just make sure that the required health care entity satisfies the definition in RFP Section 1.7.

Now that we've discussed the "Who" of the competitive process, we'll move on to the "What" and the "When."

Slide 8 Process – What and When?
RFP Section 2.2 contains an Estimated Schedule of Grant Activities, which is a more detailed version of the competitive process estimated timeline you see on this slide. Let's take a look at the items on the slide.

- On September 10th, we issued the RFP. We'll come back to the RFP later in this video.
- On September 21st, please join us for two webinars. The Q&A webinar is an opportunity for you to ask questions, and the Feedback webinar is an opportunity for you to make suggestions. Participation in either is optional.
- On September 28th, the Notice of Intent is due. Timely filing is required, and if you don't submit a Notice of Intent on time then you cannot submit a full proposal. There is no Notice of intent form. Just make sure you answer all of the questions listed in RFP Section 2.3.C. Though the Notice of Intent is mandatory, it is nonbinding and easy to complete. Its purpose is to help us communicate with you and to identify potential problems early so we can address them proactively. It also helps us give proposal evaluators some idea of how much work they are in for. If you submit a Notice of Intent and some aspect changes after submission, it is to your advantage to let us know so that we can work out issues proactively.
- October 12th is when the Q&A period ends and when the RFP addenda and revisions are complete. Our intent is to provide a degree of certainty for Bidders. If we allowed Q&A up to the last minute, then the RFP could keep changing up to the last minute, which would lead to uncertainty regarding what information proposals should include. The Q&A document linked on the grant program webpage is an addendum to the RFP.

- On October 16th, the Bidder complaint period ends. See RFP section 4.5 for more details, including allowable reasons for complaints.
- The proposal is due on October 23rd. Send it electronically as a single PDF or Word file. We will accept it as an email attachment or via a link to Dropbox or comparable file sharing method. After we receive proposals, we will screen them for RFP compliance. We may request corrections prior to forwarding the proposal to evaluators. Bidders will have to make corrections within 24 hours. See RFP Section 2.8 for more detail.
- By December 18th, we should be able to let you know proposal evaluation results.
- On December 19th, we begin contract negotiations with Apparent Successful Bidders. The end result for a successful Bidder is to enter into a contract with WSAC that outlines project work and payment for that work as well as other terms and conditions. Negotiations may result in changes to the proposal, including, but not limited to changes in the budget. Project work may start once the contract is in place.
- After notification of results on December 18th, Bidders may request a debriefing, which will be complete by December 27th.
- On January 11, 2019 or possibly earlier, depending on when contract negotiations end, projects may begin work.
- By June 30, 2019, projects must complete work. But, depending on availability of funds, projects may be eligible for an extension up to one year.

Now we'll go back and provide more information on the first item in the timeline, the RFP.

Slide 9 What? – RFP

The RFP provides "rules of the game" as you prepare proposals, and ultimately it becomes incorporated into our contract by reference. The RFP is organized into 5 main Chapters:

Chapter 1, the Introduction, sets the stage by describing purpose, objectives, and scope of work. It also describes minimum qualifications, funding, and period of performance. We have already covered these items, so I won't spend any more time on them now. But before we leave Chapter 1, I would like to especially call your attention to the Definitions in RFP section 1.7. Please read them closely to avoid potential misunderstanding.

Chapter 2, General Information for Bidders, contains contact information, the estimated schedule or timeline, pre-proposal information, and some generic legalese that the state tends to use regardless of what program an RFP pertains to. We have already covered

Chapter 2's program-specific information. But I would like to call your attention to four sections of general legalese:

- First, RFP Section 2.6 talks about RFP revisions and addenda. The estimated final date for these to be made is October 12, and they will be posted on the grant program webpage. The Q&A document linked on the webpage is an addendum to the RFP, so please check the Q&A regularly.
- Second, RFP Section 2.11 clarifies that Bidders may not charge the grant for costs related to developing or presenting proposals, or any other costs related to responding to this RFP.
- Third, RFP Section 2.14 clarifies that you can't charge for any project work started before we have a fully executed contract in place.
- And fourth, RFP Section 2.16 describes insurance requirements.

Now we'll move on to Chapter 3, Proposal Contents. Chapter 3 is your main guide in preparing the proposal that is due on October 23 in the timeline.

Slide 10 RFP What? – RFP Chapter 3 – Proposal Contents

The preamble of Chapter 3 lists the required proposal components and formatting requirements. Proposals must contain the following components, in the following order:

- First comes the Cover Sheet, which is RFP Exhibit A Form 1. It provides partnership information and a project summary, and asks for some additional information from private postsecondary education institution Bidders. A Microsoft Word version of this form is available on the grant program webpage for downloading, completing, and copying and pasting into your proposal.

- Next comes the Technical Proposal, which describes the suicide prevention need for the project, as well as the project design that will address that need. The design includes objectives, inputs, activities, participants, and outcomes. It also includes evaluation of the extent to which the project achieves its objectives.

- Next comes the Management Proposal, which describes the partnership, partner qualifications, and partner roles.

- Next comes the Cost Proposal. The Cost Proposal starts off with a Project Budget Form, which is RFP Exhibit A Form 2. An Excel version of this form is available on the grant program webpage for downloading, completing, and copying and pasting into your proposal.

In addition to filling out the budget form, you will need to attach a budget narrative that explains how the numbers on the budget form were calculated. There is no specified format for the budget narrative, but it must be detailed enough for reviewers to understand how each budget amount was calculated.

After the Cost proposal, you'll include attachments listed on the next slide.

Slide 11 What? – RFP Chapter 3 – Proposal Contents Continued
The first attachment is a 1-2 page logic model, using the format in RFP Exhibit C. A Microsoft Word version of this form is available on the grant program webpage for downloading, completing, and copying and pasting into your proposal.

After the Logic Model, attach a letter of commitment for each partner that demonstrates the partner's commitment to doing the work. Letters of commitment from each postsecondary education institution partner must also demonstrate the willingness of that partner's leadership to use the statewide resource described in RFP Exhibit B.

After the letters of commitment, attach vitas or resumes for key project personnel, but don't provide more than two pages for each.

Finally, attach a signed Certifications and Assurances form, plus any attachments to that form. The form, which is RFP Exhibit A Form 3, contains a series of statements that the Bidder must sign off on. It also includes an opportunity for the Bidder to describe exceptions to these statements and/or the terms outlined in the contract templates. The form must be signed by someone authorized to legally bind the Bidder to a contractual relationship.

Finally, if you have any attachments to the Certifications and Assurances form, attach them after the form. For example, you may have an attachment proposing a change in contract language.

That wraps it up for proposal contents. Next we will consider formatting.

Slide 12 What? – RFP Chapter 3 – Proposal Formatting
Proposals must follow the formatting instructions in RFP Chapter 3. The instructions include a page limit. We tried to come up with a page limit that would not unfairly treat partnerships with a large number of partners (and therefore a large number of attachments). So instead of an overall page limit, we came up with a 10 page limit on the Technical Proposal and Management Proposal components of the RFP combined. In

other words, the combined length of those two proposal components may not exceed 10 pages. If it does, we will only forward the first 10 pages to proposal evaluators. The Cost Proposal, logic model, forms 1 through 3, and other attachments do not count towards the 10-page limit. Do not attach anything that is not required, because only required items will be forwarded to proposal evaluators.

Now we'll move on to Proposal Evaluation, the next step in the process after you submit your proposal.

Slide 13 What? – RFP Chapter 4 – Evaluation and Contract Award

RFP Chapter 4 outlines important steps in the process that happen after you have submitted your proposal.

- RFP Section 4.1 outlines the proposal evaluation procedure, which is based on Section 3 Subsection (2) Paragraph (b) of the bill. I want to point out that the procedure has evaluators considering not only a proposal's total score, but also its needs assessment score, partnership quality score, evidence of postsecondary education institution leadership willingness to use the statewide resources outlined in RFP Exhibit B, and score for enhanced treatment services for student veterans.
- RFP Section 4.2 gives you an idea of the amount of emphasis scoring will give to various RFP components. There are 100 points possible. Please note the scoring preference for enhancing treatment services for student veterans.
- RFP Section 4.3 gives notice that we may require oral presentations.
- RFP Section 4.4 lets you know that the selection decision is final and that we may ask for proposal revisions.
- RFP Section 4.5 outlines a complaint procedure. The complaint procedure is designed to facilitate RFP corrections prior to the proposal deadline. WSAC will make a decision on how to respond to each complaint. If the decision leads to a revised timeline or other RFP revision, WSAC will update the grant program webpage accordingly and notify each institution that timely submitted a Notice of Intent.
- Section 4.6 outlines the debriefing procedure for Bidders that were not selected for an award.

Now we'll move on to the final chapter of the RFP – its Exhibits.

Slide 14 RFP What? – Chapter 5 – RFP Exhibits
The exhibits include forms for use with your proposal, information on the statewide resource, and sample contracts you can look at so you are aware of what you are getting into.

- Exhibit A includes Forms 1, 2, and 3, which we have already covered.
- Exhibit B describes the Statewide Resource for Behavioral Health and Suicide Prevention that is outlined in Section 2 of the bill.
- Exhibit C provides a form for the Logic Model, which we have already covered.
- Exhibit D is a Grant Agreement Template for use with private postsecondary education institutions. To keep the RFP file size reasonable, this template will be downloadable separately from the grant program webpage.
- Exhibit E is an Interagency Agreement Template for use with public institutions of higher education. Again, to keep the RFP file size reasonable, this template will be downloadable separately from the grant program webpage.

Now we'll move on to the last two dimensions of the process—the where and the how.

Slide 15 Process – Where and How?

- With regard to where: funding is available statewide, and there are no set asides for particular geographic regions within the state.
- With regard to how: though the competitive process is determined by WSAC, the RFP is worded to give projects a lot of freedom in determining how to best accomplish the grant program purpose of creating partnerships with health care entities to develop student suicide prevention programs. As long as the project design accomplishes this purpose, projects may choose the design that best addresses their institutions' suicide prevention needs within the constraints described in the RFP.

This concludes our description of the competitive process. I will close with a reminder about the next steps in that process.

Slide 16 Next Steps
Coming up next, there will be a question and answer webinar from 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. on September 21, followed by a feedback webinar from 2:30-4:00 p.m. on the same day.

In addition, the question and answer period runs until October 12. The webpage includes a link to the official Q&A document, which is an addendum to the RFP. The official Q&A will be updated frequently to reflect new questions and responses as they come in. Questions won't be posted unless a response is available. The Q&A document is our way of keeping the informational playing field level. It is our preferred means of communication, so don’t be surprised if you ask a question by phone and we respond via the Q&A document.

Please don’t forget to submit your Notice of Intent in time for us to receive it by 5:00 p.m. on September 28 and your full proposal in time for us to receive it by 5:00 p.m. on October 23.

Thank you for your interest!