

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

RFP#2021-13

UPO CARES Act CSBG COVID19 Related Economic Insecurity Support

Issued on 10/06/21

Q #1: Please clarify the service domain of "Youth Services" if the minimum qualifications section requires recruitment of individuals over the age of 18.

A #1: This specific solicitation is designed to procure services by programs that serve individuals who are 18 years or older with the goal of achieving self-sufficiency. A separate RFP will be issued shortly which will permit programs that target youth under 18 years of age.

Q #2: Is there a required budget template for budget submission?

A #2: No, there is no required budget template. That said, budgets that clearly spell out anticipated expenditures in the categories of Personnel Salaries and Wages (with each position/name listed within the category), Fringe Benefits, Consultant/Expert Expenditures, Travel, Transportation, Program Supplies, Equipment, Client Costs, Indirect/Overhead among other specific categories of expenditure that are unique to the organization will allow proposal evaluators to complete a thorough evaluation of the proposal submitted.

Q #3: If a program services an individual over 18, but that individual lives at home, but the family is not receiving services, how is income eligibility determined? Is it only for the individual served?

A #3: CSBG Income is assessed using the income of the family or household that shares resources/income. If the individual operates as a family of one, their income alone should suffice. If the others in the household or family operate as unit, the income of the unit is to be considered. The answer provided by the person served to the question of how family or household income is normally utilized is the biggest driver of the income to be considered for eligibility.

Q #4: Income verification forms require submission of social security information. If a participant does not have a social security number or is undocumented, are they not eligible to participate in program services?

A #4: To receive CSBG services, program participants must be DC residents and income eligible. If one meets those two requirements and does not have a social security number, the SSN field on the form may be skipped and the individual may still be served as long as income eligibility and DC residency has been demonstrated.

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Q #5: As a domestic violence organization, we are legally mandated to follow the confidentiality expectations under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)) cf. 34 USC §12291(b)(2), and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) cf. 42 USC§10402.

We would be required to produce a unique identifier (UID) and redact all personally identifying information (PII) for clients in any records shared with UPO.

Is this UPO's understanding of how we could work together to comply with grant requirements, and VAWA and FVPSA mandates?

A #5: Yes

Q #6: We are required to share information to document clients' DC residency under the funding guidelines. Does this refer to the address they had before entering our housing, or can clients' current residency in our DC location be used to meet this requirement?

If the address refers to their prior residence, we would be required to redact all PII from that documentation. This would include blocking the photo, address, and name from their photo identification. The date issued, expiration date, eye color, and height could be left visible to show a valid ID. Would this suffice?

A #6: Primarily, showing the monitor the ID or copy but blocking the photo, address, and name from their photo identification is fine. We would expect the date issued, expiration date, eye color, and height left visible to show a valid ID. Where absolutely necessary, client's residency in your DC location can be used to meet this requirement.

Q #7: For people who do not have legal authorization to work, would a third-party affidavit serve to affirm that they are a DC resident? Some of our participants are refugees who are not yet authorized to work but can legally stay in the US. Our understanding of current guidelines is to submit a third-party declaration from an attorney certifying the individual's DC residency and income.

A #7: To receive CSBG services, program participants must be DC residents and income eligible. If one meets those two requirements and does not have a social security number, the SSN field on the form may be skipped and the individual may still be served as long as income eligibility and DC residency has been demonstrated. Legal authorization to work is not needed for customers to be served. If the customer resides with a DC resident, a letter from the person the customer resides with as well as that person's DC ID would suffice for the residency requirement. Again, to be served, evidence of legal authorization to work is not required.

Q #8: What are the records that UPO would review during monthly monitoring visits? We keep on file the signed forms and documentation—redacted to remove PII—for all clients covered by the grant.

A #8: UPO will need to examine documents that show the customer served is income eligible based on household/family size. Similarly, the file should contain evidence that customer is income eligible. If the income is zero, the customer needs to provide an attestation of zero income, and this can be done by a letter signed by the customers. Finally, UPO will need to examine evidence of services provided and outcomes achieved. These may include such things as sign in sheets, attendance logs, case management notes, pay stubs, etc. depending on the nature of the program design. Note that the organization but document work done with customers in a manner that permits a reasonable third party to verify/validate.

Issued on 10/15/21

Q #9: When I was on the call I asked a question regarding how our organization would go about verifying the gross income and DC residency. We work through partners who provide our products to the families that they serve - any idea how we would go about that? We've received funding from you all in the past, but I'm unsure about how it was handled previously!

A #9: Determination of eligibility for beneficiaries of CSBG funded projects is required. Your organization will need to work with your partners to develop an approach and describe the approach you will use in your proposal. You could specifically identify each partner you will work with and provide evidence that the customers they serve are within 200% of the federal poverty levels – as per CSBG requirements.

Q #10: Which staff members do you need resumes for? Is this all staff or just upper management?

A #10: Include the staff who will carry out the project and those who will provide oversight directly or indirectly.

Q #11: Budget - can/should we use the template from our last submission? Would that be helpful?

A #11: Yes, as long as each budget categories and line items are clearly identified, evaluators of the proposal will be in the best position to weigh the merits of your proposal relative to other proposals from qualified vendors.

Q #12: On the list of required business attachments - the last item is the Occupancy Certificate for training. We do not provide employment or vocational skills training. Is it safe to assume you do not need this from us?

A #12: Consider where staff will be operating from and where customers will be served. If neither of these apply, a certificate of occupancy is not needed. The proposal must however be specific about the program design and why a certificate of occupancy for a facility in which services will be provided is not needed.

Q #13: Where can I find what is required to be included in the cover letter?

A #13: Read the proposal carefully. Just like an employment cover letter, consider your cover letter one more opportunity to distinguish your proposal from other qualified proposed projects. Use it how best you see fit, and ensure it signed so that proposal evaluators can assess your submission as complete.

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Q #14: In Section VI-B #11 *“Label the organizational chart Attachment D, Organizational Chart and attach it to your proposal”* – in Section VI-B #14, Attachments it says *“organizational chart as attachment C”*. Which is correct?

A #14: The positioning of the organizational chart does not materially affect proposal scores as long as the organizational chart reflecting how the program team is organized is provided. Given that UPO’s evaluation team includes reviewers from the community, you are encouraged to include a copy in both places in your submission.

Q #15: Also in Section VI-B #11, it is asked: *Also describe the program’s ability to record customer demographic detail, services provided, and outcomes achieved by customers in a database to be furnished by UPO.* Are you looking for what resources do we have to do it?

A #15: We are interested in your resources, tools, and system to adequately document customer profiles, services delivered to each customer (by date) and outcomes achieved by customers (by date).

Q #16: In Section VI-B #12 *“Describe the locations and facilities that will be used for service delivery.”* My response in the proposal notes that *“Services with potential placement candidates happens via video conferencing, by phone or at a mutually agreed upon location (i.e. coffee shop). When hiring fairs are executed, they are held at spaces donated to XYZ, LLC for the event or rented by XYZ, LLC for the day-of experience.”* Since I don’t have actual spaces reserved, does this response suffice?

Re: Required Business Documents: Copy of the valid Occupancy Certificate of the location where training is (or will be) provided – our locations are not confirmed or secured for 2022 and therefore don't have a COI. How do I proceed?

A #16: CARES Act funding is targeted at programs that demonstrate a strong capacity to serve DC residents impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program design must therefore demonstrate current capacity or examples from the past that communicate a track record of capacity to successfully execute the program proposed. Consequently, providing examples of locations that the program seeks to reserve for this purpose will help clarify the program design. Also, if locations have been used in the past for this purpose, describing those instances helps the reviewers to assess capacity. Additionally, an Occupancy Certificate is not required for spaces that are not permanently used by the program for service delivery.

Q #17: In Section VI-B #14 Regarding Attachments – are they to be attached to the email submitted or at the back/end of the PDF submission so it is all ONE PDF? If so, size seems to be a problem in getting to you via email. How do I proceed?

A #17: At the back of the PDF submission is preferred. Where possible, a single document is easier to provide to evaluators. If the document has to be broken into smaller files to facilitate the ease of submission, that will be accepted as well.

Q #18: Given this funding expires on 9/30/22 coupled with how challenging it was to get the initial proposal to UPO (due to size constraints on UPO's server) while also trying to understand what needs to be revised, will it be feasible for the 9/30/22 deadline to be extended if awarded funding?

A #18: No, the CARES Act CSBG funding that covers these awards is written into legislation to expire 9/30/2022. The awards reflect that expiration date. UPO is therefore not able to provide such an extension.