



Shifting Head Start Culture and Approaches to Grants

Office of Head Start Region V

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U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Administration for Children & Families

“To improve is to change to be perfect
is to change often.”

Churchill



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Setting the Context

OHS Grants - The Big Picture

FY 19 projections (approximations)

- ❑ 1,600 grantees (RO 5 19%)
- ❑ \$9.85 Billion dispersed to 2,200 discrete awards
- ❑ 600 of 2,200 awards will go to grantees that have at least one grant
- ❑ 20% of grantees have more than one grant



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Setting the Context

This is BIG BUSINESS

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has 15 Offices including OHS.
ACF's total FY 19 budget including OHS is approximately \$60 Billion

FY 18 the number of ACF grant actions – meaning an application was required and a NOA issued across ACF

- ✓ **OHS – 9,000**
- ✓ FYS -- 1,721
- ✓ 3 Offices between 500 & 1,000
- ✓ 10 Offices < 400



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Setting the Context

Prolific Life Cycle of ONE Discrete GRANT

OHS projects 2,200 discrete grants

FY 18 – 9,000 grant actions = 3 to 4 actions per discrete award

Grantee with 2 discrete awards could have 6- 8 grant actions annually

Over a five year project period one discrete grant could have 15 or more grant actions that require an application and a NOA



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Contributors to Our Complex World of Grants Management

A Whole Lot of Shift Has Happened

- DRS = budget periods extended or shortened
- Indefinite to Five Year Project Periods
- Continuing Resolutions = partial funding, delayed COLAs – YEAH! Not in FY19
- Multi-year funding (Duration & EHS/EHSCCP EXP)
- Grantees with multiple awards with project periods not aligned**



It's a NEW DAY

Impact of Head Start Performance Standards

- Flexibility
- Reliance on data informed decision making
- Emphasis on strategic planning, program goal setting and
- Continuous Improvement
- Set the foundation for a new approach to writing grants
- Gave birth to Head Start Grant Applications Instructions Version 3



Biggest Shifts in Approaches to 5 Year Project Cycles

The Ball is in Your Court

- Death to the Cutters & Pasters and Regurgitators!!
- Grant writing **teams** establish vision and direction the program plans to take over 5 year in its baseline app through its program goals, measurable objectives, expected outcomes and challenges
- Years 2 to 5 - continuation apps describe progress and as needed course corrections based on what you have learned via ongoing oversight and data assessment to ensure continuous improvements.
- The 5 grants together should tell a story – each informing the next



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Shifts in Approaches to 5 Year Project Cycles

The Ball is in Your Court

Grant application should be a meaningful roadmap embraced and understood by Boards, PCs, staff and other stake holders

Not an isolated one off yearly to do - it impacts or is informed by:

Annual Report to Public

- PIR
- Self Assessment
- Community Assessment
- Program & School Readiness Data
- Monitoring



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“After you have done the same thing for two years look at it carefully, after five years look at it with suspicion, after ten years throw it away and start over.”

A. E. Perlman



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Improvements in Applications

OHS & OGM Observations

- ❑ Grantees are reading the APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS
- ❑ Program narratives have improved – use of program data to identify course corrections and professional development
- ❑ Don't see the same application year after year
- ❑ Budget narratives align with program and SR goals



Improvements in Applications

OHS & OGM Observations

- ❑ Well versed in HSPS, greater proficiency in using HSES
- ❑ TTA plan and justification matured
- ❑ Improved communication with federal staff during review of apps



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Areas Needing Improvements

OHS & OGM Observations

- ❑ Identifying broad goals & measurable objectives
- ❑ Changes in scope not adequately supported by data or CA - conversions, reductions, program options
- ❑ Insufficient documentation of NFS – REQUEST A WAIVER IF NEEDED!
- ❑ Incomplete cost allocation plan or not uploading it



Areas Needing Improvements

OHS & OGM Observations

- Absent or outdated current or proposed ICR agreement
- Key Personnel in HSES doesn't match SF-424

“Art of writing lies in a constant readjustment to our surroundings.”

K. Okakura



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Tips When Competing for New Funding

Developing a Proposal in Response to a FOA

- ❑ Proposal costs (grant writing) are allowable if they were incurred during the current accounting period and charged as indirect administrative costs to all programs of the grantee (not solely to the program for which the grant is written). This is a change from the previous regulations. [75.460]
- ❑ OHS does not provide direct guidance or instruction in the development of an applicant's project design or in writing their applications. Applicants should use their best judgment in determining if they are able to meet the requirements in the FOA.



Tips When Competing for New Funding

Developing a Proposal in Response to a FOA

Question

With a new award that involves construction, is it possible to delay programming (without alternative services) until the new site comes online (i.e. delayed programming or temp funded enrollment reduction)?

Answer - Applicants are expected to provide services quickly after award, with a minimal start-up period, to support limited to no disruption in services to currently enrolled children. Also, applicants are asked to respond to the requirements in Planning and Implementation in Section IV.2 of the FOA which speaks to proposed approaches for alternate services until facilities are fully operational.



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Tips When Competing for New Funding

Developing a Proposal in Response to a FOA

Question

Should an applicant budget for its TTA needs?

Answer -Yes.

The FOA list both base and TA funding levels in the Executive Summary. Also, the Budget and Budget Justification section reads, "The application must clearly and accurately distinguish between the base operating funds, T/TA funds, total federal funds, and the applicant's non-federal share."



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Tips When Competing for New Funding

Two Fatal Mistakes

- Deadlines** – Grants.gov waits for no one! Do not wait for the last day or hours to submit your competitive applications. Late applications are rejected. If the deadline is 5:00 pm – 5:01 pm is considered past the deadline.
- Not One Cent More** – If the FOA states \$2,456,698 is available and you apply for \$2,456,698.50 your application will be rejected.

