

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES FUND

Questions from the Applicants' Conference

2/19/10

1. Did New Futures have to obtain matching funds?

Yes. This Federal Funding Opportunity requires a \$1 local dollar match for every \$4 federal dollars. The matching funds are being provided by the City of Little Rock.

2. Does money that is spent on trainings have to be specific?

For applicants that are successful in receiving a funding award, a budget will be developed after an initial organizational assessment is conducted, and an action plan is developed. Part of that planning would include consideration of staff development and training needs.

3. If all 12 awards are not granted, will those that were granted be increased?

No. The maximum award will be \$20,000, regardless of the number of awards. If all awards are not granted, New Futures may issue an additional *Request for Application*.

4. Must there be different colors inks for signatures on copies?

Please use blue ink on the original application.

5. Must I have a physical location?

As stated in the *Request for Application*, "Eligible organizations will provide services, programs and opportunities to people living in ... program areas through facilities also located in those areas of the City of Little Rock." Such facility can be owned or leased by the applicant organization, or the applicant organization can furnish documentation of permission to use the facility through a partnership agreement with the facility owner.

6. If our facility is downtown and we are providing services in other areas, do we describe each area?

An applicant organization can have a facility in one approved area, and propose to provide services to several approved areas. Such an applicant should describe each area in which it is proposing to provide services.

7. Can we pay for someone to attend apprenticeship classes for 6-9 months and then they teach others?

In general, funds may not be used to provide direct program services. The extent to which spending on apprenticeships is allowable would be determined after an initial organizational assessment is conducted, and an action plan is developed.

8. What is the best way to style the application so that it conveys how meaningful and valuable the proposed services are to the citizens receiving the services?

The best style to use is up to each applicant.

9. Why can you contract with a bookkeeper, but not a grant writer?

There is a specific federal law that requires that these federal funds not be used for raising additional funds. So funds may not be used to pay someone to write a grant. The determination about the appropriateness of other budget line items will be made after an initial organizational assessment is conducted, and an action plan is developed.

10. Do the applications have to be stapled, clipped, in binders? What is preferred?

Please make sure that each application is secured by binder clip or staple. Do not use covers or ring binders.

11. Is web site development covered?

Web site development may well be an allowable expense. The determination about the appropriateness will be made after an initial organizational assessment is conducted, and an action plan is developed.

12. Are community meetings for information purposes covered?

Needs assessment activities or information conveyed through community meetings may well be an allowable expense. However, the cost of food at such meetings is not allowable. The determination about the appropriateness of other budget line items will be made after an initial organizational assessment is conducted, and an action plan is developed.

13. Are printing costs covered?

Certain printing costs may well be an allowable expense. The determination about the appropriateness will be made after an initial organizational assessment is conducted, and an action plan is developed.

14. Can we consider trainings out of state?

New Futures is planning a series of capacity building workshops that may address an organization's training needs, or may be aware of other, less expensive, ways to meet these needs. While some types of training may only be available out of state, the determination about the appropriateness will be made after an initial organizational assessment is conducted, and an action plan is developed.

15. Will organizations that are just getting started be eligible?

An organization must have Articles of Incorporation completed, and meet the other eligibility requirements outlined in the *Request for Application*. One purpose of the Strengthening Communities Fund is to assist new and emerging community and faith based organizations.

**STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES FUND
OTHER RFA QUESTIONS**

16. Can payment to a grant writer be included as a budget line item?

Capacity building funds may not be used to directly raise other funds, including payment to someone to write grants. However, funds may be used to develop an on-going capacity of the organization to write grants in house. An example might be for an existing staff member to attend a grant-writing seminar

17. Will this be a one-year grant only, or a two-year grant?

The funding and corresponding project activities will be for a one-year period.

18. Can the budget include funding for a computer lab?

Decisions about appropriate budget line items will be made based on how the expenditure will increase an organization's long-term capacity to address the intent of the *Request for Application* as outlined in the "Introduction" section.

19. Our organization provides the benefit to our community this grant application is targeting as well as the capacity building needs you are offering. Our issue is that our combined budget of over \$500K includes \$275K for maintenance of our facility grounds. Without our maintenance budget, we fit the \$500K annual budget ceiling. Can that distinction be made so that our organization is eligible to apply for these funds?

Awards will be made only to organizations that have a total annual budget of \$500,000 or less, and meet the other criteria outlined in the *Request for Application*.

20. Our organization operates in several sites. Can we consider each site as having a separate budget, and submit an application for a single site?

No. An applicant must be incorporated as a legal entity, and have a budget of \$500,000 or less.

21. If my organization receives funding from the State of Arkansas that originates from a federal source, does that mean I receive federal funds?

The *Request for Application* states that organizations that have never received grants from the Federal government will receive priority consideration. The intent of this is to encourage capacity building by organizations that have not participated in prior federal grant programs. The funding you describe constitutes federal funds, but is not a grant from the federal government to your organization. Therefore, your organization could receive priority consideration in the application process.

22. Is an organization eligible to apply if currently receiving funds from the City of Little Rock?

Any organization that meets the eligibility criteria outlined in the *Request For Application* is eligible to apply.

23. One potential applicant emailed a detailed line-item budget, including out-of-state conference attendance, and asked if the line items listed were appropriate for this capacity building project.

The *Request For Application* does not ask for applicants to submit a budget with the application. A budget of up to \$20,000 will be determined after the organization is selected, and after an assessment and action plan for the year are mutually agreed to by New Futures and the organization. It is expected that the budget developed at that time will support the action plan activities deemed necessary for the organization to have long-term capacity to enhance economic opportunities and/or economic security on behalf of the organization's customers.

Out-of-state conference attendance may be an acceptable professional development opportunity for staff if no less costly opportunity is available. This would depend on the content of the conference, and how the content would support the organization's capacity building action plan.

The *Request For Application* does ask for the amount of the applicant's annual operating budget. This would be the total dollar amount of the current budget, but would not be a line-item breakdown of the current budget.

24. My organization has a physical location in North Little Rock, but conducts the majority of its activities in the approved geographical areas in Little Rock. Is my organization eligible to submit an application?

The *Request for Application* states that: “Eligible organizations will provide services, programs and opportunities to people living in the ... program areas through facilities also located in those areas of the City of Little Rock. Such facility can be owned or leased by the applicant organization, or the applicant organization can furnish documentation of permission to use the facility through a partnership agreement with the facility owner.

25. My organization cooperates with the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services by making client referrals and by attending trainings offered by the Department. Is my organization eligible for priority consideration for working with Arkansas DWS?

In order to qualify for priority consideration, and 5 bonus points, in the application review process, an applicant must attach documentation that certifies work with the Arkansas Department of Workforce services. The documentation must be in the form of a copy of a contractual agreement, a Memorandum of Agreement, or evidence of other type of existing formal agreement between the applicant and DWS.