

**Pre Application Teleconference and Q & A:  
Program Announcement for the FY 2013 Lifespan Respite care Program**

**Grants to New States**

**Moderator: Greg Link  
April 17, 2013  
1:00 PM, Eastern**

*“This transcript has been edited to ensure readability and clarity”*

Greg Link: Thank you. I want to welcome everyone to this teleconference to discuss the funding opportunity announcement for the FY 2013 Lifespan Respite Care Program – Grants to New States.

As with past years, the purpose of this call is to provide interested applicants with some background information on the program.

I'll go through the funding announcement opportunity itself and highlight some things that you should pay attention to and then at the end of the call, I will open it up for questions.

As was mentioned, this call is being recorded and there will be a printed copy of the transcript of today's call including the questions and answers at the end of the call available on ACL's Web site within two to three days following this call. The transcript will be posted alongside of this funding opportunity announcement.

My name is Greg Link and I'm the Aging Program Specialist here at ACL, the Administration for Community Living. I'm the Program Officer for the National Family Caregiver Support Program and also for the Lifespan Respite Care Program.

My responsibility is to ensure the grantees work within the requirements of the Lifespan Respite Act and the funding announcement itself, over the life of the project. I'll be your go-to person for all programmatic issues related to each project.

Joining me here on this call at ACL is Christine Ramirez. She is the Grant Specialist. Christine will be handling the business functions between ACL and the grantees that are selected.

You'll be interacting with Christine on questions about budget, drawdown of funds and things of that nature. Christine will also be doing the business review of applications as they come in.

This call should go for approximately an hour. Hopefully we won't need that much time but I just wanted to take this opportunity to go over the program announcement and clear-up any questions that you have.

I'll spend the next few minutes providing an overview of the program and then we'll review key dates. Next, I'll go through the announcement itself. This is the funding announcement for new states and it is the only funding announcement that I'll be discussing at this time.

If you're interested in applying and are eligible to apply for the Integration and Sustainability grants, that call will happen at 3:00 pm Eastern today.

By way of background on the Lifespan Respite Act, as many of you know Congress passed the Lifespan Respite Act back in 2006 and since 2009 has appropriated approximately \$2.5 million per year in funding.

To date, ACL has funded a total of 31 states to develop lifespan respite care programs and we also have funded technical assistance activities since Fiscal Year 2009.

Last year in Fiscal Year 2012, we funded several of the 2009 grantees with Integration and Sustainability grants to continue their work and we anticipate doing another round of those grants this year.

Also in 2011 and 2012, we funded several states with Expansion funds to test service delivery models and begin providing actual respite care services. As I just mentioned, we have two funding announcements out this year for grants to states.

This call is for the grants to new states and will only focus on that program announcement. Under this program announcement for New States, we anticipate funding up to five new states to begin implementing programs under this Act.

However, the final number of states that we fund for either opportunity will depend on the total number of applications that we get, the funding level, and the scores that each of the applications receives in response to the funding announcement.

For those of you who are new to the concept of lifespan respite, I want to provide a brief overview of the Act and the philosophy of lifespan respite. In a

nutshell, the purpose of the Act is to expand and enhance respite care services, improve coordination and improve respite access and quality.

Lifespan respite care programs look at the service of respite for caregivers and attempt to make it more accessible, more available, higher quality, regardless of the age of the caregiver or the care recipient.

This is a competitive grant opportunity that requires states to establish coordinated state and local lifespan respite care systems to serve families regardless of age or special need and provide new and/or emergency respite services.

There is also a training component and a recruitment component for respite care workers and volunteers and to assist in caregivers in gaining access to respite care services. Additionally, lifespan respite care programs can fill gaps in respite services where they may exist.

Eligible recipients for lifespan respite care services include family members, foster parents or other adults providing unpaid care to adults who require care to meet basic needs or prevent injury and to children who require care beyond what is normally required by children to meet basic needs.

The Lifespan Respite Act is unique in that it addresses the caregiver and respite needs across all age and disability categories without preference to a particular group. In fact Congressional intent requires that states ensure that respite is made more available and accessible regardless of age or disability of a care recipient.

That's just a very brief overview of the Act but before you all were to begin work on your applications, I'd encourage you to you or the persons who will

be working on the actual application to read the language of the Lifespan Respite Care Act itself.

Even as you convene your stakeholder groups to discuss the application of program development, it would be a great idea to ensure that each of them reads the Act as well. It gets everybody on the same page with a common understanding of what the Act requires.

The Act is relatively short and straightforward and you'll see that because of some of the language in the Act that talks very specifically about what applications have to include, you'll see language from throughout the Lifespan Respite Act repeated in the program announcement.

I've provided a direct link to the Act and the accompanying committee report on Page 4 of the funding announcement, you can just click on it. First I just want to touch on a few key dates associated with this funding opportunity announcement.

Of course today April 17 is today's teleconference and again that printed transcript will be posted on ACL's Web site here in just a few days. Letters of intent are due April 19, 2013, so that's this Friday. And I want to encourage you to consider completing a letter of intent even if you don't ultimately apply.

Submitting a letter of intent does not commit you to submitting an application. Letters of intent are more or less a planning tool for me so that I know approximately how many applications to expect. I can then go about recruiting enough grant reviewers to actually review the applications. You can either fax or e-mail your letters of intent.

They don't have to be anything formal on letterhead unless that's your state policy to do that. It can be simply a simple e-mail saying we intend to apply and here's who it's going to be coming from, you know, that's really all you need to do.

If you're going to fax your letters of intent, my fax number is 202-357-3549 and my e-mail is [greg.link@acl.hhs.gov](mailto:greg.link@acl.hhs.gov). E-mail's really the preferred way but fax works as well. The application deadline as you probably know by reading the funding announcement is 11:59 pm on May the 20th, 2013.

Applications must be submitted electronically via grants.gov. The due date is not negotiable. Applications that are received after the due date will not be considered for funding and I'll talk more in a little bit about specific application submitting instructions. The projected start date for projects is around August 1, 2013. This is an approximate date though.

Your actual start date may be a little earlier or a little later than this depending on how quickly we're able to process applications. Those are some of the key dates to keep in mind as you begin working on your applications and I'll talk in a little bit about the actual grant submission process and what you'll need to do to begin preparing for that.

Let's take a look at the program announcement. I want to take a few minutes to walk through it and point out a few things (especially if you're applying for this program for the first time) to look out for. I'll try to call your attention to those issues that I think are of the greatest importance.

If I don't answer all of your questions during this time, we can discuss them at the end. First and foremost, please be aware that this particular funding

announcement is only applicable for states who have never received a grant under the lifespan respite care program.

If you have not received funding under this program before in your state, your state is eligible to apply. Page 2 of the funding announcement starts the actual description of the funding opportunity.

I've tried to provide enough background and history so that applicants can understand the intent and the purpose of the funding opportunity as well as the context in which you're going to be working if you're funded. Page 4 near the middle is the link to the actual Lifespan Respite Act that I mentioned a couple of minutes ago.

If you've not read the statute, I encourage you to do so. It's short, it's very straightforward but it's also I think rather informative. You'll see that by reading the law, much of the language that's in the law has to do with what applicants are required to include in their applications.

Page 5 provides some definitions and terms that we refer to throughout the funding announcement. We describe an aging and disability resource center, who the eligible recipients are and so on.

Page 6 at the top outlines the required uses of funds. These requirements are taken directly from the statute and please be sure that you address them in your applications. In other words, please be sure that you design your program so that all of the required activities and services are addressed and delivered.

The Act itself is not specific with respect to how much of each service is to be provided so it's up to you as the applicant to determine the appropriate service mix.

Page 7 lays out some additional required elements that need to be in your application. Again these are drawn mainly from statute but they also reflect many of the priorities of the ACL Administrator, Kathy Greenlee.

Page 8 near the bottom and I can't stress this enough and you'll hear me repeat this a couple of times, your application package must include a copy of the MOU between the eligible state agency and I'll get to who's eligible in just a minute but your application package must include a copy of the MOU between the eligible state agency and the statewide respite coalition or organization.

This is a requirement of the Lifespan Respite Act and the Act requires that the application include the MOU regarding joint responsibility of the eligible agency's program between that agency and the public or private not-for-profit statewide respite organization or coalition.

I would encourage you to develop the memorandum so that it's flexible enough so that, as the project begins to unfold, the parties to the MOU have some flexibility to make amendments to it. For example if you spell-out specific roles and responsibilities to all parties of the MOU, please include a clause that allows modification to some of those.

What we've found in the past is that, because of state requirements, parties to MOUs are locked-in to what's written and then, as the grant project unfolds they see that they need to change their scope a little bit or maybe one of the agreements wasn't quite applicable, there needs to be some flexibility to modify that.

So consider including that flexibility if you can in your MOUs. Most important though, if the MOU is not in the application, the application is rejected and not reviewed. I can't stress that enough and I've had a couple of instances where states failed to include the MOU and the application was screened and rejected and was not passed on for review.

Page 8 through 11 lay out some additional required or optional or encouraged activities. Please be sure that you address these, as appropriate throughout your application. Pages 9 and 10 contain the sections pertaining to products, information sharing and collaboration with technical assistance efforts.

These have been expanded a little bit over previous years but we're continuing to expect these things of all applicants. Most importantly we have added a performance measurement and data collection requirement as well. This is in response to AOA/ACL's need to develop a more rigorous performance measurement approach to these grants.

All grantees will be required to participate in the work that ACL is doing with our technical assistance provider ARCH National Respite Network and we are taking a much more structured approach to enabling the program to measure its progress and success.

Technical Assistance resource center activities are ongoing through a separate grant and cooperative agreement and should your applications be successful, you'll be expected to work with the technical assistance provider and participate in the structured learning activities such as Webinars and teleconferences and the like.

Page 10 at the very bottom is rather important where we talk about grants and subcontracts. It's one of the optional elements and some of you may decide

that you need a sub-grant or a subcontract to carry-out some of the required or optional activities and this is permissible.

A number of states have done this in their existing projects. They have used a portion of their grant funds to develop mini-grant programs. That's an option you have. Others have made sub-grants to other entities to complete portions of the work plan, grants or subcontracts so that is an option as well.

However, the state agency - the applicant - must demonstrate an active role in development, implementation and management of the project. Don't propose projects that simply pass funds through to another entity. We have not and will not fund pass-through projects.

If you decide to subcontract specific activities, be sure to clearly describe the process for this and how you as a grantee will continue to be in the lead role and also be sure to describe the role of the project director and the role and the makeup of the stakeholder group.

Stakeholder involvement in partnerships is discussed very completely in the funding announcement so I would encourage you to pay close attention to that. We've seen in states where lifespan respite activities and programs are successful, a very strong collaboration among project stakeholders. Please be sure that you address this in your application.

Pages 11 to 12 begin the award information. We plan as I mentioned earlier to fund up to approximately five grants at a maximum of \$200,000 each for a 36-month project.

What this means is that you'll receive your grant award up-front for a three-year project so please keep this in mind as you develop your work plans and budgets for your 36-month project.

Our rationale for 36-month project lengths was to give states who are maybe not as far along in their development of lifespan respite programs or who may not have begun the work necessary to bring the relevant stakeholders together enough time and resources to plan and implement programs, supplement respite services where necessary and have enough time to focus on sustainability.

For those states who may be further along but this is your first grant, maybe you have a relatively well-developed lifespan respite program. You can use a 36-month project period to fine-tune your programs, increasing your reach, try new approaches for meeting respite needs, fill gaps in services more effectively, what have you.

Since awarding the first round of grants, I've seen the benefits of three-year projects. I think it allows adequate time for planning and ramp-up of grant activities and staffing of projects. It's a similar approach that we've used through our ADSSP grants as well as our ADRC grants.

Page 12 near the top points out that it's very likely that not all applications that we receive will be funded. We'll be making funding decisions based on the outcomes of the application review processes for both this opportunity for new states as well as the integrated and sustainability programs funding opportunity announcement.

As you can imagine, it's a very small amount of money, a little over \$2.4 million, so it's expected that this is going to be a highly competitive

opportunity and we will only be able to recommend for funding the strongest applications in either funding option.

During the course of the application review, we may come back to applicants to negotiate the actual size of the award. Keep in mind that you can never be awarded more money than you ask for and we can and we have in some cases awarded less in terms of funding than was requested based on the scope of work relative to the funds requested and the funds that are available.

While these are grants, I have worked relatively closely with all of the grantees throughout the lives of their projects. I anticipate that that will continue to be the case.

As the projects get underway, you'll be brought into the communication system that I've setup with the grantees, with the technical assistance resource centers so that you'll be advised of regular conference calls that we have, technical assistance updates and information about program-specific issues that you may need to know about.

Page 12 at the very bottom begins the eligibility section. Please be sure that you read and understand all of these requirements, especially who's eligible and when I talk a little bit more later about screening applications against responsiveness criteria which happens before we actually send the applications to the review panels, this is the first thing that we'll look at is whether or not the applicant is eligible as specified under the statute.

Eligible applicants must either be the state unit on aging, the state's Medicaid agency or another state agency identified by the governor to administer the lifespan respite program. No other entities are eligible to apply.

If you're listening on the call now and you're not from a state agency, you're likely not eligible to apply. If that is the case, you should contact and work with the eligible entity in your state and encourage them to submit an application.

Additionally, the eligible agency must either be, or work in concert with, an aging and disability resource center and must work in collaboration with a public or private non-profit statewide respite care coalition or organization and that's where the MOU again is so important.

In this case if there isn't a formal respite care coalition in the state, a statewide respite organization working in the state on behalf of the entire state would suffice.

Note that the final set of eligibility criteria is that the eligible agency must demonstrate an ability to work with other state and community-based agencies, have an understanding of respite and family caregiver issues across all age groups and disability groups and must have the capacity to ensure meaningful involvement of family members and caregivers.

On Page 13 of the announcement, I want to call your attention to the match requirement. This is a really important issue. By statute cost-sharing and match is set at 25% cash or in-kind. Congress has not permitted waivers to or reductions of the required match and as with most federal grants, grant funds must be matched from non-federal sources.

Cash match can come from non-federal funds such as cash contributions. In-kind contributions are non-federal third-party non-cash made directly to the grant project and include things like donated time, goods and services and things of that nature.

Be sure that your match is based on the project's total cost and not on the amount that you request from the feds. This essentially requires you to develop your work plan and budget first before determining how much to request from the feds and we've provided some detailed examples for how to compute your match.

Earlier I mentioned some responsiveness and screening criteria. Pages 14 to 15 get into this in a little bit more detail and I want you to pay attention to that. Please be sure that your applications address the responsiveness and the screening criteria.

We'll be screening each application internally to ensure that both the screening and the responsiveness criteria are addressed before we move the applications on to the reviewers.

Failure of an application to comply with either the responsiveness and/or the screening of technical criteria will result in the application's elimination from further review. The responsiveness criteria on Page 15 in the middle includes three factors.

First we'll be looking at whether or not the applicant is an eligible state agency as outlined in statute. Are you either the state agency on aging, the state unit, the Medicaid agency or another state agency?

Number 2: is the MOU between the eligible state agency and the respite care coalition or organization in the file? And, does the applicant propose to do the work themselves meaning you're not proposing pass-through funds.

We have to be able to answer yes to all three of those questions and then the application can move on. If all of those above conditions aren't met, your application will not be reviewed.

The application screening criteria are more technical in nature and include things like, was the application submitted on time? Are the margins correct? Is the narrative within the page limit length of 20 pages, the correct font size and so on.

Page 15 provides guidance on where to get application packages. It also includes my contact information and this page also includes some helpful information about using grants.gov.

Pages 16 to 17 give specific instructions on all the steps you need to follow to make sure that you're registered on grants.gov and that you have your DUNS number.

From time to time there can be issues with grants.gov with respect to accessing application packages or when it comes time to submit your application packages. Should this occur if you have technical problems with grants.gov, please use the toll-free number that is included in the funding announcement if you have questions about grants.gov.

Grants.gov is not an ACL system. We're not able to help with technical issues. If you're not already registered with grants.gov or you don't already have your DUNS number, please be sure that you start those processes early.

Check if you have passwords but you haven't used the accounts in a while, make sure that the passwords are still valid. I would really avoid waiting until

the last minute to make sure that you have access to grants.gov or that you have a valid DUNS number.

Don't want to wait until the last minute because there is often times a time lag between when you request these or update them and when they actually become available to you.

Pages 17 to 25 provide a lot of information specific to the application contents and format, how to submit and a list of required forms and page limits, etc.

Page 25 begins a section that provides you with information about how to structure the project narrative. Remember that the narrative is the heart of your application.

This is where you tell your story, you outline the needs that your state has with respect to respite and this is where you layout and discuss your project and how it's going to unfold.

This is your one and only opportunity to tell the grant reviewers what you're going to do and the narrative is the primary means on which the application scores are based. And you've only got 20 pages to do this. So planning and execution of the narrative is really critical.

We'll be using outside review panels to review and score each application and the narrative is your only opportunity to tell these folks what you're going to do. I want to call your attention specifically to Pages 26 and 27.

In the section that's labeled "problem statement" and then in "proposed intervention," there is a bulleted list of items that are statutorily required be in

your applications. Please be sure that your narratives address those bulleted requirements.

Page 29 outlines some other required application elements. I want to draw your attention to some templates we've provided for you for the budget narrative, work plans, etc. Please be sure that you make use of those templates.

I wanted to call your attention to the fact that because these applications are fully funded up-front, please make sure that your work plans very clearly show what you're going to accomplish in each year of the project. Break your work plans down into Year 1, Year 2, Year 3.

Because these are forward-funded, we're going to be required to monitor a little more closely your progress on each of the tasks in the work plan. By having a very clear, cohesive work plan that will help us do that.

Your notices of award will reflect the additional monitoring that we're going to be required to do and we'll work with you on that. Another section that I want to point out to you is on Pages 32 to 36 of the funding opportunity announcement.

This is really critical. These pages layout the exact criteria against which your applications are going to be scored. In other words, the scoring forms that are used by the reviewers will ask them to look for each of the listed elements in your applications.

My suggestion to you would be to read and to make sure that your applications can answer each of the questions in the affirmative under each of

the five sections. Keep in mind that these are the only criteria against which your applications will be reviewed and scored.

Page 37 talks a bit about the review process that will take place after you submit your applications. Each of the applications that go through the initial screening that I mentioned earlier will be reviewed by a panel of three experts.

Their recommendations are included in the final award decision and they'll use the scoring format that contains the criteria on Pages 32 to 36. They use forms with that exact same criteria to measure each of your applications. After the May 20th deadline our grants office will pull the applications together and get them out to the reviewers.

Reviewers will have about two weeks or so. I anticipate that with a May 20th due date for applications, the grant reviews will happen and be completed by mid-June and then that begins the time when Christine or grant specialists will do the business review of the applications. That will likely happen in the latter part of June, early part of July.

We hope to have notices of award out by the end of July for an August 1 start date. Again, these are not specific dates and the dates may move a little bit earlier or later just depending on our work flow.

Pages 38 to the end talks about some routine administrative information, reporting, performance report requirements and things of that nature so that concludes my walk-through of the funding announcement. I'd like to open the lines for questions if we could, please.

Coordinator: Thank you. We will now begin the question-and-answer session. If you would like to ask a question over the phone, please press star 1. You'll be prompted

to record your name. To withdraw your request, press star 2. One moment, please, for the first question. Again if you would like to ask a question over the phone, please press star 1.

Greg Link: Well, if there are no questions, I guess that's a good thing. I would like to thank those of you who dialed-in. I wish you the best of luck in writing your applications. Please remember, be thorough in your narratives!

Be sure that you include the MOU between the eligible state agency and the state's respite coalition in your application. That document must be part of your application package. Are there any questions?

Coordinator: There are no questions over the phone, sir.

Greg Link: Okay, thank you all very much. Bye.

Coordinator: That concludes today's conference. Thank you for participating. You may disconnect at this time.

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