



CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE AND RELIEF SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2021: GRANTS TO ENHANCE ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES TO RESPOND TO COVID-19

Frequently Asked Questions

February 1, 2021

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) is establishing the “Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021: Grants to Enhance Adult Protective Services to Respond to COVID-19” funding opportunity to implement Section 2042(b) of Subtitle B of Title XX of the Social Security Act, otherwise known as the Elder Justice Act (EJA) as authorized and funded through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021. In accordance with these statutes, the purpose of this opportunity is to enhance and improve adult protective services provided by States and local units of government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

These frequently asked questions (FAQs) are provided to assist APS programs better understand the new funding opportunity. These FAQs further elucidate the information contained in [the Federal Register Announcement for this Opportunity](#), and published on February 1, 2021.

An information call for state-level APS programs will be held on February 3, 2021, 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. (EST). To register for the event, please visit the [ACL - APS Formula Grant Info Webinar information page](#).

GENERAL QUESTIONS

What is the statutory reference for this funding?

The statutory authority for grants under this program announcement is contained in the Elder Justice Act Section 2042(b) of Title XX of the Social Security Act [Public Law 74-271] [As Amended Through P.L. 115-123, Enacted February 9, 2018], and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021.

What is the purpose of this funding?

Funds expended from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 are to be spent in accordance with Elder Justice Act Section 2042(b) for APS programs to respond to the Coronavirus Emergency. Funds awarded under this opportunity will provide Adult Protective Services programs (APS) in the States and territories with resources related to their response during the Coronavirus Public Health Emergency. APS programs must expend funds on allowable activities as defined by the Elder Justice Act and State and local policy. This funding is intended to enhance, improve, and expand the ability of APS to investigate allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation in the context of COVID-19 and to respond to the needs of adults experiencing such abuse, neglect and exploitation.

How can these funds be used?

Funds must be expended on APS activities related to the Coronavirus Emergency. Below are examples of how these funds could be used that would be responsive to the requirements. (See “Appendix” below for further information on prior approval for equipment purchases.) These examples are for consideration only, and do not replace existing fiscal requirements:

- Improving and Supporting Remote Work:
 - Purchase of equipment and associated technologies that will allow for secure remote work and enhance APS workers’ ability to interview and investigate while they cannot physically visit during to COVID-19 crisis. This may include purchase and/or reimbursement of expenses related to remote work; such as:
 - laptops,
 - smart phones,
 - electronic tablets,
 - WiFi hotspots,
 - software to facilitate secure video conferencing and virtual meetings;
 - Purchase of new, or improvements to existing, data systems and/or technology infrastructure related to case management that enhance interoperability and communication of systems across locales, including across states, and reporting to the National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System (NAMRS).
- Costs for and associated with establishing new, or improving existing, processes for responding to alleged scams and frauds, especially related to COVID-19 vaccine or cure scams.
- Costs for and associated with community outreach, including: advertising, postage, and printing of brochures and similar educational materials.
- Costs for and associated with providing goods and services to APS clients related to COVID-19.
- Costs for and associated with assisting APS clients secure the least restrictive option for emergency or alternative housing, and with obtaining, providing, or coordinating with care transitions as appropriate.
- Paying for staff extended hours, or hiring of additional, temporary staff, and associated personnel costs. For more information on indirect costs, see [45CFR75.414](#).
 - Note: this funding is time-limited.

- Costs for and related to training (both remote and in-person) for current and new APS employees on conducting investigations, interviews, and documentation during COVID-19, including additional costs associated with advertising, recruiting, certifying, and providing continuing education.
- Funds for travel once in-person investigations resume. For more information on indirect costs, see [45CFR75.414](#).
- Acquiring personal protection equipment and supplies for program use, as appropriate, once in-person investigations resume.

Is the state APS entity allowed to use the funds for state-level initiatives around COVID-19?

Yes. Funds may be used at the state level, distributed to local APS programs, or may be contracted out.

How does an APS program apply for the funding?

Funding will be distributed once ACL receives a Letter of Assurance and an Initial Spend Plan from the eligible applicant by the due date. The due date, required elements for the plan and letter, and details about to whom and how to submit, are outlined in the [Federal Register Notice](#).

What assistance is available to help state APS programs with planning how to use these funds?

ACL recognizes that a new opportunity like this could seem a lot for a state/territory APS program to undertake. ACL is committed to the success of these projects and is prepared to provide technical assistance to all 56 grantees on programmatic, fiscal, and technology issues and questions. ACL will provide more information on how that technical assistance will be provided once the awards are made. In the interim, APS programs can direct programmatic questions to: Stephanie Whittier Eliason via email at stephanie.whittiereliason@acl.hhs.gov.

ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS

Who is eligible to apply for this funding?

Per the Elder Justice Act Section 2042(b), eligible entities are the agency or unit of State government in each state or territory having the legal responsibility for providing adult protective services within the State.

What about States where adult protective services is separate from elder protective services?

As the funding allotments are based upon the percentage of older adults in a state, in the States where elder protective services is separate from adult protective services the funds will go to the agency or unit of State government providing protective services to elders. ACL encourages recipient agencies in these states to work collaboratively with their protective services partners to implement this funding, as well as with their State Units on Aging, local and State Ombudsmen, and other partners.

Funding Related Questions

What does ACL mean when it says funding is “one-time funding”?

Funding for this opportunity were made available through emergency legislation to support Americans during the COVID-19 crisis. Because this funding comes through a supplemental funding bill and is not considered a part of the annual federal budget, this funding is considered “one-time” funding. That is, grantees should have no expectation that there will be additional, similar funds available in the future. Grantees should plan their activities with this information in mind.

What Does ACL mean when it says this funding should “supplement and not supplant existing funding?”

The phrase “supplement and not supplant existing funding” means that the funding made available through this opportunity may not be used to replace existing state, territory, or local funding already appropriated for APS programs and services. Existing funds for an existing project or activities may not be displaced by federal funds and reallocated for other organizational expenses. The funding through this opportunity must add to the state’s/territory’s current funding levels, not be used to replace funding, even to cover funding reductions.

How will ACL distribute or allocate these funds?

ACL will distribute funds to States and territories as required by the population-based formula prescribed in the Elder Justice Act Section 2042(b). That is, each State and territory shall be allocated a proportionate share of the total funding available from the appropriation based on the number of elders (age 60+) in each state. The EJA also establishes a “minimum allotment. No State (50 entities) shall receive less than 0.75% of the total appropriation, and no territory (6 entities) shall receive less than 0.10% of the total appropriation

How much is each state and territory going to receive?

The amount of funds allocated for each of the 56 state-level APS programs is posted in the [Federal Register Notice](#).

Will American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands be treated as States or territories for purposes of the funding formula?

The distribution of these funds are in accordance with Section 2042(b) of the Elder Justice Act, which provides for minimum allotments to “50 States and 6 territories.” Therefore, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands will be treated as a territory for purposes of this funding opportunity.

Are matching funds required?

No.

My State's APS serves older adults and younger adults with disabilities. How can we use this funding?

Funds can be used to support activities as outlined above under “purpose” and “use of funding.” When reporting, grantees will be required to report on the number/proportion of elders served by your agency with these funds.

How long do we have to use the funds?

The project period for these awards is anticipated to be 18-months, with an estimated start date of April 1, 2021, and an estimated end date of September 30, 2022. Grant activities must be completed within the project period timeframe (i.e., spend it, incur an expense against it, and/or obligate it) by September 30, 2022.

If the COVID-19 public health emergency ends, is the Act funding no longer available?

The funding will be available for the full project period that will be stated in the Notice of Award. It is estimated that the project period will be April 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022. Even if the COVID-19 public health emergency resolves prior to September 30, 2022, it is prudent to assume there will still be expenses related to the coronavirus response, such as costs associated with in-person visits to clients and purchasing of personal protective equipment, for example.

Under a Major Disaster Declaration, are funds available for “bucketing” like the Older Americans Act funds?

No. The funds are administered under the authority of the Elder Justice Act, and do not have the same flexibilities as the Older Americans Act funding.

Reporting Requirements

Where and how will States/territories submit their financial reports?

Grantees are required to submit a [financial report SF-425](#) on a semi-annual basis. The SF-425 shall be submitted using the HHS' Payment Management System (PMS). PMS website is located at: <https://pms.psc.gov>. Reports are due within 30 days of the periods ending March 31 and September 30 (i.e., due April 30 and October 30), through September 30, 2022. A final PMS drawdown and a final SF-425 are due within 120 days after September 30, 2022 (i.e., due January 31, 2023). If a final SF-425 report will be submitted January 31, 2023, a semi-annual report is not required to be filed for report ending September 30, 2022. For this opportunity, there will be three (3) SF-425 reports due: October 31, 2021, April 30, 2022, and a Final Report January 31, 2023.

On the SF-425 form, lines 10 a. through c. are reported on a quarterly calendar year basis (for the periods ending 12/31, 3/31, 6/30, 9/30) at the HHS' Payment Management System (PMS). Reconciliation of advances and disbursements is required for each quarter and the report must be completed within 30 days of the end of each quarter (i.e., by 1/30, 4/30, 7/30, 10/30). This reporting requirement is separate from completing the entire SF-425 as denoted in the financial reporting term.

What programmatic information will States/territories be required to report?

Grantees may use the [Current Guidelines for Preparing Performance Reports for Grants \(PDF, 332KB\)](#). ACL will provide additional guidance to grantees when awards are made.

Where and how will States/territories submit their programmatic reports?

Grantees will upload their annual programmatic report as an attachment under "Resources" in NAMRS. All grantee agencies should already have access to NAMRS. If you need additional assistance, please contact the APS Technical Assistance Resource Center (<https://apstarc.acl.gov/>).

When are programmatic reports due?

Programmatic reports are due annually beginning with 12 months from the date of the notice of award. A final report will be due 90 days after the projected project end date.

APPENDIX

What are the equipment prior approval requirements?

Per 45CFR75.320(a)(2) a grantee may not encumber property without approval of the HHS awarding agency

Equipment purchases made by a direct grantee (i.e., APS entity) exceeding \$5,000 must receive prior approval from ACL prior to purchase. Note: A sub-grantee of an APS entity must receive prior approval from the APS entity for equipment purchases exceeding \$5,000. ACL does not provide prior approval to sub-grantees of the APS entity.

Equipment means tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000.

How does a grantee submit an equipment purchase request?

1. Provide the following information to ACL for review of any equipment purchase requests that are subject to prior approval:
 - Identification of and cost for purchase
 - Purpose and intended use of the purchase
 - Market research done (i.e., obtaining bids, assessment of lease vs. purchase)
 - Efforts to adhere to “Buy American”.
2. Submit the information to your ACL Financial Contact and Regional Administrator for ACL review.
3. Do not purchase the equipment until written approval is received from ACL. Once prior approval is received, the organization then follows its own procurement policies.