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DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Funds

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Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Funds Guidelines

I. Introduction

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) provides assistance to states and local communities to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities and empower low-income families and individuals to become fully self-sufficient.

In support of the goals and objectives of the CSBG toward the amelioration of the causes and effects of poverty, the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) follows its mission to foster opportunities for businesses and communities to thrive in a global economy, enabling Pennsylvanians to achieve a superior quality of life.

Federal and State law stipulate that approximately five percent (5%) of the federal Community Services Block Grant funds may be used for discretionary projects. Eligible applicants include non-profit community-based organizations or governmental entities. A qualified initiative must serve clients who are at, or below, 125% of the federal poverty guidelines.

II. Project Objectives

CSBG Discretionary funds are intended to advance methods of reducing poverty and revitalizing low-income communities. For 2012, Pennsylvania's discretionary funds will be **dedicated to supporting its 42 Community Action Agencies and 2 Limited Purpose Agencies.** CSBG discretionary applications will be provided to the 44 eligible entities to assist in providing additional funds to provide critical services within their service areas.

CSBG discretionary funds will be awarded in priority order as listed below:

1. Priority will be given to those Agencies for which the 2012 CSBG allocation was reduced from fiscal year 2011, in order to fill the gap created by the 2012 allocation.

2. Once all applications from Agencies to fill gaps have been considered, the second priority will be to award any remaining to funds to Agencies requesting funds beyond the gap created and/or to supplement funding in addition to the original award of the 2012 CSBG allocations.

   DCED reserves the right to award discretionary funds to any organization engaged in activities outside of the competitive application process as deemed appropriate.

The deadline for submissions of CSBG Discretionary proposals is June 30, 2012.

All applications will be reviewed to ensure that applicants are presenting efforts related to achieving the CSBG objectives, leveraging, establishing clear partnerships, ensuring project sustainability and identifying measurable outcomes.

III. Project Narrative

In addition to the information requested in Section IX of the Single Application for Assistance on www.newPA.com, a completed application must include the following information:

A. **Agency:** A brief profile of your agency that includes the following:

1. Date of incorporation
2. Overall mission or purpose of the agency
3. Primary services of the agency
4. Demonstrated ability of agency to achieve results (such as staff capacity, past/present achievements, successes, resources)
5. Annual budget and recent audit

B. **Statement of Need:** A clear and specific description of the needs that are to be addressed by the funding request and how the funds will assist the Agency to meet those needs. Any available evidence or statistics that were used to support the identified need(s) are to be included. Specific details about the community or targeted area served that can be used to demonstrate need include, but are not limited to low-income population, unemployment rate, percentage of residents receiving public assistance, vacant buildings, school dropout rates, etc.

C. **Project Plan:** A comprehensive outline of details including objectives, employment impact (jobs), expected outcomes and project timeline. Clearly outline the approach, plan and activities that will support the goals and objectives. Indicate the expected impact the funding request will have on its targeted population/community residents through projected outcomes and goals.

D. **Eligibility Determination Plan:** A description of the validation process that will be used to ensure those being served are low-income individuals at or below 125% of the federal poverty guidelines.

E. **Sustainability Plan:** A description of how the organization will ensure that the Agency can continue after the CSGB discretionary resources are depleted, and, if applicable, how funds will be raised and leveraged to continue operations.

F. **Linkages and Collaboration:** Identify partners and other collaborators. This section should demonstrate the strategic approach to the integration of larger, local networks of partners and the community. Include a listing of the organizations who are a part of your approach with whom you plan to work; demonstrate a shared agenda for action and strategies to serve the low-income population, what role those organizations will play in the project and describe how this project links with their efforts but does not duplicate services. Provide a description as to how the project promotes, leverages and/or partners with community and/or economic development programs in the service area.

G. **Outcomes (Community Impact Measures):** Detail the community impact and changes that are anticipated as a result of the funding request. This section should explain the clear measures of success, concrete measures by which the activities can be evaluated, along with quantifiable outcomes, using empirical evidence to the degree possible. This section should also address options that improve the intra- and inter-agency coordination. Outcomes presented should be both short-term and long-term and should include measures such as new partnerships (memoranda of understanding), employment attained, barriers removed, number of new jobs, persons employed in quality jobs (greater than minimum wage with benefits), number of jobs sustained (employed for at least 6 months), improved homeownership rate, residential vacancy rate, increased racial diversity, business revenues collected/maintained among others.

IV. Priorities

DCED will give priority consideration to proposals submitted by Community Action Agencies that experienced a reduction of CSBG funds distributed by formula for federal fiscal year 2012. Applicants must demonstrate that the proposed activities will achieve significant community impact, as measured in the outcomes section of the submitted application. Applications that do not contain this justification will not be considered as meeting the priority and will not be funded.

V. Requirements

All grant requests for CSBG Discretionary funds must adhere to the following requirements:

A. Project funds must be expended between January 1 and September 30, 2013.

B. Project funds are not to be used for the purchase or permanent improvement of real property.

C. To apply for funding, the application must be submitted using the electronic on-line Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) Single Application for Assistance located at www.esa.dced.state.pa.us. Please reference the single application number (generated upon submission of your application) on any documents sent with the signature page or submitted via US Mail.

D. Audit costs must be included in the project budget, as well as the source of funds paying for the audit, if the application request is for $100,000 or more.

E. Approved applicants will be required to procure fidelity bonding in the amount of 50% of the grant award for anyone authorized to sign checks, certify vouchers and/or handle or control funds, checks, securities or property.

F. Approved applicants may be required to submit regular reports of grant activity utilizing the Community Organization Planning and Outcomes System (COPOS) and any other department (DCED) reports as required. Information regarding these reporting processes will be sent to the grantee upon execution of the contract.

NOTE: *DCED reserves the right to monitor and/or audit the project at any time to assure contract compliance.*

V. Review of Proposals

The deadline for submissions of CSBG Discretionary proposals is June 30, 2012. Approval of any funds is effective as of the start date of the contract between DCED and the grantee. Applications will be reviewed against standard criteria and ranked based upon the documentation provided as outlined in the project narrative in addition to the following performance-based factors:

1. **Timeliness of Reporting –** the record that the Agency has established for timely and accurate reporting for programs. This includes COPOS reporting, invoicing and fiscal status reports, Family Savings Account reporting, Weatherization reporting and other reporting for DCED funded programs.

2. **Monitoring Results –** the results of past monitoring that has been conducted for all DCED funded programs, which includes programmatic monitoring, fiscal monitoring and single audit results. This includes findings as well as recommendations for improvement.

3. **Systematic Analysis of Data –** (ROMA) – the degree by which the agency evaluates and applies programmatic and tracking data to service delivery decisions, projections and outcome data.

4. **Fiscal –** the degree to which the agency has worked to leverage private funding and reduce dependence on public sector funding sources. This also includes the financial solvency of the agency, being able to meet all financial obligations with reserve funds.

5. **Organization's Programs –** the amount of total organizational effort that is expended on each program listed. (Organizational effort is defined by the organization itself based on any combination of time, funds and/or other resources.)

6. **Internal Measures –** the degree and approach by which each of the organization's programs is evaluated. Includes frequency, etc.

7. **Board Performance/Conduct –** the process the board uses to evaluate its own performance, assesses for risk factors and ensures that the Agency remains compliant and sound.