Decoding Federal Solicitations

PARTNERSHIPS THAT WORK SERIES

SESSION 1

AUGUST 10, 2017
Welcome to *Partnerships that Work*

NLADA is excited to welcome you to the launch of Partnerships that Work, a five-part webinar series, helping civil and defender stakeholders to better understand the ins and outs of connecting their programs to federal resources.

The Partnerships That Work series is presented jointly by NLADA's Defender and Civil Legal Services Divisions as a collaborative effort to connect stakeholders across the civil and criminal justice landscapes to resources, partners, and to spark innovation. You can learn more and register for any of the sessions on our website at [http://www.nlada.org/webinars](http://www.nlada.org/webinars).
Decoding Federal Solicitations

Federal funding solicitations are long and.... Confusing.

We have some suggestions to help you wade through the pages more effectively.

Before you get started, look for the solicitation mission and deadline.

- How does the issuing agency expect this opportunity to help fulfill its mission? Does the work of your office or organization support that same mission already?

- When are applications due? Do you have time to put in a strong application before the deadline?
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Getting Started: Use your time effectively by knowing where to look first to see if the solicitation might be a good fit.

- Goals
- Deliverables
- Eligibility
- Partnership Potential
- Reporting Expectations
- Application Checklist
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Do any of the goals of the solicitation align with your office or organizations goals? Are you doing any similar work already or have you done so in the past?

As you’re reading, keep an eye out for things you’ll want to work into your program proposal.

• Strategic Planning Services – have you participated in or facilitated a strategic planning process before?

• Data and Research – how are you currently using data or research to make decisions that increase your organizations capacity?

• Create a Platform – are there innovative ways that your organization uses technology to share information?
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Your program proposal will need to show how you intend to execute every listed deliverable or requirement.

Once again, keep an eye out for things you’ll want to work into your proposal. Deliverables are also where you may get your first idea of what partnerships will be useful.

- **Manage an Online Process** – Is there someone on your team or a team you’ve been wanting to work with that can do this well?

- **Deploy Research Partners** – Are you currently conducting research? Do you have the ability to leverage existing researcher partnerships?

- **Develop Strategic Planning Tools** – Creating tools combines a variety of skills from content to design to marketing and evaluation. Where will you find all of the skills needed to do this well?
Once you’ve decided that the mission, timeline, goals, and deliverables of a solicitation are all in alignment with your organization you can review the eligibility section.

Though public defenders are not often mentioned explicitly in this section, they are rarely specifically precluded. This section will also issue guidance on demonstrated experience required to make an applicant eligible for award.

- Demonstrated expertise in delivering and managing strategic planning services on a NATIONAL LEVEL TTA program
- Demonstrated past experience in working with state and or local public defense systems

C. Eligibility Information

Categories 1 and 2: Eligible applicants are public or private organizations, nonprofit organizations (including tribal nonprofit and for-profit organizations), for-profit organizations, and public universities and colleges (including tribal institutions of higher education). For-profit organizations (as well as other recipients) must forgo any profit or management fee. Eligible nonprofit organizations must be exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and have a 501(c)(3) designation.

The applicant should demonstrate expertise in delivering and managing strategic planning services on a national level TTA program and have particular knowledge of courts management and leadership and defender systems related to protecting the Fifth Amendment rights. In particular, the applicant must have demonstrated past experience in working with state and/or local public defense systems and courts and an understanding of their operation, organizational structure, culture, and environment.

BJA welcomes applications under which two or more entities would carry out the federal award; however, only one entity may be the applicant. Any others must be proposed as subrecipients (“subgrantees”). The applicant must be the entity that would have primary responsibility for carrying out the award, including administering the funding and managing the entire program. Under this solicitation, only one application by any particular applicant entity will be considered. An entity may, however, be proposed as a subrecipient (“subgrantee”) in more than one application.

Category 2: Eligible applicants are limited to individuals, as well as state, tribal, or local government, organizations, or academic institutions seeking to provide federal-level experience for one of its staff members.

Organizations seeking to place their employee as a fellow under this program will not have programmatic oversight of the staff person for those activities conducted as part of this fellowship. For-profit organizations (as well as other recipients) must forgo any profit or management fee. Any person serving in the fellowship position must be a U.S. citizen at the time of application.

The prospective fellow should have all of the expertise needed to conduct the proposed activities in the fellowship, including at least 5 years of criminal justice expertise in Sixth Amendment issues, practice, or research and working in a policy or applied criminal justice setting (such as criminal justice, law enforcement, criminal courts, service provider, or partner agency such as a social service provider) or an agency or office with responsibility for criminal justice and policy (such as a governor’s office, mayor’s office, or other related policy setting pertinent to criminal justice). Researchers should apply only if they have expertise and specific skills in developing models and applied research tools for the field, implementation of evidence-based practices, and collection and analysis of data and performance management.
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For many awardees, the greatest challenge in managing federal grants comes after award. Many grants are intended to assist their issuing agency in gathering data and evidence to guide policy.

Before deciding to submit an application, be thoughtful about what resources you have or will need in order to successfully report on each objective.

- Are you currently performing any similar work? If so, start tracking now as a troubleshooting period. Work that plan into your proposal.
- If you’re not able to track one or more objectives internally, who can you partner with to fill that gap?
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Once you think you’ve prepared all the parts of your application, review the application checklist at least twice more. There are a lot of parts in every application and missing one could disqualify you. Don’t let all your hard work be wasted.

Save your work! Even if you’re unsuccessful in your application on the first try there will be future solicitations or renewals of the solicitation at hand where sections can be recycled.
Learning from Experience

How one organization reviewed a solicitation and made their decision to apply (or not!)

- What were the **application** requirements?
- What were the **program** requirements?
  - Is this work we’re currently doing? Is it work that we’ve been wanting to start?
- Is the work sustainable for us?
- What are the administrative requirements?
Guidance from the Field

• Have you had direct experience applying for a federal grant?
• In what ways is your office set up to support grant applications?
• How can NLADA help the help you to feel more prepared for this process?
• What types of funding partnerships would you like to learn more about?
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