

February 2, 2011

Notes from Brownfields Professional Learning Community (PLC) #37

Session Leader: Mike Senew

Topic: Programmatic Capability and Institutional Capacity

NOTES FROM SESSION 37

This session we discussed Programmatic Capability and Institutional Capacity. We also continued discussing issues and questions regarding the grant submission process. *Note that opinions expressed as part of the Professional Learning Community are not policy or official guidance and only the observations of the contributors.*

REMINDERS

The RFP due date is March 18, 2011. If you have questions regarding this session or questions about the EPA Request for Proposals, send them to Mike Senew at msenew@aol.com or Glo Hanne at ghanne@eicc.edu and we will forward them onto EPA.

If you have not signed up to attend *Brownfields 2011*, this is a good time to register. The conference is free with over 100 educational sessions and panel discussions. HMTRI will host an interactive discussion session as well as an exhibit at the conference to be held April 3-5 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia. Go to www.brownfields2011.org to register, and for information on accommodations and scholarships.

Threshold and Eligibility Criteria

This was discussed in previous PLC sessions. Be sure you qualify before investing more time. Grants are awarded to one "Recipient" who must be an eligible applicant per the Threshold and Eligibility Criteria.

Ranking Criteria

The narrative proposal and attachments: Ranking criteria provide an objective mechanism for grant evaluation. A perfect score is 100 points. As previously noted, narrative proposals must not exceed 18 pages. Attachments to narrative proposal may not exceed 20 pages. Pages beyond these limits will be removed before moving forward to the reviewers for evaluation.

Programmatic Capability (15 points maximum)

- While the grant recipient must meet threshold and eligibility criteria, the recipient may partner and should enlist assistance with a variety of other organizations. These partnerships often include the following types of arrangements:
 - Partners
 - Co-applicants
 - Consortia members
 - Coalitions
 - Subgrantees
 - Subawards
 - Consultants
 - Contractors
- In the case of subgrantees or subawards, it is important to remember that subgrantees are held to the same procurement and operational standards as the recipient organization.

- In the case of consultants and contractors, it is important to follow compliance with EPA federal procurement regulations. (See 40 CFR parts 30 and 31 for specific details.) Basic compliance is to always get at least three quotes. Contracts not awarded to the lowest bidder are allowed, but need to be justified. Keep your solicitation, quotes, and justifications for an extended period of time. Consultants and contractors, who may have participated in the development of the grant proposal, also need to participate in a competitive bid review. Sole source contracts are discouraged and only applicable in rare situations. Participation in program development does not justify sole source status.
- It is important that in responding to Programmatic Capability, you clearly respond to your specific experience. If your organization or proposed subgrantees have not had experience with EPA or with federal grants, it must be clearly stated. In such cases, a neutral score will be given.
- If the proposed organization does have experience with EPA or with other federal grants, it is important to be as specific as possible about that experience. Information related to job training, placements, reporting, and leveraging of funds can result in a maximum score of 15 points for this section.

Institutional Capacity (8 points maximum)

- Subdivided into two sections
 - Experience in training and finding employment for minority, unemployed, and under-employed populations. (4 points)
 - Experience and success in delivering job training in the target community to be served. (4 points)
- The first criteria demonstrates the extent of experience in training proposed target populations. Are the certifications and coursework appropriate for targeted participants? Are students being set up for success and ease of employment? Has there been any experience training unemployed and under-employed individuals? If so, what is the extent of this experience?
- The second criteria relates to the target community. Are facilities accessible to those being trained? Are subgrantees training in the target community or at a remote suburban location? When using a training provider, make sure a letter of commitment is attached. Also, check if the provider has received EPA or federal funding in the past. Both parts of the evaluation criteria are concerned with the proposed organization's relationship to the target community. If the recipient is not embedded in the community it is serving, how will it interact with that community? Are partners embedded in the community? Can participants identify with the proposed training organizations and training sites? Can the trainers relate to the target participants?

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Next PLC Session: Wednesday, February 16, 2011
 2:00pm EST

Feel free to invite a guest! Send your contact information to Mike Senew at msenew@aol.com.

Visit our *Brownfields Toolbox* Web site at <http://www.brownfields-toolbox.org> for more information on Brownfields Job Training programs.