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Learning Systems International
FY 2021 FGP SCP Best Practices in Budget Development

Wednesday, January 13, 2021

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15:11:56 Please stand by..

15:21:25 Thank you for joining. The session will begin shortly.

15:21:46 Please stand by.

15:31:16 Thank you for joining. The session will begin shortly.

15:31:27 Please stand by.

15:32:20 >> Good afternoon everyone and thank you for joining us.

15:32:51 Before we start, I will review event technologies so you get the most out of the session. Audio for the event is broadcasting by phone and online. Event is lecture only and microphones are muted to reduce background noise. To adjust audio through computer, go to bottom left of the screen, click small arrow next audio settings and select speaker.

15:32:56 Some viewers get better audio while streaming and others get better quality by phone so if you have audio difficulties, try a different connection method. There's several features we will use..

15:33:14 At the top of the screen, click the options button and select exit full screen to display chat panel on right side of the slides. Use chat panel to receive links and resource information from panelists or sheer idea or respond to session activities.

15:33:19 When you use the check, select all panels and attendees from drop-down menu and this lets everybody see your comments.

15:33:31 At any time, used to raise your hand feature if you have technical issue with zoom and you need assistance. Support team will contact you via chat.

15:33:36 You could select Q&A panel to ask questions at any time and the panelists will get to them eventually.

15:33:41 We are recording the event so I will start recording and then turn it over to Anne.

15:33:48 >> This meeting is being recorded.

15:34:04 >> Hello everyone and thank you for joining us today for FY 2021 FGP SCP Best Practices in Budget Development, on the expansion competition. We

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will end up our cycle tomorrow afternoon talking about how to submit your application in eGrants.

15:34:14 I will hand it off to my wonderful colleague, Tracey, to tell us about best practices in budget development. Tracey, the floor is yours.

15:34:51 >> Hello and thank you for joining this best practices in budget development webinar for the AmeriCorps Seniors FY 2021 FGP/SCP expansion competition. My goal for today's session is to help you acquire the knowledge and skills you need to understand function and to develop the budget and budget narrative.

15:35:15 Your submission of complete and high quality budget will help to demonstrate that you have the physical capacity to manage FGP/SCP program. During the session, I will review the components of FGP/SCP budget which are identical in design and include AmeriCorps resources and the applicant's matching resources.

15:35:35 At the end of the webinar, you should understand how to determine if the costs are allowable, reasonable, necessary and allocable as determined by the office of management and budget uniform administrative requirements cost cells and audit requirements for Federal awards. You will hear that referred to as the uniform guidance.

15:35:46 If you use this information and the tips and practices I share today, you should be prepared to submit compliant and competitive budget.

15:36:03 Because the budget and budget narrative becomes part of the grant recipients contract with AmeriCorps, we want and we expect applicants to present a strong and accurate document.

15:36:14 The approved budget not only serves as financial guide for grant supported activities but it helps to ensure the terms and conditions of the award.

15:36:29 In addition to helping AmeriCorps monitor grant and financial compliance, it could serve as a tool for AmeriCorps and award recipients to measure progress towards the match requirements and monitor budgets and expenses to actual expenses as part of your budget management process.

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15:36:45 Before we dive into the details of budget development, I want to point out budget development is just one component of effective budget management process. Let's look at the full process.

15:37:11 As you started to work on your FGP/SCP application, you may have asked yourself, how do I design the budget? Whether you started the process with the question or not, as part of the preaward project development process, it's likely your team already determine the needs that you want to address with FGP/SCP resources.

15:37:31 And then you set up program or project goals and objectives and you decided on a strategy to accomplish those goals. To develop the budget, applicants must translate that strategy into dollars to prepare a budget that is aligned with the stated program goals and objectives.

15:37:48 Post award, after you get your funding from AmeriCorps Seniors, grantees then continue to manage their budgets effectively by establishing a budget control process by monitoring expenses and that is comparing your budget to actual expenses, to check for over an understanding.

15:37:59 And then modifying your budget as necessary with approval from AmeriCorps when required. Today is conversation will focus on the budget appropriation process.

15:38:24 Let's talk about approved budget. It should be realistic. It should reflect expected program revenues and expenses and it's a capacity to carry out program activities. It should be consistent and aligned with the program goals and objectives.

15:38:38 It should be flexible. A project's financial and operating circumstances often change in the budget must adapt to those changing circumstances. For now, we will focus on the realistic and consistent features as they relate to budget design.

15:39:01 A few minutes ago I outline the steps that your team may have taken as part of the budget development process. The term team was intentional on my

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part. AmeriCorps encourages applicants to approach budget design as a team activity, engaging various departments based on their individual expertise.

15:39:16 Example -- human resources may have salary range and criminal history check costs. The program office may know the cost for training, evaluation and delivery services to the community.

15:39:31 Accounting office will have historical spending rates for specific costs, the grants office should be able to review your application for compliance and other staff may have additional expertise and reviewed the budget for clarity.

15:39:47 I realize if you're part of a small organization, you may not have all these resources available, but you still should not undertake budget development in a vacuum without input from others.

15:39:58 Don't be afraid to involve as many other people as is required to present the most realistic data in the budget and make sure the document aligns with your programmatic goals and objectives.

15:40:14 You may want to have someone outside your budget development team look at that budget to make sure that the content is clear and accurate. AmeriCorps recommends applicants use historical information when possible and as a reminder, accounting department should have that information.

15:40:27 And then you adjusted as necessary so that the data is more timely. And then you include that information as appropriate as part of your budget narrative description.

15:40:41 Your strong budget design provides a framework for effective budget management. It ensures realistic scope, appropriate detail, competitive proposal, compliance and effective delivery.

15:41:00 It serves as a guide for your program implementation. In order to create a budget that is strong, accurate and requires minimal clarification, I encourage you to take your time and engage others in the data collection and quality review.

15:41:19 As I previously stated, one of the objectives for the session is to provide you with tips and tools for creating a competitive budget narrative. The first tip is to read and follow instructions in the NOFO.

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15:41:33 In the application instruction also referred to as NOFO. The strongest budget narratives adhere to these guidelines and that saves all of us time and effort later.

15:41:59 These documents provide specific details related to budget compliance including required costs. I share this guidance with a caveat. We recently discovered original application instructions included incorrect guidance on the process for providing federally negotiated indirect cost rate details to AmeriCorps and the current annual stipend amount for volunteers.

15:42:21 I will highlight these errors with the correct information as I go through the webinar content. I will encourage you to review the most current version of the application instructions and compare that with what you submit your application budget and as a reminder, those instructions are available on the AmeriCorps website.

15:42:40 I encourage you to become familiar with uniform guidance and only include those costs that are allowable, reasonable, necessary and allocable. You could find uniform guidance online at ecfr.gov and look under title II, grants and agreements.

15:43:00 After you and your team estimate financial resources you need to achieve the stated program goals, you will organize them -- organize them in the narratives. Following guidance in NOFO and the application instructions. As you develop narrative, provide adequate descriptions and clear calculations.

15:43:18 EGrants will automatically populate budget summary and budget narrative report that should be able to serve a standalone document without the need to reference the application narrative for explanation.

15:43:35 That is where the suggestion to have somebody outside budget development team review the document to check for holes and inaccuracies comes in handy. We often like to in our office refer to this as the mom test, give it to your mom or somebody else who has no idea what you're doing.

15:43:42 Your normal day and if they could understand what is in the budget, then it's probably a pretty clear standalone document.

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15:44:06 The uniform guidance specifies cost considered unallowable such as lobbying, entertainment and alcoholic beverages. AmeriCorps strongly encourages these applicants to review those uniform guidance unallowable costs so that you avoid including those in your proposed budget.

15:44:30 Other unallowable costs include those not necessary to meet program objectives.. Example -- budgeting new laptop computers for each of your organizations eight staff members might seem like a great idea but you wouldn't include computers for all eight staff members if only two steps are included in the budget.

15:44:51 That's not allowable and could be considered waste, fraud or abuse. Another example is budgeting \$4000 for a top-of-the-line desktop computer with all kinds of fancy accessories and peripherals for employee who will primarily use a word processing program and email.

15:44:57 These are costs that would be unreasonable from a prudent person's perspective or they just have no logical basis for inclusion in this budget.

15:45:21 The minimum match requirement for FGP/SCP applications is 10% of the total project cost. This graphic shows what the budgeted 10% grantee's share would look like for a grant with total program budget of \$100,000.

15:45:39 In this example, the grantee share of \$10,000 meets that 10% requirement. As you know, AmeriCorps waived the match requirement for this program year after issuing the NOFO. While this requirement appears in the NOFO in the application instructions, applicants will not be held to the standard.

15:45:51 We do encourage you to show how you will support your program, so when you are able, you will show that support by entering information in the grantee share of the budget.

15:46:20 It's important to remember that if the cost is unallowable as part of AmeriCorps share, it's also unallowable as part of the grantee's share or your required match. Cash and in-kind contributions are acceptable as match when they are necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment project or program objectives.

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15:46:40 When they are allowable under uniform guidance and the application instructions, when they are included in the approved budget and allocable under program guidance, when they are compliant with the terms and conditions of the award and the uniform guidance and when they are verifiable from the organization's records.

15:46:56 The matching resources must be treated the same as the AmeriCorps share and consistent treatment includes complete and accurate documentation. A frequently heard phrase in the world of grants management is if it isn't documented, it didn't happen.

15:47:22 Please make sure to document all of your expenses. In order to fully demonstrate a plan for your non-AmeriCorps support, applicants are required to include the source of matching funds in the budget narrative entering description of the source along with the amount, cash or in-kind classification, the type of match source that is whether it's state or local government, federal funds or private donations.

15:47:49 And confirmation of whether the sources of match are secured or proposed as noted in the NOFOs. You do not need to secure 100% of your match prior to submitting the application. You may enter anticipated match by noting it is proposed. And whether secured or proposed, the total in this section must equal amount of match shown in the budget exactly.

15:48:10 As you enter dating your budget, you will notice the structure includes both AmeriCorps and grantee's share of project cost. The grantee's share is identified in eGrants as the CNCS share. The budget is divided into two different sections.

15:48:28 Section 1 is her volunteer support expenses which includes direct and indirect cost categories. Direct costs in this section include grant related program operating costs. Specific line items may include those shown on this slide.

15:48:58 This section may include general or centralized organizational expenses that are spread across the entire organization as indirect cost. Section 2 of the budget is for volunteer expenses. This includes all reimbursable

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expenses incurred for the FGP/SCP volunteers during the course of grant related activities, rather than those costs related to program operations.

15:49:20 It includes category for stipends and for other volunteer costs including those shown on the slide. The FGP/SCP applicant develop budget management -- management system and the control process, establish clear policies and procedures for tracking and documenting all of these expenses.

15:49:32 Before we go into the specifics of a budget, I want to pause and check with Anne to make sure there are no questions pending.

15:49:35 >> No questions at this time.

15:49:56 >> Perfect, let's dig into what is in the budget itself. Looking at the categories and related guidance in the 2021 AmeriCorps Seniors application instructions. You may want to pull up a copy of that and follow along as I go through the budget with you.

15:50:32 We are going to begin with section 1, volunteer support expenses. In section 1 A, personnel expenses, you will list each staff position supported by the grant and provide annual salary and level of effort as percent of full-time employee devoted to this award or if it's calculated on an hourly basis, the hourly rate and number of hours per week that employee will generally work.

15:50:52 Remember to only include positions that are supported by the application narrative and make sure not to include value of direct community service provided by volunteers, unless it's for organizational functions such as accounting or auditing or training if you have somebody providing those services to you as an in-kind donation.

15:51:20 If you have multiple AmeriCorps grants, it's a good idea to confirm that you are not over budgeting, that is including more than 100% of staff time on your budgets. You could do this by including a statement in each line or at the end of the section that states percentage of time allocated to budget and step does not exceed 100% cost all of AmeriCorps grants.

15:51:32 It's not required but something that will save clarification down the road so I encourage you to enter that type of content just to provide more clarity.

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15:51:50 EGrants will help you populate information in the fields that you will enter to include the individual title, name and then the percentage of time and the annual salary.

15:52:18 Section 11 B Annette's personal fringe and if it's, you will identify type of fringe benefit and the cost for each staff. This includes FICA, health and life insurance and retirement, you could edit as appropriate. You will enter additional lines like state unemployment insurance or Worker's Compensation as appropriate.

15:52:46 Your fringe benefit costs should align with the salary lines and that should include step only included in the personal expenses section and those should be calculated in alignment with section 1 a. If benefit is more than 30% of salary cost, you must justify it by listing benefit separately so rather than enter fringe benefits at 41.65% of total salaries,

15:53:23 Break it out and it might read health insurance at 24 per -- at 24% and retirement at 10% and FICA at 7.65% will stop you could break those out as he is all of our health insurance costs, all of our retirement and all of our FICA or you could alignment with individual staff in section 1 A if you have project director and project assistant in the section 1 A category, you would do appropriate fringe for those positions in a similar manner.

15:53:42 Section 1 C's travel section and that's divided into local travel which is travel within project service area shown in item 12 of the 44 phase sheet and long distance travel and that is travel that incurs outside of service area.

15:54:12 In those sections include purpose of travel and the type of travel. Whether it's ground transportation, air transportation, lodging, per diem and so on, number of trips, number of staff that are traveling and you want to make sure calculation you use is clear and simple to follow.

15:54:16 You should include only travel costs for staff listed in budget category 1 A and who directly support the grant activities described in application.

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15:54:30 Please note budget guidance in section 6 D of NOFO which states applicant must include a line item for project director training expenses and that would often be your travel to go to whatever the training event is.

15:55:01 You may budget mileage at a higher than federal reimbursement rate, if that mileage rate follows your organization's policy. And it's justified in the budget narrative and by that justification, it could be as simple as adding a comment in that line item that says based on organizational policy or something appropriate.

15:55:24 Section 1 D is equipment section and it's defined as tangible nonexpendable personal property having useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5000 or more per unit for equipment. If it's less, expense goes into supplies section no matter what the threshold is that your organization uses to define equipment.

15:55:45 If your budgeting equipment costs, show unit cost and number of units with purpose of equipment. In the supplies section, it's 1 E, you will show type of supplies and their respective costs and individually list any single items costing \$1000 or more.

15:56:21 Section 1 F is contractual and consultant services and includes all contractual and consultant services. You will itemize each contract or consultant and provide brief justification of the need. You will convey that the costs are reasonable and necessary by adding daily or hourly rate or putting in their what your annual contract fee is and those details in your justification.

15:56:50 This section should include services that are documented by contract, such as equipment maintenance or accounting services or training consultants. Section 1 I is other volunteer support costs and there's a catch all category for those project expenses that don't neatly fit into the other categories. In this section, you must include National Service criminal history checks for employees or other individuals who receive salary or similar payment from the grant.

15:57:08 This is pre-existing line item you will edit as appropriate. If you do not include these costs, please make sure to explain how the costs are covered or that the checks are already completed.

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15:57:31 This section may include line items to cover cost for training, evaluation services, recruitment expenses and other expenses that don't fit into sections A through F. In addition to the direct costs, section 1 includes a section for indirect costs in one -- in 1 J. Indirect costs are general or centralized costs that support the project.

15:57:57 They don't include project specific costs. They may be included in organizations indirect cost rate agreement if one exists or calculated using the minimus rate so before we moved to section 2, I want to take a few moments to look at how you would calculate indirect costs and then I will pause to see if there are questions about section 1 and then we will look at section 2

15:58:29 .There are two methods for calculating indirect costs in FGP/SCP budget. Be aware that this is one of those pieces that varies from the guidance that was available on the website, the FAQs referenced only the federally approved indirect cost, there are two rates, federally approved and 10% to minimus rate.

15:58:40 If applicant has federally approved indirect cost rate they must use this method and at approved rate agreement constitutes documentation of the indirect costs.

15:59:04 EGrants will direct you through the population of this information and you will specify the rate type that is whether it's provisional, predetermined, fixed or final, and then you will supply the rate and the basis on which the rate is calculated, whether based on salaries and benefits, all direct costs or other basis.

15:59:22 Applicants will then follow guidance of the application instructions to calculate the maximum allowed. If your budgeting for less than maximum, you will note percentage claimed in that description in the eGrants.

15:59:56 You must also enter the details of your approved negotiated indirect cost rate agreement in eGrants using the guidance in the NOFOs under section D 6 B -- please make sure that the budgeted rate that you use in your budget is the same as the rate details entered in eGrants and that indirect cost rate agreement details that you are using current rate and has not expired.

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16:00:14 Organizations may use the minimus rate of 10% of modified total direct costs. It's important to note if the minimus option is selected, the organization must use it consistently across all the organizations federal awards.

16:00:28 As an alternative to using under these methods, applicants may charge these costs directly, providing that the cost maybe allowability standards outlined in the uniform guidance.

16:00:45 I will pause for a moment to see if there are questions related to budget section 1..We have had a couple questions come in --

16:00:50 >> Please go over difference of cost of equipment and supplies again.

16:01:22 >> Absolutely -- if you need to reference this, it's in the application instructions. Not quite as detailed in application instructions but equipment is tangible, nonexpendable, personal property having useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5000 or more per unit.

16:01:39 Supplies are anything that does not fall into that description. So having useful life of less than one year and acquisition cost of less than \$5000 per unit would be your supplies.

16:01:50 >> Thank you. Couple questions about indirect costs, can you explain what is meant by indirect costs?

16:02:08 >> Absolutely -- as we went through the direct costs and you looked at those different cost categories, personal expenses, fringe benefits, travel and supplies, contractual services, criminal history checks.

16:02:32 Those are costs you could allocate directly to this grant. That is you could say I have my project director allocated at 100% at project assistant at 75% and they are going to travel this far, this many times and they have these fringe benefits and ease criminal history checks.

16:03:12 You could allocate it as percentage and dollar amount. It's related to what is in your program narrative. Indirect costs are the costs -- the costs of doing business. The cost of running your organization, your rent, utilities, executive director, administrative time, not necessarily individuals or individual --

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or individual cost you allocate to the grant although you can if you have a process for determining what percentage or amount is allocated to this award.

16:03:39 But in general, you could say these are just indirect costs, they support my program. I often will use analogy of a beach house. You see the house on the beach that you don't want to build it right on the sand because the waves will crash and it will knock into it when the flooding comes.

16:04:04 It's a mess so you need something that's there to support it so you build the house on stilts and those indirect costs are like that stilt. It is there to support everything else. If you didn't have your facilities and rent in the copier lease and Executive Director and all of that, you could do the other things that your -- that your budgeting for in here.

16:04:28 It's all of the support expenses. If the organization has federally negotiated indirect cost rate and that is provided by the organization's cognizant agency so that's a federal agency that gives you the most money in federal dollars, you would negotiate indirect cost rate with them and then you could use that rate or anything up to maximum of that rate..

16:04:40 If not, you are able to use that 10% to minimus rate which is the 10% of modified total direct costs.

16:04:56 >> Thank you. Trying to choose one more, we got a couple questions - can you speak to whether things like supplies can be defined by dollars per month on the budget?

16:05:29 >> That goes back to when I talked about using historical information. If you know traditionally that you use \$50 of supplies a month, you could use that as justification in your basis. In your budget narrative, you would say supplies calculated at number of dollars per month based on historical information.

16:05:58 As simple as that but that's something you want to look at your records to make sure that you're actually using some type of historical information, otherwise, you will just have to take a shot and say I think I might use this many pens and this much paper and it will cost this -- and it will cost this amount and

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make the guest. That is where the piece about the budget being flexible and sometimes

16:06:16 We realize what we plan for six months before the program started is not what necessarily happens and we realize we have to make budget modification, so if you find that you budgeted for something very different, that's when we could talk about budget modification.

16:06:29 >> Thank you. Can you please explain cognizant agency and if AmeriCorps is an agency has its own rate?

16:06:49 >> Cognizant agency is the agency that gives the organization the most federal funding so if you get federal awards from five different federal agencies, it's the one that gives you the highest dollar amount in all of the annual awards.

16:07:09 You would work directly with that organization to determine the indirect cost for your organization so we as a federal agency do not have a rate. It's a rate we negotiate with the grantee organizations based on what you are proposing as your indirect costs.

16:07:13 >> Thank you, Tracey.

16:07:15 >> Anything else?

16:07:20 >> That's it for section 1.

16:07:38 >> Let's move on to section 2 and that focuses on volunteer expenses and includes two budget categories. Category 2 A includes lines for foster grandparents and senior companion volunteer stipends only.

16:07:57 EGrants has populated annual stipend calculation of \$3132. Applicant seen only enter number of volunteers endocyte and totals for the AmeriCorps in the grantee shares and the total amount of the line item so totaling those two components.

16:08:37 This is one of the situations where the application instructions include incorrect information, they have an old annual rate of \$2766 and that was based on hourly stipend of \$2.65 and that was raised to three dollars last spring so annual stipend that you will include in your budget is the \$3132 that is in eGrants.

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16:08:44 Budget section also includes category B, other volunteer costs and this category is populated with lines for meals, uniforms, insurance, recognition, travel and physical exams.

16:08:56 Enter associated cost for these line items in the same manner you did for section 1 including details like number of volunteers covered, cost per item, mileage rate whatever it is to justify the expense.

16:09:31 Remember that insurance for volunteers when on assignment is required line item details which are outlined in the regulations and you will find on link to those regulations on page 5 of the NOFOs. Volunteers may be reimbursed for costs incurred while performing assignments such as transportation and supplies providing the costs are outlined in the memorandum of understanding that's negotiated with volunteer station where the volunteer is serving.

16:09:47 The last section of the budget narrative is the source of funds section. In it you won't list budget sections or budget line items costs. You enter the source of those resources covering the specific line item expenses in the grantee's share of the budget.

16:10:07 The source of funds section provides details for any grantee share of cash or in-kind resources included in the budget. Applicants will enter these details from budget section 1 and 2 headings and click the link to enter the source of matching funds.

16:10:38 That is shown here. Once you click the link, a new screen will open for you to enter the source. Be aware there is a source of funds category for both section number one in section number two and you will use either or both depending on whether you budgeted resources as part of the grantee share if you budgeted resources as part of it.

16:10:53 Once you open the window for source of matching funds, enter each source of matching resources separately including a brief description of the match whether it's secured or proposed, dollar amount of the resources, the match classification and that's cash or in-kind piece and then the source type with a private, state, local.

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16:11:08 I caution you to make sure to update this section as well as if you use it the indirect cost section after you make any budget revision so that it reflects all changes.

16:11:29 These pieces based on other information in the budget, they are often neglected and you go back and make a couple modifications on the front end and you forget to update indirect or source of funds and then when we look at it, we are looking for information to match exactly and it doesn't because of overlooking the update.

16:11:42 This source of funds total must equal total amount of resources in the grantee share of the budget exactly. That is why it's important to update it all the time.

16:12:08 When complete, the source of funds section might include content that is similar to -- if you look at this, it's only including the source of match and not specific budget sections or the line items covered by the matching funds.

16:12:25 It provides required detail, it knows whether resources are secured or proposed, if it's in-kind or cash donations and it is provided by private or government entity.

16:12:43 As long as we are discussing matching resources, I want to remind you that difficult -- if the cost is unallowable as part of AmeriCorps share, it is also unallowable as part of grantee's share with your required match. If you're not sure whether cost is allowable, uniform guidance is the best place to find the answer.

16:12:57 This is a good time to discuss excess funds column that applicants may use to report amount of grantee share resources in excess of required match. Applicants are not required to utilize excess column but you may do so if you choose.

16:13:21 This column may include cost of activities like fundraising which are unallowable on the grant budget. The cost of excess funds should not be included in the source -- in the source of funds section..

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16:13:41 That is section 2 of the budget and the source of funds section so let's break again and see if there are questions for those two pieces.

16:14:08 >> Couple questions -- I was trying to answer them in the chat about corporation funded versus non-Corporation funded and that refers to our old name.

16:14:20 >> Correct any reference to Corporation CNCS is now going to be AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors.

16:14:39 Question can we put percent of internal trainer in the personnel cost?

16:14:39 >> What was the question?

16:14:41 >> Can we put percent of internal trainer in the personnel cost?

16:15:03 >> Yes, when you enter any cost in the personnel section, the way that the eGrants content is set up, it will ask you for percentage of their time, assuming it's a full-time employee, they will ask for what is the percent of the full-time equivalent.

16:15:19 If you have someone on staff and they are devoting 10% of their time to the project, you would enter 10% and you would enter whatever their annual salary is.

16:15:26 >> The rest of the questions do not have to do with the section 2. Should I wait for the end he got

16:15:36 >> We could do that and that sounds great. Let's move on to some pointers about budgeting.

16:15:54 That begins with guidance to check and double check your work to eliminate any erroneous information. The NOFO and application instructions outlined budget restrictions and regulations and make sure to follow them.

16:16:14 Remember to use the version of the application instructions and the FAQs updated after January 12, 2021 to guide your work. Budget should include all required costs like cost for staff and volunteer, criminal history check and transportation recognition and insurance costs for volunteers.

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16:16:29 Your budget narrative will demonstrate how you are supporting your budgeted match with a source of funds section that includes required details and equals total budgeted match exactly.

16:16:39 As a reminder, applicants will not be held to the required match referenced in the NOFO but if you include match, you must document the source of the matching resources and alignment with the budgeted match.

16:16:57 As much as possible and I know eGrants has character limits for some fields and that makes it challenging at times, but as much as you are able, the budget narrative should provide details including purpose and accurate calculations in whole dollars and exclude unallowable costs.

16:17:16 Goes unallowable in this competition and those on allowed by regulations. Just a pointer that I picked up over the years, I recommend that applicants use zero dollars line item to enter additional clarifications if needed so you could enter a

16:17:33 And then when it comes to entering the actual cost, put 04 CNCS share and zero for the grantee share and zero for the total that gives you extra space where you could give us narrative to provide additional clarification.

16:17:58 Reminder to please have somebody check all of your calculations before you submit. Finally, most importantly you should ensure that your budget is aligned to the program goals and the application narrative, including miscellaneous contingency or undefined budget amounts may adversely impact your application status.

16:18:12 I will stress the benefit of involving your team and someone outside of the team in the budget development and review process. Having one more set of eyes on it does make a big difference.

16:18:41 Before you submit your application, make sure that your organization has active registration with the system for award management. That is accessible at sam.gov. If you apply for the first time, I recommend you apply early as it may take a while to activate your registration.

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16:19:04 Please know that SAM is a free service organization should never pay for eight SAM registration. Applicants must maintain actives -- active SAM registration throughout the registration process and if awarded a grant, you must maintain active registration throughout the life of the grant.

16:19:33 A link to that SAM quick guide for grantees is in section D Trey of the NOFO. Please make sure to submit your organization's operational and financial management survey using process outlined in Section D 7 B of the NOFO. Please make sure organization most recent single audit is on file with the Federal Audit Clearinghouse.

16:19:52 And form 990 is submitted to GuideStar if applicable. Finally if you have one, please be sure to enter your current federally negotiated indirect cost rate details in eGrants using the guidance in Section D 6 B of the NOFO.

16:20:14 AmeriCorps is aware that on occasion applicants experience challenges with the eGrants system. EGrants automatically performs limited compliance check to validate the budget and it may result in a warning or error message.

16:20:31 Some of these messages prevent you from submitting your application so you should be aware of the differences and the related actions. When you receive a warning, you can move forward but the application may not be compliant with the guidelines.

16:20:44 On the other hand, an error message will not allow you to move forward until you correct the error. You must resolve all errors before you submit your application.

16:20:55 If you experience a challenge other than a warning or error message, contact the AmeriCorps hotline right away. The number is showing on the slide. A link to the help request form is at the bottom of most eGrants pages.

16:21:18 I want to draw your attention back to these points I shared earlier. I encourage you to keep this checklist nearby as you develop your budget and your budget narrative and frequently consult it as a budget development guide and quality assurance checklist.

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16:21:32 Many budgets require extensive revisions and often in part because applicants don't follow the points outlined. You will save yourself follow-up effort by checking your proposed budget against this checklist before submitting it to AmeriCorps.

16:21:50 That's all I have to share. I hope you found this instruction helpful guide for developing your FGP/SCP budget and budget narratives. I encourage you to review the content from this presentation multiple times before submitting your application as part of your QA process.

16:22:01 I will toss it back to you, N, to check for questions we can answer.

16:22:15 >> Thank you, Tracey. We have a question -- should number of volunteers used to calculate narrative be only for you number one of the project or total over three years?

16:22:33 >> Your budget is one year budget. Even though we are looking at a three-year grant award, this is a single year budget. Make sure all of your costs are for that single 12 month period.

16:22:49 >> Next question has to do with training -- should additional line item be included for directors training or could that be included under long distance travel?

16:23:06 >> That could be included in your travel section. I would make sure that you note it's for the director just so anyone who is reviewing this is clear that you met the requirement for that training component.

16:23:33 >> If background checks have already been done or otherwise required by the applicant, while you might include zero dollars in the line item, should applicant include contributed costs as part of their nonfederal match?

16:24:08 >> You can also leave that as a zero. That is where you may recall I mentioned about if you aren't budgeting costs for this, that is where you want to say why you were not because these have already been conducted and you just put a statement in here that existing staff with current checks in place or same with volunteers.

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16:24:38 They conducted elsewhere so you have the flexibility to do that either way. What is important and especially since the required match is not going to be assessed this program year and that's why I tell you you'd -- I tell you that you don't need to put in his -- put it in as match but what's important is to show us that all of your staff and all volunteers noted on the budget do have accurate checks and current checks.

16:25:04 >> Thank you. Couple questions that ask about recognition. In the chat, I am providing a link to manage AmeriCorps Seniors grant page. You will be able to access some of the tools including examples of costs that are allowable for recognition.

16:25:22 Couple questions asking about this session whether it's being recorded and it is being recorded. It will be posted along with the slides on the competition website and I will include a link to that in the chat as well.

16:26:08 Another question -- is there a deadline or close update we could ask direct questions about the proposal? So you could continue to send your questions or come back tomorrow to the training to ask questions and then you could send questions to competition mailbox, 2021 fgpscp@cns.gov.

16:26:39 Question is \$260,000 maximum or the minimum so it depends on the number of the VSYS that you are requesting. \$260,000 is the maximum if you are requesting 40 VSYS so 40 volunteer service years.

16:27:00 Let's check the chat to make sure we have not missed anything. Any last tips you want to share, Tracey?

16:27:25 >> I will again go back to the checklist.. I think that is the biggest tip I could share is to have that to go through the application instructions and the NOFO and make sure you are reading that carefully and paying attention to everything required and those things that are not allowed.

16:27:50 And then to check and double check for accuracy. Check the mapthand pass it off to your best friend, your cubicle mate, I guess we don't have those anymore but pass off the budget to anyone who is unfamiliar and just say does this make sense.

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16:28:05 Can you understand what I'm doing and I think I will tell you in particular, I get very confused with travel calculations because you often have lots of different things in there, numbers of people, numbers of miles, numbers of trips.

16:28:13 Take caution to make sure all of your calculations are complete and clear and correct.

16:28:22 >> Thank you, Tracey. Question I am seeing in the chat is there maximum number of VSYs we can apply for?

16:28:34 >> There is not maximum number so apply and what you think is best for your community and what you think you can manage.

16:28:41 I do not see any other questions.

16:28:57 Tracey, I appreciate you taking the time to speak with us and teach us more about the budget and this was helpful for me and hopefully it was helpful for all of you in the audience today as well.

16:29:15 >> Thank you for including me and all of our attendees for the great interaction and I appreciate it and it's helpful to see so many questions coming through and interest and I wish you all good luck with this.

16:29:20 >> Good luck everyone and we will see you back tomorrow afternoon. Goodbye!

16:29:25 [End of session]

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