California Department of Aging

Bridge to Recovery for Adult Day Services: COVID-19 Mitigation and Resilience Grant Program

November 13 Bridge to Recovery Office Hour Q&A

OFFICE HOUR OVERVIEW

This office hour was held on November 13, 2023, from 11:00 AM–12:00 PM to support the Bridge to Recovery for Adult Day Service: COVID-19 Mitigation and Resilience Grant Program. California Department of Aging (CDA) provided information for grantees on completing application updates and the revision process in order to execute their grant agreements. The office hour included both a presentation and a Q&A session.

The transcript below captures the questions asked by awardees and the answers offered by CDA. A downloadable copy of the video, the presentation, and all other supporting documents can be found on the Bridge to Recovery webpage, including a recording of the repeated presentation during the November 16 Office Hour.

TRANSCRIPT

Kerin Miller:
I will now open the floor to questions. So, I will leave this screen up. Lisa, I will ask that you help moderate some questions within the chat and if there are requests to view my supplies section, we do have examples as well.

So Lisa, I will pass it to you to help navigate this portion of the presentation.

Lisa Wurm:
So we have a question in the chat that I feel would probably be good for everyone to hear. And so the question is around GrantsConnect™ and if the narrative from the proposal, meaning the application, is that automatically transferred to the grant agreement?

Kerin Miller:

So, good question. The narrative that you provide for us under the project description on that first tab of the grant agreement form again our PCG staff will review it, make sure it looks good, make sure it mentions all the pieces, send it back to you if it doesn't. But that narrative, in its final approved state, will appear on your grant agreement.

So yes, the exact language that you use and that gets approved on that form, you will then recognize on your grant agreement.

Lisa Wurm:
To add to that, it will likely need to be revised so, meaning it will not be original from your application.

Kerin Miller:
Yeah, that's a great point. And I think the purpose here and why we didn't copy that original narrative from your application is that a majority of you received partial funding, meaning that some portion of your application narrative no longer applies to your awarded narrative. So we would just appreciate if you all could reread the narrative that you provided, take out the details that were not funded, and resubmit that narrative for us to review.

Lisa Wurm,
For the Banking Form within GrantsConnect™, can the person who signs the W9 to be different from the person who signs and submits the Banking Form on GrantsConnect™?

Kerin Miller:
For the purposes of this grant, there will be a designee for signature. And on that Banking Form, I'm sure you'll have noticed that there could be more than one person listed that's authorized to sign and submit your Banking Form and your grant agreement.

So we do ask that you identify those people on the Banking Form for the purposes of this grant program, the individuals who sign that W9 can be different. Let's say your accountant deals with your W9, whereas your program director is in charge of reporting for this grant program. We understand that situations like that may happen. We just ask that if it is your program director who is signing the Banking Form, that that is also the same designee on that the grant agreement as well.

So we ask that you are consistent but recognized that the person who is that authorized signer for Bridge to Recovery purposes may not be the same person who signed your W9.

Roxanne McAlpine:
I just wanted to make a comment. This is Roxanne McAlpine from Department of Aging.

Please double and triple check that banking information because that is how PCG will be reimbursing your invoices and if it is even one number off and that reimbursement gets deposited into an incorrect bank account of no fault of theirs, they will do every effort they can to get that money back but if it is unrecoverable and the bank won't return it, there's nothing we can do if you provided incorrect information on that Banking Form. So please make sure your banking information is correct.

Kerin Miller:
Agree, Roxanne. And I think that also brings up a great point. So for the Banking Form, once you hit submit it is locked, meaning that you cannot edit it. If you do notice that information on the Banking Form, whether it was incorrect or it needs to change, your banking information changes in six months, something like that, please do reach out to our technical assistance inbox. We can open up that form back to you to allow you to edit that information. But due to the high level of security around that banking information, once you hit submit it is locked.

So again, should you need to edit it, please reach out to us to do so.

Roxanne McAlpine:
That brings up another good point. If you're an authorized representatives, change for any reason, maybe they retired or they left your employment, please make sure you are updating the authorized form so PCG knows exactly who are your authorized representatives should anything change.

Lisa Wurm:
I also want to add that within the GrantsConnect™ system, you can add authorized users so people can view all the components. So we can do that for you as well or tell you how to do it.

Kerin Miller:
Yeah, we could take this time now to tell you all how to do it.

So on your main login screen, I believe it's at the top right hand corner, you'll see a little button that says "Manage Applicants" and it looks like it has a little person with a plus mark to the left of that "Manage Applicants" button. So you can go ahead and click that button and then type in the email address of any individuals that you want to add to your GrantsConnect™ profile.

You can also control their security settings. So you can check a box if you want them to receive notifications from GrantsConnect™. You could check a box if you want them to be able to edit your forms versus just view your forms. So these are all ways that, if you need additional folks from your organization to help you complete these forms, you can go ahead and add them to your profile.

This is also a great tool. Let's say you get you forget your password, you get locked out, the password assistance isn't working, or whatever reason, we can add either an alternate email for you or add another email from anyone else in your organization, with your permission, to access that information.

So you all have that ability to add on your side. As administrators, we also have the ability to add people as well. So should you request for additional email addresses on your account, that's something we're also happy to do as well.

Lisa Wurm:
That's a great tip and a great function of the system.

Just to state this out loud as well, we had a question in the chat. This office hour is being recorded due to the CAADS conference. So, this will be posted, as Roxanne responded in the chat, on the Bridge to Recovery website.

And we have another question. In order to provide staff titles for the retention recruitment bonuses, does this mean that awardees need to enter each bonus as a separate line item?

Kerin Miller:
So a little bit of a tricky question. First step, is it a retention bonus? Is it a new hire bonus? So in the RFA as well as updated guidance documents, we ask that you do separate the two. So step one, retention bonuses should go together. New hire or sign-on bonuses should be lumped together. We do ask that you parse those out for both reporting and data tracking purposes.

The second piece to that is any staff member that is receiving the same dollar amount of bonus can go on the same line item. So let's say you have 5 individuals that are receiving $1,000 retention bonus and 10 individuals that are receiving a $500 retention bonus. You would just separate out those receiving the $1,000 from those receiving the $500. So those are kind of the different ways that that we want to see those parsed out.

And again, if you are confused when completing the form or have any questions, those are things that you can submit attachments for.

So again, if you think that there's a different way to show that information that makes more sense to you, all we ask is that you make your best effort to complete the forms that we have provided, but we'll also welcome and consider any attachments to clarify your asks or how you completed that specific budget section.

Lisa Wurm:
To clarify that, so if there are 10 direct care staff and a program director, and they're all receiving the same retention bonus, can you put those all on one line or do they need to be separated by title?

Kerin Miller:
So technically you can do it either way. I think it's less time consuming for you all to put them on one line. So in that first column, what you would do is say retention bonus: 10 direct support professionals and 1 program director. Then in the next one, it asks for how many. So you would say that it's for 11 people, $1,000 for that line item.

I do believe that I have that written out here. Yep, so here is an example and this case these are all retention bonuses, but what you can see is here's your program director. They're getting their $1,000 retention bonus, whereas these 10 individuals, 2 RNs, 3 social workers, and 5 drivers are getting $750 each.

So this is an example of how you can throw them all on the same line, different staff titles, but they are at the same rate. So hopefully that kind of helps clarify.

Roxanne McAlpine:
I just wanted to point out you must list the staff title. So you wouldn't say 10 care workers. You need to list the individual titles, like 3 RNs, 4 social workers, 5 drivers so we can make sure the title is eligible.

Lisa Wurm:
The next request is an awardee would like to know specifically where to find the current narrative that that they need to update. I assume in the GrantsConnect™ system and how to find that narrative that needs updating.

Kerin Miller:
Yes. So I will leave this slide for reference in one second. On your application there was, I believe it was on the project description tab, that asked you for your project description narrative. That application should be visible to all of you in GrantsConnect™.

So again, if you have the luxury of multiple screens, go ahead and throw that application up on one screen. Bring up your grant agreement, project description and budget on another. That way you can kind of seamlessly copy and paste from the information that applies from one to the next.

So what I have on the screen and those of you that were on last week's office hours, this may look familiar. On the left is an example of a project description that was submitted with the application. The items highlighted in red are those that were ineligible items that were not funded, so they would not have been listed on that Award Form.

So what I've done is basically copy-and-paste it, my project description from the application, removed the items in red that were not funded or those that were ineligible for funding, and that's how I generated my revised project description. It took probably about 2 minutes to read through, highlight what was not funded, delete it, and then submit my new project description.

So when we talk about copying and pasting and repurposing viable pieces of your application, this is a good example of what we mean.

Lisa Wurm:
And to clarify, when we talk about forms you'll see within the GrantsConnect™ system, there's the Grant Agreement Project Description and Budget Form and that's typically what we're referencing here.

In your Award Form, which is not editable, but the Grant Agreement Project Description and Budget Form is editable, so hopefully that will help clarify the question in the chat. And we also have a couple of questions about direct support positions and any specific clarifications we might have on how those positions fit into this grant.

Kerin Miller:
Following our webinar on the 9th where we discussed ineligible or impermissible items or projects as well as permissible projects, there were kind of lots of comments that came through.

First of all, we thank you for your feedback and those comments. We do take them all into consideration and CDA is actively reviewing those staff titles and those comments are now taken into consideration. So if and when we have any updates, we will contact you directly should your award get revised at all.

So, Roxanne, anything that that you want to add there?

Roxanne McAlpine:
I just wanted everyone to know that we heard you guys loud and clear. We went by one set of regulations and stakeholders brought to our attention several other regulations that we are now looking into. So we want to give everybody an opportunity and not overlook anything.

So someone posted a comment about the LVN. So we are looking into regulations for that and we should be making a decision this week on other direct staff. So thank you for bringing that to our attention. It's under review and there's a good chance we will be allowing some of these other positions, but we just have to research all the regulations.

Lisa Wurm:
To clarify for the next question, so to repeat for wage differentials, can line items be combined by employee title? And the answer which we have said is yes, so that should help clarify that.

Kerin Miller:
I'll just point out the slide that's on the screen. So again, kind of the same rules apply as a bonus. So if individuals are at the same rate, you can list them together. So again, we have that up here, employees at the same rate can be listed together, regardless of whether they are the same title.

So I recognize that in this example they're both RNs, but if this was one RN and one social worker and they were receiving the same wage differential payout, those can be included on the same line. Again, we want to make this user friendly and intuitive to all of you. So, if it helps you to separate those out, separate them out. If you're looking to save lines and maybe save a little bit of time, those at the same rate can be submitted on the same line.

Lisa Wurm:
And next question is around bids. So that awardee is asking to clarify how many bids must be submitted per project item and when must they be submitted.

Kerin Miller:
So if you review the RFA—there were, I believe, the original RFA and two addendums to the RFA—you'll notice that there is at least a minimum of two bids required for contractual work. One bid was required at the time of application. So if you did not submit a bid with your application, either a bid or a cost estimate, then we did not consider that project or that item eligible for funding. During the reporting process, we will collect that second bid. And again, I do want to reiterate, it's in the RFA. That is a requirement to be in compliance with this grant program.

We do recognize that if you're fixing your patio, it might be hard to get an estimate to extend your patio after it's already extended. So you might want to think about these requirements within the context of the work that you are doing and plan accordingly as to when you seek out these additional bids.

But again, to summarize, a minimum of two cost estimates or bids is required for this grant program and we also want to reiterate that you do not necessarily have to take the bid that is lower in cost.

So let's say you have a preexisting relationship with the contractor. You're aware of their quality of work. For whatever reason the case may be, you will be able to justify which bid you selected through our reporting process. So again, you do not have to select the lower cost bid, but you will have to justify as to why you selected one bid over another.

Lisa Wurm:
Another question from the chat: so if an awardee sees something that's been relocated to a different section within their grant application, such as retention bonuses, they're wondering how they classify or label this amount under Other. So do they need to list staff titles?

That answer is yes, but you can go into more of it.

Kerin Miller:
So we noticed that some of you submitted all of your wage requests under Salaries and Wages, whereas bonuses, whether that was a new hire or retention bonus, for example, fall into that Other category. So what you will need to do is parse out those costs in the correct budget category.

If there are instances, for example, where our reviewers had to make assumptions about your requests, whether it was a lack of detail or you provided some sort of attachment to help kind of clarify those costs, if our review team made any incorrect assumptions about your budget requests, we encourage you to write in to us so that we can help you fix and navigate these forms together.

But yes, bonuses should go under Other. Any requests for wage differentials or temporary staff salaries, those are meant for the Salaries and Wages category.

Lisa, I see there's some questions coming through the chat. Any that you want highlight?

Lisa Wurm:
Yes. So one question I think would be good to go over is if an employee has left since the application was submitted. Can a different employee with the same title and the same rate replace them, and how should this be reflected in the budget?

Kerin Miller:
So admittedly, we are more concerned with staff titles than staff names, so if you need to swap out that staff name, that is acceptable. Again, the key here is that it's the same staff title and the same rate. So in that instance, yes, that swap is acceptable.

If you are looking to swap that wage differential to another staff member, that cannot be done at this time. A little bit later on in a couple of weeks, we will have a webinar that's focused on invoicing and reporting and we will also detail how to use the change request form. So the change request form will be reserved for instances where you are moving funds from one budget line item to another.

So again, to summarize, if it's the same staff title, same rate, different name, we can swap that out easily here. If it is a different staff title or a different rate, those changes require a change request form, which we will explain a little bit later in the process.

Lisa Wurm:
And just to clarify for those who are joining us late today, we completely understand there's a lot going on and this presentation is being recorded and will be posted.

We have a clarification on the CAADS conference. If an awardee requested 2023 CAADS conference costs, does that mean that awardees will need to submit a change request form if they requested for 2023 instead of 2024 funding?

Kerin Miller:
So that's a great question. This should appear on your Award Form, but in the instance that it does not, please feel free to call or email us. If you requested for the 2023 CAADS conference but did not request for other years on the Award Form, it should indicate 2024 CAADS conference. So in that instance, no change request form required because on the Award Form we've told you the year that you were funded for.

So again, if that level of detail is not on your Award Form, please let us know so that we can update and correct.

But transferring funds from one year of the CAADS conference attendance to another, that does not require a change request form because those were all decisions that were made during the awarding process.

Lisa Wurm:
Also to clarify what I said earlier about the presentation. We posted it to the Bridge to Recovery website.

Kerin Miller:
And on the topic of the CAADS conference, travel is an area that we're really looking again for you to parse out and itemize those details. So separate your lodging request from your mileage or from your airfare. A lot of you gave us lump sums where you had one line item to include all of these things. Again, that leads to a lot of assumptions on the reviewer's part in that we might not know exactly what dollars are going towards what.

So again, please parse out these costs. There are some examples on the screen of how to do so. We understand that for things like airfare, you might not book your ticket for 2024 yet. So if you want to do some brief research, an estimate of what flights usually cost, and use that number, that is perfectly acceptable at this time.

But again, we do ask that you break out these costs and, specific to lodging, please look at the travel reimbursements on the California Department of Human Resources website. You will not be reimbursed for rates above those mentioned on the website. So again, great reference tool for you all when thinking about parsing out and planning some of these costs.

Lisa Wurm:
And we have a question around bid clarification. So when bids are due, how many bids are due? I think we may have discussed this earlier, but it's a question from the chat.

Kerin Miller:
So again, to reiterate, one bid was due with your application. If you did not submit a bid, or at the very least a pretty detailed cost estimate, we did not approve that budget item.

So for most of you, that means we are just waiting on a second bid to be submitted through our reporting process.

Also we want to encourage you all to think about the context of your project. The example we talked about earlier, it might be hard to get a bid on extending your patio after the patio has already been extended. So you might want to think about it within your work plan and how you plan to proceed with your grant activities to make sure to build in time to get that second bid, which will be collected during our reporting process.

So again, two bids. You will have to justify why you selected one bid over another. That selection does not have to be the bid which is cheaper. We understand that there are other factors like relationship with contractors or quality of work or reputation that might play a role in these decisions.

So two beds, select one, we will ask for your justification through our reporting process. That will come a little bit later down the line.

Roxanne McAlpine:
I just wanted to reiterate, we are going to have another webinar discussing the invoicing and reporting process. So you guys will get further clarification of what is required, when it needs to be submitted. Once all of the grants are executed, we will be hosting that webinar as well, sometime in December, so stay tuned for that communication to come out with those dates.

Kerin Miller:
And in the meantime, the RFA that is still posted on our website and will continue to stay up on our website, there are specific sections about invoicing and reporting requirements and all that good stuff. So at this time if you do have questions, reference that document, bring those questions to our webinar.

But again, we should be covering that phase of the grant in early December.

Lisa Wurm:
And awardees need two bids so they can get started on that at this point, if your question in the chat was around that.

And then we have a different question regarding project description. So in the project description, can due dates for activities be changed? And how will these due dates be applied in the reporting process?

Kerin Miller:
So project description here as well as your work plan—which, when we say work plan, we mean your objectives and activities and things like that—those timelines and those dates, we understand that those are subject to change and that there are certain unforeseen circumstances that affect those.

So when completing your forms, first and foremost, we understand that your work plan at this stage might be different than your work plan in your application. That is totally acceptable. That's fine. Things change.

The second piece to that is, let's say you submit this form, you told us you were going to do something in March. You had a delay with the contractor that will push that work to June. Those are all things that, via progress reports, you can provide those updates and edit your timeline.

So we are not holding you firm to your timelines. The only firm date to keep in mind is March 31st, 2026. That is when your last invoice can be dated and submitted, so that is really the only set in stone sort of date. Your other timelines, we understand that they are subject to change and those can be updated and revised in the progress reports, and again more details to come during that that reporting webinar.

Lisa Wurm:
And a specific question from the chat regarding documentation for the bid. This awardee just wants to make sure that they don't need to resubmit their bid that they've already submitted.

Kerin Miller:
So if you are on your GrantsConnect™ profile, there's just a general tab called Attachments. Any attachment that you have submitted thus far, or that you sent in for our review, should be uploaded to that Attachments tab.

Those attachments will live there as long as this grant program is active. So you do not need to resubmit those bids unless we request them for some reason. But those should live on your Attachments tab.

If, for some reason, you believe you submitted something that's not on your Attachments tab, that might be a reason to call or email us. But you will have that Attachments tab available to all of you to reference. So feel free to check and reference that Attachments tab.

Roxanne McAlpine:
Here I just wanted to point out one reason why a bid may have to be resubmitted is, let's say, you were getting an HVAC project and the total bid was $96,000, but it wasn't itemized out.

So, the cost would be acceptable and the items they listed, but we need to see it itemized out. So that could be one example of why you would need to resubmit the bid: in order to have those items itemized.

Kerin Miller:
Appreciate that clarification. So any additional information will need to be attached, but the bids that you have previously submitted, those are still all live in our GrantsConnect™ platform.

Lisa Wurm:
And we have about five minutes left and I don't have anymore questions in the chat, but to just reiterate on the bids, if there are any previous bids for disallowed items, it's not necessary for awardees to delete those unnecessary bids.