Department of Developmental Services
Disparity Funds Program Teleconference
Summary and FAQs
For Fiscal Year 2018-19

**Background**
The Department of Developmental Services (Department) held a Disparity Funds Program Question and Answer Teleconference on Thursday, September 13 from 1:00 – 2:30 PM.

This document provides a summary of the teleconference.

Department staff in attendance were presenters Sylvia Hoggatt and Lucy Tran-Ruelas, and Caroline Castaneda, Vicky Lovell, Michael Sanchez, and David Sem.

**Agenda**
The purpose of the call was to review the 2018/19 Disparity Fund Grant Program Guidelines, provide responses to questions submitted through the Disparity Program’s email address, and respond to additional questions from the teleconference participants.

**Important Dates**
The grant cycle opened on August 17th, 2018. Proposals must be submitted by October 16th at 5 p.m. Pacific Standard Time to DisparityFundsProgram@dds.ca.gov Inbox. The proposal review period begins October 17th. The Department will send out the notifications of determination by November 30th, 2018. By January 1, 2019, the Department will post a list of the approved projects on its website.

**Submittal Documents (pages 6-14 of the Guidelines)**
Applicants must submit:
1. Attachment A1, the applicant checklist. This is a good resource to make sure that all of the required documents are submitted;
2. Attachment A2, the cover page;
3. Attachment B, the proposal project information;
4. Attachment C, schedule of development/activities worksheet;
5. Attachment D, the project measure’s worksheet;
6. Attachment E, the budget worksheet, which includes E1 and E2;
7. Letters of support if the applicant will request data from one or more regional centers (RC) or will work with another organization(s) as a partner or a subcontractor.

**UC/CSU:** University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) proposals must include a completed model agreement, which will assist with streamlining the grant process.

**Optional:** Applicants may provide optional supporting documentation about the organization such as board minutes, proof of employment identification number, or business registration.
CBO: Community-based organizations (CBOs) must submit their proposal concurrently to the Department and to all of the RCs in their proposed project area.

RC: Regional centers (RCs) that want to request continuation funding must submit a budget worksheet, which consists of Attachments E1 and E2, and the request for funding to continue an approved project, which is Attachment F. The Department updated Attachment F on September 4, 2018, and the updated attachment is available on the DDS website.

Review of Submittal Documents
Proposal Cover Page (Attachment A2, pages 25-26 of the Guidelines; instructions are on pages 6-7).

In section 1, applicants provide general information about the organization. In section 2, applicants provide a summary of the proposal. This includes the project catchment area(s) to be served. For Los Angeles County, the proposed zip codes need to be included. An RC directory, including counties and areas served, is included in Enclosure C on page 50. Zip codes for the Los Angeles County RCs can be found on the Department’s website under the Regional Center tab; look up RCs in Los Angeles County by zip code.

Letter of support: If the applicant is working with one or more organizations as a joint project or subcontractor, a letter of support is required from each organization including their role in that collaboration. If requesting aggregate data from one or more RCs, a letter is required from each RC in support of the data sharing.

Project Information (Attachment B, pages 27-28 of the Guidelines; instructions are on pages 7-8).
In Attachment B, applicants provide information about the proposed project. This will include information about the target population, the focus area or areas if more than one and the project type or types if more than one. In total, Attachment B cannot exceed 7 pages, single-spaced, 12 point Arial font, excluding any supporting documentation, such as board minutes and resumes.

Schedule of Development/Activities Worksheet (Attachment C, page 29 of the Guidelines; instructions are on pages 8-9).
Attachment C is the Schedule of Development Activities Worksheets. In this attachment, the applicant describes how the project will meet its stated objectives. Details include activities, who would be responsible for those activities (listing individuals or staff members), and when each activity will take place by using the column labelled Q1 for the first quarter, Q2 for the second quarter and so on. A completed example is provided as Attachment C1 on pages 30-31 of the Guidelines.

This will cover the project measures. In this attachment, the applicant describes how the project implementation and success will be measured with qualitative and quantitative measures of outcome. Attachment D1 also provides an example of a completed worksheet.

**Project Budget Worksheet** (Attachment E, page 34-37 of the Guidelines; instructions on pages 10-13).
Attachment E consists of two documents: E1, which is the budget worksheet and E2, which is the budget narrative. Of the two forms, E1 includes a proposed budget outlining associated costs and the total amount of funds requested. Both of these attachments, E1 and E2, must be completed for and signed by the applicant and each sub-contractor. Samples of these attachments, E1 and E2 can be found on pages 38-41. A revised Attachment E2 has been posted online to expand the character limit.

A list of allowable expenses and non-allowable budget items can be found on pages 10-13. Allowable expenses need to be necessary for proper and efficient performance and related to the goal of the project.

Line item categories are personnel, which is salary and wages and benefits of project staff; operating expenses, which are incurred because of the project activities; and administrative expenses, which are incurred to operate a business as a whole and cannot be directly associated with a project. The last line item category is administrative expenses or indirect expenses, which cannot exceed 15% of the total budget.

**Request for Funding to Continue an Approved Project** (Attachment F, page 42 of the Guidelines; instructions on page 14).
Attachment F is only for RCs who are seeking continuance of funds for previously approved projects in fiscal year 2016-17. In addition to Attachment F, Attachments E1 and E2 need to be completed.

**Scoring Process**
The Department will use a three-phase review process that is outlined on pages 15-16 of the Guidelines.

**Phase 1**
Phase 1 assesses whether each proposal was submitted by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on October 16, 2018, and whether Attachment B (not including any optional documents, such as resumes) does not exceed the page limit requirement.

**Phase 2**
In Phase 2 for proposals that have passed Phase 1, a panel of reviewers consisting of Department staff and external reviewers will evaluate the proposals for content. Each member of the panel will review all the proposals and score them using the scoring criteria that is listed in Attachment G (pages 43 and 44 of the Guidelines). Proposals scoring 30 points and above may be eligible for funding.
Phase 3
If there are not sufficient ABX2 1 dollars to fund all the proposals that meet the minimum score of 30, a Phase 3 will be utilized. Reviewers will evaluate the proposals based on the criteria set forth in Attachment H (page 45) related to the intended target population, the catchment area and the project type.

Once the evaluations have been completed, the Department will notify all applicants, by November 30th, 2018, of the final decision via email. If the applicant is awarded funding, the notice will contain a formal cover letter, feedback on the proposed measures for assessing project impact and data collection methods, and a grant agreement. After final awards are made, approved project proposals will be posted on the Department website.

Reporting Requirements
Reports will be required every quarter over the course of the project and are due to the Department on the last day of the month following the end of each quarter. Information on the reporting requirements is set out on pages 17-18 of the Guidelines.

The reports will be used to evaluate the activities performed for each proposal and whether the project is on target with the approved work plan. The quarterly claim expense form is submitted along with the quarterly progress report. Expense forms are reviewed to determine that services have been performed, that payment for items is not duplicative and that funding is being used appropriately.

Payment Schedule
CBOs
For CBO awards that are below $100,000, the project award will be paid upon receipt of an invoice as follows: there will be an initial payment of 90% of the approved grant amount and then a final payment of 10% pending satisfactory completion of a final report.

For CBOs with award amounts that are at or above $100,000, the project award amounts are paid upon receipt of an invoice, as set out on page 19 of the Guidelines.

RCs
RCs will invoice and receive payment through the existing allocation and payment process.

Supporting Documentation (Guidelines page 20)
Grantees need to maintain supporting documentation for all expenses. Supporting documentation could be subject to audit either during or after completion of the project.
Some examples of supporting documentation are timesheets; travel receipts if travel is part of the grant (requirements for meals, hotels, mileage at or below the state rate); invoices from consultants or subcontractors; purchase receipts; and attendance records for workshops and training.

**Question and Answer – DisparityFundsProgram@dds.ca.gov Inbox**

The following 17 questions were received in the DisparityFundsProgram Inbox as of September 6, 2018.

**Question:** Are CBOs limited to serving only parents of current consumers of the RCs?

**Answer:** No, projects are not limited to serving only parents of RC consumers; however, the project must state how its activities propose to increase equity in service. For example, proposals may include activities related to increasing access to information about RC services in the form of community outreach, such as screenings, events or outreach events.

**Question:** If the prospective project is for parent education, is the target population limited to only parents of current consumers of RCs?

**Answer:** No, parent education such as orientations, trainings and workshops is not limited to parents of current RC consumers. All proposals must indicate a target population and how that group is underserved using POS data or other data of supporting evidence and how the project will address the disparity.

**Question:** Will RCs mandate these parents to attend the training or workshops posted by CBOs?

**Answer:** No, RCs are not responsible for requiring parents to attend trainings or workshops, or to participate in any activities.

**Question:** Are we required to collaborate with the RCs for our events and activities?

**Answer:** All CBOs are required to submit a copy of their proposal concurrently to the RC and to the Department. The Department encourages CBOs and RCs to work together as much as possible; however, this is not a requirement. If the CBO project depends on an RC providing data, a letter of support from the RC is required along with the proposal.

**Question:** Can a project serve more than one area?

**Answer:** Yes, there are 21 RCs, most of which cover multiple counties. Projects may serve one or more counties within a RC catchment area, or more than one RC catchment area. (See the map of RC catchment areas in Enclosure B.) If the project will be implemented in Los Angeles County, list the applicable RCs and zip codes.

**Question:** Is it possible to conduct two events, which will involve two RCs, under one proposal or will the proposals need to be separated by RC?
Answer: Yes, the project may include more than one RC under one proposal. The proposal should state all the RCs in which the project will be implemented. If the project will be implemented in Los Angeles County, the applicable RCs and zip codes should be listed.

Question: If a project proposes two events and one parent educational activity, will the project be able to apply for all of these activities under one project proposal?
Answer: Yes, projects may consist of more than one activity.

Question: Are RCs supposed to indicate in-kind funds as part of a continuation request for a new proposal?
Answer: No, there is not a requirement for RCs to provide in-kind funds.

Question: Can a CBO that was awarded funding in fiscal year 2017-2018, apply for funding for a different project in fiscal year 2018-2019?
Answer: Yes, the grant process is a competitive process, so all proposals will be reviewed using the scoring criteria provided in the Guidelines.

Question: Can you describe the Phase 2 review scoring criteria?
Answer: Each criterion evaluates information provided for a specific component of the proposal. The criteria are described in Attachment G (page 43 of the Guidelines). Each criterion has a potential score of zero, which means an inadequate response; a score of one, indicating an adequate response; or a score of two, for an exceptional response. Each score is multiplied by the weight shown for that criterion, and the weighted scores are summed to create one score for the proposal.

Question: Can you describe the Phase 3 review scoring criteria?
Answer: If total funding requested by eligible applicants exceeds the allocated funding of $11 million, the Department will implement a third-phase review. The third-review phase will look at three factors:
1) If the project target population is not already being served by a current effort in the same geographic area;
2) If the project targets a geographic area that is not currently being served; and
3) If there are no similar project types, such as outreach or education, in the geographic area to what is being proposed.

Question: What is a CBO?
Answer: For the purpose of this program, a CBO is defined as a public or private non-profit, or private for profit organization that represents and advocates on behalf of a community or a significant segment of a community, including family support groups. Each proposal from a CBO must describe its organizational structure and how it meets the aforementioned definition of a CBO.
**Question:** Is a CBO that’s vendored by a RC eligible to receive grant funds?

**Answer:** Yes; however, the project must address the needs of a broader community than the vendor is currently serving.

**Question:** Are CBOs required to have a federally qualifying employer identification number or EIN?

**Answer:** No; however, if the CBO does not have an established EIN, a financial management service must be utilized to facilitate invoicing and payments.

**Question:** Is there a maximum approval amount for disparity projects?

**Answer:** There is not a maximum approval amount. The Department will approve proposals based on merit, proposed funding and available funding.

**Question:** Will payment for the projects be paid from the RC?

**Answer:** No, payments will be made directly by the Department through the State Controller’s Office.

**Question:** How are these Guidelines different from last year’s Guidelines?

**Answer:** There are a few changes, including some new requirements.

The checklist in Attachment A1 is new this year. The checklist will help ensure that proposals include all of the required documentation.

Attachment A2 was known as Attachment A last year. Attachment A is now separated into two attachments: Attachment A2 and Attachment B. Attachment B, is now focused on project details. Some of the questions are the same as last year, but some questions have been reformatted to be more focused. For example, question 2 on Attachment B asks about the target population. Last year, this was an open-ended question, but this year Attachment B includes common responses from last year’s application as selection categories.

Attachment C is similar to last year.

Attachment D has some minor changes. Instead of being open-ended, like last year, there is now a checkbox list allowing applicants to select the type of measures the project will utilize and include a description. For approved proposals, the Department’s Research Section will offer feedback to clarify the measures, if needed, and discuss when the data will be reported.

The budget worksheet, previously known as Attachment E, has been broken into two attachments: E1 and E2.

Attachment F is only for RCs to request continuation funding for projects that were previously approved in fiscal year 2016-2017. This attachment was previously known as Attachment B.
Questions During the Teleconference

Question: Is the total amount available for this fiscal year 2018-2019, $11 million or is it a different number?
   Answer: Yes, $11 million is available.

Question: When does the grant agreement begin?
   Answer: The grant agreement is effective after it is signed by the grantee and the Department.

Question: Can State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) apply for grant funding?
   Answer: Yes, it appears that SCDD meets the definition of CBO and may apply.

Question: If we have an existing staff member who is part-time and is funded through another source, is it possible for them to also work part-time for a Disparity Funds Grant, not to exceed 40 hours per week?
   Answer: Yes, staff may work part-time on a disparity grant project and, with separate funding, part-time on another project. Bill the Department for actual time worked on the disparity grant funded project. Total hours worked cannot exceed 40 hours per week or 1 full-time equivalent, whichever is less.

   Retain backup documentation that clearly supports the amount of time worked on the disparity funds grant project.

Email additional questions to DisparityFundsProgram@dds.ca.gov. The Department will review and update the question and answer document its website periodically until 12:00 p.m. Pacific standard time on October 15, 2018.