

OSDFS/GRAA TA Training for Applicants

Moderator: Nicole White

March 22, 2010

12:00 pm CT

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time, all participants are in a listen-only mode until the question-and-answer period. If you'd like to ask a question at that time, please press star then 1. Today's conference is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time.

I will now turn the meeting over to your leader of the call today, Ms. Nicole White. You may begin.

Nicole White: Good afternoon, everyone. Happy Monday. This is Nicole White with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools and I want to thank you for joining our National Technical Assistance conference call for this years' Grants To Reduce Alcohol Abuse competition.

I am the competition manager for this grant program and all administrative questions and any questions that you may have that arise about the grant program, the priority, the selection criterion, or the process should be directed to me, either via email or phone. My email address and phone number is located in the application package several times, but I'll repeat again now. My

email address is Nicole.White@ed.gov, or you can reach me by telephone and my number is 202-245-7884.

And while you are always welcome to give me a call, typically email is the best way to reach me. One, because I can multi-task and secondly, any answers that I give you or any responses, I would like for you to have them in writing for your own benefit, as well as mine, okay?

Before I get started with the specifics on this years' grant program, let me quickly tell you how the call is going to go this afternoon; review the agenda.

First, I'm going to talk about the goal of the grant competition, I will then review the organization of the application package, I will discuss the absolute priority, the requirements of this years' competition, the selection criterion, four of them, and then I'll finish up with some grant organization tips and an overview of the peer review process.

I will be taking questions. My intent is to discuss each of those sections, and then open it up for questions. So, my suggestion would be that as questions come to your mind you jot them down so you don't forget them.

Additionally, the acronym for the Grants to Reduce Alcohol Abuse Program, is GRAA, so if you hear me use the acronym GRAA, that is what I'm talking about. I will try to watch my use of other acronyms, or at least explain them as I go along.

The goal of the GRAA grant competition is to support efforts of local education agencies to develop and implement innovative and effective projects to reduce alcohol abuse in secondary schools. The application packages for this years' competition became available March 2, 2010, and the

application transmittal deadline for the competition is April 16, 2010. During the grant proposal tips part of the agenda, I will discuss the details that must be followed in submitting your application in a timely manner.

We are estimating to make nine new awards this year. It's a fairly small competition this year. I must note that the number is simply an estimate and we, the Federal Government, are not bound by that number. But, based on the amount of money that we have appropriated to use by Congress, it is our estimate that nine new awards will be made this year.

Hopefully, you've had an opportunity to print of a complete copy of the application package. I will point out that there are five major sections of the application package.

Section 1 deals with the application submission procedures and the instructions that you need to follow, depending on the method for which you will submit your application and I'll get to that shortly.

Section 2 is the program background information where we talk about the funding priority, as well as the elements that must be met by the applicant in order to meet that priority, and we'll discuss that in a bit. We will also talk about the four selection criterion, as well as give you some answers to some frequently asked questions.

In Section 3 of the application package are the legal documents that drive this grant program and the copy of the Notice Inviting Applications is in this section.

And then in Section 4, you will see the general application instructions and information. This is the guidance that we provide for you on how to prepare

putting your application together, how to organize it, as well as the instructions for all of the standard federal forms that you must submit with your proposal. There's also a checklist for preparing to submit your application in this section.

We do intend to make these awards by July 30, 2010.

Now, we will move on to the four elements of the absolute priority. The absolute priority for the GRAA program is the project must develop and implement innovative and effective programs to reduce alcohol abuse in secondary schools.

The statute requires that there are four requirements under this priority. One is the applicant must describe the activities that are to be carried out under the grant.

Two, the applicant must provide an assurance that these activities will include one or more of the proven strategies for reducing underage alcohol abuse as determined by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, or SAMHSA. I'll discuss that in a second.

The third, the applicant must explain how activities to be carried out under the grant that are not described will be effective in reducing underage alcohol abuse, including references to the past effectiveness of such activities.

Fourth, the applicant must provide an assurance that the applicant will submit to the Secretary, an annual report regarding the effectiveness of the programs and activities funded under this grant.

Before I get into discussing these four priorities, it will be a shame to have your application screened out and not read by the peer reviewers because you did not address all four of these elements, so this section is very important. I'm going to cover the four elements now and then I'm going to open it up for questions in case you have questions on this section.

Providing an assurance that the activities will include one or more of the proven strategies for reducing underage alcohol abuse is determined by SAMHSA.

On Page 29 of the application package we have a list of the programs that must be implemented in order for this program. You must use one of these programs on this list. You are welcome to use another program on this list, but it must be used in concert with a program on this particular list. For the purpose of this grant program these are proven strategies by SAMHSA.

I'm going to discuss the rural and low income applicant status and then I will open it up for questions for this particular session. The statute also directs us to develop procedures to make the application process for grants more user-friendly, especially for rural and low income LEAs.

And so, for rural and low income LEAs, we have two sources of technical assistance - this is one. We will also be providing another technical assistance call later on in the month. That date will be advertised shortly. In addition, the rural and low income applicants will be screened and reviewed on a separate panel together.

To be considered rural and low income, you, the LEA, will have a designation by your state and there is a locale code of 6, 7, or 8. There's also a listing of rural and low income LEAs on our Web site. In essence of that, you can also

substitute certification by your state education agency that you are located in an area defined as rural and low income. You will need to provide evidence of that to that effect, and failure to do that will result in you not being read in the pool of non-rural and non-low income applicants.

(Jackie), we can open it up for any questions on this particular section now.

Coordinator: Certainly, if you'd like to ask a question, please dial star then 1. To withdraw your question, it's star then 2. And I have no questions at this time.

Nicole White: I will move on to the requirements of this years' competition. The first has to do with the eligible applicant. The only eligible applicants for this competition are local education agencies, or LEAs. A public or private non-profit organization cannot apply. An individual cannot apply. A community-based organization cannot apply.

The only entity that is eligible is a local education agency and that is defined by your state, and usually it's a school district, but from time to time there are some charter schools that are designated as LEAs. The other major limitation on eligibility is that you must not be a current or active GRAA grant to reduce alcohol abuse grantee to apply and that includes being a member of a consortium that is a current grantee.

So, for the purpose of this eligibility requirement, a grant is considered active until the end of the grant project period, which includes being officially closed out, including no-cost and extensions. So, for all of my '07, '08, or '09 grantees, you would not be eligible for this years' grant competition.

In terms of the indirect costs, we do provide guidance in the Frequently Asked Questions section of the proposal of the application package that if you would

like to claim indirect costs, you are allowed to use your schools' districts' federally negotiated indirect costs rate.

My advice is as you're putting your budget proposals together and you're getting ready to submit proof of your federally negotiated indirect costs rate, is to take a look at the agreement.

Are there any questions for the requirement; who is eligible to apply?

Coordinator: There's a few questions on the phone. Our first comes from Caller 1. Your line is open.

(Caller 1): Okay. I have three questions. One about the LEA, I'm writing for a school that it is an Indian - Native American school and they're not in the state LEA system, so how do I - I mean they are a public school, so how do I manage that when they're not one of the state LEAs?

Nicole White: That is something that I would need to look at on an individual basis. And I would suggest that you send me an email after we get off of the call, because there may be some other parameters that we can go by, in terms of who defines them as what they are.

(Caller 1): Right. And I guess that would apply also to the rural and low income, because they're not on that list either. I have one other question I'd like to ask. This school is - has - they're not - okay, our school has a GRAA now and this Native American school has just received some services from it. They're not the physical agent, they haven't received any money from us except, you know, for the curriculum. Are they eligible to apply themselves?

Nicole White: That is something that I wouldn't want to make a general yes or no, because I don't want it to be interpreted incorrectly. So, you need to call me offline and - so we can see what they're classified as.

(Caller 1): I'll do that. Thank you.

Nicole White: No problem.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Caller 2). Your line is open.

(Caller 2): Oh, hi. Thank you. On the absolute priority, I punched my button late and I'm back to the absolute priority. I'm sorry. When we talk about the absolute priority in our narrative, do we actually put something in there that says, "Absolute Priority," and address briefly those four points, and then go into greater detail in the body of narrative, or do we just need to cover these four points as we go through the three or four questions in the narrative?

Nicole White: My suggestion would be a little bit of both. And I'll go into detail further in when I get to the selection criterion and the peer review process, but I would suggest that you give a very good synopsis of what your program is going to entail in your abstract, and then clearly delineate what those - how those items will be addressed throughout your narrative.

But, I will get into that a little bit later on.

(Caller 2): Thank you.

Nicole White: No problem.

Coordinator: We have one additional question from (Caller 3). Your line is open.

Nicole White: Hello?

Coordinator: (Caller 3), your line is open, please check your mute button.

(Caller 3): Hi. We hit our button a little bit late as well, and this is a Absolute Priority question. We're going to be applying for multiple sites and one or more of those sites may be in a low income area and the others may not. How would we apply...

Nicole White: In order to be considered...

(Caller 3): ...based on that?

Nicole White: Yes. In order to be considered a rural and low income applicant, all of your sites must be considered rural and low income. So, that's how your school - .

(Caller 3): Yes, it does. Thank you.

Nicole White: No problem.

Coordinator: We have no additional questions at this time.

Nicole White: Okay. Thanks, (Jackie). Okay. So, now we'll get into the proposal - now we'll get into the selection criterion. So, for this application package, there are four selection criterion. Need for the project is worth 20 points, significance is 25 points, quality of the project design is 30 points, and quality of the project evaluation is 25 points. Each one of those has sub-criterion and should be addressed as such.

So, for your need, which is 20 points, under this criterion we're going to look for evidence that the applicant has conducted some alcohol use surveys among the secondary students who will be served by the grant. In the absence of student surveys, applicants should submit data on disciplinary referrals for alcohol consumption among the secondary school students. So, the main thing here is to show that there is a need in your area for the particular project that you need to - want to implement.

Significance, which is 25 points and it has two sub-criterion under that; A, the likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change, which is worth 10 points; and B, the importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes are likely to be attained by the proposed project, which is 15 points.

For this section in significance, we look for the applicant to explain how the proposed project will be implemented, including references to the past effectiveness of such activities, and be able to provide a clear link between the improved student outcomes, in terms of alcohol abuse and the proposed program.

Quality of the project design, which is worth 30 points and it has three sub-criterion under that. The first, 3A, is the extent to which the design of the program reflects up-to-date knowledge, that's 10 points. The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity, that's 15 points, and the extent to which the proposed project will establish linkages with other appropriate agencies, that's 5 points.

So, under this criterion, we're looking for detailed and comprehensive description of the proposed program. The applicant proposes to implement, and an explanation of the programs basis and research and effective practice.

Number four, the quality of the project evaluation, which is worth 25 points, and the sub-criterion under that is the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures, which is 15 points, and the extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback; 10 points.

Under this criterion, we're also looking for the applicant to provide reliable data that measures changes in student binge drinking and student perceptions of alcohol use. Additionally, under evaluation you need to make sure that you are making a plan for collecting the GPRA data for this program, okay?

Are there any questions under this section?

Coordinator: Once again, if you'd like to ask a question, please dial 5 and 1. (Caller 4), your line is open.

(Caller 4): Howdy. I had a question regarding the Need for Project in the selection criteria.

Nicole White: Okay.

(Caller 4): Wanted to know if we can use the most current CHKS Surveys, 2008, 2009, to meet the evidence that the applicant has conducted alcohol use surveys among secondary students?

Nicole White: I wouldn't be able to answer specifically what surveys you should use, but whatever surveys you are using to demonstrate the need, they need to be able to apply to your area. So, you wouldn't want to use national surveys or national data, you want to use something that's local.

(Caller 4): Okay. We have - it's district-wide and potentially site specific data.

Nicole White: Okay. Again, I could not be that specific because that would seem to give you coaching advice, but I would just suggest that the data that you use is relevant to your area and current.

(Caller 4): Okay. So, we don't have to necessarily administer a new survey. We could use existing...

Nicole White: Not necessarily, no.

(Caller 4): Okay. Thank you.

Nicole White: No problem.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Caller 5). Your line is open.

(Caller 5): Hi. I have two questions.

Nicole White: Okay.

(Caller 5): The first is in regards to our goals and objective statement. Is the correct place to list that under Significance with 2B, the important or magnitude of the results or outcomes to be attained?

Nicole White: That would seem like it would be the proper place to use that, but again I could not tell you how to structure your application other than what is listed under the Selection criteria.

(Caller 5): Okay. And my second question has to do with the GPRA. Is this the right time to ask a question about the GPRA?

Nicole White: Go ahead.

(Caller 5): Okay. The RFP says that baseline data should be collected at the beginning of year one. So, my question is two-fold, if we have baseline data that was collected in the - this spring, so just prior to year one, is that sufficient? And do you also want to see us collecting year-end data in year one? So, it would be pre and post of year one.

Nicole White: You do need pre and post data and my suggestion would be that you need to collect data at the beginning of your actual project period.

(Caller 5): Okay.

Nicole White: So, not to rely on data from a previous year.

(Caller 5): And when you say pre and post, so you would mean like the fall of year one and the spring of year one, and then subsequently it could be in the spring of year two and spring of year three.

Nicole White: I couldn't tell an exact time, but I would say that it needs to be consistent per year, and that it needs to make sense in terms of being able to assess the students before implementation and post.

(Caller 5): Okay. Thank you.

Nicole White: All right.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Caller 6). Your line is open.

(Caller 6): Hello. Thank you for giving this - giving us this opportunity for this call first. Could you please repeat the three points under Quality of Project Design?

Nicole White: The three points under Quality of the Project Design, and these are also in the application package, so you can also reference that, but 1A, 3A, is the extent to which the design and the program reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practices; B, the extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal Financial Assistance; C, the extent to which the proposed project will establish linkages with other appropriate agencies and organizations providing services to the target population.

(Caller 6): Thank you.

Nicole White: No problem.

Coordinator: We have one additional question from (Caller 7). Your line is open.

(Caller 7): Hello, one of my questions has to do with the survey. You mentioned that the survey that we used in our grant would have to be from secondary schools, is that correct, the population as far as the kids - the students are taking the survey?

Nicole White: Yes.

(Caller 7): Okay. The reason I ask is because we have survey data from two years ago, which could reflect our current secondary school populations, or will be too for the future, if we could use that to demonstrate the need of what is needed

now versus - could we use that in a sense and just say these are the students that took this survey two years ago, which will be the students we will be providing sort of to?

Nicole White: Oh, okay. You meant - I misunderstood you. I thought that you meant surveying secondary students if - in your implementation of the project, but you're saying...

(Caller 7): Oh, no.

Nicole White: ...to demonstrate need, would you be able to use that?

(Caller 7): Right.

Nicole White: I think if that is the relevant - if that's the population that you're going to serve, then that would seem to make sense.

(Caller 7): Okay. And then, the second question I have is in regards to Number 4, Quality of the Project Evaluation. You mentioned something else in there that I didn't get to write down completely. We have B, the extent to which the method of evaluation provides performance feedback, and then you said collect, and I didn't get the rest of that.

Nicole White: Say that again.

(Caller 7): Well, you mentioned the - under quality of the project evaluation, you mentioned the Point A and B...

Nicole White: Oh, okay the third thing was to also make sure for this program there are three GPRA measures, Government Performance Results Act measures that are required for this program. And so, you will need to make sure that you are collecting data to address those three GPRA measures.

(Caller 7): Okay. That's it. Thank you so much.

Nicole White: No problem.

Coordinator: We have no additional questions at this time.

Nicole White: So, moving on we just did the selection criteria, and now I will move to structuring your proposal.

One of the first things that we tell applicants in preparing is giving yourself plenty of time to prepare. Hopefully, you've started to formulate in your mind what you want to be thinking about putting in your proposal and giving yourself plenty of time to prepare.

We give folks 45 days from the time we release the application to the public to the date that they have to transmit their application to the Department. We're required to give potential applicants 30 days, but for the vast majority of our grant programs, at least in the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, we give 45 days, so that's what you'll see here with this program.

So, the first tip that we would certainly give you is to allow yourself plenty of time to prepare because putting the application together for the first time, just a couple of weeks before the deadline is not advisable.

The next tip that I would give you is to read the application package in its entirety. By now, hopefully you've had a chance to download it and my advice to all of you on this call, as well as any other potential applicant that contacts us is that you're going to read the application in its entirety at least a minimum of three times.

The first time you should read the application solely for the sake of reading it and getting its full context in what the Department is doing and the direction in which they're heading. I would not advise trying to write the proposal on your first read of the application.

Secondly, I would read it and jot down those things to yourself that you know you need to or want to include in certain sections of the proposal.

And then the third time of reading the application, you look at it for following the formatting guidelines. This goes back - to the formatting and the number of pages, and how it should be formatted and how it should look.

While there are no formatting instructions in the application package, very large documents are difficult to manage. So, you can use bold face, you can use underlining, you can use italics, and any other thing that you believe would draw the eye. I would not suggest using colored text because it would be a mute point because we print out the applications in black and white. So, simply going with black on white paper would be best.

The other thing - tip that we give in terms of following the formatting guidelines is how to structure your narrative according to the criteria, and this probably goes back to the earlier question. I indicated that there were four selection criteria, the need, significance, project design, and project

evaluation, and then there are the various sub-elements to each of these selection criteria.

You want to make it easy for the reviewer to evaluate your proposal, and so as such you want to structure it in a way that the reviewer doesn't have to look all over for items in your proposal. I know it takes a lot of time and effort and energy to put your proposals together, and so we want to create a level playing field for everyone. And so, you're in competition with one another, so one of these ways is to point out easily for the reviewers where your responses are to each of the criteria.

One of the pieces of advice that we have for potential applicants is to use headings. So, for example you can have a major heading of Significance, Need for the Project, Evaluation, and then use the smaller headings under that. But, be - provide direct responses to each of the sub-elements clearly in the proposal so that the peer reviewers do not have to go on a fishing expedition to look for your responses. You want to make it crystal clear to them how you responded to each of the elements.

The next piece of advice that we have for potential applicants is to be clear and concise and specific. Vague and non-specific applications rarely -- if ever -- get funded. The reviewers are going to be looking for clearly identified, clearly specified, and clearly measureable goals, objectives, and outcomes. They want to see clearly what your program consists of, what are its components, and et cetera.

These are types of things -- again -- that go a long way in getting a decent score on an application, and that is for you to be very clear and specific and also to format in a way that makes it easy for the reviewers to read your proposal.

The next thing in terms of structuring your application I wanted to mention, talk about, is your funding request. In addition to the project narrative that you put together, which is a response to - which is your responses to the selection criteria, you also are required to submit a budget narrative.

One of the required forms is the ED Form 524. It's the budget information form, and that's the one-page form where you list your budget categories or the funding items, or requests that you have for this project. Let me back up a little bit and say that in the GRAA grant (facts) that we have the estimated average size of award is \$368,000, and that is per year.

And I mention that because we have had applicants in the past, not only in this program, but in other programs that have done their budget narrative and requested what they wanted in year one. If you do not put years two and three in your application package, we are going to assume that you only are requesting funding for years one.

So, if you would like to request up to 36 months of funding, then you need to definitely spell that out and not assume. So, that -- again -- goes back to being very clear and specific. So, in addition to that form, the ED Form 524, to accompany that you need a budget narrative that fully justifies and explains all of the proposed costs. It will not be sufficient for you to simply provide that form, and then attach a one-page spreadsheet, you know, that just simply shows the same figures that are on the 524.

What we're going to want to see is how you calculated those costs, how you came to those costs, and how they're directly related to the project narratives that you've included.

One of the - an example of this would be that if you have a supplies category, don't put - simply put \$10,000 in supplies for miscellaneous expenses, because that'll get cut out of your budget. We want to know what that \$10,000 entails and we want to know how that is related to your project, and why it is necessary for implementation of your progress - of your project.

Another example would be under travel. For travel, we have several meetings that are required of grantees. So, under travel it would not be sufficient to just list travel and have a line item of \$5000. We need to know who that travel is for, where that travel is to, and those kind of specific details.

So, in addition to writing your - structuring your proposal in a way that your peer - the peer reviewer is able to clearly find responses to the selection criteria, we suggest that you write it for a lay person. So, you're writing this for somebody who knows nothing about your program, even though the peer reviewers are trained, but they're not allowed to assume or make any assumptions.

They're not allowed to fill in any holes for you or to give you benefit of the doubt about anything. So, you need to be very clear in your proposal and write it as if someone who knows nothing about your proposal is reading it, because that's true.

The last couple of things I wanted to tell you about submitting your proposal has to do with electronic submission or paper submission. And it's these two pieces that are very important depending on how you decide to submit your proposal, and that's why I saved these tips for last, because I would hate for all of your hard work to be for not, if your proposal is not submitted timely or properly.

I mentioned earlier at the top of the call that you are allowed to submit your proposal electronically if you wish. If you do, you must go through eApplication. This is - all of this is listed in the application package. You can also submit your proposal in paper format and if you do that, you can either do it by mail or deliver it in person.

So, first I'm going to talk about signatures that are required and how that plays a part and depending on how you submit your proposal. If you submit your proposal electronically through eApplication, all of the forms will be electronically signed at the time of submission. Now, we may come back to you at some point in the future and ask for the actual pen and ink signatures on the forms from your authorized rep, but at the time of submission we do allow the eApplication system to serve as your electronic signatory.

If you're submitting your proposal in paper format, either by mail or by hand, your authorized representative has to actually physically sign the proposal and all the different forms. So, simply getting the cursive font on your word processing program is not sufficient. You will need to have the actual person actually sign it in pen and ink.

The other thing I want to mention is the deadline, and this is very, very important. The deadline for this application is April 16, 2010. If you submit your proposal electronically via eApplication, your proposal has to be fully submitted in the system. That doesn't mean in the middle of it, it doesn't mean you're - you know, you've uploaded the majority of the document, the entire document must be fully uploaded and fully submitted by 4:30 Eastern Standard time on April 16. So, that's 4:30 Eastern Standard time on April 16.

And the reason we add the zeros is that we've determined that 4:30 pm means 4:30 pm. It doesn't mean one second late. If your proposal is one second late,

it is late. So, if that happens and your application is late and it will be ruled ineligible, and we've had confusion over that particular piece so that's why it's necessary to add the seconds as part of the deadline.

If you submit your application in paper format by hand, whether you personally deliver your proposal or you hire a courier in the Metro Washington D. C. area to do that, the Application Control Center for the Department of Application will accept a hand-delivered proposal up until 4:30 pm Eastern Standard Time on April 16.

If you're going to submit your proposal in paper format by mail, whether that's through the U.S. Postal Service or through a commercial carrier like FedEx or UPS, or whatever your commercial carrier of choice is, we will accept a postmark date of April 16, 2010. So, if you happen to be in an area where there's a post office that's open late, then you definitely can do that as long as your application is postmarked April 16, 2010.

If you're going to use an overnight carrier like FedEx or UPS then the shipping label needs to show a date that's no later than April 16. If you are going to do that and go that route, I would definitely suggest that you hold onto your shipping label and track your package.

On the off chance that your proposal gets lost in transit, because things do happen, you want to be able to prove to the Department of Education that you did ship your proposal out on or before the deadline. And having that tracking information is necessary to do that.

So, those are some of the things that you need to keep in mind when you're submitting electronically and/or in paper. Electronic signatures are okay in eApplication. If you - actual signatures are required in paper format and in

terms of the deadline, applications must be fully submitted no later than 4:30 pm on April 16. And my suggestion would be to not wait until 4:20 on April 16 to try to submit something electronically, because you never know what's going to happen.

The same is true for a hand delivered application and paper format that goes directly to the Department of Ed's Application Control Center. If you're going to do paper format by mail or commercial carrier, we will accept a postmarked date.

Are there any questions at this time?

Coordinator: We do have one question in the queue from (Caller 8). Your line is open. We'll take the next question from (Caller 2). Your line is open.

(Caller 2): On the - I have a question about the budget; the ED 524 actually shows five years, you know...

Nicole White: Yes. There are some - that is a standard form used by the Department, and so we do have some grant programs in the Department that are five years, but this program is only up until 36 months.

(Caller 2): Okay, so we just show one through three. My other question about the budget and - is I see what the average grant is, is there a cap on what we can ask for?

Nicole White: You know I believe the cap for this program is between \$450,000 and \$500,000...

Nicole White: ...I would need to double check on that to be sure.

(Caller 2): Okay.

Nicole White: But, it's definitely no more than \$500,000 per year.

(Caller 2): Yes. Okay. Thank you.

Nicole White: No problem.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Caller 4). Your line is open.

(Caller 4): Yes. This is a formatting question. For the narrative, is there a page number limit and also where would we start numbering pages? I'm not sure. Sometimes different, you know, number forms...

Nicole White: Well, as I said before, there were no particular formatting instructions for this particular application included in the package. So, I would say that you use the amount of pages necessary to respond effectively to the selection criteria. I would say though that very large files are difficult to manage, as well as hard for the reviewers to review.

(Caller 4): Okay. Thank you very much.

Nicole White: No problem.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Caller 5). Your line is open.

(Caller 5): I'm sorry about that. I have a question about the budget. The RFP says that we should not name any specific contractor, including the evaluator. If we have a

CBO that we're partnering with that helps us deliver some of our prevention services, can we name that specific CBO partner?

Nicole White: That is fine.

(Caller 5): Okay, even if they'll be receiving some money through the grant?

Nicole White: That is fine. The reason why we say that is because grantees, and it's not on our end, the grantees sometimes have a problem once - if they're funded that those contractors that they've named in their application, if they choose to go with someone else the contractor then has an issue with the grantee that they were named in the original grant application.

So, you know, we try to help grantees not - to forego that problem.

(Caller 5): Got it. So, is it okay to name our evaluator if we are firm on using a specific provider?

Nicole White: You can, but you - no additional preference is given if you already named someone.

(Caller 5): Thank you.

Coordinator: Our next question comes (Caller 9). Your line is open.

(Caller 9): My question was already answered. Thank you.

Nicole White: Thanks, (Caller 9).

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Caller 4). Your line is open.

(Caller 4): Yes, can we provide, or can we contract the law enforcement to provide enforcement operations?

Nicole White: You may contract - you - okay, let me start again. A grantee and applicant may contract with subcontract. Who that is has to make sense to your project.

(Caller 4): Okay. Thank you.

Nicole White: Okay.

Coordinator: (Caller 2) your line is open.

(Caller 2): Two more questions about the budget. Sometimes with grants they say that a project manager is required. I didn't really see that in here.

Nicole White: It's not.

(Caller 2): Okay. Cool. And sometimes there a cap on you should use X% of what you're asking for for your evaluator or for that process.

Nicole White: What I will say, (Caller 2), is that if your application makes it to the funding status, what we do here in the office is review your budget, and one of the things that we look at is your costs, and how you're evaluation costs are in relation to the amount of your total award.

(Caller 2): Okay.

Nicole White: So, those costs need to be reasonable.

(Caller 2): All right. Okay. That makes sense. Thanks.

Nicole White: No problem.

Coordinator: And we have no additional questions at this time.

Nicole White: Okay. So, if you have any other questions about the requirements or any pieces of the grant program, your - my advice is to contact me, the competition manager. And as I indicated, you have my email address and you have my phone number.

Now, the last part I'm going to cover is the peer review process and a brief overview of that process is just to take a bit of what - a little bit of the mystery away about it, and explain to you what happens when your application is submitted to the Department.

So, we peer review because it states in our Department of Education Regulations that we will use a peer review process to award our grants, and that's done for a couple of reasons. One, we want to not show any type of favoritism or a subjective (slant) or partiality toward any of the applications that come in to us. Secondly, it has to do with the subject matter expertise.

While we at the Department are able to give guidance on administrative regulations surrounding your program, we are not always necessarily the subject matter experts. So, we hire your colleagues that are subject matter experts and train them on how to become a peer reviewer, and what they need to look for as they are assessing your applications.

Once we train these individuals, I talk to them a lot about what we've talked about on the phone today. So, I go over the selection criteria, the absolute

priority, what things that they should be looking for and all the different nuances of the grant program.

Once we know how many applications we have, we will actually confirm the peer reviewers and assign them to the panel, and each peer review panel is made up of three non-Federal individuals who will be assigned up to 11 applications to review over a two-week period. So, that's the panel.

Now the process, once your application comes into the Department and the application deadline date has passed, our application control center and our contractor will provide us with copies of all the applications that were submitted.

Staff here in the Office of the Safe and Drug Free Schools, and it'll primarily be me, and dependent on the volume, others will screen your application. The screening is intended to simply check to see that the application is submitted one, by an eligible entity, and two meets the priority of the competition.

So, we're not reading the applications word for word, we're not assessing them, we're not scoring them, we're just reading it to make sure that they're eligible applications. So, for that earlier question about where they should put certain information, you should put your priority - your Absolute Priority information somewhere where it's pretty clear and concise so that the screeners can see it. And then, we assign it to a peer review panel to make sure they meet the qualifications of the program.

So again, for this particular program, I look to make sure that you are definitely an LEA, and then I'm going to look for those elements of absolute priority. And if any of those are missing, your application will be deemed an ineligible application, and the applicant - you will be notified to that affect.

So, if you meet all of the elements of the priority, we will randomly assign your proposal to one of the panels to review. After all of the applications have been screened, we will move into the peer review period and the panel will do first independent review of your application by themselves, so that means they're not going to discuss the application with anyone else on the panel, they just read the application. They write up their comments noting the strengths and weaknesses they've identified, and the score it, and they do that for every application.

Then, the second part of the peer review process is the panel discussion. And those discussions are facilitated by - either by a Department of Education staff member or someone that we hire and train to facilitate these discussions. We discuss the applications and look at any scoring discrepancies that may exist. Our goal is to get the panel in agreement both scoring-wise and comment-wise with an application.

Then, we move on to the final stage, which is getting the slate of candidates or the slate of applicants approved, not only here in the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, but by the Secretary's office within the Department of Education. Once we have that approval, we're ready to obligate the awards and make those determinations public.

After the applications are awarded or the grants are awarded, all applicants, whether or not you received funding or designation from us, will receive a copy of your scores and comments from the peer reviewers who evaluated your proposals. So, that's just an overview of the peer review process.

So, I want to open it up now for our last set of questions if there are any.

Coordinator: Once again, if you'd like to ask a question, please dial star then 1. We do have one question from (Caller 1). Your line is open.

(Caller 1): Someone asked this question before about where to pagination, and I didn't hear an answer to that.

Nicole White: You - I would suggest that you start it where it makes sense to you, probably at the beginning of the project narrative.

(Caller 1): Okay. So, not the Abstract, not the Table of Contents, but just start...

Nicole White: I mean, it's up to you...

(Caller 1): Oh, okay.

Nicole White: ...I couldn't tell you.

(Caller 1): All right. Thanks.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Caller 10). Your line is open.

(Caller 10): Yes, hello. I have to quick questions. You are accepting consortium applications, correct?

Nicole White: As long as they are an LEA.

(Caller 10): Okay. And the LEA, you are accepting that as defined by your Department - State Department of Education. For example, in Pennsylvania we have intermediate units. If the intermediate unit would serve as the LEA, we would include a letter then stating that we are as such, correct?

Nicole White: Yes, the state defines it for you.

(Caller 10): And would you like also letters from the consortium showing that they are agreeing to the activities in - within the project?

Nicole White: That would make sense.

(Caller 10): Okay. Thank you very much.

Nicole White: You're welcome.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Caller 11). Your line is open.

(Caller 11): Thank you. I have several questions. One is about attachments. What if we - if wanted to attach job descriptions, resumes, logic model, evaluation plan, is that a possibility?

Nicole White: Yes. You can upload and - attachments that you feel are necessary to support your application.

(Caller 11): Okay.

Nicole White: The only thing I would say is that you would - should think about limiting the size of your attachments because again, really large files are hard to manage. So, between 1 and 2 megabytes will probably be the limit.

(Caller 11): Okay. And so, the job descriptions and resumes really are not required, it would just - we might just put a - include a little bio in the body of the narrative?

Nicole White: They're not required, but I would -- again -- would say you need to include whatever you need to support.

(Caller 11): Okay. Okay. Thank you. One more question...

Nicole White: No problem.

(Caller 11): ...on Page 29, that list of strategies, is that exhaustive or - there's one CMCA is the...

Nicole White: Right.

(Caller 11): ...ones that we ...

Nicole White: Right. You can implement CMCA, but you will also need to implement it in concert with one of the programs on this list.

(Caller 11): Okay. Great. Thank you very much..

(Caller 11): No problem.

Coordinator: Our next question is from (Caller 12). Your line is open.

(Caller 12): Yes, could you go back over Absolute Priority again. I'm not sure I understood what you meant by that.

Nicole White: No problem. Okay, for this competition, the absolute priority is that a project must develop and implement innovative and effective programs to reduce alcohol abuse in secondary schools. And if I didn't mention it before, just as

with LEA, your local education agency is defined by your state. Different states have - you have to define secondary school by what your states definition is.

Okay, so under the priority we have four requirements; one, that you must describe the activities to be carried out under the grant; two, you need to provide an assurance that these activities will include one or more of the proven strategies that are listed on Page 29 that the young lady just had a question about; thirdly, you need to explain how these activities are going to be carried out under the grant, and how it will be effective in reducing underage alcohol abuse, including references to the past effectiveness of such activities, so making that linkage, and then four, you need to provide an assurance that you'll submit an annual report basically.

(Caller 12): Okay.

Nicole White: Concerning the effectiveness of the program.

(Caller 12): Okay.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Caller 2). Your line is open.

(Caller 2): On the Safe and Drug Free Schools grant that we've had in the past, we always need to address with the non-public schools within our district.

Nicole White: Yes, a private school?

(Caller 2): Yes. Is that a part of this federal grant as well?

Nicole White: Yes, ma'am, the Equitable Participation?

(Caller 2): Yes.

Nicole White: Yes.

(Caller 2): So, kind of treat that the same way that we've treated - historically treated Safe and Drug Free Schools?

Nicole White: Yes, ma'am.

(Caller 2): Okay. Thank you.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Caller 13). Your line is open.

(Caller 13): My question has to do with institutional review board. Can you talk a little bit about what the requirements are for that under this grant program?

Nicole White: For the IRB? One, you can -- I'm sorry did you say something?

(Caller 13): No. I'm. Go ahead. I'm sorry.

Nicole White: Okay. No, for the internal - the IRB, you can charge your costs associated with the IRB review to the grant proposal. And most of the grants, when they come in, that is going to be something that we look for to see if that's been taken care of.

(Caller 13): I guess my question is, would you talk some about what - how do we know if we're required to do that or is there an expectation that all education grants are required to do that now?

Nicole White: Well, generally for this grant, if they make it to the level of funding we take a look at it and determine if it has human subjects review. So, I guess I could say that's not something you would need to worry about at this stage.

(Caller 13): Okay. Thank you.

Nicole White: No problem.

Coordinator: Once again, if you'd like to ask a question, please dial star then 1. (Caller 14) your line is open.

(Caller 14): Yes, just not to be redundant here, but I just wanted to make sure on the formatting, since there aren't formatting instructions, that then there's no specificity around font size, double spacing, anything like that.

Nicole White: There is no specificity, but I would say you have to do what makes sense, and what you, you know, is professional and will be...

(Caller 14): Readability.

Nicole White: Yes...

(Caller 14): Yes.

Nicole White: ...will be readable to the peer reviewers.

(Caller 14): Okay. Great. And then, the question around the budget and I think that I know the answer, but I just want to make sure.

Nicole White: Okay.

(Caller 14): There's also no specificity around an administrative cap, so if one was to have some project management duties in the budget that there isn't a specific cap around the cost of that?

Nicole White: While there's not a specific cap, it has - it should be commensurate with what is expected in your area - I mean, what is the norm in your area. And again, if you make it to the level of - funding level, this office will do a budget review of your application.

(Caller 14): Okay. So that it was proportionate to the activities that person would be doing relevant to this grant.

Nicole White: Exactly. Yes.

(Caller 14): Okay. And then, the last one was around the SAMHSA list and I had asked - I just wasn't sure, it ended with S's and there was - like when I plugged in in NREPP list, alcohol, school-based, this secondary population, there was another program -- for example -- called Team Intervene that was listed in the NREPP list. And I just was curious, would that be considered a listed SAMHSA program or not?

Nicole White: Well, the list that you need reference is the list on Page 29, and that was developed between SAMHSA and Ed. If you wanted to use that additional - that - and I forgot there quickly which program you just said, you...

(Caller 14): It's called Teen Intervene.

Nicole White: If you needed - wanted to use Teen Intervene and implement that program, you can, but you must also implement one of the programs on this list.

(Caller 14): Okay. So, the list on 29 is exhausted in the sense that you must include one of those specifically.

Nicole White: Yes. Yes, ma'am.

(Caller 14): Okay. I think that was it for me. Thank you very much.

Nicole White: Okay.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Caller 15). Your line is open.

(Caller 15): On Page 29 of the application it says, "Is this program covered by Executive Order 12372?" Do we need to submit a copy of our application to a state entity before we submit it to you? I'm not sure I understand what that means.

Nicole White: And what page did you say - are you talking about the state point of contact?

(Caller 15): Yes. Page 28.

Nicole White: Page 28.

(Caller 15): The last paragraph.

Nicole White: Oh, okay. Yes. If you - your state does use that state point of contact, then they would need to get that. And on an application, there's a date - the date I believe is - the date is in the back, by which you need to have...

(Caller 15): So, is this something we would do if we are funded, but we don't do it now?

Nicole White: Yes - no. Let's see it is June 15. It's subject to that, so if applicant - if you need to contact your state single point of contact to find out and comply with it, the date is June 15, 2010, and that's on Page 52.

(Caller 15): Okay. Thank you.

Nicole White: No problem.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Caller 16). Your line is open.

(Caller 16): Yes, my question is referenced to travel. Could - are we to assume that there would be like a national convention once a year that we would need to send someone to? And at the beginning of this project, would we assume that your District Project Director should attend a meeting or so in Washington, D.C.?

Nicole White: Yes ma'am. So, there's the Project Director's meeting, which is required. There is the National Conference, which is required, and then for the purpose of this grant because we have a technical assistance center, that we work in conjunction with SAMHSA. There's also a technical - a National Technical Assistance Meeting that is required.

(Caller 16): Okay. Thank you very much.

Nicole White: No problem.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Caller 17). Your line is open.

(Caller 17): Yes, I have a question about the budget. When we're writing the budget, should we write for the average or for the cap, or does it matter?

Nicole White: When you're writing your budget, you have to do your budget for your school - your particular needs. So, you will need to determine what funding levels you will need for personnel and for supplies, and what makes sense to your particular organization.

(Caller 17): Okay. So, as long as we don't go over the cap award amount, we should be okay?

Nicole White: You should be okay in that you will not be going over the maximum amount, but there still - your application is still subject to budget review by our office if you reach funding level. So, there may be things in your budget, even though you've included it and you're under the threshold that maybe reduced or cut from your budget because they're unallowable or the cost is not reasonable.

(Caller 17): Okay. Thank you.

Nicole White: No problem.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Caller 18). Your line is open.

(Caller 18): Hi. Thanks for taking the call. Just looking through the application, is there any requirement for matching funds?

Nicole White: No, not for this particular grant program.

(Caller 18): Okay. Thank you. I just wanted to make sure I didn't miss it.

Nicole White: No problem.

Coordinator: Our next question comes from (Caller 2). Your line is open.

Nicole White: Hi, (Caller 2), again.

(Caller 2): I have a lot of questions; imagine if you were really face-to-face with me. I don't see any anywhere where it says that our programming - I mean, can our programming be in the after school area as well or does it need to be during the day classroom?

Nicole White: There is - there are no limitations on what time of the day that program needs to be implemented.

(Caller 2): That's what I thought. Thank you.

Coordinator: There are no additional questions at this time.

Nicole White: I've given you my contact information at the start of the call. It's also in the application packet, so you have my email address and my phone number. If you have any specific questions or further information that you want about anything we discuss today, please feel free to call or send an email message.

I always set the parameter for folks and I hope I haven't been too vague to some of your questions that I'm not allowed to discuss your specific project or your specific needs, so - it's not my place to do that. So, I can simply try to explain and clarify different definitions in the requirements, and the absolute priority for you. It'll be up to the peer reviewers to assess and score your proposals.

So, I want to thank you for time this afternoon. If you do plan to submit a proposal, I wish you the best of luck, and if you're interested in being

considered as a peer reviewer for this process, you can send me an email message to that affect and I can send you an - information on how to begin or start that process. So with that, I'll turn it over back to (Jackie).

Coordinator: Thank you for joining today's call. You may disconnect at this time.

END