

Questions and Answers: Fiscal Year 2010 Citizenship and Integration Grant Program

Introduction

In Fiscal Year 2010, the USCIS Office of Citizenship is offering two competitive funding opportunities for organizations preparing lawful permanent residents (LPRs) for citizenship.

The Citizenship and Integration Direct Services Grant Program (DHS-10-CIS-010-003) will provide grants of up to \$100,000 to strengthen locally-based citizenship service providers. The Citizenship and Integration National Capacity Building Grant Program (DHS- 10-CIS-010-002) will provide up to \$500,000 to increase the capacity of members or affiliates of national, regional, or statewide organizations to offer citizenship services in underserved communities.

Below are answers to frequently asked questions about the program.

Questions and Answers

Direct Services Grant Program (Funding Opportunity: DHS-10-CIS-010-003)

- Q. Are Direct Services grant awards available both to organizations proposing citizenship education services only and organizations proposing both citizenship education and naturalization application preparation services? Do I have a better chance of getting a grant if I propose both citizenship education services and naturalization application preparation services?
- A. DHS will make grant awards to support both program types. Organizations proposing citizenship education services only will not be in direct competition with organizations proposing both citizenship education services and naturalization application preparation services. Organizations proposing citizenship education services only can receive a maximum score of 100 points and will compete with organizations proposing those same services. Organizations proposing both citizenship education services and naturalization application preparation services can receive a maximum score of 160 points and will compete with organizations proposing those same services. Two separate ranked lists will be forwarded for final funding decisions. Please refer to Section V of the Direct Services Grant Program funding announcement for a full description of the review process and evaluation criteria.

- Q. How many Direct Services grants will go to organizations proposing to provide only citizenship education services versus organizations proposing to provide both citizenship education and naturalization application assistance?
- A. Of the 45 estimated awards, USCIS anticipates recommending an approximately equal number of awards for both types of programs, subject to the programmatic selection factors described in Section V, C of the funding announcement.
- Q. What happens if an organization submits two applications under the Direct Services Grant Program announcement one for citizenship education services and a second for citizenship education services and naturalization application preparation services?
- A. Organizations should not submit more than one application under the Direct Services Grant Program. If an organization submits multiple applications, prior to commencing review, DHS will contact the organization to confirm which application the organization wants to include in the review process. The other application will not be reviewed.
- Q. Does the single application limit per organization apply to affiliates of national organizations?
- A. No. All eligible affiliates may apply and will be reviewed as individual applicants under the Direct Services Grant Program funding announcement.
- Q. Can a partner organization be listed on multiple applications?
- A. Yes, however DHS reserves the right to contact all organizations included in the application prior to making an award.

National Capacity Building Grant Program (Funding Opportunity: DHS- 10-CIS-010-002)

- Q. Can a sub-applicant budget include a paid partnership with another organization to provide services at the local level?
- A. No. The goal of the National Capacity Building Grant Program is to use grant funding to build the organizational capacity and technical expertise of specific sub-applicants to provide local services beyond the performance period of the grant. Sub-applicant program funding proposals should reflect this goal and program design decisions should focus on building the capabilities of the sub-applicant to provide citizenship preparation services.

Q. Can a coalition of member organizations serve as the principal applicant under the National Capacity Building Grant?

A. Yes. However, there must be a single principal applicant that meets the definition of a national, regional, or statewide organization in Section I of the funding announcement and the member organizations must meet the definition of an affiliate/member organization in Section I of the funding announcement. There must be an established and formal oversight relationship between the principal applicant and each sub-applicant.

Q. What if my organization does not have a field or affiliate/member structure? Can I pick any local organization as a sub-applicant?

A. No. The sub-applicant must be part of a pre-existing, established, and identifiable affiliate or member network structure. See the definitions in Section I of the funding announcement.

Q. Can the principal applicant create a new affiliate/member organization with this funding?

A. No. The organizations included as sub-applicants must already exist.

Q. Can an organization be included as a sub-applicant under the National Capacity Building Grant and also be included as a partner providing naturalization application preparation services under the Direct Services Grant?

A. No. The principal applicant under the National Capacity Building Grant should select sub-applicants who need organizational development, capacity building, and technical assistance in order to build or improve programs and to effectively manage those programs. The expectation for an organization included as a partner in the Direct Services Grant is that the partner has a sound organization and brings expertise and qualifications to the program. If an organization is included as a sub-applicant, it will be hard to justify that they are well-qualified to provide high quality programming under the Direct Services Grant.

Q. Under the National Capacity Building Grant, can the principal applicant propose any amount for the sub-applicant programs?

A. There is no minimum budget for individual sub-applicant proposals. The maximum request for a single sub-applicant is \$150,000.

Q. Does a sub-applicant need to have experience providing citizenship preparation services in its community?

A. No. However, the principal applicant must clearly demonstrate the ability to guide sub-applicants to gain the expertise and experience. The sub-applicants must demonstrate the ability to gain the experience to sustain its citizenship program beyond the performance period of the grant.

Q. Does the principal applicant need to have experience in both citizenship education services and naturalization application preparation services to apply for the National Capacity Building **Grant?**

A. No. However, the principal applicant must only propose activities for sub-applicants that reflect the subject matter expertise of the principal applicant. That is, if the principal applicant does not have experience or expertise in naturalization application preparation services, this should not form part of the sub-applicants' citizenship preparation program design.

Q. Are two principal applicants allowed?

A. No. A single principal applicant must assume primary responsibility for all fiscal management and programmatic aspects of the grant.

Q. What is the maximum award for a principal applicant proposing only two sub-applicants?

A. For two sub-applicants, the maximum possible award is \$450,000. This amount is based on a maximum of \$150,000 for the principal applicant and a maximum of \$150,000 each for the two subapplicants.

Q. What activities can the principal applicant fund with the up to \$150,000?

A. The principal applicant may use funds for management and oversight costs, along with costs associated with the programmatic aspects of the grant. This includes program staff, technical assistance, organizational and program development, training, domestic travel, program evaluation, etc.

Q. How can I demonstrate community need for local citizenship preparation services under the National Capacity Building Grant?

A. You should use reputable or substantiated statistical data or evidence such as state or local government reports, regional analyses, published policy reports or U.S. Census Bureau data, such as the American Community Survey.
ALLA InfoNet Doc. No. 10031962. (Posted 03/19/10)

Q. If USCIS rejects one or more of the proposed sub-grantees, can we negotiate to have a substitute or substitutes included?

A. No. Only sub-applicants included within the original grant application package will be considered for funding. DHS reserves the right to approve funding for some, none, or all of the two (2) to four (4) proposed sub-applicant programs.

Q. There is a stipulation in the National Capacity Building Grant funding announcement that the sub-applicants may not be located in the same city or locality. Would a suburb of a metropolitan area count as the same locality?

A. The purpose of the National Capacity Building Grant is to build capacity within a wide range of communities most in need throughout a state, region, or across the nation. DHS strongly discourages submission of applications that propose multiple sub-applicants within a single metropolitan area, and will not accept applications proposing multiple sub-applicants within the same city or county. DHS reserves the right to approve funding for some, none, or all of the two (2) to four (4) proposed sub-applicant programs and will consider program balance factors in making final funding decisions.

Q. Do the sub-applicants included in the proposal also have to be non-profits?

A. Yes. Each sub-applicant must meet the same non-profit eligibility requirements as the principal applicant.

Application and Eligibility

Q. Which funding opportunity should I apply for?

A. If you are a local organization with demonstrated experience providing direct citizenship preparation services to legal immigrants, you may apply for the Direct Services Grant. If you are a national, regional, or statewide organization, you may serve as the principal applicant under the National Capacity Building Grant. Affiliates or members of national, regional, or statewide organizations may not apply as the principal applicant under the National Capacity Building Grant. Affiliates or members included as subapplicants under the National Capacity Building Grant may not apply for the Direct Services Grant.

Q. Can the principal applicant under the National Capacity Building Grant also apply for a Direct Services Grant?

A. Yes. However, the Direct Services applicant must demonstrate that they will implement a direct citizenship services program for lawful permanent residents (LPRs). The organization cannot receive funding under the Direct Services Grant and pass it along to affiliates or members of the same organization to implement the program.

Q. How many applications can an individual organization submit for each funding opportunity?

A. Organizations may only submit one application for each grant program. For the Direct Services Grant Program, a local organization **cannot** submit one application proposing citizenship education services only and a second application proposing both citizenship education services and naturalization application preparation services. For the National Capacity Building program, the national, regional, or statewide organization **cannot** submit multiple applications proposing different sets of sub-applicants. The principal applicant must select between two (2) and four (4) sub-applicants for its proposal.

Q. Do applicant organizations need to demonstrate 501(c)(3) status or is it acceptable to simply be a nonprofit corporation?

A. 501(c)(3) status is not necessary. However, to be eligible, you must provide documentation of public or private non-profit status as defined in section III, A of the funding announcements.

Q. Can an organization with a pending 501(c)(3) status apply?

A. Prior to submission of an application, organizations must have documentation of public or private non-profit status as described in Section III, A of the funding announcements.

Q. Are state and local governments eligible to apply for either funding opportunity?

A. Both local and state governments may apply for the Direct Services Grant, provided the state or local agency or entity directly provides the services to LPRs and does not serve as a funding pass-through. For the National Capacity Building Grant, only a state agency or entity, with an organizational structure that includes subordinate offices in different cities or localities, may apply. Local governments are not eligible to apply for the National Capacity Building Grant.

Q. Can a statewide organization with multiple sub-offices apply for both types of grants?

A. Yes. The statewide organization should decide which grant to apply for based on the capability and experience of the sub-offices.

Q. Can a public non-profit institute of higher learning with multiple sites in the same city apply for both types of grants?

A. Please see the answer to "There is a stipulation in the National Capacity Building Grant funding announcement that the sub-applicants may not be located in the same city or locality. Would a suburb of a metropolitan area count as the same locality?" above for the National Capacity Building Grant. For the Direct Services Grant, funding could be used to expand citizenship preparation offerings at these existing sites.

- Q. Do individuals providing citizenship services to immigrants qualify as eligible applicants?
- A. No.
- Q. Are for-profit entities eligible to apply for either of the grants?
- A. No.

Letter Of Intent

Q. Is the letter of intent mandatory?

A. Yes. The letter of intent is mandatory and due March 26, 2010. Your application will not be considered unless you submit a letter of intent. Please see the "Overview Information" Section of either funding opportunity announcement for specific instructions on submitting the letter of intent.

Q. If we submit a letter of intent and then decide not to apply, should we notify DHS?

A. Yes. If your organization decides not to apply once it has submitted a letter of intent, DHS would appreciate notification of this decision via the same email or fax options provided within the grant funding announcements.

Grant-Funded Activities

- Q. Do individuals receiving grant-funded services have to be lawful permanent residents or can they have any legal immigration status?
- A. Individuals receiving services must have the status of lawful permanent resident (LPR). The AILA InfoNet Doc. No. 10031962. (Posted 03/19/10)

Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2010 states, "...none of the funds made available in this Act for grants for immigrant integration may be used to provide services to aliens who have not been lawfully admitted for permanent residence." Organizations must demonstrate how they will verify that only LPRs will receive grant-funded services.

Q. Can the local programs provide only naturalization application preparation services?

A. No. This is an optional activity under both funding announcements, and may be proposed only after the mandatory citizenship education program requirement is satisfied.

Q. Does an organization need to focus on the Priority Immigrant Groups as was the case in FY2009?

A. There is no mandatory requirement to focus services on specific priority immigrant groups.

Q. Are organizations allowed to charge a small registration or tuition fee for citizenship classes?

A. Yes. However, the fees must be nominal. The project narrative and budget narrative should include the amount proposed and explain why this fee is necessary within the program structure.

Note: In most cases, any program income generated from the receipt of this grant must be used to further the project.

Q. Can organizations limit services to one ethnic, religious, or language group they currently serve?

A. No. Eligible participants targeted for these grant funds must be served regardless of their ethnic or religious backgrounds or the language they speak.

Q. Can organizations apply for less than \$100,000 under the Direct Services Grant and \$500,000 under the National Capacity Building Grant?

A. Yes.

Q. Are there limitations if an organization already receives other federal funding?

A. There is a standard clause that reads: "Requests for funds under this announcement shall not be used to take the place of activities described in the application that are currently supported with other funding. Also, grant funds shall not be used to support activities that are normally part of the organization's operations."

Q. Is this grant only for preparing immigrants for citizenship through classes (English as a Second Language or civics) or also through legal services?

A. Both are allowable program components. However, applicants **must** propose citizenship education services, which include citizenship/civics-focused English as a Second Language (ESL) and citizenship instruction. Once this mandatory program element is satisfied, the organization **may** propose naturalization application preparation services.

Q. Can the grant money be used to pay the costs associated with BIA recognition and accreditation?

A. Yes.

Grants Evaluation Criteria

Q. Is USCIS able to publish the points by which applicants will be judged?

A. The evaluation criteria and corresponding point values are found in Section V, B of the funding announcements.

For additional information on the grant program, please visit www.uscis.gov/grants. To learn more about applying for federal funding opportunities, please visit http://www.grants.gov/ or contact the Grants.gov support line at (800) 518-4726.

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