OFFICE OF THE ILLINOIS LT. GOVERNOR, JULIANA STRATTON

Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) Program Board

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Workgroup

Regular Meeting Minutes

September 23, 2021

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| **A present majority of R3PB member/designee positions shall constitute a quorum, i.e. 3** | | | |
| **Position** | **Name** | **Present (via WebEx)** | **Absent** |
| **R3PB Members/Member Designees** | | | |
| Elected Official | Sen. Celina Villanueva | **X** |  |
| Designee (Dept. of Children and Family Services | Dagene Brown | **X** |  |
| Designee (Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA)) | Charise Williams, Deputy Director |  | **X** |
| Formerly Incarcerated (over 24 years of age) | Marlon Chamberlain | **X** |  |
| R3 Area Resident or Worker | Pablo Mendoza |  | **X** |

Also, in attendance were:

Lt. Governor’s Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Initiative (JEO) Director Yaacov Delaney

Lt. Governor’s JEO Policy Coordinator Emily Harwell

Lt. Governor’s JEO Program Manager Ariana Correa

Lt. Governor’s JEO Re-entry Policy Coordinator/McCormick Foundation Fellow Orlando Mayorga

Lt. Governor’s JEO Legislative Liaison Kirsten Davis-Franklin

Lt. Governor’s JEO Policy Intern Ebra Buah

Lt. Governor’s JEO Policy Intern Tyeese Braslavsky

Lt. Governor’s JEO policy Intern Claudia Mulica

ICJIA R3 Grant Program Manager Mitchell Troup

ICJIA Federal & State Grants Unit Associate Director Greg Stevens

ICJIA Advance Grant Specialist Rise Evans

ICJIA Associate General Counsel Blanca R. Dominguez

**A. Call to Order and Roll Call**

1. Mitchell Troup called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

2. Blanca Dominguez took roll

3. Quorum was established

**B. Acknowledgement of Need for Videoconference Meeting**

1. Mitchell Troup acknowledged the continuing need to convene by videoconference because the public-health challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic are still present

**C. Motion to Approve the Agenda for September 23, 2021**

* 1. Moved by Dagene Brown
  2. Seconded by Marlon Chamberlain
  3. All in favor
  4. No oppositions
  5. No abstentions

**D. New Business—Capacity-Building Grants—Purpose**

1. Mitchell Troup:

a. Reminded the group that the purpose of the workgroup is to hear feedback on key aspects of the NOFO and ICJIA is looking forward to hearing ideas and feedback on how to make the NOFO more equitable.

b Stated that all feedback will be taken into account as the NOFO is developed but there is no guarantee that all ideas will be included in the NOFO due to the guidelines and processes; there will be a good deliberative process on the feedback.

c Capacity Building grants

i. Stated that last year, 10% of total funding was attributed to planning and assessment grants intended to allow communities to assess what types of services were needed in an area, assess the resources they had, and make a plan to provide those services in the future. This year focus will be shifted to planning and capacity building.

ii. Also stated that there was strong interest for providing opportunities to build the capacity of small organizations as part of the NOFO process. Details for this type of grant are still pending; asking the workgroup for ideas as to (i) purpose of these types of grants; (ii) examples of what these grants might look like; and (iii) eligibility criteria and how that criteria would be written into NOFO.

2. Sen. Celina Villanueva:

a. Stated that examples would be helpful. Also noted that each organization has different operating capacities, which would in turn vary the meaning of capacity from organization to organization.

3. Mitchell Troup:

a. Provided examples of what a capacity building grant could be:

i. One approach is to say that a planning grant to some extent is a capacity-building grant. An organization is going to host other organizations, develop a plan that can then be incorporated into each organization’s services. This gives the organization a chance to receive funding and to have staff paid for by the grant, to convene other organizations to discuss services, allowing them to gain experience in working on the grant, have a full-time staff and opens up their other funding sources to do other things.

ii. Another approach would be a collaborative process with the larger organization playing host to smaller organizations. The funds would be passed through to the smaller group and the large organization will do a coaching session where they will walk the smaller organizations through applying for other funds; almost like a subsidized training process where they act as the host or lead.

iii. Reiterated that those were two ideas requested other suggestions as to what would be helpful, especially from those who work in that space.

4. Dagene Brown:

a. Noted that she has received similar feedback from smaller organizations; concurred with Pablo Mendoza’s comments made at the September 22, 2021 meeting relating to point that smaller organizations do not have the capacity to write grants or become Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) compliant, etc.

b. Stated that organizations would like opportunity to work with a larger organization to support their capacity; a situation where they get funding to work with their community partners to build up their capacity, help them navigate the state system and work towards getting grants on their own.

5. Marlon Chamberlain

a. Agreed with Dagene Brown’s statement. Added that he believes capacity- building grants should provide grassroots organizations with funding but having a larger organization or technical assistance that would come with the grant that would help them use the funds correctly, market and grow. Likened this approach to a planning grant where funds are provided along with resources to build out the organization.

6. Dagene Brown

a. Stated that capacity-building grant should also help smaller organizations with the back end of the grant such as with the outcomes and evaluation components of a grant. Discussed how funds should be used to allow for smaller organizations to do the actual work in the communities as well as address the seemingly daunting task of the GATA process which often prevents people from even trying to apply.

7. Mitchell Troup

a. Confirmed that the workgroup seems to have an interest in a partnership concept approach to the capacity-building grant and asked whether the workgroup would like to posit that the capacity-building grant can be a version of a collaboration between a smaller and larger organization where the larger organization would play the role of a mentor.

8. Sen. Celina Villanueva

a. Stated that relationship between the collaborators would be important. Noted that she has worked for various organizations—large and small—and level of collaboration is dependent on the relationship between the parties. If there is an agreement to come together, share resources and there has been work already towards the collaboration, then that can be part of capacity-building. But if you have a larger organization that acts in the role of the older sibling, that will create tension and issues. Stated she would not like the funds to go only to the larger organization.

b. Stated that an important aspect of capacity-building is to allow smaller organizations to not only plan for the present but also to grow and expand; would like technical assistance to be an aspect of this type of grant. Stated it is important to create a collaborative effort and not a dictatorial situation which is a concern if larger organization receives the funds.

9. Mitchell Troup

a. Proposed allowing the smaller organization applying for the grant, receiving the funds, and then providing a subaward to a larger organization as a technical assistance provider, allowing the smaller organization to have control over the collaboration.

b. Noted a downside to this concept—smaller organizations would have to be GATA compliant to receive funds.

10. Dagene Brown

a. Concurred that allowing the smaller organization to pick its own mentor is a great idea and that approach helps with the nuances discussed of having the larger organization possibly playing a dictatorial role.

11. Greg Stevens

a. Asked if the capacity-building grant would just be mentoring or would there be service delivery

12. Dagene Brown

a. Stated that smaller organizations should be helped with capacity-building first and then service delivery in future rounds.

13. Mitchell Troup

a. Asked the workgroup if there should be guardrails as to what counts as capacity building such as needing funds to find a new location for services, technical assistance needed to build administrative capacity or develop a plan. Asked group for additional ideas as to examples of capacity-building activities to include in the NOFO.

14. Dagene Brown

a. Requested information as to round one grantees that received a planning and assessment grant.

15. Mitchell Troup

a. Stated that planning and assessment grantees were still working on their plans, with the hope being that they would ultimately be ready provide service delivery in their communities. Noted that the planning and assessment goal was very similar to that of the capacity-building grant. The expectation is that those that apply for capacity-building grants this year will eventually apply for service delivery in the future.

16. Greg Stevens

a. Asked if there was additional information that could be included in the NOFO to help smaller organizations incentivize large organizations to serve as mentors such as reimbursing the mentors for their assistance.

17. Dagene Brown

a. Stated that a larger organization would receive some of the funding to serve as a mentor.

18. Mitchell Troup

a. Concurred with Dagene Brown regarding providing some portion of the funds to the larger organization as a subaward, noting again that this would allow the smaller organization to maintain control over the funds.

19. Marlon Chamberlain

a. Asked how advocacy work would fit into the capacity-building concept.

20. Mitchell Troup

a. Noted that there are certain prohibitions against lobbying with grant funds but to the extent that the activities related to community organizing advocacy for affected individuals, that might be permissible. Requested information from Blanca Dominguez.

21. Blanca Dominguez

a. Informed group that she would conduct further review of this question and provide the workgroup with additional information at the next meeting; would need to make sure that activities did not run afoul of state laws and/or other restrictions.

22. Marlon Chamberlain

a. Added that he is referring to advocacy work more along the lines of community organization and leadership development, and not lobbying (Blanca Dominguez reiterated that further review of this issue would have to be conducted to avoid legal prohibitions).

**E. New Business—Capacity-Building Grants—Eligibility Criteria**

1. Mitchell Troup

a. Asked the workgroup if they wanted to place constraints on eligibility for capacity-building grants, i.e., only open to new organizations, only open to tiers 1 and 2, etc., or if they wanted to leave it open to anyone with a good capacity- building plan.

2. Dagene Brown

a. Noted that it would depend on the way “smaller organization” was defined; may also mean existing organizations since they may also need capacity-building.

3. Mitchell Troup

a. Asked group whether they would like to keep capacity-building grants open to organizations that fit criteria for Tiers 1 and 2 which essentially means organizations with less than five years and less than $2 million (Dagene Brown agreed but would like the other members of the workgroup to provide feedback).

4. Sen. Celina Villanueva

a. Noted the special circumstances arising from the COVID pandemic may have resulted in many mid-level organizations that received an additional money that they were merely passing through to intended recipients rather than their operating budget. Provided example of immigrant rights organizations that received monies that were immediately passed through to immigrants since they were not eligible for stimulus checks. Stated that such organizations may be deemed ineligible for capacity-building grants due to the pass-through funds, but any other non-pandemic year would have qualified.

5. Mitchell Troup

a. Acknowledged the unique circumstances resulting from the pandemic. Proposed including questions in the program narrative on any artificial inflation of funds that would allow reviewers to distinguish the aspect discussed by Sen. Celina Villanueva.

6. Sen. Celina Villanueva

a. Stated she liked the idea of additional questions and felt that more information allows for a better understanding of the organizations but still had some reservations over narrowing down access to grants. Expressed support for the idea of encouraging smaller organizations that need capacity-building to apply and would like a happy medium to the addition of questions but also continued encouragement of smaller organizations.

7. Mitchell Troup

a. Stated that concept of breaking out the funding similar to the manner in which it is distributed amongst the tiers might be helpful to ensuring that smaller organizations received majority of the funds, i.e., tier 3 would only get 25% and tiers 1 and 2 would get 75% of the funds

8. Sen. Celina Villanueva

a. Stated that she would be comfortable with the distribution of funds along with the addition of questions addressing the inflated budgets caused by the pandemic because of pass-through money from CARES and ARPA funds.

9. Mitchell Troup

a. Indicated that this concept of asking for additional information on an organizations budget in relation to the pandemic would need further review before incorporating into NOFO.

**F. Member Updates**

1. Mitchell Troup

a. Reminded workgroup of the importance to meet quorum of three given small size of the group and that member updates was opportunity to provide updates on any scheduling conflicts.

b. Marlon Chamberlain indicated at 10:52 that he would have to leave the meeting at that time as he was required to attend another commitment. It was noted that there would be no vote at this meeting and that adjournment could occur with less than quorum present. Marlon Chamberlain left the meeting at 10:52AM.

c. No additional member updates provided.

**G. Public Comments**

1. S.L. Owens, a current R3 grantee spoke at the meeting. Was informed by Mitchell Troup that she had approximately three minutes to speak. Ms. Owens’ comments were as follows:

a. She expressed appreciation for the concept of capacity-building grants. Stated that her organization has been working with an established organization and it has been beneficial and believes others can also benefit.

b. Stated that advances on working capital pose difficulties to grantees as many cannot begin work without those funds and believes anything that can facilitate that process should be considered. Also stated that advance working capital funds should cover more than a 2-month period given the impact a shortage of funds or delay in funding on smaller organizations, i.e., furloughs, shut down in mid-program, etc.

c. Stated that performance period in capacity-building grants can be for longer periods for smaller organizations, especially in tier 1—maybe 9, 12 or 24 months. Smaller organizations, particularly those in tier 1 have to build out from scratch if they do not have an organization yet or a program; require a lot of time to build out the model, prove up the model, and things of that nature.

d. No additional public comments.

**H. Adjournment**

1. Upcoming meetings will be held on 9/29 from 12:00PM to 1:30PM, 10/1 at 9:30AM and 10/6 from 12:00PM to 1:30PM.
2. Moved by Sen. Celina Villanueva at 10:57AM
3. Seconded by Dagene Brown
4. All in favor
5. No oppositions
6. No abstentions