

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS RFA # 2470

TITLE: North Carolina Culture Change Coalition Enhancement Grant

FUNDING AGENCY: DHHS/Division of Health Service Regulation
2711 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2711

or overnight mail to 1205 Umstead Drive, Raleigh, NC 27603

ISSUE DATE: July 15, 2022

IMPORTANT NOTE: Indicate the RFA number on the first page of your application. The font needs to be Times New Roman, 12 point, and shall include the applicant name and page number on all pages. Submission is limited to 16 pages, not counting the cover letter. Also not included in the page limit: copies of vendor information, photos, reference page, supporting documentation of measurables, diagrams.

Applications, subject to the conditions made a part of hereof, will be received through July 14, 2023, for furnishing services described herein. Submit your application electronically, in a word document, to Becky.Wertz@dhhs.nc.gov.

SEND ALL APPLICATIONS DIRECTLY TO THE FUNDING AGENCY ADDRESS SHOWN ABOVE.

Direct all inquiries concerning this RFA to: Becky Wertz
Telephone #: 919-855-4580
E-mail address: Becky.Wertz@dhhs.nc.gov

NOTE: Questions concerning the specifications in this Request for Applications will be received through July 14, 2023. All questions will be answered upon receipt.

INTRODUCTION

The goal of the NC Culture Change Coalition enhancement grant program is to improve the quality of life for residents in certified nursing homes through promoting positive environmental and cultural changes within these homes. The objective of the program is the development and implementation of funded projects showcasing a variety of cultural change enhancement philosophies. Eligible nursing homes must be dually certified (Medicare and Medicaid), Medicare only certified, or Medicaid only certified.

A contract between the applicant and the Division of Health Service Regulation (DHSR), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), will be in effect for the duration of the entire grant period. It is the expectation that the applicant will adhere to all conditions of the contract they have entered with DHSR. Failure on the part of a applicant to comply with the explicit contractual obligations of the award shall result in remedies up to the withholding of grant funds and may include termination of an award and repayment of monies issued.

Applicants must adhere to the North Carolina Office of the State Auditor's requirements for the use of funds by non-state entities, as outlined in G.S. 143C-6-22 and 23. For more information on these requirements, consult the website at <https://www.ebs.nc.gov/irj/portal>.

Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order 224 as part of North Carolina's response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 State of Emergency ("COVID-19"). The applicant is required to comply with Executive Order 224.

BACKGROUND

The grants are made possible by the utilization of penalty monies collected by the North Carolina DHHS, DHSR, from federal enforcement actions under the 1987 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation ACT (OBRA). The grant program is implemented through a partnership of the NC Culture Change Coalition, DHSR and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Assembling the proposal and describing the scope of services - this information will form the basis for the contract with DHSR.

All proposals must adhere to the following format:

Cover letter: Include a separate cover letter on applicant letterhead that introduces your organization, explains the purpose of the project, and contains a summary of your proposal. The cover letter should include the amount of funding that you are requesting, the population it will serve, and the need it will help solve. Make a concerted effort to bring your project to life in the cover letter and actively engage the reader.

Include the RFA #, the DUNS # if applicable, the applicant status (profit, non-profit, state operated), the date, physical address, mailing address (if different from physical address), telephone number, fax number, the administrator's name, administrator e-mail address, Federal Tax ID # and fiscal year end date. Identify the person authorized to manage all elements of compliance for the duration of the grant period. Include contact information specific to this individual.

Project abstract: Provide a brief abstract summary of the project that is no longer than one page. Include the amount requested, information on what problem/area of concern this project addresses (include resident/family involvement), what/who determined this project (must include resident/family involvement), a description of the project, and its goals and objectives. Provide information regarding how the project will be evaluated to determine success towards those goals, including a brief description of how that will be quantified and measured. (a complete detailed explanation will be required in the results measurement section). Identify the person who will be accountable for the project evaluation. Include information on this person's background along with his/her specific contact information.

Statement of need: Describe in further detail the problem/need/area of concern that the project will attempt to address. Include information regarding all previous attempts to resolve the problem, why it persists and how this project will impact the area of concern. (**Note:** Grant funds cannot be used to bring an applicant into compliance with any rules and regulations. Grant funds may be used to enhance facility's efforts to provide quality of life for its residents). Show evidence the applicant has thought through the details of implementing this project and is prepared for any challenges it may produce. Describe those challenges and how each will be addressed, including residents' health, safety, and concern. Include evidence the applicant has consulted with life safety, local health department, local building inspections, etc. as necessary for projects that change the physical plant or involve continued regulatory compliance, and those permissions/approvals have been secured.

Program description: This section includes two items: a narrative description of the project and a detailed timeline of implementation. First, describe the project or program in full and provide detailed information on how it will be implemented. Include details on how current staff and residents/families will be informed/educated/involved in implementation, how family/resident councils will be involved, and how new hires and new admissions will be educated. Include information on any training the applicant will provide or contract for staff, including who will be trained, how the remaining staff will

be trained if initial training is not inclusive, and how the information will improve resident outcomes. Also include how the applicant will incorporate project participation into resident care plans. Describe in detail procedures for cleaning, storing, locking, assigning, repairing, disinfecting, or replacing any equipment or items purchased with grant funds. Attach supporting information about the project as applicable, including web links, references, photos, diagrams, invoices, etc. (this is not included in the 16-page limit).

Second, include a timeline that outlines deliverables and implementation of the project. Deliverables include quarterly reports to the state survey agency and CMS. Implementation includes ordering/procurement dates, education, receipt of items, and all other benchmarks or important dates along the one-, two- or three-year grant period to fulfilling the project. The timeline should use a bulleted format and generic terms, such as Week One, Month Four, Quarter Three, etc. Do not use dates due to the nature of the review process and subsequent unpredictability of when the project will begin.

The grant application should identify any program(s), philosophy(ies), or method(s) of culture change that are being followed and a brief description of those concepts. Attach a list of references (i.e. books, websites, articles, training programs, conferences, etc.) used in making the decision for using that specific enhancement model(s) and to verify any evidential statements made throughout the proposal.

Results measurement: Each contract with DHSR and every CMS civil money penalty (CMP) grant is required to be performance based. To accomplish this, all grant recipients are required to select or develop a method for continuously monitoring the effects projects have on the nursing home's residents. From this monitoring process, applicants will report on two (2) measures of performance: a satisfaction survey and one other measurable. The satisfaction measure must demonstrate satisfaction with both the project as well as the facility, and the other measure must demonstrate effects of the enhancement on the nursing home's quality of care and/or quality of life for its residents.

The first measure – satisfaction – must quantify both project satisfaction and overall facility satisfaction. In this section grantees shall describe how they will measure satisfaction of the residents and/or families and staff affected by the project. Others within the nursing home may be surveyed at the discretion of the applicant. The satisfaction survey must be taken, and results reported (at a minimum) at the beginning of the project (baseline), mid-point, and end of the project grant period. These dates shall be included in the timeline (see Program description). Include a copy of the satisfaction survey.

The other measure must be meaningful, responsibility-linked, resident focused, credible, comparable, and simple to explain. In short, it must demonstrate the efficacy of the project towards its intended goals. They may be taken from indicators the applicant already monitors, such as medication rates, unintended weight loss, falls, episodes of disruptive behavior, participation in activities, or other quality indicators. Clearly identify and describe the measure the applicable will monitor, by what method it will be measured, and why it is pertinent to this project. Include the current rate and the proposed rate as well as information on what the applicant has already done in the past to address these indicators. CMP funds cannot be used to bring an applicant into compliance, so include sufficient historical information to demonstrate this is not the first effort to correcting or improving this measure. This data is to be reported quarterly and should be included in the timeline (see Program description). Include a copy of the documentation that will be used to monitor the measure or identify where this data will be taken from.

For quarterly reporting purposes, data must show the extent of a change and measure what happened versus what was planned to happen. All performance measures must be coupled with evaluation data and narrative analysis to increase understanding of why results occur and to identify what value the

enhancement adds. Quarterly reports will be submitted to the state survey agency and the state survey agency will forward to CMS.

Benefits to nursing home residents: Provide a detailed description of the way the project will directly benefit and enhance the well-being of nursing home residents. Clearly and specifically state what the enhancement goals are for your nursing home. Include the applicant's mission statement and information on how this project fits into that philosophy. Focus on how the project goals will improve the quality of life and/or the quality of care for the residents in the nursing home. Describe in detail how the planned enhancements correlate with the chosen culture change philosophy.

Stakeholder involvement: Describe in detail how all members of the nursing home, including the staff, residents, residents' families, governing body, community, etc. will be involved in the development and implementation of the project. Also include information on how the applicant will continuously educate each group on the enhancement philosophies chosen and the specific project to be implemented in the nursing home. Explain how information on the project will be incorporated into admission policies and orientation for new hires. Include a description of how the resident and family councils will be involved in the development and implementation of the project. Describe how the governing body of the nursing home has lent its support to the project. Identify any volunteer groups or outside agencies that shall lend support to the project.

Funding: This section shall consist of two items: a separate Excel spreadsheet of the budget and a narrative explaining each item in the budget. Show the total amount requested in both items. Funding shall consist of actual purchase prices, not estimates, and shall represent specific items versus broad categories. All costs for training and education must be reasonable. Include vendor information and copies of invoices/price sheets as applicable. Grant funds may be used to pay shipping and handling costs but not taxes. If applicable, identify any shipping and handling costs in the budget. Explain fully any co-funding the applicant is planning to use from other sources for the project and why. Include the specific amount of CMP funds to be used for the project, the time for such use, and an estimate of any non-CMP funds that the State or other entity expects to be contributed to the project. Items that will not be considered: staff salaries, items/services the applicant must provide already, expenses for managing grant reporting, capital expenses (there is no dollar limit on what is considered a capital expense). Use federal or state rates for meals, travel, and accommodations for speakers/education.

Describe how the applicant will continue to support the project once the grant funds have been depleted. This includes both funding for any continuing costs as well as measuring the effectiveness of the project for improving the residents' quality of life. Include information on any ongoing costs, such as subscriptions, maintenance, support, repairs, replacement, etc., and how those will be paid and by whom. Include information on how the applicant will maintain the spirit of the project as an ongoing goal.

Involved organizations: List any sub-contractors that are expected to carry out and be responsible for components of the project. Copies of subcontracts shall be available upon request to CMS and the state survey agency. Submit DHSR construction approval or documentation that the review is in process, if applicable. Examples of applicability include but are not limited to: outdoor projects, bathing room changes, dining room enhancements, and reconstruction. If applicable, provide copies of any building permits or other required approvals. Show evidence applicant has procured any necessary local building permits, health inspection approval, or other approvals as needed or has consulted with applicable agencies who have determined no approvals are necessary.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

The grant review committee, comprised of members of the NC Culture Change Coalition, will review each application submitted. Applications will be reviewed every month.

The submitting applicant will be invited to participate in the review process, either by phone or in person. Each proposal will be assigned a mentor who is a member of the grant review committee. That mentor will be available to assist the applicant in making any changes, corrections, or edits to the proposal as needed to meet the CMS requirements. This process can take as long as needed – there is no deadline for submission of proposals. Once the proposal has completed a final review by the full committee, the applicant will be instructed to merge their grant proposal into the CMS CMP application. Then the Nursing Home Licensure & Certification Section will forward the application to CMS for review. Once an application is approved by CMS, the Nursing Home Licensure & Certification Section will begin the contract process.

THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

The following is a general description of the process by which an applicant will be selected to complete the goal or objective.

1. Written questions concerning the RFA specifications will be received until the date specified on the cover sheet of this RFA. A summary of all questions and answers will be mailed to all agencies and organizations sent a copy of the RFA.
2. **Applications in one original and (at least two) copies** will be received from each applicant. The original must be signed and dated by an official authorized to bind the applicant.
3. All applications must be received by the funding agency no later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of the RFA. Faxed applications will not be accepted.
4. At that date and time, the applications from each responding applicant will be logged. Budgets will be included as part of the application.
5. At their option, the evaluators may request additional information from any or all applicants for the purpose of clarification or to amplify the materials presented in any part of the application. However, applicants are cautioned that the evaluators are not required to request clarification: therefore, all applications should be complete and reflect the most favorable terms available from the applicant.
6. Applications will be evaluated according to completeness, content, experience with similar projects, ability of the applicant's staff, cost, etc. The award of a grant to one applicant does not mean that the other applications lacked merit, but that, all facts considered, the selected application was deemed to provide the best service to the State.
7. Applicants are cautioned that this is a request for applications, and the funding agency reserves the right to reject any and all applications when such rejections are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency.

DHSR MONITORING OF GRANT FOR CONTRACT COMPLIANCE

The applicant must adhere to the budget as exactly stated in their approved grant proposal and fully executed contract. Should the applicant find it necessary to deviate from the executed budget, prior to expending the funds, a written request, along with an explanation of the deviation, must be submitted to

DHSR. Without formal approval of the deviation request from DHSR, the grantee shall be expected to adhere to the terms of the executed contract and approved grant proposal.

DHSR and CMS Reporting Requirements: Applicants shall complete and submit to DHSR a written quarterly narrative report detailing their progress for the duration of the executed contract period. This report shall include performance monitoring data and analysis. The performance monitoring analysis, based on data review, must demonstrate what changes have occurred and the association between the changes, explanation for any deviation (positive or negative) for outcomes other than those projected, and any alteration to the program for further improvement. Quarterly reports shall include any CMS conditions or requests that were listed in the CMS approval letter. All quarterly reports will be reviewed for compliance with DHSR contract monitoring guidelines, and compliance with the approved grant proposal. DHSR will provide a copy of all quarterly reports to CMS.

Applicants must also complete and submit to DHSR a quarterly expenditure report until all funds have been exhausted. The expenditure report must be completed on a DHSR-approved form and must reflect costs incurred during the prior quarter reflected in that quarter's funding requests. All grant expenses will be reviewed for accuracy, compliance with DHSR contract monitoring guidelines, and compliance with the approved grant proposal.

A final grant report shall be submitted to DHSR within 30 days of the termination of the grant period. This report shall identify the results incurred through the changes supported by the grant funding and these results should use the performance monitoring data and analysis found in the quarterly grant reports. DHSR will provide a copy to CMS.

To maintain the integrity of the grant program, DHSR personnel serving on behalf of the Coalition, will make a planned, on-site visit annually during the contract period to each applicant receiving CMP funding to monitor grant compliance. Additional visits may be conducted as needed to assess compliance. In cases of visitor restrictions, a virtual visit or conference call will be conducted.

NC Office of the State Auditor Reporting Requirements: Within 3 months after the end of their fiscal year, applicants are required to comply with G.S. 143C-6-23 and the North Carolina Administrative Code 09 NCAC 03M. Failure to submit this information to the State funding agency's Contract Administrator could result in a grantee's name being placed on the state auditor's public list of non-compliant grantees.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

Grant Length: The funding period for the enhancement grants will be one, two, or three years, depending on the length of time requested to complete a proposed project, beginning with the date of the individual contracts, and ending with the expenditure of grant funds.

Availability of Funds: Funding is provided by the Division of Health Service Regulation, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services through the federal enforcement action under Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA). The total amount of grant funding available is \$25,000,000. Funds may be used for a variety of enhancements except for staff salaries, capital improvements, partial support for large-scale construction projects, and expenditures needed for regulatory compliance.

Funds Disbursement: Applicants must submit a funding request to the Nursing Home Licensure & Certification Section, no more than monthly. Some applicants may only have a one-time reimbursement request. Receipts, invoices, quotes, and other supporting documentation must accompany the funding request. An approved DHSR funding request form, signed by the person responsible for completing the form, must accompany copies of the receipts or invoices for grant funds

to be dispersed. Expenditures can begin immediately upon receipt of a fully executed contract. Timely dispersal of funding will be dependent upon the applicant's compliance with the funding request and reporting requirements set by a contract with DHSR, North Carolina DHHS and its addenda.

Award or Rejection: All qualified applications will be evaluated, and award made to that agency or organization whose combination of budget and service capabilities is deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency. The funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any or all offers if determined to be in its best interest. Successful applicants will be notified after final CMS approval.

Decline to Offer: Any applicant that receives a copy of the RFA but declines to make an offer is requested to send a written "Decline to Offer" to the funding agency. Failure to respond as requested may subject the applicant to removal from consideration of future RFAs.

Cost of Application Preparation: Any cost incurred by an applicant in preparing or submitting an application is the applicant's sole responsibility. The funding agency will not reimburse any applicant for any pre-award costs incurred.

Elaborate Applications: Elaborate applications in the form of brochures or other presentations beyond that necessary to present a complete and effective application are not desired.

Oral Explanations: The funding agency will not be bound by oral explanations or instructions given at any time during the competitive process or after awarding the grant.

Reference to Other Data: Only information that is received in response to this RFA will be evaluated; reference to information previously submitted will not suffice.

Titles: Titles and headings in this RFA and any subsequent RFA are for convenience only and shall have no binding force or effect.

Form of Application: Each application must be submitted on the form provided by the funding agency and will be incorporated into the funding agency's Performance Agreement (contract).

Exceptions: All applications are subject to the terms and conditions outlined herein. All responses will be controlled by such terms and conditions. The attachment of other terms and condition by any applicant may be grounds for rejection of that applicant's application. Funded applicants specifically agree to the conditions set forth in the Performance Agreement (contract).

Advertising: In submitting its application, applicants agree not to use the results therefrom or as part of any news release or commercial advertising without prior written approval of the funding agency.

Right to Submitted Material: All responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to or in reference to the RFA, and all other reports, charts, displays, schedules, exhibits, and other documentation submitted by the applicant will become the property of the funding agency when received.

Competitive Offer: Pursuant to the provision of G.S. 143-54, and under penalty of perjury, the signer of any application submitted in response to this RFA thereby certifies that this application has not been arrived at collusively or otherwise in violation of either Federal or North Carolina antitrust laws.

Applicant Representative: Each applicant shall submit with its application the name, address, and telephone number of the person(s) with authority to bind the agency or organization and answer questions or provide clarification concerning the application.

Subcontracting: Applicants may propose to subcontract portions of work provided that their application clearly indicate the scope of the work to be subcontracted, and to whom. All information required about the prime applicant is also required for each proposed subcontractor.

Proprietary Information: Trade secrets or similar proprietary data which the applicant does not wish disclosed to other than personnel involved in the evaluation will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by NCAC TO1: 05B.1501 and G.S. 132-1.3 if identified as follows: Each page shall be identified in boldface at the top and bottom as "CONFIDENTIAL." Any section of the application that is to remain confidential shall also be so marked in boldface on the title page of that section.

Participation Encouraged: Pursuant to Article 3 and 3C, Chapter 143 of the North Carolina General Statutes and Executive Order No. 77, the funding agency invites and encourages participation in this RFA by businesses owned by minorities, women and the disabled including utilization as subcontractor(s) to perform functions under this Request for Applications.

Contract: The Division will issue a contract to the recipient of the grant that will include their application. Expenditures can begin immediately up receipt of a fully executed contract.

Successful applicants may be required to have an audit in accordance with G. S. 143-6.2 as applicable to the applicant's status. The contract may include assurances the successful applicant would be required to execute when signing the contract. Applicants receiving Federal funds would be required to execute a Consolidated Federal Certification form (as applicable). Private not-for-profit agency contracts would also include a conflict of interest policy statement.