

NWX-HHS HRSA OFAM
Moderator: Christopher Suzich
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5:00m CT

Coordinator: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for standing by. At this time all participants on in a listen-only mode until the question-and-answer session of today's conference. At that time to ask a question, press star 1 on your phone and record your name at the prompt. This call is being recorded.

If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time and a recording of this call can be heard within one hour after the conference has concluded by dialing toll-free 866-346-7117. I would now like to turn the call over the Christopher Suzich. Sir, you may begin.

Christopher Suzich: Thank you (Anna). Welcome everyone and good morning and good afternoon depending on your location. We're so glad you could join us today to hear a little bit of information about your HRSA grants and how to perhaps better manage it.

We have a number of subject matter experts on the phone with us today and we'll leave plenty of time for any questions that you might have at the end of our call. At this time I'd also like to introduce Rear Admiral Kerry Nesseler. She is the Director of the Office of Global Health Affairs. Rear Admiral?

Kerry Nessler: Hi, well thank you Chris and thanks so much to your staff and all your experts there in holding this conference today. As you all know we're doing this quarterly and we sure hope that this is helpful to you our grantees and stakeholders out in the U.S. Pacific Islands.

And we're so pleased that you could join us today and as Chris said it could either be early morning, afternoon or evening for all of us so we do appreciate your time and attention here and we hope the information that we provide you today is really helpful and this call really is for you.

It's to help answer your questions and discuss grants management issues that are most relevant to you and your Pacific region and I'd also like to do a welcome to our HRSA project officers and any guests from Region 9, the San Francisco regional office. Folks from CDC and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration who may have dialed-in as well.

So as you know, the project officers and grants management specialists here at HRSA work together as a team to really assist you and support you in improving the health outcomes in the U.S. API.

Our office here - the Office of Global Health Affairs - mission is to improve the health of Americans through global action to strengthen health systems, access, equity and quality throughout the world and I really do realize the six jurisdictions and territories out there.

Some of you are independent nations and some being U.S. territories so that is how you really do fit in with our global health mission here to really help improve your health outcomes and strengthen your health systems. A key goal for our office here in Global Health is to improve health access and to decrease health disparities and especially in the U.S. API.

We are committed to your success so tonight once again we've partnered with the HRSA's Office of Federal Assistance Management that (Chris Suko) is the one that is directing that to provide the fifth U.S. API technical assistance call to better serve you, our Pacific grantees.

And as Chris mentioned as we've done on previous calls who we hope that we can take a few minutes at the end so you can provide us some feedback on the call today, the information that we shared and some new and pressing agenda items that you hope we will bring up on our future calls so again thank you all for participating.

We're excited to have you on the call today and Chris I will turn it back to you. Thank you.

Christopher Suzich: Thank you Kerry. I'd like to go over a few items and then a number of my colleagues will add some valuable information to our discussion and then we'll be able to open it up for some questions.

As you probably may already know, if you have a question with our - while navigating our - electronic handbooks what we refer to as EHB, that is the grant system that we use here at HRSA. If you have any questions while you're doing that, often times I think your first stop is the HRSA contact center and I know that there are time differences and challenges in that respect logistically when you need to reach out to the contact center.

But I did want to reiterate the telephone number for the HRSA call center and also provide you with their e-mail address. Their e-mail address might be more useful for you than their toll-free number because their business hours probably don't mesh very well with the time different out there for you all.

So let me go ahead and give you that phone number just in case you find it useful. It is 1-877-464-4772 and perhaps more importantly their e-mail address, it is callcenter@hrsa.gov. That was callcenter@hrsa.gov.

And we would just ask that if you do send in an e-mail if you can be as specific as possible, include your grant number or any EHB tracking number that you might have when you ask a specific question. This will help the contact center personnel research and respond to your inquiry.

Not to be confused with EHB contact center, there is also the payment management system help desk. Unfortunately we don't have an e-mail box for the payment management system but I can give you their phone number.

As you know when you drawdown funds from your HRSA grant, you do not draw them down through the EHB system. You draw them down through the payment management system which is different from the EHB system and if you are having specific problems about drawing-down your funds - your grant funds - the payment management help desk phone number is 877-614-5533.

Next up I'd like to turn it over to Helen Harpold. Helen's got some recent new information on salary cap limitations for our HRSA grantees. Helen?

Helen Harpold: Thanks, Chris. In 2010 the Department of Health and Human Services imposed a salary rate limitation on grantees. At that time the rate limitation was for one STE, \$179,700.

And in 2014 the rate was raised due to the executive level pay having increased by 1% so the new rate is \$181,500. That's the amount that you can

pay one STE with federal funds because this rate was increased and there is a timeframe when that happens.

Any award that was received prior to January 17th, 2014 is still under the old salary rate limitation of \$179,700. As of January 17th, if you received an award of funds, the new rate that you can apply to salaries is \$181,500. That's the upper limit that HRSA will support for salaries.

All grant-supported salaries must be reasonable for the grant activities being supported and consistent with the grantee institution salary policies. If you have questions about this salary rate limitation, please contact the grants management specialist whose name you will find on the last page of your Notice of Grant Award. Thanks, Chris.

Christopher Suzich: Thank you Helen. At this time I wanted to ask the operator if she could once again provide that telephone number in the event that anybody would like to listen to a recording of this call when we're all finished. I know some people have colleagues that maybe couldn't tune-in to the call today but thankfully we have a recording of the call. (Anna), could you give us that telephone number, please?

Coordinator: Yes, the recording of the call can be heard within one hour after the conference has concluded by dialing toll-free 866-346-7117.

Christopher Suzich: Thank you (Anna) and that recording's available for I think 45 or 60 days. At this time I'd like to turn it over to Darren Buckner. Darren has some new information on what we call subaccounting here at HRSA and how it might affect and how you drawdown your funds for your HRSA grant. Darren?

Darren Buckner: Thank you, Chris. Good afternoon or good morning to all of our grantees and stakeholders. First I'm going to share some information about what we call subaccounting. Subaccounting here at HRSA it's nothing new. If you have NCHB blog grant or any ACA Affordable Care Act funds or any Ryan White Part A and B funding, your awards are already in subaccounted documents.

HRSA with based on a Health and Human Services HHS mandate will be working to convert all payments to subaccount document numbers over the next two years so what this means is during this year we are subaccounting anything that's a new award or a competing continuation or any action that may cause a new document number to be established.

At the end of the year and through next year FY '15 we will have converted all - or be working on converting all - of our progress reports what we call Type 5s or non-competing continuations to subaccounts. You as grantees will get more information as time goes on in terms of our development.

This subaccounting process will allow you as a grantee and HRSA to see NTMS in the division of payment management your funds for your HRSA award and your funds or your expenditures that are charged directly against your award so it's a win-win for both you as a grantee as well as HRSA in terms of post-award monitoring.

One thing we must caution is that even though the awards will be in subaccounted document numbers which will mean they won't be in pooled accounts, you as a grantee will still have an obligation to submit all of your quarterly reporting requirements to the division of payment management.

If you have a grant with HRSA or a grant with any other HHS (op-dev) and if you are on a drawdown restriction, your payment could be held up if you are

delinquent on any quarterly reporting so you will as grantees receive more information as time goes on in terms of our subaccounting efforts at HRSA.

Next I want to talk to you about the Type 5 non-competing continuation progress report. We call this the Type 5 or the NCC award and this is your next year of funding that will be in the particular budget period that's a part of the project period.

We say that all you need to do as a grantee is to submit your progress report and the requirements for the progress report will have been sent to you well in advance for you to submit back to HRSA.

They are available in the EHB 120 days before the budget period start date but they are due to HRSA 90 days before the budget period start date. You will receive a message from the EHB that will let you know that the progress report is available and in the EHB you will go in the task tab to pull-down your progress report guidance information.

If you have any questions about your progress report, please contact the grants management specialist that's listed on your Notice of Award or your HRSA project officer who's also listed on the Notice of Grant Award for your first award or your most previous award action.

The progress report information is developed by the program and it's loaded into the EHB for your review, your drawdown and your submission. If you contact the grants management specialist, he or she will definitely make sure that you as a grantee will get the right information or hear something from your HRSA project officer if there's a concern about the progress report.

Next I would like to share some updates on grants.gov. HRSA as well as HHS is pleased to announce that as of January 2014 grants.gov and grants.gov is the portal that you would submit all applications for competing funds or competing continuations or competing supplements.

That's the portal that you would submit the applications for Type 1s, 2s or 3s. They have expanded the allowable special characters in the filename. Characters currently supported are Cap A through Z, small letter a through z, the underscore, the hyphen, space, as well as a period.

New characters that will be accepted in grants.gov include parentheses, curly brackets, square brackets, ampersand sign, tilde - that's the squiggly - as well as exclamation points, comma, semicolons as well apostrophe.

The @ sign A, number sign pound or dollar sign, percent sign as well as plus and equals. Ampersand and an XML must use the and amp format. You can find additional information about all of that on the grants.gov Website.

That Website is www.grants.gov or you may contact them at their help desk which is 800-518-4726 and as a point of information, grants.gov is a separate entity from HRSA. If you are experiencing problems or issues with grants.gov, you should contact them directly.

If you fail to reach them and you leave or provide a message to your HRSA representative, we cannot guarantee that we can go to grants.gov for you but if you get in touch with grants.gov, always make sure that you get a case or reference number for your issue. Thank you. Chris?

Christopher Suzich: Thank you Darren and just to reiterate the filename changes that Darren was talking about, that information can be found on the grants.gov Website.

I know that was all a lot of information but we think that's positive and good news for our HRSA applicant community like yourselves because frequently or at least occasionally filenames that were part of the application process coming in through grants.gov would be rejected because they contained some of those special characters.

Now as Darren mentioned many of those special characters are permissible by grants.gov and therefore should result in fewer errors and application rejections by our HRSA applicant community. Next up we have Kelly Long and Kelly's going to talk about one of the most important submissions that our HRSA grantees make.

It has to do with what is known as the FFR, the Federal Financial Report and also the SF-425 - they're both the same thing - but there are some differences especially when we talk about your quarterly submissions to the payment management system, contrasting those with your typically annual submissions within EHBs so Kelly, take it away.

Kelly Long: Thank you Chris and good day to all. I'm going to talk with you briefly a few points regarding the Federal Financial Report or I will be referring to it as the FFR.

The first point being the FFR submission done through the electronic handbooks and then the reporting requirement to the payment management system so the payment management system being the place that you go to withdraw the federal dollars.

So first and probably the most important thing to understand is that the FFR form - that is the Standard Form 425 - is a single-page form that recipients

must use to file both their cash transactions and then their financial status information so therefore both HRSA and the payment management system utilize the FFR to monitor recipients' financial data.

It's important to know the difference between the two requirements again to HRSA and to PMS to ensure that you're in total compliance with your grant award so first you're required to file on a quarterly basis the cash transaction report via the payment management system.

In this report you're reporting cumulative disbursements of the cash that you withdrew from PMS so this would be Lines 10A through 10C on the Standard Form 425 form.

Then you are reporting your expenditure of funds and its applicable cost-sharing or program income to HRSA - that's grants office - through the electronic handbooks. This is Lines 10D through 10O on the 425 form. The schedule for submitting the FFR to HRSA is either on a semi-annual or an annual basis.

The specific due date is specified on your Notice of Award under the reporting requirements section so your due date is dependent upon the grant program cycle so the NOA is your best resource for knowing when the report is due to HRSA. The next point I want to cover is the importance of submitting these reports.

HRSA does take financial reporting requirements very seriously. If you're not in compliance, HRSA may take an adverse action which can include drawdown restriction, withholding a continuation award or withholding monetary revised awards.

For example a request to carryover funds could potentially be denied if the organization is not compliant with financial reporting requirements. We may also terminate a grant if it's deemed appropriate so therefore it's imperative that you comply with both of these in requirements to ensure the continued funding and that you have access to your funds when you need them.

So when your grant specialist receives the financial report through the electronic handbooks, they will carefully review the data that you supplied and they will check it for accuracy, reasonableness and completeness.

Through their review they will determine if there are any significant changes in the rate of obligations or expenditures from that of what's expected and they will ensure consistency with the terms and conditions of the award.

If you have a program that requires you to match expenditures, your grant specialist will also ensure that you're meeting your matching requirements. Likewise if you have a program that contains program income, your grant specialist to review to ensure you're accounting for the program income in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award.

If the grant specialist finds an error or that a particular piece of the report requires additional information, they may send it back through a change request. You will then receive an e-mail notification that additional information or corrections are needed. It's important to make the changes as soon as possible and to return that revised report to HRSA.

Now I want to talk briefly about the carryover request in relation to your FFR submissions. When submitting your FFRs, if you have an unobligated balance of funds, the system will ask you if you want to carryover the funds.

If you select yes, a separate prior approval request to carryover the funds must be submitted within 30 days of the FFR submission. This request is created and submitted through the prior approval module in the electronic handbooks.

So you want to be sure to submit your FFR first before attempting to submit the carryover request. The system will not allow you to submit the carryover request in advance of the FFR. Also you want to make sure that the requested carryover amount must be equal to or less than the unobligated balance of funds.

So please know that if you have questions pertaining to information or data on the FFR, your grant specialist is available to assist you. If you have technical issues with the electronic handbooks during the FFR process, you can call or e-mail the HRSA contact center. Thank you. Chris?

Christopher Suzich: Thank you Kelly. Next we'd like to talk a little bit about the various roles that users can have while they are an EHB user. As you know there are a variety of roles. Sometimes it can be a little bit confusing. Fortunately we have Melissa Reyes with us today to explain those EHB grantee roles. Melissa?

Melissa Reyes: Yes, hi, thanks Chris and thank you everyone for joining. As Chris mentioned I'm going to go over a few roles. The first set of roles I'm going to go over are the organization roles. This is the role that you'll select during your EHB's registration.

You can also change a role if you find that you have selected the incorrect one. Now the first role I'm going to go over is the authorizing official role. The authorizing official is the individual names by the applicant organization who is authorized to act for the applicant and to assume the obligations

imposed by the federal laws, regulations, requirements and conditions that apply to grant application of grant awards.

During the registration process or thereafter if you are the designated authorizing official for your organization, you would use that role. The next role I'll go over is business official. The business official role is named by the organization and this person is authorized to review and submit the financial status report and to interact with the payment management system.

If you are the business official, you would choose that role. The last organization role I'm going to go over is the other role. The other role is someone that's not the authorizing official or business official. It could be just a staff person that might just be working on an application, may or may not be the project director or communication contact.

Now if you selected one role and you find that you need to change it later on, the best way to do this is to go to login to the EHBs, click on the organizations tab, click on the organization folder link and then on the next screen there's a link to update your role.

Now the next set of roles I'm going to go over are the grant level roles. The grant level roles are the project director role, the financial reporting administrator role or other. Now the project director is the person whose name is listed on the Notice of Award.

This person automatically will have all nine financial report privileges and they're responsible for granting non-financial report privileges to other users. Non-financial submissions include performance reports, progress reports, non-competing continuations and other submissions.

The financial reporting administrator role or the FRA is the person who's responsible for approving or submitting the financial report. The FRA is usually the business official for the organization.

And when the FRA adds the grant to their portfolio, they need to you to pen Indy account ID from the payment management system to register for the grant so please take note of that. Now by default the FRA automatically has privileges to the financial reports and is responsible for granting financial report privileges to other users.

And last but not least there's another employee role. These are staff other than the project director or the financial reporting administration. These staff would need to request access from the project director or the financial reporting administrator to gain access to the grant and to work on either financial or non-financial reports.

Now I'm going to go ahead and go over some help resources. I had just gone over some roles and this can actually be found on the EHB's Website. The EHB's Website for those of you that do not have it is <https://grants.hrsa.gov/webexternal/login.afp> and once you get to the EHB screen there are a couple of different ways that you can get to the help.

The first in the upper right-hand corner there's a support tab. If you click on that it'll drop down and there's a link to EHB's help. The second option is to look for the question mark icon in the lower right-hand side and it'll pop-up with a couple of options, one of which is the EHB's help.

Now in the help you can find information on the roles I just went over, help topics such as federal financial report, prior approval requests, ADM

submissions, extension requests, etcetera, so I do encourage anyone to check out the help.

The next place for help you can go is YouTube. If you just go to www.youtube.com and type-in HRSA tube or electronic handbooks, there are a few useful videos that you can look over and the other Website I'd like to mention is the HRSA Website. If you go to www.hrsa.gov and click on grants and then manage your grant, it'll bring up several items.

You can get transcripts from the previous calls, the award management tutorial, there's some information on subaccounting, property actions, etcetera, so again I would encourage all of you to check out these three useful resources. Chris?

Christopher Suzich: Thank you Melissa. Well, like we said at the beginning we'd like to give you all an opportunity to ask any specific questions that you might have about your grant or about EHBs in general. If you would like to ask your question, please have your grant number handy and we will do our best to look that grant up if we can't answer the question immediately.

If we can't answer it, we will take your contact information and get back with you. At this time Kerry would you like to say anything?

Kerry Nessler: No, I'm interested to listen to some of the comments and questions from our grantees at this point. Thanks Chris.

Christopher Suzich: So at this time (Anna) could you give us the instructions for anybody that would like to ask a question?

Coordinator: Yes, thank you. We will now begin the question-and-answer session. To ask a question, press star 1 on your phone, unmute your phone and record your name clearly when prompted. One moment, please, for any incoming questions. Looks like our first question comes from (Heidi San Nicholas). Your line is open.

(Heidi San Nicholas): Hi, yes, I don't really have a question at this point but I just wanted to thank you for taking the time to pull everybody together for this conference call. I think it's very helpful to have all the information and I think it's particularly helpful that it's recorded so that we can go back and review things as we go along so thank you very much for staying up and past your regular work time to be able to reach all of us in the Pacific. Thanks.

Christopher Suzich: Thank you (Heidi). (Anna) could you go ahead and give that recorded phone number one more time?

Coordinator: Yes, and to hear the recording of this call, please dial toll-free 866-346-7117.

Christopher Suzich: Do we have any questions in the queue (Anna)?

Coordinator: I'm showing no questions at this time.

Christopher Suzich: Okay, if you want to repeat the instructions one more time please?

Coordinator: Yes, and again to ask a question on your phone, press star 1, unmute your phone and record your name when prompted. Great, and I believe the name was (Sharon Cruz), your line is open.

(Karen Cruz): Yes, this is (Karen Cruz) in Guam.

Christopher Suzich: Okay, go ahead (Karen).

(Karen Cruz): We have with us some people from our fiscal office - (A-hec) office - and also one of our center programs. We were interested in having some discussion or clarification about the matching requirements. Do we report the match for the entire amount of grant award or the amount of match funds expended?

Christopher Suzich: So you (Karen) you have an H-80 grant and an additional grant too, did you say?

(Karen Cruz): We have an (A-hec) grant...

Christopher Suzich: Uh huh.

Darren Buckner: You have an (A-hec) grant with the Bureau of Health Professions?

(Karen Cruz): Yes, the 476. U76, I mean.

Darren Buckner: And that grant program has a matching requirement?

(Karen Cruz): Yes, uh huh.

Christopher Suzich: Darren can you speak to that?

Darren Buckner: And your question is whether or not - are you talking about - when you report on your FFR?

(Karen Cruz): Yes.

Christopher Suzich: Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't realize it was FFR-related.

Darren Buckner: Kelly, are you still with us?

Kelly Long: I'm still here. I'm not sure if I totally followed the question so just point of clarification. On the FFR form, there is a field for reporting which is under the recipient's share. It's Lines I, J and K so Line I will be prepopulated and then on J you are reporting your share of expenditures. I'm not sure, does that address your question?

(Karen Cruz): No, the match. Does the match reported speak to the expenditures or to the total grant award?

Kelly Long: Okay, so your Notice of Award will provide your matching requirements. Your required share is based on your expenditures so if you haven't expended the full award amount, it's based on what your expenditures are.

(Karen Cruz): Thank you.

Kelly Long: Okay.

Christopher Suzich: Thank you caller. Do we have any other questions operator?

Coordinator: Yes, we have one more question from (Mark). Your line is open.

(Mark): No, I don't have any questions but just say thank you very much for your assistance and (the comforts score then). As I am the new fiscal officer for a department and we haven't got anything yet from our project officer here but again thank you for (many million). Thank you.

Christopher Suzich: And have you registered (Mark) have you registered in the EHB yet?

(Mark): Yes, yes, I already registered on EHB and I'm also the financial fiscal officer for other HRSA grants here at the Department of Health.

Christopher Suzich: Okay, in which jurisdiction are you in, which country?

(Mark): (Breken semmel).

Christopher Suzich: Okay, okay then. You've taken the best step in terms of ensuring that your registration is up to date.

(Mark): Yes. I already got that. Thank you.

Christopher Suzich: Thank you (Mark). Any other questions operator?

Coordinator: I'm showing no questions at this time.

Christopher Suzich: Okay, everybody, last call for any questions. If you have anything for us, we'd be happy to answer them. If not Kerry would you like to close us up?

Kerry Nesseler: Yes, again thanks so much Chris and to the OFAM staff for taking your time and sharing your expertise and for your demonstrated dedication in providing this technical assistance to the Pacific population.

We all found these PowerPoints very helpful and useful for future reference so thanks so much for putting together the highlights of your talking points for future reference. It really is helpful.

I'd also like to thank (COLA) if they joined the call and all of our project officers and program managers from HRSA, again from Region 9 in San

Francisco, CDC in SAMHSA and for all their help in making this call a success.

And of course last but not least I need to thank each and every one of you our grantees out in the Pacific for participating on the call and for the work that you do every day in helping decrease those health disparities, those non-communicable diseases and really helping bring health and welfare to your people.

So please again we're planning on having another call. It will be scheduled for May of this year. Watch out for the invitation and please share this information today with all of your colleagues either in program or in finance.

I know that both program and finance work out from the Pacific jointly but they're in separate offices so it's good for both groups to know the same information and please let us know if there's some future topics that you either want us to recover that maybe we've covered on one of the other five calls or a new bit of information so let us know that so we can surely make this agenda relevant to you and all of your needs.

So Chris thanks again so much and I'll turn it back over to you. I guess before I turn it over to you I do want to around the table here I have the staff from our Office of Global Health Affairs.

We have Lt. Cmdr. (Alexis Byer) and Lt. Dave Young that work every day to help you all at the Pacific base to try to coordinate the HRSA efforts here to make our systems all a little bit easier for everybody.

We do know that sometimes you have some activity issues and it's difficult so (Alexis) and Dave has just been fantastic. I want to let you all know that Lt.

Dave Young has accepted another assignment. He's been with us for four years and that's as commissioned core officers. It's good for us to have variation in our careers so we want to congratulate him.

He is going to the United States Coast Guard as a Public Health Service Officer. He'll be helping with their electronic medical records so you might be coming into contact through the Coast Guard with Lt. Young again so thank you Commander (Byer) and Lt. Young and Lt. Young, any comments for the grantees?

Dave Young: No, ma'am, it's been a pleasure in my short time here in HRSA I guess working for the grantees and hopefully I'll be able to visit territories one of these days.

Kerry Nessler: Okay, great, thank you Dave. Okay Chris, over to you.

Christopher Suzich: Operator, did we have any more calls while we were - I'm sorry, any more questions - while we were talking there?

Coordinator: No, no questions at this time.

Christopher Suzich: Okay, I'd like to ask all of the speakers on the call to hang on the line for post conference and I'd like to thank all our grantees again for being with us.

Coordinator: Thank you for your participation. This concludes today's conference call. You may disconnect at this time.

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