



## **SUMMARY OF DRAFT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON GRANT CARRY FORWARD SURVEY RESULTS**

### **I. BACKGROUND**

In January of 2009 NOSORH conducted a survey of SORHs reporting carry forward of SORH and FLEX grant funds. The purpose of this survey was to identify:

- underlying causes of carry forward
- educational and mentoring needs for SORH staff
- other opportunities to assist ORHP and SORH to eliminate carry forward funds

Target states were identified by ORHP:

- 17 SORH had \$10,000 or more of SORH grant carry forward
- 9 SORH had \$50,000 or more of FLEX grant carry forward
- 20 SORH Total

### **II. SURVEY RESULTS**

80% of the target SORH responded to the survey

#### **A. Knowledge of carry forward**

19% stated they did not or did not know if they had carry forward of SORH grant funds  
56% stated they did not have carry forward (8) or did not know (1) of FLEX grant funds

#### **B. Duration**

36% of respondents had carry forward for 3 years or more of SORH funds  
36% reporting having significant carry forward of FLEX funds for 3 or more years

#### **C. Representative comments on cause**

##### SORH

Combination of internal financial tracking processes, bureaucratic delays in awarding grants/contracts, inability of contractors to complete project(s)

Need more time to implement projects. The time is too short from when we are notified that we have received our grant.

Indirect - how our financial tracking system actually ends up charging what amount of indirect. Often not known until the end of our project year.

##### FLEX

Staff turnover

Inability to award Sub-contracts due to state or other restrictions

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There are problems with sub-contracting but many of the contracts will cover most of one grant and part of another. One of the reasons is the lateness in receipt of federal grant Awards and the continuing problems with the financial management side of the federal grant structure.

Failure of sub-contracted entities to use grant funds in a timely manner.

Staffing changes created need to spend time training and more time communicating.

#### **D. Potential Support**

##### **Top 3 most valuable potential support activities**

#1 response – Tips on contracting

#2 response– Mentoring on grants management

#3 response – Assistance with management and tracking of contracts

#### **E. Representative comments on potential support**

##### SORH

You would need to provide TA to our state. It is our state systems for government administration and finance, federal grant accounting, and contracting systems that need to be fixed.

Balancing multiple projects with multiple funding sources that don't start on the same date is a real issue. HRSA grants start on different dates. Only SORH has the same start date as our state fiscal year.

##### FLEX

Advocacy for a two year grant cycle

More timely action by the FORHP grants management process

In our state, grant managers do not have direct access to financial information about grant expenditures. I find out about carryover funds when I receive the FSR. An ORHP "required" tracking spreadsheet would be helpful tracking

HRSA needs to fix its own grants management department and make it easier to work with. Also, if there was any way we could combine SHIP/Flex/SORH program processes so we were not writing, managing, and reporting on these programs as if they are 3 different program whereas in a well coordinated state like ours they are very much all linked together. It is just so much work to manage all three as if they are separate

Tips on how grants management works to reconcile FSRs and PMS

Identifying potential contractors for state bidding processes for areas targeted in the grant; Specifying in grant required travel; Specifying in grant required organizational memberships

More timely approval of grants

Assistance from ORHP, in particular, in encouraging state governments (state health departments) to allow vacant FEDERALLY FUNDED positions to be filled so as to not lapse needed resources!

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### III. INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Ideas for mentoring or educational exchange:**

- Tap into the expertise of the ZERO carry forward and other low carry forward states
- develop a manual for grants management
- prepare a “contracting tips sheet” including balancing multiple projects
- Teach states how to propose a budget and workplan that anticipates their own and HRSA bureaucracies in other words how to break up a workplan for an 18 month project to fit what may actually be a 10 month year????
- teach the federal grants management piece
- prepare model states to Mentor states who request mentoring – i.e.: a checklist of what should be covered – what are your state’s regulations regarding indirect, how do you get financial data – and what can you do yourself without better reporting from the state, how do you keep track of contractors progress etc...
- consider mentoring to SORH to include a connection between state finance type people who work with the SORH – maybe not travel scholarship – but a phone conference – if there is opportunity to improve the state finance issues
- Prepare a simple easy to use budget tracking spreadsheet “estimator” that could potentially be developed into a required tracking device...
- develop a simple contract tracking tool – or maybe even a “service” provided by NOSORH – you tell us where the contract is what the next step and we become the kind professional initial “noodger”

#### **Ideas for potential NOSORH service – investigate feasibility:**

- sometimes state procurement – allows taking advantage of federal price agreements - investigate the feasibility of doing some bids which would meet some federal standard for the typical type contractors needed and offer some purchase agreements for SORH to use – perhaps they could justify using these price agreements as one of the benefits the state gains as being a member of NOSORH
- Find a cracker jack – maybe semi retired Flex or SORH Coordinator type person to contract to NOSORH and farm them out as needed to cover state vacancies – so SORH are just receiving a service from their membership organization. This could be an enhanced tier of membership dues – that includes X hours of consultant time for X dollars.
- Investigate if any of the low carry forward states only do cost based reimbursement with their sub-contractors and identify any strategies to reduce that burden for sub-contractors increase contract spending and activities
- Could NOSORH have a revolving cash fund for sub-contractors who could use our cash and to do the work – then get reimbursed by the state?

#### **Ideas for policy or regulation change:**

- Investigate feasibility for a two year grant cycle
- Combine SHIP/Flex/SORH program processes so we were not writing, managing, and reporting on these programs as if they are 3 different program whereas in a well coordinated state like ours they are very much all linked together
- Specifying in grant required organizational memberships

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