Area Agencies on Aging Broadcast 2022-07

Date: May 18, 2022

To: Area Agencies on Aging Directors
    Area Agencies on Aging System Administrators
    AAA Finance Directors

From: Office of Area Agencies on Aging (OAAA)

Subject: Notice of Funding Available – Expanding the Public Health Workforce

This information is shared with Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) Directors and the AAA SPURS Administrators. Distribute to all staff and contractors as deemed necessary.

Please direct any questions regarding the policy information in this broadcast to the AAA Help Desk (AAA.Help@hhsc.state.tx.us).

All broadcasts are posted on the following website:


Background

Under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), additional funds were appropriated to the Administration for Community Living (ACL) to expand the public health workforce within the aging network.

Expanding the Public Health Workforce within the Aging Network for States

Through ACL’s Expanding the Public Health Workforce within the Aging Network for States program, ACL issued the State Public Health (STPH) grant which provides
one-time funding to recruit, hire, and train public health workers needed to support the aging network's response to the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE).

The STPH funds are separate from all other grant funds and are not considered Older Americans Act (OAA) funds.

The funds:

- will be distributed evenly to those AAAs who have accepted the funds;
- will be available for use from January 1, 2022 through September 30, 2024;
- do not require administrative or service match;
- cannot be transferred to any other grant program, including OAA Title III programs; and
- cannot be bucketed (disaster flex) with other OAA funds.

**Allowable Use of Funds**

Staff funded through this program may provide a wide range of public health services that support ongoing efforts to prevent, prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 PHE.

The funds may be used to hire new staff, contract staff or temporary staff; to expand the knowledge and duties of current staff; or to increase the hours of existing staff.

The funds may also be used for the cost of equipment, training and supplies needed for these staff.

State plan and area plan administration costs may not be charged to the grant.

**Allowable Activities**

Staff funded by the grant may provide a wide variety of services that directly support the health and well-being of older adults, including:

- information, referral and assistance;
- case management;
- assistance accessing health care services, including COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters;
- outreach to address vaccine hesitancy and ensure vaccine equity;
assistance with transitions and diversions from institutional settings to community settings;
● health and wellness education;
● activities to address social isolation; and
● technical assistance to local health departments and other entities on the accessibility of vaccination sites for older adults.

Special Initiative

HHSC is activating the special initiative definition to support reporting for the STPH grant.

The Special Initiative template and instructions are updated to include the Expanding the Public Health Workforce Special Initiative. The template must be completed and submitted providing the agency’s detailed plan and projected cost by budget period for the term of the grant. This Special Initiative template will be submitted to HHSC for review and approval.

Please submit the completed templates to the Help Desk at AAA.Help@hhsc.state.tx.us.

Notice of Funds Available

The Notice of Funds Available (NFA) notification for the STPH grant will be released on May 18, 2022.

The STPH NFA has been placed on the Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) site in the folder labeled 2022 NFA for each AAA who accepted the funds.

The Request for Payment (RfP) and Request for Adjustment Journal (RfAJ) templates have been updated to include the STPH funding source and will be published on the SFTP site on May 20, 2022.

The Expanding the Public Health Workforce special initiatives template must be approved by HHSC prior to requesting reimbursement under the STPH grant.

Reporting

The use of the grant funds must be tracked and reported, including the number and type of positions, and the related activities and outcomes.

Monthly and annual program reports are required and must include the following:
To support the federal reporting requirements, the expenditures must be included in the Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) and activities and outcomes must be reported in the State Unit on Aging Programs Uniform Reporting System (SPURS).

**SPURS Updates**

The Expanding the Public Health Workforce funding source has been added to SPURS and all service delivery records will use the Special Initiative service. Service delivery records will require the use of topics and topic outcomes to capture reporting metrics required by ACL. Service deliveries should be assigned to consumer groups instead of individual client records.

To add the new fund identifier in SPURS, AAAs must make the following selections to each provider record:

1. In the **Administrator – Providers** screen, use the **Add New** action to add a new care manager.
2. In the **Services** drop-down menu, choose the Special Initiative service.
3. Enter the start date. **Do not enter a date prior to 01/01/22.**
4. Select the appropriate Fund Identifier for *Expanding the Public Health Workforce*.

**Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) Workbook Update**

The STPH funds must be tracked and reported as a separate grant using the following fund identifier:

- Expanding the Public Health Workforce

Expenditures will require supporting detail to describe how the funds were used.

The State Fiscal Year 22 QPR workbook will require agencies to manually add the new funding stream following the instructions below and use existing functionality in the workbook templates.
1. Open the QprMenu file and select the **Maintenance** button on the Main Menu tab.

2. Select the Add/Clear Funding Source button on the Maintenance tab.

3. Fill out the 3 fields (Select Fund Type, Fund Source Name, and Available Row Numbers) using the values listed below.
   a. Select “Current FY Expenditures” for the **Select Fund Type** value from the drop-down list
   b. Type “Expanding the Public Health Workforce” for Fund Source Name
   c. Select “31” for **Available Row Numbers** from the drop-down list

4. Click the **OK** button to update the template files with the new value, responding to the different prompts that are presented on screen.

   When the funding stream has been added, select the **Exit** button and save all changes when prompted by the application.