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GRANTS OFFICE

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AN EVOLVING EDUCATION LANDSCAPE A LOOK AT NEW TRENDS IN GRANT FUNDING BY CHRISTOPHER HAIGHT, GRANTS DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT

The education funding landscape continues to evolve, especially at the Federal level where the final 2011 budget deal resulted in the elimination of many highly-anticipated grant programs. Popular programs such as Smaller Learning Communities, Enhancing Education Through Technology, Improving Literacy Through School Libraries, and Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools will not be offered this year. Other programs, such as the Teaching American History Grant, will only be available for continuation awards (meaning no new grant applications will be funded).

In all likelihood, this one-time elimination of funding does not bode well for any of these programs' revivals. As political leaders and policymakers in Washington look ahead to the next budget battle, which will include the need to raise America's debt ceiling, there will be little appetite for continuing these relatively small education programs.

Still, there was some hope within the budget deal that

could signal new priorities in education funding. As reported previously in *FUNDED*, Race to the Top, the major education reform grant initiative launched under the Recovery Act, received an additional \$700 million for 2011. Although far less than the \$1.2 billion sought by the Obama administration, the continued support signaled Race to the Top grant dollars will be an important source - or at least influence - for education funding.

One of the key facets of this year's Race to the Top appropriation was the direction by Congress to include a specific priority for Early Learning reform projects. With the administration's proposed Early Learning Challenge Fund left unfunded, the administration announced in May that \$500 million of the total 2011 Race to the Top funds would go to a specific grant program targeted towards early learning education. State Education Agencies will be the only eligible applicants, much like the original Race to the Top program. *(continued on page 2)*

Grants Program Spotlight: *Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Planning Grant*

Choice Neighborhoods employs a comprehensive approach to neighborhood transformation. The program will support organizations working to transform neighborhoods by revitalizing severely distressed public and/or assisted housing and investing and leveraging investments in well-functioning services, high quality public schools and education programs, high quality early learning programs and services, public assets, public transportation, and improved access to jobs. Successful applicants must ensure that current residents will be able to benefit from this transformation, by preserving affordable housing or providing residents with the choice to move to affordable and accessible housing in another existing neighborhood of opportunity.

Choice Neighborhoods eligible applicants are Public Housing Authorities (PHAs), local governments, nonprofits, and for-profit developers that apply jointly with a public entity.

The application deadline date is August 8, 2011.



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Based on the initial announcement, the goals of the new program will be to:

"increase access to quality early learning programs for low income and disadvantaged children, design integrated and transparent systems that align their early care and education programs, bolster training and support for the early learning workforce, create robust evaluation systems to document and share effective practices and successful programs, and help parents make informed decisions about care for their children."

Efforts to support enhanced professional development for educators are also a growing priority for funding at the Federal level. Under the original Race to the Top and Investing in Innovation grant programs, the U.S. Department of Education specifically cited activities related to "Great Teachers and Leaders" as an absolute priority. This topic included career pathways (such as alternative certification methods or experiences such as Teach for America), professional development activities and tools, and accountability and effectiveness measures.

These sorts of activities are expected to be a central component again under a 2011 Investing in Innovation program, funded at \$150 million. In addition, the administration has proposed through its *Blueprint for Education Reform* and annual budget proposals to create a more comprehensive professional development competitive grant program. This program would combine many of the previously eliminated programs (such as Enhancing Education Through Technology) into one more generally-focused grant competition.

Finally, a more holistic approach to education reform initiatives may play a more prominent role in the future. The Promise Neighborhoods program, which focuses on efforts to address socioeconomic influences on student academic achievement, proved one of the very few "winners" of the

2011 budget. The program, first introduced in 2010, saw its total amount of funding triple from \$10 million to \$30 million. Promise Neighborhoods is based on the experience of the Harlem Children's Zone in New York City, which incorporates social services such as parenting classes in addition to supportive educational offerings such as tutoring and mentoring.

All of these trends will demand applicants develop more comprehensive proposals and greater scopes of their projects. School districts seeking more targeted uses of funding, such as upgrades solely for technology or equipment, will have to broaden their creativity and capacity in order to stand a competitive chance for funding. While these costs can certainly be incorporated in many of these grant programs, they must be for much larger purpose. For more information on how last year's top-scoring application to Investing in Innovation approaches its project-development and grantseeking, see our April issue: <http://grantsoffice.com/funded/issues/FUNDEDApr2011.pdf>.

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Homeland Security Funding: The National Terrorism Advisory System

BY VINCE SIRAGUSA, GRANTS DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT

Goodbye, Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS). Hello, National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS). The HSAS, first implemented in response to the September 11th attacks, was designed to “inform all levels of government and local authority, as well as the public, to the current risk of terrorist acts.” As many of us know, the previous system was built on a five-level, color-coded threat condition indicator that attempted to assign a color according to the current threat level. Latent with unrealized benefits, this colorful experiment has officially ended as of April 2011. In its place we find DHS writing a new chapter of homeland security preparedness.

In a January 2011 discussion at George Washington University, DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano cited a “whole of nation approach” as a way to achieve the level of security and resilience we all require. In that discussion, the new National Terrorism Advisory System was announced as a replacement for the former HSAS system. This NTAS aims to work harder to ensure coordination between DHS and other federal agencies with an overall goal of more effectively

communicating information to the American public, government agencies, first responders, and other necessary stakeholders. As Napolitano stated: “The new, two-tiered system [will provide] detailed alerts regarding information about a specific or credible terrorist threat. These alerts will include a clear statement that there is an ‘imminent threat’ or ‘elevated threat.’ The alerts also will provide a concise summary of the potential threat, information about actions being taken to ensure public safety, and recommended steps that individuals and communities can take.”

While the former and oft-criticized color-coded indicator seemed too frequently to evoke the boy who cried wolf, the new system promises to go beyond just a simple “heads-up” to employ a more holistic approach to emergency and terrorism preparedness. Under the NTAS, the specific nature of the threat becomes a much larger indicator as to whom—or where—alerts are issued. Some warnings of national relevance may be broadly issued to anyone or everyone across the country. Other notifications, intended for a particular group or location, will be disseminated only to the related audience.

Not only are these alerts intended to be more recipient-specific, they will additionally be applicable to an actual threat within a definite time-period of time. Napolitano notes, “They [DHS] may recommend certain actions, or suggest looking for specific suspicious behavior” as a result. Thus, where the former HSAS announcements offered little if any practical information, the new system should provide more actionable details and next steps. You can follow the life and times of the HSAS five color-coded levels at www.dhs.gov/xabout/history/editorial_0844.shtm.

Only time will tell how well the new system will actually function in today’s world and, perhaps just as importantly, how these new efforts will impact the privacy and liberties that agencies like DHS are designed to protect. The government’s increasingly public image, the use of social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as efforts like the “If You See Something, Say Something” campaign will inevitably become a new norm in a world that looks much different today than it did just 10 years ago. We can only hope, and trust, that a safer and better informed nation awaits us in the future.



The Prevention and Public Health Fund: The Federal Government Finally Puts Money Where Mouth Is When it Comes to Prevention and Wellness Initiatives

BY CHRIS LAPAGE, GRANTS DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT

In the health sector, money continues to flow from the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF), originally created in the health reform legislation passed in FY 2010 (Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act). The PPHF was created in the same vein as its predecessor from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the Prevention and Wellness Fund (PWF). However, while PWF represented a one-time appropriation with limited impact, the PPHF has real dollars committed to it for the next 10 years. In total, the PPHF represents a \$15 billion investment over the next decade in community-wide efforts to prevent disease and manage chronic conditions by detecting and controlling them before they become severe and

require costly interventions.

Over the past year, funding has been distributed to organizations and public entities across the United States for a variety of purposes. Community and Clinical Prevention Grants were distributed to states and nonprofit organizations to integrate primary and behavioral health care, tobacco cessation initiatives and HIV prevention programs. State and local public health departments received grant funding to improve infrastructure (including community-wide linkages), laboratory capacity and public health workforce training. Almost \$1 billion in grants went to states, institutions of higher education and healthcare providers to expand the primary care workforce.

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Technical Assistance Calls with the CDC

For folks that are interested in finding out more about the Community Transformation Grants, the CDC is hosting three time-zone specific technical assistance calls with parties that have submitted a letter of intent. Call-in details are below:

- **June 14, 2011 10:00am – 11:30am** – For eligible applicants in the Atlantic, Eastern, and Central time zones. This conference call can be accessed by calling 1-888-972-9343. The leader for this call is Lori Elmore and the passcode is 8899773.
- **June 14, 2011 1:00pm – 2:30pm** – For eligible applicants in the Mountain and Pacific time zones. This conference call can be accessed by calling 1-800-857-9846. The leader for this call is Lori Elmore and the passcode is 8899773.
- **June 14, 2011 3:00pm – 4:30pm** – For eligible applicants in Alaska and Hawaii-Aleutian time zones. This conference call can be accessed by calling 1-888-950-9563. The leader for this call is Lori Elmore and the passcode is 1495768.





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While several grant programs have already come and gone, the bulk of the funding is yet to be distributed. Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced \$102 million in FY 2011 grant funding through a program titled "Community Transformation Grants". Considering that projects will be funded over a five year time period, the total amount of funding available will total \$900 million through FY 2015. The goal is to fund community-wide efforts to implement evidence and practice-based policy, environmental, programmatic and infrastructure changes necessary to work towards the goals of the "Healthy People 2020" federal initiative. The main focus areas are projects that address healthy changes in weight, proper nutrition, increased physical activity, decreased tobacco use prevalence, as well as improvements in emotional well-being

and overall mental health. Eligibility is wide open, including state and local government agencies, municipalities, nonprofits, and tribal organizations. Interested parties must apply to one of two categories: (A) capacity and infrastructure building, or (B) implementation. The CDC anticipates making as many as 75 awards. Depending on the category of funding and type of entity, award sizes range from \$50,000 to \$10 million. Interested applicants were required to submit a letter of intent by June 6, 2011 and a full proposal is due by July 15, 2011.

In addition, the CDC has made \$40 million available in FY 2011 through a separate program known as the "Prevention and Public Health Fund Coordinated Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Program". The program represents a total investment of \$120 million over

the next three years for statewide projects aimed at chronic disease management. Specifically, The new initiative will support the implementation of public health programs, surveillance of chronic diseases, translation of research into public health practice, and development of tools and resources for health workers and other leaders at all levels of community (local, regional, state, national). State-designated entities must apply by the July 22, 2011 deadline.

For communities around the country that are struggling with implementing evidence-based prevention strategies and chronic disease management initiatives, the PPHF represents the largest investment in such activities by the federal government in history. Health care providers, public health departments and other stakeholders that would be interested in realizing funds from the PPHF need to monitor grant programs released with "ACA" in the program title, which stands for Affordable Care Act. In addition, local stakeholders can keep track of what PPHF dollars are being utilized for in their particular state by monitoring information available through the Department of Health and Human Services at <http://www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/prevention02092011a.html>.

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 2011 Webcasts

- **June 21, 2011:** Grantwriting Series: 10 Tips for Getting More Tribal Grants
- **June 28, 2011:** Competitive Department of Energy Grants
- **June 30, 2011:** Frontier Focus: Funding for Rural Healthcare Initiatives, *sponsored by Philips*

July 2011 Webcasts

- **July 14, 2011:** Utilizing PHEP Funds for IT Initiatives, *sponsored by Cisco*
- **July 19, 2011:** Funding to Bridge the Digital Divide
- **July 21, 2011:** Building Interoperability Coalitions, *sponsored by Tait Radio Communication*

August 2011 Webcasts

- **August 9, 2011:** Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response Grants - Helping your Department be "SAFER"
- **August 16, 2011:** Grant Funding for Rural Projects

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