

Discussion Guide on Grant Recipients' Resource Allocation

Introduction and consent

Thank you so much for meeting with us today. My name is [introduce self] and I am a member of the Supporting Evaluation Efforts for Demonstrations in Self-sufficiency (SEEDS) team. As you know, my colleagues [NAMES] provided research and evaluation support to you as one of the Family Self-Sufficiency Development Demonstration (FSSDD) grant recipients, with funding from the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The intention of the SEEDS project was to build grant recipients' research and evaluation capacity and help them generate evidence related to their programs, which aim to improve the lives of children and their families.

The purpose of the discussion today is to gather feedback from you about how your organization leveraged resources during the FSSDD grant period. We want to understand how your organization allocated its FSSDD grant resources awarded by ACF and whether you used any additional fiscal or in-kind resources to support your FSSDD project. We will use information gathered in this discussion to inform a report for OPRE, which will not be made public. SEEDS is seeking this information to improve future technical assistance and support to grant recipients. This is not a compliance exercise. Nothing you discuss will have any effect on your ability to receive funding from ACF, now or in the future.

We will keep your responses private. In the report we produce, we will blend your responses with responses of other grant recipients and not use any individual names, so no single finding or statement will be attributed to an individual person or grant recipient. Your responses will in no way affect your current or future grant opportunities. We anticipate this interview will take approximately 30 minutes.

I would like to record our conversation today so I don't miss anything. Is it okay with you if I record the conversation? If you want me to turn the recorder off for any reason or at any time, just say so. The recording will assist with notetaking and only be accessed by evaluation support team members while it is stored on a secure drive at Mathematica. We'll destroy the recording at the end of this project.
[INTERVIEWER: TURN THE RECORDER ON]

Okay, I have now turned on the recorder. Now that I have the recorder on, I need to ask you again, is it okay if I record this conversation? [*Interviewer: Get verbal consent to record after beginning to record.*]

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) STATEMENT OF PUBLIC BURDEN:

The purpose of this information collection is to provide evaluation support to innovative interventions serving individuals, children, and families facing challenges to economic independence to expand the evidence base. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 30 minutes per response. This is a voluntary collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB # is 0970-0356 and the expiration date is 02/29/2024. If you have any comments on this collection of information, please contact Julia Lyskawa at JLyskawa@mathematica-mpr.com.

Warm-Up

Before we begin, please tell us about yourself: Your current position, how long you've been with the organization, and your main responsibilities.

What was your role or involvement with the FSSDD grant specifically? Were you involved in writing the grant application and/or developing a budget for the grant?

Grant resources

Now I'd like to talk about how your team used your resources from the FSSDD grant. For this discussion, "project" or "grant project" refers to the research and evaluation activities you proposed doing in your FSSDD applications and worked on with SEEDS support.

1. Please describe how your organization used your FSSDD grant resources. What types of costs did you incur? What types of costs did the FSSDD grant cover?

Probe: For example, did you use grant funds to support staff time; technology, such as data systems; external support, such as evaluators or other consultants; travel; incentives; etc.?

2. Were any of your staff dedicated full-time to FSSDD grant activities? Of the key staff involved in the FSSDD project, what percent of their time do you think they spent on FSSDD activities?

Probe: This could include calls with SEEDS coaches, internal team meetings or project work, cross-grant recipient activities, grant management, and other FSSDD or SEEDS-related activities.

3. Did you use other financial or in-kind resources to support your FSSDD project? If so, what kinds did you use?

4. To what extent were grant resources sufficient in helping you carry out the activities needed to achieve your FSSDD project goals?

5. If your team worked with an external evaluator, how did you select that evaluator? What went into your decision to hire an external evaluator?

Probe: [If not covered earlier] What portion of your grant funds went to supporting an external evaluator?

Grant structure and management

6. How familiar was your organization with Federal grants prior to receiving the FSSDD grant? Had your organization received any Federal grants in the past? If so, from which agencies?

7. What did you like about the way this grant was structured? What would you change if you had the opportunity?

8. To what extent did you find the grant flexible enough to help you meet your FSSDD project goals?