

Section 1.2.1: Grants Management Customer Service Guidelines

Effective communication is at the heart of customer service. In all interactions with internal and external customers, grant program managers shall convey a clear message that they are genuinely interested in working in partnership with the customer to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

Grant program managers should be familiar with resources such as established lists of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), directories of contacts, grant-related websites, state policies and regulations, and the Grants and Federal Resources (GFR) website, grants.az.gov. Grant program managers should keep up with policy changes, organizational issues, budgets, and other announcements. Grant program managers also should develop familiarity with other offices' activities to allow greater coordination when scheduling site visits, and to help customers take advantage of all available State of Arizona services and programs.

Grant program managers should be prepared to answer questions from subrecipients and initiate contact with subrecipients to provide administrative and technical assistance. These interactions should be documented in the eCivis or agency SRM solution and the grant manager's working file. Grant program managers should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Respond to internal and external inquiries within one business day of receiving a request. If a grant program manager is not able to obtain the necessary information for a complete response within this timeframe, he or she should let the customer know they are seeking an answer;
- Arrange for a backup. If a grant program manager is unavailable for more than one business day because of travel, vacation, or illness, make arrangements for backup coverage;
- Make every effort to obtain correct information and to communicate the response in a prompt and clear manner;
- Document customer inquiries, responses provided, and the interval between the customer inquiry and the resolution of the question; and
- Use telephone, VPN remote access, out-of-office e-mails, or e-mail forwarding features to manage inquiries when out of the office.

Inquiries from congressional or legislative personnel should be coordinated with the agency director and/or intergovernmental staff. Media inquiries should be coordinated with the agency public information officer (PIO) or designee; in the PIO's absence, media inquiries should be sent to the governor's director of communications. Inquiries regarding state appropriations should be sent to the Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting (OSPB) budget analyst. Inquiries concerning the financial aspects of grants, if beyond the capacity of the grants program managers, should be referred to the agency accounting office. If a policy or practice has been established that addresses a specific issue, grant program managers employ the policy or practice consistently. Failure to do so contributes to a variety of problems that impact customer service, including processing delays, errors, and misinformation, as well as confusion and frustration on the part of grant applicants and recipients.