

Section 5.1: Providing Pre-application Assistance

PURPOSE AND POLICY

The pre-application stage consists of all contacts with a potential applicant prior to the submission of a formal application. In a non-competitive grant program, the grant program manager may provide counseling that allows prospective applicants the opportunity to qualify for application and/or improve the quality of their applications.

Because individual assistance to applicants in a competitive process may create an unfair advantage to other applicants, individual assistance may not be provided to applicants for competitive grants unless it is provided to all applicants. Below are steps to incorporate pre-application assistance into the pre-application phase for a competitive grant program:

- Develop an assistance strategy for the pre-application period, including a timeline. The strategy may include a program guidance document, development of a frequently asked questions (FAQ) page or other updated website content, a phone number or email account dedicated to the program, published office hours, or video instructions.
- Publish the solicitation notice or notification of funding availability. Ensure such notification adheres to applicable guidelines, regulations or law. A.R.S. 41-2702 requires the grantor to provide adequate public notice of the request for grant applications, which shall be given at least six weeks before the due date for the submittal of applications.
- A pre-application conference, such as conference call, webinar and/or in-person meeting with all potential applicants may be conducted before the due date for the submittal of applications to explain the grant application requirements. If a pre-application conference is held, Arizona Revised Statute (A.R.S.) 41-2702 requires the grantor schedule the conference at least 21 days before the application due date. Consider making the pre-application conference available through a web-streaming service.