

Administration on Aging



SMP program directors and/or staff work with AoA grants management staff and AoA project officers. The grants management staff is located in Washington, D.C. The project officers are located in the Regional Offices.

Cooperative Agreements

The SMP grants are cooperative agreements between the Administration on Aging and the program or grantee. Cooperative agreements are different than other grants because it is expected that the project officer, grants management official and grantee are working in collaboration to successfully fulfill the grant requirements. Because the overall management of grants is a cooperative function, the information developed or received through monitoring must be shared with individual program and grants management staff counterparts. In many cases, the same item will require separate reviews by two persons: a project officer and a grants specialist. Open communication among all levels (grants specialist, project officer and grantee/program) is essential for the success of the projects. Everyone in the equation should know what the expectations are throughout the grant period. Expectations are clearly spelled out in the cooperative agreement.

Grants Management office staff are primarily responsible for the business and other non-programmatic areas of grant award and administration. They are responsible for ensuring that both federal staff and grantees fulfill applicable statutory, regulatory, and administrative policy requirements.

Designated AoA project officers have primary responsibility for performing monitoring actions. Refer to the state by state project officer list for contact information

IMPORTANT

Acknowledging AoA grant support on products

Major products, such as training manuals, videos, education booklets, journal and newspaper/magazine articles, etc. require acknowledgement of AoA grant support. Meeting agendas, fliers or notices, and such are not required to have such information. Check your cooperative agreement for the most current AoA requirements. Below is an example of appropriate language typically used to provide such acknowledgement:

“This project was supported in part, by a grant (*you may include the grant number*), from the U.S. Administration on Aging, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration on Aging policy.”

Grants Management Office/Specialist

The Grants Management Office is the single focal point for applicant/recipient questions and communications on business management and other non-programmatic matters. This includes being the receipt point for any reports required to be submitted as a term or condition of award and requests for prior approval, even if the reports or the prior approval requests are of a programmatic nature. The project officer may be designated as an additional receipt point or will receive a copy of the incoming material directly from the Grants Management Office. Having a single focal point helps ensure timely response by the Administration on Aging and allows for appropriate monitoring, follow-up, and enforcement, if necessary. It also may help the recipient to avoid later audit disallowances and provides consistency of advice and interpretation. The grants specialists are responsible for ensuring receipt of required reports, reviewing financial status reports and responding to questions regarding these activities.

AoA Project Officers

Program staff designated as project officers are responsible for the programmatic, scientific, and/or technical aspects of grants.

Roles of AoA Project Officers

- Acquire signed copies of cooperative agreements and review with the project.
- Negotiate acceptable work plans that are consistent with the cooperative agreement and expectations of the grant.
- Review program performance reports.
- Ensure that continuation applications are consistent with year one application and cooperative agreement. Submit project certification for funding to the grants office.
- Encourage collaboration with the Aging Network.
- Identify programmatic concerns with any of the following:
 - audit reports on an active grant or a grant not yet closed out,
 - site visits,
 - the report portions of continuation applications,
 - correspondence from grantees or third parties in which information on grant performance is provided, and
 - documentation of telephone conversations with grantees or third parties in which information on grant performance is provided.

Project Officer Responsibilities

The project officer is involved in the following monitoring responsibilities:

1. Provide direct consultation and assistance to grantees concerning programmatic or technical matters as requested.
2. Conduct site assessments as warranted by program or project needs or as requested by the grantee to substantiate progress and compliance with laws, regulations, and policies, or to provide technical assistance.
3. Evaluate all projects for programmatic performance, progress, and any changes using information gathered from onsite reviews, progress and other reports, correspondence, and other sources. Identify potential or existing problems or issues which may impact the project, and share with the appropriate staff information and/or findings concerning those problems. Participate with other staff, as appropriate, in resolving those problems and recommend actions for resolving the problems.
4. Assume responsibility for ensuring that the performance reports meet HHS and AoA requirements. When the review has been completed, the program official notifies the grants management staff in writing, using the AoA Grants Monitoring Statement, regarding the satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress of the recipient. That documentation must be included in the official grant file.
5. Serve as focal point for responding to technical and programmatic correspondence from the recipient.
6. Provide input to grants management staff with correspondence from grantee on business management issues.
7. Provide information regarding whether or not special programmatic conditions placed on the award have been met and should be released or other action taken.
8. Thoroughly document in the official grant file all onsite reviews and discussions with the recipient that may influence the administration of the project. This file is maintained by the awarding office grants management officer.
9. Communicate regularly with any other program staff having responsibility for various aspects of the program, to keep apprised of the progress of individual projects and issues needing resolution
10. Assist the grantee, where appropriate, with developing an action plan for conducting subsequent years of the grant project.
11. Provide input to grants management staff on requests for any "re-budgeting" or other actions that require prior approval.