

# 2024 Public Service Grant Q & A

## March 19 and March 20 Sessions

1. Is there a hard copy of the application to prepare it prior to entering?
  - a. Yes you can find a hard copy of the application on the application page. The application page is found here: <https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/2024-PSG>
2. What does CDBG stand for?
  - a. CDBG stands for community development block grant. It is the federal funding source designated by HUD. This informational session is regarding Public Service Grants which one of the many projects funded annually with Pittsburgh's CDBG allocation.
3. Are new non-profit organizations able to apply if they have not completed a 990 form just yet?
  - a. You are still eligible to apply. For your 990 attachment please address on letterhead your organization's situation and that you are applying for non-profit status. If selected you will have to prove your 501(c)(3) status. You will also have to have a full sam.gov registration in order to be eligible.
4. What about food insecurity program at a public school?
  - a. If you are serving youth, then that is an eligible application category. Funding for a food bank run through a school would need extra clarification from HUD in order to deem your program eligible. The issue arises if there are other activities being conducted in conjunction with the food bank since the school is attached to the program.
5. What is the difference between UEI and SAM.gov?
  - a. UEI stands for Unique Entity Identification, which organizations receive as part of their SAM.gov registration. SAM.gov is a government website that verifies entities to do business with the federal government.
6. If you ask for \$25,000 and someone doesn't think your organization is in need of that money, will the application be ineligible?
  - a. The mayor's office and city council decide the allocations therefore you may receive the amount that you apply for or receive a lower amount based upon their determinations. But, your application will not be rejected based on the amount you request.
7. Is the DUNS and Bradstreet numbers becoming obsolete?
  - a. Yes. The DUNS number has been replaced by the UEI number and active registration.
8. Is this funding only for new projects?
  - a. These funds should be looked at as complimentary funds and not operational funds because if you receive funds one year, you may not receive funds another year. The mayor's office and city council like to reward projects that are already in action. These funds are also reimbursable funds where you would need to have expenses established for reimbursement which may be a hurdle for new projects starting up.

9. Can we apply for general operating support?
  - a. Yes, operational expenses are allowable with a cost analysis statement if other funding is used for the same operating expenses
10. How long is the program narrative/project description intended to be?
  - a. Brief! 2 Paragraphs should be sufficient
11. Do we need the documentation of the general workers' comp and the liability insurance?
  - a. Proof will be required at time of contracting
12. What is the maximum amount that organizations can apply for?
  - a. No official maximum, but groups are unlikely to receive more than \$50,000
13. Do we need to prove income eligibility with our initial application or can we submit later?
  - a. Application just requires a description of how income eligibility is verified. If you do not currently verify, make a note in your application that you will implement a system if awarded.
14. Where can we see past award recipients?
  - a. 2023 Engage page <https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/2023-public-service-grants>
  - b. 2022 Engage <https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/2022-public-service-grant>
  - c. Annual Action Plans <https://pittsburghpa.gov/omb/community-development-documents>
15. Can we print the questions ahead of time since the application needs to be submitted in one setting?
  - a. Yes, a draft document is available on Grant Opportunities <https://pittsburghpa.gov/omb/grant-opportunities>
16. For the Federal Funds Awarded question, do we need to include Federal Entitlement funding in the totals?
  - a. Yes, any funds received from the federal government should be included in the list. If they will be used towards the budget of the project being applied for, list them in the total project budget question.
17. What is the average ask for organizations?
  - a. Grant minimum has increased in the past few years, so average ask was lower. Total allocation budget is only \$550,000.
18. We are serving a population of Pittsburgh Public School students, who are presumed to be in the income category of low to moderate as a population, do we need additional income verification?
  - a. PPS keeps records of eligibility for free and reduced lunch, which is frequently used to verify eligibility for youth programs.
19. Can you apply for capital campaign support?
  - a. No. Funds are for programs implementable in 2025 calendar year providing direct services. Additionally, using federal funds for construction adds many more requirements and restrictions. Projects should fall in one of the eligible categories listed on the application page.
20. Can we apply for the grant to cover housing expenses for a transitional housing program for homeless veterans. Housing costs would specifically be for rent/utilities of the property site?

- a. Yes. The project type would be homelessness prevention. Use of funds for paying rent/utilities for individuals has several restrictions, such as that individuals may only receive support for a maximum of three months, and the beneficiaries may not be receiving assistance from other rental support services at the time. However, you could use CDBG funds for personnel costs or other operational expenses.
21. Also, is a form 990 from 2021 or 2022 ok?
  - a. 2022 is acceptable if the 2023 is still in progress. If you submit a 2021, please explain why that is the most recent rather than a 2022.
22. Do you have recommended word counts?
  - a. Project description and plan for use of grant should be descriptive, but we do not have a minimum word count. Please be precise and specific rather than worrying about length or wordiness. There is not maximum, but it seems unlikely that you will need more than two paragraphs at the most to answer any of the questions.
23. My question is similar to Tanya's above- our organization serves PPS students but we do not capture their income. Would free lunch status count as acceptable documentation?
  - a. Free lunch status does count as acceptable documentation for students.
24. Are there specifics on the parameters of income eligibility reporting?
  - a. Many organizations use eligibility for Federal assistance programs (SNAP, TANF, free and reduced lunch) as proof. Others will verify income by reviewing wage statements. Please see the video on the application page (5 min 14 seconds) to learn more about types of income to report. If none of these options are available, self-attestations are permitted.
25. Re: the attachment for Board meeting minutes affirming approval of PS2024 application submission. If the nonprofits Board meeting takes place after the submission deadline will you accept an agenda or a statement of acceptance signed by the Board President?
  - a. Please submit a statement of acceptance signed by the Board President/Chair/Officer of the Board. An agenda is insufficient.
26. Does having been granted a small CDBG have any impact on receiving this grant?
  - a. Your eligibility is not impacted if you have received a grant in the past
27. The engage page notes that many different projects are eligible, is it preferred to apply for a single project vs multiple projects?
  - a. Theoretically you can submit multiple applications for different projects, but each application must address one specific project category due to contracting requirements
28. My organization serves more than three city districts. Should I only list the headquarter district or list every district the organization serves.
  - a. If your organization serves more than three districts, please select city-wide. Applications will be sent to all City Council offices in this case.
29. We serve residents in all city districts, and, as a safe house, our location is undisclosed. We do have an admin office in South Side.
  - a. Select "City Wide" and your application will be sent to all City Council offices.
30. Our EIN number is for our national organization (we have housing programs in 5 states). We are a registered charity in PA as a Foreign Entity - do we need to supply any other documentation regarding this?
  - a. If you are a subsidiary of a national organization, we need the information for the organization holding the EIN and 501(c)(3) status. In the attachments section, you can submit the documents for the national organization. Make a note with any of the attachments that you are a subsidiary.
31. Are you going to combine the City's funds with our local councilmember CDBG this year?

- a. Public Service Grants are the City Council and Mayor's office CDBG money. Public Service Grants are funded by CDBG, but we discuss them as Public Service Grants as that is the specific portion of the funds. Contracts will not be combined with any other funds.
32. If we've received federal funding for COVID reimbursement in the last three years, do that preclude us from applying for this funding?
  - a. No. There is no amount of previous federal funds received which precludes an organization from applying.
33. Under categories for "presumed benefit" is there a definition of "Victims of Intimate Partner Violence" - we provide emergency housing and programs for homeless women survivors of sex trafficking and exploitation.
  - a. If your program documents that the beneficiaries are definitely survivors of these crimes, you can apply as a presumed benefit program under that category.
34. What types of projects are permitted especially for daycares?
  - a. Any project the daycare is running. However, funding may only benefit children whose families are income eligible, not all students at the daycare.
35. Can we do a scholarship program for lower income students to attend our program?
  - a. Yes, though it would not necessarily be called a scholarship program for a daycare. This would be a "child care" project.
36. And if general operating support is possible as a project, is it based on having lower income students enrolled, and then the money is used for general operating expenses? How does that work exactly?
  - a. If you are using the funds for general expenses, we would do a cost allocation to ensure funds are only being used for eligible students. Details could be figured out during the contracting process.
37. If awarded, what does reporting look like?
  - a. Depends on the type of project, but as this is a reimbursement grant, we will require backup documentation showing how the funds were spent, as well as the beneficiary report showing income and demographics. Finally, a brief narrative of the project will be needed. All of this will be explained thoroughly to awarded organizations.
38. Are we able to include our full NICRA (federally approved indirect) rate in the budget?
  - a. Yes, you can list these in your application.
39. Would two eligible organizations be able to collaborate on a project? If so, how should that be explained in the application?
  - a. Choose a lead organization to do the application/manage all of the funds and paperwork, and in the project description you can mention the collaboration. The contract will only be made with one organization.
40. For a senior program, in addition costs of the program that would include food and supplies, can we submit payroll hours for the staff that runs that program?
  - a. Yes, payroll/personnel is an eligible expense. Supplies are an eligible expense. Food is only an eligible expense if providing food is the main mission of the project.
41. How common is it for organizations to apply for and receive grants for more than one year? Or is this a one-time thing?
  - a. Plan on it being a one-time grant. Nothing is guaranteed for the future, and all groups must apply every year if they want additional funds. Public Service Grants are complimentary funds, NOT operational – your program should be able to run without PSG funds.
42. In the grant application under "ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION", Question 16 asks to list all Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and any other Federal Government funds

awarded to your organization in the past 3 fiscal years. Could you reiterate whether this is only required if that federal funding would be used for this particular project? Additionally, is it necessary to include federal subawards?

- a. This is all federal funds received, including sub-awards. It will not prevent you from receiving these awards, we just need the information.
43. Could projects be approved/funded at a lower dollar amount than requested?
- a. Yes, but for \$10,000 at least
44. Our organization received 501c3 status at the beginning of 2023, so we do not have a 2022 990, and our 2023 990 has not been submitted yet. Is there something else we can submit?
- a. Write an official statement on organization letterhead explaining the situation.
45. This year we are asking for funds for a part time worker with our senior program. Is that possible?
- a. Yes, as long as this person is an employee of the organization. To be reimbursed for personnel expenses, you must show proof of worker's comp insurance. You will also need to collect timesheets and payroll details.
46. Is there a chance if we ask for a higher amount, we will only be awarded a partial amount of the ask?
- a. Yes
47. What information are you looking for in answer to question 11  
"What types of project expenses do you expect to have reimbursed with Public Service Grant funds? *For example: personnel, program supplies, professional services, utilities etc.* Do you want to specifically know how we will use the funds or who will specifically benefit from the funding?
- a. This question is about the use of funds. Please provide an estimate of the line items and amounts on your budget.
48. We serve homeless abused women in the greater Pittsburgh area. How do we prove that our women are homeless?
- a. The burden of proof is on the organization's intake process. If your clients come from the Allegheny Link, for example, there will be some sort of verification document.
49. I know you previously mentioned this but can you explain what occurs after the application is submitted?
- a. Applications will be reviewed for eligibility, then there are multiple levels of decisions and approvals which take several months. We anticipate awards being announced in October 2024 and contracts beginning January 2025.
50. For question 11 that asks for project expenses is it okay to keep this general- ie: program materials or should it be more detailed with specific items that will be purchased?
- a. Yes, keeping things more general is preferred.
51. Can the de minimus rate (10%) be used for admin and indirect costs?
- a. Yes, but for this type of program we typically prefer to not reimburse for admin costs. A conversation could be had on this; typically organizations are able to find eligible expenses within their budget.
52. We do not have a secured space, can we list rent or space payment as a budget item?
- a. Yes, this budget is prospective. If it needs to change before the contract begins, it can.
53. What is the cadence of submitting reimbursements? Is this ongoing? Quarterly? At the end of 2025?
- a. This depends on each group. You can be reimbursed as frequently as monthly, or you can submit for the entire amount all at once. You can request the funds as soon as you have spent them, but you MUST submit before the end of the contract period. If you are new to managing the Public Service Grant, DO NOT WAIT until the end of the contract in

case your documentation has issues. It is much easier to fix at the beginning than the end.