

FY 2023 Community-based Aid Funding FAQ

The FY2023 Community-based Aid Request for Application was released on October 13, 2021 and applications are due **December 17, 2021**. There has been confusion around the two-year project and year two budget language. We have gathered the questions that have been submitted and provided answers below. If you have further questions, please contact us.

Question: *I'm confused about the Year 1 and Year 2 language. How has the grant changed?*

Answer: The grant has not changed. Applications are still submitted each year and the grant funds are awarded annually.

Since the State runs on a biennium budget, we had hoped to transition the Community-based Aid into a two year project period with one year budgets. In doing so, we wanted counties and tribes to start thinking of their projects as two year projects to have more time to implement and come up with a proposal that would better meet the needs outlined in the community plan. Community plans were also updated to cover a four year time period to align with two State biennium budgets. As a result, we started referring to the grant years as "Year 1" and "Year 2," referring to the year in the biennium. In practice, everything still happens on an annual basis (applying and awarding of funds). Counties/tribes can decide in year one of the biennium what they plan to fund for the next two years. This is why we asked for Year 1 and Year 2 goals on the grant application last year. This approach may be beneficial for larger counties that sub-award a significant portion of their funds to community providers. Funding community providers on a step down from year one to year two is also something counties/tribes might consider. Counties/tribes can also decide what they funded in Year 1 did not work and they want to fund something different in year 2. That is acceptable.

One idea that we were floating was to allow the "Year 1" award to have a two year award period, meaning grantees would have two years to spend the "Year 1" grant award (extending the project period into year 2). If this was done, we would have had to evaluate where each county/tribe was at with spending down their "Year 1" award when it was time to award "Year 2," and reduce "Year 2" awards accordingly. Due to the timing of when grant applications are due and the uncertainty with how much grant funds would be expended in the future, that approach is not feasible. Counties/tribes would have more certainty with how much they can apply for and get awarded if each year is awarded and closed within a one year project period.

Additionally, when we allowed the FY20 funds to be extended to the end of FY21, what we discovered was counties/tribes were still deobligating a large % of those extended funds. The main priority for us at the Crime Commission right now is getting the grant funds spent and addressing the deobligation issue. Extending funds that resulted in delayed deobligations does not meet our goal of addressing the deobligation issue. The funds are better utilized when at the end of "Year 1," the funds are deobligated and put into EB for those counties/tribes with a demonstrated need for additional funding and do not historically deobligate large % of the award.

We apologize for any mixed or confusing messaging.

Question: *I thought we would have two years to spend “Year 1” funds. Will we be able to extend the current grant funds (Year 1 FY 2021-2022) into the next grant year?*

Answer: No. Any FY22 funds unexpended on June 30, 2022 must be deobligated just like other grant years. If grantees need additional funds in “Year 2,” they must apply for those funds in the form of an EB grant. Grantees will have the opportunity to apply for a supplemental EB grant in July/August 2022. As a reminder, EB grants are competitive and not guaranteed.

Question: *Do I need to submit a new grant application for year 2?*

Answer: Yes. If you want funds for year 2 (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023), you must submit a grant application by December 17, 2021. Both new program requests and currently funded programs must submit an application. Community-based Aid funds still must be awarded annually per statute.

Question: *Can I simply re-submit last year’s application for year 2? We are not requesting funds for anything new or different in year 2.*

Answer: No. The application questions have changed from last year. Every grantee requesting year 2 funds must submit an application in the updated template, regardless if the requests are new or the same as year 1.

Question: *I thought we would only have to submit an updated budget. Do I have to submit the entire grant application or just the budget?*

Answer: Applicants will need to submit an entire grant application. For programs continuing from year 1 into year 2, we are asking for an update on program implementation and progress on year 1 goals in the program narratives. New program requests must complete the new program narrative. Additionally, the budget section had some restructuring and the new template must to be submitted.

Question: *Can I apply for something different for year 2 or do the programs have to be the same?*

Answer: Counties/tribes may apply for any program allowable and within the funding areas outlined in the RFA. They can be the different from year one.

Question: *Our County/Tribe did not apply for the grant last year. Can we apply for year 2 funding even though we did not have a year 1 grant?*

Answer: All counties and tribes are eligible for FY2022-2023 funding regardless if they applied for Year 1 FY22 funding.

Question: *Our County/Tribe was part of a multi-county collaborative last year. This year we would like to apply on our own. Is that allowed? Do we also have to submit a new community plan that is not part of the multi-county collaborative?*

OR

Question: *We applied on our own last year, but this year we would like to join with another county. Is that allowed?*

Answer: Yes, removing your county/tribe from a multi-county collaborative or joining with another county/tribe is allowed from year to year. New community plans are not required to be submitted. As long as your county has or is part of a comprehensive community plan, you can apply for the grant funds. It does not matter if you have your own plan or if your county is part of a multi-county collaborative community plan.

Question: *Why did my year 2 funding allocation amount get reduced?*

Answer: At the time the FY22 RFA was released (January 15, 2021), the Crime Commission released the allocation amounts assuming the amount of funds available would be \$6,048,000.00. The Legislative appropriation for Community-based Aid in May 2021 for the FY2022-2024 Biennium was reduced to \$5,798,000.00/year. The updated appropriation amount was used in the formula for the allocation amounts in the FY23 RFA.

Question: *If the Legislature reduced the amount of funds available for Community-based Aid last year, why did my county/tribe still receive the amount we applied for?*

Answer: Instead of taking the \$250,000 reduction from all counties/tribes applying for year 1 funds, or taking the entire \$250,000 out of the funds that would have been available in EB, the amount of funds awarded to counties/tribes with a deobligation of 20% or more the previous two years were reduced by 5%. The remainder of the \$250,000 deficit was taken from EB.

Question: *Our allocation got reduced. We will have to cut programs from our grant in order to keep salary and fringe in the budget. What should we do?*

Answer: If your CB allocation does not meet your needs and you can demonstrate a need for additional funds, apply for an EB grant. Counties/tribes are also eligible to apply for JS grants. We encourage counties/tribes to assist their programs if possible by partially funding them, picking up the fringe, etc. Searching for other funding sources is also important. It is vital that all programs, counties and tribes have a sustainability plan for keeping programs when grant funding is reduced or not available.

Question: *In this application, do I request the total amount of funds we need including what we got this year for EB?*

Answer: The CB grant application should not exceed the amount allocated for your county/tribe in the RFA. If you need additional funds or would like to apply for an EB grant, you will need to apply for those funds separately.

Question: *Can we submit a request for EB in the CB application that is due December 17, 2021?*

Answer: No. Any request for EB funds must be submitted separately. Some application questions for EB will be different than for CB.

Question: *If we put fringe benefits in an EB grant, will it get funded? We usually put fringe in EB, should we move it to CB? What should we put in EB?*

Answer: The funding purpose and requirements for EB are the same as for CB, the only difference is EB is award as a competitive grant. Counties/tribes applying for EB should have a plan to sustain or fund the program if EB is not awarded. We cannot guarantee any EB grant will get funded, regardless if previously funded. Additionally, EB grant awards may be awarded on a step down or reduced amount. While allowable, it is not preferable to see EB funds predominately going to fringe benefits. We would like to see counties/tribes provide match for their programs even though it is currently not required. Match might become required again in the future if it is apparent that sustainability plans are not in place and programs continue to be 100% reliant on CB and EB grant funds.

Question: *When will EB and Juvenile Services grants be released?*

Answer: The EB RFA will likely be announced in November 2021 with a due date in January. Juvenile Services Grant will likely be released in January or February 2022 with a due date in late February or early March 2022.

Question: *If we need additional funds, should we apply for EB or JS?*

Answer: Counties/tribes are eligible to apply for both EB and JS. We would like to see counties/tribes apply for EB first, if possible, so we can combine the awards into one CB grant. However, applying for one grant over the other grant is not required. Counties/tribes can apply for either or both grants.

Question: *Who do I submit my grant to? Can I use my GrantVantage account?*

Answer: Email your completed grant application to Trent Chestnutt at Trent.Chestnutt@nebraska.gov by the deadline. There will be no deadline extensions. Late applications will not be accepted.

The Community-based Aid CB, EB, and Juvenile Services Grants do NOT utilize the GrantVantage Pre-award site for submitting grant applications.

Question: *If I print my application and then scan it, it will be in PDF format. Why is that not accepted? Can I scan the signature page?*

Answer: Scanned copies of a printed grant application are not accepted. They are difficult to read and do not have the search function. Once you have completed and saved your grant application in Word, choose File → Save as Adobe PDF. Email the version that was saved as Adobe PDF, not the scanned version.

If the Authorized Official wants to print the signature page and hand ink sign, we will accept the scanned copy of that signature page. Typed signature using a cursive font or other font made to mimic a hand-drawn signature is not accepted. Digital certificate-based signatures are accepted.

Question: *We have met the need in our community plan. Can we apply for something different?*

Answer: You can apply for any program that is allowable. If the program is not a priority in the community plan, you must submit a revised community plan or an addendum to the community plan that includes the proposal as meeting a need in your community.