

HPP Annual Cooperative Agreement Non-Competing Continuation Guidance Webinar

April 21, 2021

Event Transcript

00:00:02.639 - 00:23:54.960

Jennifer Hannah: Thank you for joining us for our HPP Annual Cooperative Agreement Non-Competing Continuation Guidance. Apologies for the challenges that you may have encountered regarding getting into the Zoom meeting with the password but hopefully that has been resolved. This call is being recorded, so for anyone that may be unable to attend, we will certainly be sharing the recording link, as well as the transcript following the call.

During today's call I'll be providing you with an overview of the Continuation Guidance application instructions. Please feel free to ask questions in the chat box throughout the presentation on specific sections that we are covering. We will also have some time at the end of the webinar for you to ask additional questions verbally or through the chat.

Before we get started with the content for today's webinar, I would like us to quickly take the poll on whether you are receiving our weekly ASPR Health Care Readiness Bulletin. As many of you may know, we did transition to a new platform in February, but it's come to my attention that some of our subscribers have not received the Bulletin in recent weeks. As you may know, through this Bulletin, we share information on upcoming deadlines and meetings and other cooperative agreement information, such as the announcement of this Non-Competing Continuation application. Please complete the poll on your screen. If you are joining by telephone or unable to complete the poll, and you have not received the Bulletin since February, please send an email to hpp@hhs.gov and a member of our team will reach out to troubleshoot.

We will now close the poll link and thank you for participating. For those who wish to receive the bulletin, but haven't received the distribution since February, we will be in touch to troubleshoot your subscription.

I'm going to start by providing a brief overview of the Continuation Application packet and submission information. As many of you know, only recipients previously awarded under the FY 2019 - 2023 HPP Cooperative Agreement are eligible to apply for the continuation of funds. The continuation of funds is for fiscal year 2021/Budget Period 3 which begins on July 1 of this year and June 30 of 2022. Applications must be submitted via [GrantSolutions.gov](https://www.grantsolutions.gov) by 11:59pm Eastern time on June 12, 2021. You also need to complete the PERFORMS application module by June 12 12:59pm Eastern time as well because you'll be downloading some of those components from the PERFORMS application module for your GrantSolutions application.

This is just the checklist of required application packet content, which has also included an outline within the continuation application that all recipients must submit these documents that are shown here through [GrantSolutions.gov](https://www.grantsolutions.gov). Additionally, there are optional attachments as well, if they apply, for those recipients that use a bona-fide agent, they need to include documentation. If you are requesting recipient-level direct costs above the 18%, you must submit a waiver request and you should also submit support letters from health care. If anyone is requesting the Isolated Hospital classification, please submit that request with the with the application, and then for recipients and Health Care Coalitions. If they will be purchasing any PPE, pharmaceuticals, or any other type of medical material, then you must complete and submit the inventory management program protocol with the application.

This is just the list of requirements that were outlined within the application instructions as a point of reference. Requirements may be found in the FY 2019 through FY 2023 funding opportunity announcement, as well as any requirements that were added or clarified in the FY2020/Budget Period 2 continuation application and instructions. Also, any clarifications that we have provided here within the Budget Period 3 application instructions. I won't go into detail on every single one of these, but what you will note is that for ease of use, we did include those requirements that were

clarified from Budget Period 2 and those elements or components that may have come out of the Pandemic and All-Hazards and Advancing Innovation Act. We included those within these application instructions, so hopefully you would be able to find those very easily and wouldn't have to turn back to or refer back to too many different documents.

Appendix A is, of course, primarily for the majority of the recipients, except for those recipients that fall into the category of those isolated hospitals, as well as some of our select territories and our freely-associated states. Their requirements are outlined within the Appendix B. Just to kind of touch on a couple of things that you may have noticed within the requirements: there were a couple of additional components and some fine-tuning based upon your experience with COVID pandemic response that we implemented, maybe some tweaks to some requirements. One of those was related to the Clinical Advisor and Readiness and Response coordinator staffing requirements. You'll note that we did an integration of the Medical Operations Coordination Cell, which was an initiative that was developed during the height of the pandemic response. Also, some fine-tuning for the Clinical Advisor to be able to assist with advising related to crisis the standards of care. For Health Care Coalitions to coordinate with Regional Disaster Health Response System entity, that is still left relatively broad, however, the expectation is that Health Care Coalitions that fall within the jurisdiction or where there isn't a Regional Disaster Health Response System demonstration site to coordinate with that RDHRS demonstrations site. As you may know, we did award a new demonstration site last year to the Denver Hospital and Health Authority.

As you already know, regarding the coalition-level annexes for Budget Period 2 and Budget Period 3, Health Care Coalitions have the option of completing either the Burn Surge or the Infectious Disease specialty annex. Whichever one was completed in FY 2020 or Budget Period 2, then you must complete the remaining specialty annex in Budget Period 3. There is a requirement regarding submitting new or updated crisis standards of care concept of operations, the deadline for that was last year, for the end of FY 2020 or Budget Period 2. Due to some updates that we've made, we have extended the deadline for the crisis standards of care CONOPs to FY 22 in Budget Period 4.

We did include the modifications to Appendix C or territories, freely associated states, and isolated frontier hospitals. The majority of those are also consistent with some of the changes or the clarifications that were implemented within Appendix A. I specifically wants to point out about the MYTEP being weighed. Also, the same modification regarding the crisis standards of care CONOPs was included there, as well as the option to do either the Burn Surge or the Infectious Disease annex in this Budget Period.

So I want to spend a little time with specific modifications to the crisis standards of care CONOPs requirements, the majority of the bullets here are exactly the same as the previous requirements with the addition of two bullets at the very bottom. One is that it should include actions the state will take to comply with federal nondiscrimination laws. Really the impetus for highlighting or emphasizing this particular element to be included in the crisis standards of care plan was during the COVID response. There were some groups that represented one of the protected groups under the federal nondiscrimination laws that had some concerns and filed a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights regarding the crisis standards of care plan with consideration that potentially individuals may be discriminated against because of disabilities. We wanted to feature this more properly. We know that we have an overarching requirement within the funding opportunity announcement for all recipients of federal funding that they must adhere to the federal nondiscrimination laws, but I thought it was important as well to include that here so that so that no complaints will be filed against anyone, but also at the same time to just make sure that no one is being discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, and in some cases, sex and religion. We want to make sure that the crisis standards of care plans CONOPs are inclusive. Also, another element that was included for the actions that the state will take to engage the community and clinicians and wanted to put just a little bit more of a finer point on that specific requirement to encourage community engagement, as well as engagement of clinicians. This also

was somewhat of an outcome of what we've been learning from the pandemic response. As I've already stated the change to the deadline for the CONOPs, and know there's a number of recipients that may have completed their CONOPs, so if you would please go back and take a look at those to make sure that those latter two elements are included within your crisis standards of care CONOPs. We did extend the deadline or another year for the end of FY 2021. With the change in that deadline, then comes the trickledown effect is that the deadline for the CSC CONOPs plans incorporation and validation in an HCC-level exercise has now been extended to FY 2022 our Budget Period 4.

This slide is just really highlighting the specific requirements that were in the funding opportunity announcement for Budget Period 3 and those are for completing the Public Information Officer training, developing the ability to rapidly alert and notify employees, patients, and visitors to facilitate communication, developing an HCC an continuity of operations plan.

This slide and the subsequent slides were pulled directly from the funding opportunity announcements.

This requirement here is a little bit out of order from those that we just displayed regarding the Budget Period 3 requirements. I wanted to highlight this one because it is associated with the crisis terms of care requirement. There is a Budget Period 3 requirement that each funded Health Care Coalition must collaborate with the recipient to integrate the following crisis care elements into their response plan and that requirement was a Budget Period 3 requirement. The deadline for that will now be extended as well to FY 2022 or Budget Period 4 so just wanted to make sure that this was included in this slide so that you have it as a reference. When you receive the slides and need to refer back to it and then also for anyone that may have been unable to participate today and was looking back at the slides and listening to the playback.

This is just the list of the benchmarks in the Pandemic Influenza surge planning requirements which are withholding requirements. You may have noticed within the application instructions that we made some modifications or some clarifications or implemented some flexibilities regarding the benchmarks. The benchmarks have not changed, but just wanted to highlight those that may have had changes or may have been waived. The joint Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan or MYTEP is waived for this year. You're already aware of the Health Care Coalition Burn Surge Annex or Infectious Disease Preparedness and Surge annex requirement, that you must complete one or the other this year. If you completed the Infectious Disease annex template last year then the Burn Surge annex is the requirement for this year, and vice versa. Also for benchmark number seven which is requirements related to the Health Care Coalition Annual Work Plan and Training Plan, the training plan is waived. The requirement to submit the Health Care Coalition Annual Work Plan is not waived. You must still submit that. The benchmark number eight related to Essential Elements of Information template and completing that is still suspended until further notice. There's still big collection of EEI, so we are suspending that again until further notice. As you may know, in FY 2019 and in FY 2020, those were for the Budget Period 1 and Budget Period 2, we had waved the annual Health Care Coalition surge tests, as well as the hospital surge test due to the COVID-19 response. The coalition surge test and the hospital surge tests will be required for Budget Period 3 but we also want to let you know that we are in the process, along with the Evaluation Group, of revisiting both of those tools to make updates to those tools, so that they can be a little bit more flexible. We know that early on with the pandemic response, we heard very loud and clear that the concern the with these tools was that the scenario being around evacuation and then the inability to be able to make those more applicable to different scenarios. So we are revisiting are the coalition surge test tool as well as the hospital surge test tool and updated tools will be forthcoming for Budget Period 3. Regarding the Pandemic Influenza Planning requirement, ASPR does not require recipients to submit a pandemic flu plan. We allow our recipients to be able to meet that requirement by responding to our performance measures, and then we take those performance measures and identify those that we think would be most applicable to pandemic flu planning, so there is no separate submission requirement or a requirement to submit a pandemic influenza plan to ASPR to meet that requirement.

So in this next section I just want to explain our approach related to the FY 2021 Budget Period 3 funding formula, as well as the award amount.

This is just a very quick snapshot explaining our funding formula design. As you know, our funding amounts are determined by a statutorily required funding formula. Also, the FY 2021 award amounts for each recipient are identical to FY 2020 levels, so it wasn't your imagination when you looked at the funding table and we didn't make a mistake. When you looked at the funding table you'll notice that the funding level of the year award amount was exactly the same as last fiscal year. As you may know, what we call a discretionary modifier was added to our funding formula so that we could focus on health care surge-specific risk and particular event types. One of the modifiers was a discretionary modifier. As part of our funding formula, if a recipient jurisdiction experiences a public health emergency in any fiscal year, the HPP discretionary modifier ensures that the recipient will not experience an HPP funding decrease for the following fiscal year. So due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, no recipient will have a decrease in funding for FY 2021 compared to FY 2020. We apply the discretionary modifier for all recipients for COVID-19. Therefore, you did not see a decrease in your funding award amount for FY 2021. Okay, so those include the prepared slides, and with that we'll open the line at for any application instruction questions that you may have.

00:23:56.700 - 00:24:28.920

Zoe Kovatchis: Thanks, Jennifer. As a reminder, everyone can submit a written question in the chat box. If you would like to ask a question verbally, please select the raise hand icon in the participants bar and we will unmute you can ask your question.

I do see one question in the chat which reads: this week's HPP Bulletin discusses carryover and says the HPP COVID-19 supplement can also be carried forward by request. The supplement was awarded in BP 1. Can you explain how the process works? Are we moving the unobligated COVID funds from BP 1 to BP 3?

00:24:41.910 - 00:26:24.450

Jennifer Hannah: Great question. The appropriation for the COVID-19 supplemental funds is in a five-year appropriation. However, because the funding was added to an existing award, then the period of performance for the COVID supplemental funding had to be identical to the performance period or the budget periods for the existing main award, in this case the Annual HPP Cooperative Agreement. Initially, the COVID supplemental funding expired along with Budget Period 1 which was June 30, 2020, and then the recipients should have requested a carryover request to be able to use those unobligated funds from the COVID supplemental in Budget Period 3, and then you would have to submit another carryover request in order to carry over those funds into the Budget Period 3. I see that Virginia Simmons is on, so Virginia if you want to clarify that further, or if I didn't answer that correctly, please unmute yourself.

00:26:32.430 - 00:28:12.239

Virginia Simmons: Yes, you did a wonderful job of explaining the carryover process. Absolutely. So, those COVID funds are now expired, with the Budget Period 2 award, so once you receive your Budget Period 3 award, you can then submit a request to carry over the Budget Period 2 COVID funds into your Budget Period 3 award. If you have any detailed questions about the carryover processes on this, if we did not explain anything clearly, feel free to reach out to your assigned Grants Management Specialist for clarification. Again, just to be specific, submit your carryover request to carry over unobligated COVID funds for Budget Period 2 after you receive your Budget Period 3 award. Now, some people may want to submit the COVID funding carryover request with their Budget Period 3 application. You may do that as well, but we strongly recommend you submit it after you receive your award. Either way, the Grants Management

Specialist can assist you directly if you need further clarification or your particular circumstances are different or requires more information. I hope that's helpful. Well said, Jennifer.

00:28:17.040 - 00:28:36.600

Jennifer Hannah: Thank you, Virginia. I will note that Virginia is on the line to respond to any specific Grants Management questions as well. For those of you that may be new to HPP, Virginia Simmons is the Chief Grants Management Officer for ASPR Grants Management.

00:28:39.150 - 00:29:36.960

Zoe Kovatchis: Thank you, Jennifer and Virginia. We do have a few more questions. The next one reads: do we submit the request to carryover COVID funds after July 1, 2021?

00:28:54.570 - 00:29:10.140

Jennifer Hannah: I believe that Virginia answered that question. She said that they can be submitted after July 1, 2021, after the start of the Budget Period 3, but also that the carryover request can be submitted with the application.

00:29:17.190 - 00:29:40.140

Zoe Kovatchis: We do have another question that reads: a note was added to GrantSolutions stating that effective immediately, the reporting requirement has been updated to increase from \$25,000 to \$30,000 and the question is, how does this impact funding for this award?

00:29:41.370 - 00:30:31:024

Virginia Simmons: We submitted that information because we wanted all the recipients to know about the change in the requirements. It does not impact your funding at all, it is a notification of change the grant administrative requirements. When we process your BP 3 awards, we will update the terms and conditions with that requirement. We are required to change the terms and conditions of awards when federal grant and cooperative agreement regulatory requirements are updated. That is an update to your reporting requirements for your grant. It does not impact your award.

00:30:35.040 - 00:30:41.490

Zoe Kovatchis: Thank you, Virginia. We do have a question asking to clarify obligated versus unobligated.

00:30:46.200 - 00:34:47.460

Virginia Simmons: Sure, any time a recipient received an award, and let's take this particular program in effect as an example, with this program, you have a five-year period of performance. Each year, you have a Budget Period with 12-month increments. You're given an award every 12 months. That 12 month Budget Period reflects your Budget Period 1, Budget Period 2, which we are in right now, and you're about to receive your Budget Period 3 award. You are required by federal regulations to obligate meaning expend your funding for that particular award within that 12-month period of that respective Budget Period.

What that means, as an example, is allocate it to an invoice for service or product. You are required to do so within that 12-month period. If you have not obligated or extended those federal funds within that 12-month period, if you have some left over and it has not been expended, meaning that you have not invoiced it, you have not allocated it for a service, product, or vendor, then it is considered unobligated. However, that 12-month period expires and yet you have those unexpended or unobligated funds sitting there. This is where you get into the carryover requests.

Should you need to obligate those funds within the next Budget Period, you are required to request prior approval via a carryover requests in order to expend, access, or allocate those unobligated funds for that expired Budget Period for the next Budget Period. In some cases for some of you, you may decide you don't need it this upcoming Budget Period, but you may later find that you needed it for another Budget Period, say Budget Period 4. There was a question earlier about carrying over funds and obligated funds for Budget Period 1 into Budget Period 3. Apparently, that recipient didn't need the expired unexpended funds for Budget Period 1 in the subsequent Budget Period, Budget Period 2. They may find they're going to need to utilize those unexpended funds that were awarded in Budget Period 1 in Budget Period 3.

So, as I stated before, you will submit a carryover request for prior approval to expend or access or allocate those unexpended funds for the previous award, in that situation which was awarded Budget Period 1, for Budget Period 2, that requires a detailed budget report of what you intend to expand those funds on. I hope this is that was clear, and if it's not, again you have access to your Grants Management Specialist to further clarify the difference between unobligated and obligated and they can look further into your particular budget in your situation to assist you with expending your funds. Thank you.

00:34:51.180 - 00:35:13.470

Zoe Kovatchis: Thank you, Virginia for that clarification. We have a follow up to that explanation: with a scenario in which a contract would be encumbered for PPE using COVID funds and the PPE is on back order, can there be a carryover for these obligated funds or is that considered unobligated?

00:35:17.130 - 00:36:42.270

Virginia Simmons: To be clear, if the recipient actually initiated an invoice for a contract or vendor whether it's COVID funds or just regular HPP funds and that invoice was not paid out, in that instance and I truly understand especially with contract that takes time for processing invoices, then they can ask for a what we will call an extension to liquidate funds. At the end of each Budget Period, recipients have 90 days at the end of their 12-month Budget Period to liquidate obligated funds, so they can ask for an extension to liquidate those funds. Again, they would need to contact the Grants Management Specialist for detailed information to process the extended liquidation of those funds, and that is a very good question especially because it does affect the FFR that the recipients are also required to submit 90 days after the end of the Budget Period, which is called the annual Federal Financial Report.

00:36:44.250 - 00:36:54.030

Zoe Kovatchis: Thank you, Virginia. Another question reads: can we please repeat the updated recipient pandemic influenza plan requirement explanation?

00:36:57.300 - 00:37:56.820

Jennifer Hannah: Sure, and I'll try to simplify it since I probably stated it in a very convoluted way. There is no specific requirement for recipients to submit a pandemic influenza plan to ASPR. How we have the recipient meet that requirement is by responding to our performance measures, so when you submit or respond to your performance measures at the end of the of the Budget Period, then it's considered that you have met that pandemic plan requirement. So instead of submitting a plan you only have to respond to the HPP performance measures

00:38:02.580 - 00:38:40.620

Zoe Kovatchis: Thank you, Jennifer. We are seeing a lot of questions about extensions versus carryover. Can we go over that one more time?

00:38:44.190 - 00:41:53.640

Virginia Simmons: Sure, just for clarification, recipients are required to submit their federal financial report 90 days after the end of their Budget Period. The purpose of providing you 90 days to submit your annual Federal Financial Report is to allow you time to liquidate all of your obligations. That example we use: invoicing for contracts and vendors in particular, which can take quite some time. You're allotted 90 days to liquidate all expenditures. Another way of saying that, just in case it's not clear is you're allotted 90 days to, let's say, expend, make sure that all of your expenditures are accounted for. Your invoicing, your receipt for payments, all of those are validated. Your vendors have paid all of your financial accounts for all of your expenditures of federal funds are accounted for. Why do we allow this? so that you can give an accurate report of what federal funds you expend for that 12-month period. Again, if this isn't really clear, I emphasize that you contact your Grants Management Specialist. We're here to assist you with your awards and it's okay if this is your first time and you're not quite clear in terms of how to ensure that all of your awarded funding is allocated, expended, and obligated. Many of you should have an accountant on staff or financial person on staff to assist you. That individual is typically the one that is responsible for drawing down the funds and managing your financial management systems, so we do want to hear from you, if you have any issues. We want to ensure that you're on track and you have a thorough understanding. That is requirement also, in terms of your fiduciary responsibility to administer federal funds. So don't hesitate to contact your Grants Management Specialist if you're not clear on your responsibility at the end of the Budget Period for allocating or accounting for your obligation or expenditure of federal funds. Again, we're here for you, for detailed information and any specific issues to your account. I hope that's helpful, thank you.

00:41:55.560 - 00:42:16.320

Zoe Kovatchis: Thanks so much, Virginia. For everyone's awareness, Jennifer has pasted the pandemic influenza planning requirement in the chat for your reference. We do have another question: PERFORMS has required uploads for the MYTEP. Given that it's waived, how should we handle this?

00:42:21.000 - 00:42:41.790

Jennifer Hannah: I'll be following up with the with the CDC PERFORMS team. The business requirements, or rather, the application module was developed prior to us finalizing the HPP application instructions, so we'll get that will get that reconciled as well.

00:42:48.390 - 00:43:11.640

Zoe Kovatchis: Thank you, Jennifer. If we have questions regarding PERFORMS, can you explain where those should be directed?

00:43:15.450 - 00:45:29.370

Jennifer Hannah: Certainly, those probably be directed to the to the CDC PERFORMS team, but for that particular question: will PERFORMS be updated to be able to used on browsers other than Internet Explorer? It is my understanding and in speaking with the CDC PERFORMS team that they are in the process of doing some internal discussions and testing to be able to use other browsers, so stay tuned for additional information regarding upgrades and the ability to use additional browsers. I do know the announcement is going to be forthcoming.

Just one clarification I wanted to make: I believe that we made an error in the application instructions where there were discussions or talks about the deadlines for the annual FFR for Budget Period 3. It looks like we inadvertently included information regarding Budget Period 2 versus Budget Period 3 and that should be Budget Period 3. The Budget Period dates are July 1,

2021 through June 30, 2022 so therefore, that annual FFR for Budget Period 3 is what is due by September 30 of 2022. Just wanted to clarify that.

00:45:35.160 - 00:45:50.550

Zoe Kovatchis: Thank you, Jennifer. We do have one more question. It says: in previous reauthorizing legislation for this program, unspent funds from one Budget Period can only be used in the subsequent Budget Period or when they expired. Did that change with the last reauthorization?

00:46:07.800 - 00:46:13.470

Jennifer Hannah: I think previously that was due to a requirement when we were working jointly with PHEP and had a joint application with PHEP. It's my understanding that the funds do expire at the end of the Budget Period, but as Virginia stated, then you must submit a carryover request in order to be able to use those funds, but Virginia, if I could get you to address this, I don't believe that the funds expire and have to be returned to Treasury, correct?

00:47:05.670 - 00:48:07.770

Virginia Simmons: The official and final expiration, which would be when the funds are returned to Treasury, would be after the period of performance, after the five years have passed. Again, because your Budget Period is in increments of 12 months, they have an expiration period of 12 months, meaning that they are no longer available to the recipients after that 12-month period. They do still exist in the account, but the recipients no longer have access after that 12-month period. So recipients, please request the prior approval to carry over the funds into the subsequent Budget Period.

00:48:14.280 - 00:48:37.890

Zoe Kovatchis: Thank you, Jennifer and thank you, Virginia. Thank you to everyone for all the questions. Please note that any remaining questions can go to your Field Project Officers and if there are any carryover questions in the chat we will follow up with an email after this meeting.

00:48:43.170 - 00:51:08.100

Jennifer Hannah: Thank you everyone for all of the questions. These are great questions and we want to make sure that we do answer every single question that you have. You can certainly send questions to the HPP mailbox at hpp@hhs.gov. You also have a ready and prepared and informed group of folks that are available to you in our in our project officers, so please certainly reach out to them as well, but thanks all for joining us today. If you have additional questions, please feel free to reach out. Our last parting statement is, of course, is if you have a success story, please feel free to share those with us, as well as success stories related to your sub-recipients, especially as it relates to the COVID-19 response. You can submit that story or those stories either by email at hpp@hhs.gov or you can fill out our new Story from the Field submission form which is available on our Health Care Readiness in Action: Stories from the Field website. Our team has included a link for that. If you submit a story, then a member of our communications team will reach out to learn more. Again, thanks everyone for joining. We look forward to continuing to hear your questions that you may have. One final parting note is please don't wait until the last minute to submit your application. If at all possible, please submit your application early before the deadline date. Work closely with the regional staff in the development of your applications so that if you have any challenges that can be addressed on the front end versus after the award is made. With that, we are going to end today's call. Again, thanks everyone, and have a great day.