

**2014 Homeland Security Grant Application Teleconference
Question and Answer Session
Minutes**

Wednesday, September 23, 2014 – 6:00 p.m.

The Question and Answer Session Conference Call began at 6:00 p.m. with twelve (12) local jurisdictions participating. Two 2014 Homeland Security Grant Committee members were on the call as well (Tom Andross of Grafton County and Director Perry Plummer, Homeland Security Advisor). The call was led by Grant Administrator Pam Urban-Morin.

Perry Plummer stated that this is the second conference call regarding the 2014 Homeland Security Grant application. There were 37 parties on the first call. Pam Urban-Morin is going to give an overview and then there will be a question and answer session.

Pam informed the participants that this call is being recorded and minutes will be posted on the Department of Safety's Grants Management Unit website. The minutes from the September 10, 2014 call have been posted as well to assist you as you go through the application process.

This year, the grant process is similar to the previous year's application process. You have an opportunity to apply for eligible Homeland Security Grant equipment. The 2014 Homeland Security Grant Committee (Grant Committee) included some suggestions for acceptable applications in the preface to the application. She indicated that people should not be overwhelmed by the size of the application because a large part is due to grant terms and conditions which are included. These are very important provisions, but they do not require immediate action.

This year's Homeland Security Grant allocation is \$3.7 million with \$2.8 million available for the local share for the non-Law Enforcement part of the program and just under \$1 million available for the Law Enforcement specific portion. The allocation plan is broken down on our webpage in detail. There are set-asides for training and exercises approved by the Grant Committee which are available now and can be applied for at any time during the open grant period. The contacts for these allocations are listed on our grant website. The competitive funds available are as follows: the Law Enforcement side of the grant has just over \$500,000 available and the non-Law Enforcement side has just over \$1 million available.

Pam noted that there is a potential for a highly competitive pool. If you reference the back of the application, you will find the scoring criteria that is used by the Grant Committee. That criteria is a good guide for you when thinking about the projects you would like to apply for. She added that the Grant Committee likes to see background information that supports the grant request such as after action reports (AAR), local emergency operation plans (LEOP), or a detailed analysis of infrastructure for a communications system. Those are the types of things that help buttress an application and make it more competitive in the process.

Perry added that this is an open book test. The answers are on the scoring sheet. That is the exact scoring sheet that is used by the Grant Committee. We continue to get applications where a section is not filled out and even though it is a worthwhile project, they do not make the grade when scoring. Make sure when you are done to have a second set of eyes look at your application and make sure that you have hit all of the different areas where points are available.

Pam stated that one of the resources available is to call the Grants Management Unit and speak to either Pam Urban-Morin or Janice Bresnahan. Your local area field representative from Homeland Security and Emergency Management also has information that can assist you. Please remember that the applications are due at Noon on October 3, 2014. We do date and time-stamp them in. We have already received the first application for this funding.

Perry stated that if the project is a relatively small project, he encourages people to reach out to their field rep. and make sure that this grant program is more advantageous than an EMPG grant program. Typically, the EMPG grant program is for smaller projects. If you do not know who your field rep is, please give Perry Plummer a call at 603-419-0255.

Pam noted that if you are awarded a grant, there are certain components of the grant process that can take additional work and additional time. One of them that can be time-consuming is the EHP and NEPA review process. That can take anywhere from a couple of weeks to a month and a half. As you are looking at your timeline, remember that DHS-FEMA headquarters in Washington is very insistent that we expend these funds within the 24-month period that we are allotted. This is why the process has been abbreviated a little bit. We used to allow 9-10 weeks for an application process and we have cut that back because we are now advised constantly that we will not get extensions.

Once applications come in to the Grants Management Unit, they are scanned for eligibility requirements to align with federal eligibility requirements and then go out to the Grant Committee. The Grant Committee is populated by your peers from various groups around the state. We try to consider geographic representation as well. The Grant Committee will score the applications and then meet again to deliberate over the applications and the scores. The Grant Committee will make recommendations to the Department of Safety Commissioner who will then consult with the Governor's Office. The goal is to have grant award notifications out before the holidays season this year. We hold an open public meeting. Someone can come in and talk with the Grant Committee about their grant application if they choose to.

Perry added that if your grant project is so large or is going to take so much time that you are going to have a hard time fitting it in that time frame, don't plan on getting an extension. He suggested that they break the project into a couple of phases. Complete phase one and then apply again for phase two.

Pam stated that large dollar projects can also be broken down into phases. It is sometimes more attractive to the Grant Committee to fund a few more worthwhile projects rather than one large project. If a large dollar project can be broken down into phases and still be a viable project, you may want to consider that as you put together your application.

Perry recommended that people go back and read the minutes from the September 10, 2014 question and answer session. They are posted on the Grants Management Unit website (<http://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/homeland/>). Pam added that one of the things brought up on that last call was that if you are doing a regional project (which is encouraged), the Grant Committee is definitely looking to see active letters of commitment from all of the partners. We had a couple of cases in the past where the letters were very dated. If you are doing a multi-jurisdictional, or multi-agency project, make sure to have current agreements for that project.

Pam stated that there have been questions asked about having knowledge about the THIRA and SPR. That is something that your field reps can help you with preliminarily. Going forward, in future years, you will see more emphasis on that. It is not a giant piece of scoring for this year; however, it helps people to be aware of what your real threats and weaknesses are and opportunities in your area.

Question & Answers:

Question: Milan-Dummer Ambulance Service: Could you give me the webpage? How do I get on it?

Answer: Pam gave directions on how to find the webpage. There is a link to the 2014 Homeland Security Grant on the main page of the Department of Safety. Perry also stated that he could contact his field rep and they could help him to locate it. Pam stated that he could call the Grants Management Unit at 271-7663 for assistance. The direct link is: <http://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/homeland/>

Comment: Town of New Boston: Thank you for taking the time to do this. A lot of us are volunteers and we do not have the time to go to meetings during the day. This outreach program is really special. Thank you very much. This call has been really helpful with the information about including background information with the application.

Answer: Pam thanked him and asked if he had any specific questions. He responded that Danielle (his field rep) has been keeping him up to date very well. Pam stated that he could always call her office or send her an e-mail if he had any questions.

Question: Bedford Police Department: Would you clarify whether or not this has to be regional? Do we have to get together with Goffstown or Merrimack or can it be just a one town grant if we want to tackle a large project in our town?

Answer: Pam stated that there is no mandate for a regional grant. Although, if you look at the scoring sheet, you will see that there is definitely a preference for a regional project.

Question: Bedford Police Department: We had recently done an active shooter exercise and would like to improve on our response to an active shooter situation. I just want to have clarification. If we were to do an exercise on an active shooter incident, would that cover it?

Answer: Perry asked if he was talking about doing an active shooter exercise. He confirmed that he was. Perry explained that he did not need to apply for a grant through this process. He just needs to contact Emily Martuscello at Homeland Security and Emergency Management to apply for an exercise.

Question: Bedford Police Department: Is this application more for equipment or more for training?

Answer: Perry responded that it is for equipment. Training and exercises have a separate allocation which are carved out of the same funding source, but are available year-round as opposed to once a year. This application is more for eligible equipment. Although not required to be a regional approach, it gets scored higher if it is regional. Part of the Homeland Security federal guidelines is to be more regional.

Question: Bedford Police Department: Where is the score sheet located on your website?

Question: Pam stated that he could find it by going to the Department of Safety's webpage and clicking on the 2014 Homeland Grant announcement. On the left side of the screen, click on the 2014 Grant. That will open a page full of information. Open the 2014 Competitive Application and at the very end of the application, you will find the scoring sheet (about 2 pages from the end). The link to the 2014 Grant page is:

<http://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/homeland/2014/index.htm>

Question: Milan-Dummer Ambulance Service: The reason I am going for a grant is that we have an ambulance service that is almost folding up. We are in need of portables and pagers.

Answer: Pam responded that pagers are not eligible under the Homeland Security Grant. The Grant program in the last 10 or 11 years has given out a lot of radios for the Fire, Ambulance and some Law Enforcement. Pam stated that she would look to see if Milan-Dummer Ambulance was awarded radios in the past. Pam requested that he call her to discuss the matter further. He said that he would give her a call and that he appreciated the help.

Question: Lancaster Fire Department: We are working on phase one of the project now from last year's grant award. We still have the last phase to go. Where we are still working on phase one, would that be considered in this grant cycle or would it not be as favorable?

Answer: Pam advised that it is certainly an eligible component. She suggested that he may want to call and speak with her off-line regarding how much he could take on timing-wise. Perry added that if he was going to apply for phase two while still working on phase one, he would have to write a pretty strong statement that he would be closing out phase one and would be ready for phase two. In the past, the Grant Committee has been really concerned about awarding a phase two if phase one was not done. You would really need to strengthen your application to reassure the Grant Committee that phase one would be done. Perry suggested that he also plan to attend the Grant Committee meeting to answer any questions that may arise about phase one.

Question: Haverhill Police Department: In regards to a program that we are trying to get going with the Grafton County Dispatch, we are trying to be able to share records amongst all the many agencies that have the same software system. The company that we all use for records management changed hands and now it is cost prohibitive for us to be able to partake in the records sharing. Is that a type of project that would be appropriate for this Grant? Would each police department write their own grant or would Grafton County write one for each one of us?

Answer: Pam stated that historically, RMS systems such as this have not been funded by this program overall. She believes that it is something that is technically eligible on the Authorized

Equipment List (AEL) for this year but will double-check after the call. Pam noted that routine records management sharing isn't necessarily anti-terrorism and all-hazards by nature. That makes it a lower priority. The Homeland Security Grant Program is still the first responder, anti-terrorism, all-hazards program. The primary mission of records management a lot of times is routine law enforcement information sharing.

Question: Haverhill Police Department: We are also looking for some equipment that we don't have up here that we could share regionally. Particularly, cell phone and tablet forensics. What we would like to do in that area is to get the equipment and the training and then offer it to other police departments in the North Country who have the same frustration we do. The forensics lab has that capability, but the State Police come first and it is almost impossible to take advantage of that equipment.

Answer: Pam asked her to call her directly to talk about specifics for eligibility. Funding of more routine law enforcement functions like that is not generally eligible.

Comment: Town of New Boston: This is not a question. I have an offer for the gentleman from Milan-Dummer Ambulance Service. I would like to offer my service because we have limited budgeting as well. I might have some information and some avenues he could take to acquire the equipment needed.

Answer: Pam and Perry thanked him for his offer.

Pam stated that any further questions were to be directed to the Grants Management Unit at 271-7663. The Grants Management Unit is located on the 2nd floor at 33 Hazen Drive. She reminded people that the applications are due on October 3, 2014 at Noon. These minutes will be posted on-line in the next couple of days on the Grants Management Unit webpage.

The call ended at 6:38 p.m.