

RFA NO. 22-32J10210-001

## Questions and Answers

Questions have been anonymized (removing identifiable information). Therefore, wording is not exact.

### I. ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS

#### 1. Is my organization eligible to apply?

**Response:** As long as your organization can answer the minimum qualifications on page 11 of the Request for Applications affirmatively, Commerce encourages you to apply.

#### 2. What is the definition of / what constitutes a 'diaper bank?'

**Response:** Diaper Banks are defined as a social institution or nonprofit organization which provides diapers, wipes, etc., to people in poverty and families in need. Diaper banks accept donations, diaper supplies, and grant funds to provide for children and distribute diapers to partner agencies for distribution to people in their social programs in need of diapers.

#### 3. Is it an eligibility requirement that my organization be officially part of the National Diaper Bank Network?

**Response:** No, it is not.

#### 4. Can a food bank that distributes diapers be eligible for a grant?

**Response:** Yes.

#### 5. Could you clarify what a distribution/bank facility means? Is that an informal term for any location that distributes diaper resources or is there a certification requirement?

**Response:** Yes, this is an informal term to describe a location that distributes diapers to families in need free of charge. There is no certification requirement.

#### 6. If my organization distributes diapers, and receives those diapers from another organization that purchased them, should my organization apply for a grant or should the organization that purchases the diapers apply for a grant?

**Response:** The organization that does the work of distributing the diapers (and supplies) to families should be the applicant in this case. The distributing entity would be considered as the diaper bank for this question.

**7. Our organization operates under the umbrella of a church entity. Does the grantor have any prohibitions in contracting directly with a church?**

**Response:** There are no prohibitions against Commerce contracting directly with a religious entity for this grant. However, the funds provided under the contract may not be used to fund religious worship, exercise, or instruction. No person shall be required to participate in any religious worship, exercise, or instruction in order to have access to items funded by this grant.

Grantees must ensure that any assistance directly or loosely linked to diaper supplies purchased under this grant does/will not require attendance at religious services or classes, nor is there any inducement of conversion to a faith group, institution or cause in order to receive assistance.

**8. One of the requirements of the grant is to have an established business relationship with a diaper company to procure diapers at a bulk rate. Our diapers are currently gifted to our organization. Do you know of any diaper suppliers that might be able to establish this type of business relationship with us to meet the requirement of the grant application?**

**Response:** If the organization obtains diapers by donation, please identify this as the method in which the organization receives diapers and related supplies. Should there be an established relationship through donations from one or more specific entities, the applicant should also detail this information.

**9. The RFA requires an applicant to: 1. Be licensed to do business in the state of Washington, and 2. currently operate a distribution/diaper bank facility located in the state of Washington, and 3. Have at least two years of experience distributing diaper resources. Our organization operates a food bank network serving two counties; we do not distribute diapers regularly but do as they are available to us through our supply chains. Would this count as meeting those requirements?**

**Response:** It is recognized that many Food Banks provide baby and toddler diapers, formula, wipes, etc., to families in their service area who are in need. Leveraging opportunities whenever available by distributing diapers, wipes, etc. through an existing food bank is an acceptable method as long as the Food Bank is licensed to do business in the state of WA. (Please refer to the response for question 4)

**10. On average, 10-15 babies/children are receiving services through our program at a time. Clients itemize their needs on a weekly basis and can order diapers from our supply. Would this qualify as a distribution/diaper bank for the purposes of this grant?**

**Response:** Yes, as long as the organization meets the qualifications required to receive funding under this grant.

## II. EXPERIENCE SECTION QUESTIONS

### 11. Our diaper purchasing and distribution process would change if we received a grant. Where in the application should we detail this information?

**Response:** This information can be included in the Experience subsection under Statement of Need and Financial Summary.

### 12. Since the project funds only diapers, wipes and formula, does the project budget we submit include only diaper, wipe and formula expenses or all related expenses to our diaper bank program?

**Response:** Per the RFP instructions (Section 3.2.2, Item 2), applicants are asked to provide a financial summary of the last three years of expenses as it pertains to your organization's purchase and distribution of diapers, wipes, and other essential baby products to families in need.

**Note:** The Proviso language stated that funds would be used for "diapers, wipes, and other essential baby products". The language did not include the term formula; however, Commerce considers this as an essential baby product.

### 13. I see the RFP might fund 2 to 3 years of this project. Confirming our project budget needs to reflect expenses for the next two to three years?

**Response:** The proviso language provides for funding under these grants from 7/1/21 through 6/30/23. Funding beyond that 6/30/23 is not permitted for this specific proviso.

Per the RFP instructions (Section 3.2.2, Item 2), applicants are asked to provide a financial summary of the last three years of expenses as it pertains to your organization's purchase and distribution of diapers, wipes, and other essential baby products to families in need. Commerce is not asking applicants to provide a budget for the next two - three years, only a financial summary of expenses for the PAST three years.

### 14. Can you please advise of key elements that should be included in the financial summary?

**Response:** The financial summary should include the last three years of expenses as it pertains to your organization's purchase and distribution of diapers, wipes, and other essential baby products to families in need.

Upon successful awards, cost and expense categories will be defined and included in the grant budget.

### 15. For the Staffing and Volunteer section, what does this underlined part specifically mean? "Based upon previous and anticipated demand, provide a description of the proposed staffing structure (including volunteers) and internal controls to be used during the period of this grant."

**Response:** The purpose of internal controls is to help safeguard an organization and further its objectives. Internal controls function to minimize risks and protect assets, ensure accuracy of records, promote operational efficiency, and encourage adherence to policies, rules, regulations, and laws.

### Examples of Internal Controls

Securing supplies/products in a safe area.

Review of invoices and financial statements for accuracy before paying them.

Ensuring checks, cash, and credit/debit cards are secured.

### 16. We are asked to submit three references “for whom work has been accomplished and briefly describe the type of service provided for them.” We serve community members, not other businesses or organization. Will you please clarify what the references should comprise of and who they should be coming from?

**Response:** This response would include any partnerships with other social service programs/agencies in your area. It is understood you provide diaper related supplies to individual clients and families; however we are seeking information on business/partnership relationships that your organization has.

## III. GRANT – ELIGIBLE EXPENSE QUESTIONS

### 17. Can an organization purchase and distribute reusable, cloth diapers?

**Response:** The purpose of this proviso is to ensure that all babies have an adequate supply of diapers. Providing cloth diapers aligns with this purpose. While cloth diapering may not be a good fit for everyone, it can provide a cost effective way to diaper children.

Education and information associated with the distribution of cloth diapers to families who qualify can additionally help alleviate the cost burden of disposable diapers.

### 18. Can a portion of the grant be spent on staffing a Diaper Bank program, and is there a percentage/spending cap?

**Response:** (1) Funding awarded includes the cost of administering supplies funded by this grant. As such, administrative costs (such as staffing, storage, equipment, etc.) would be an allowable use of funds as long as the costs were directly related how the applicant administers (meets the scope of work) designated in the grant. (2) Administration costs should not exceed 10% of the grant award.

**Note:** Please see the response to question 19 for additional information on use of Administrative funds.

### 19. Would the rental of appropriate storage space for diapers be acceptable and eligible for reimbursement through the grant?

**Response:** Yes. Since the Scope of Work requires that diapers and supplies purchased with these funds shall be held in a secure and dry space (including shelving the diapers as needed for distribution) the cost of storage space would be considered an eligible expense.

### 20. As to diapers and “other essential baby needs” for children under 3 years old, what specific essential items, in addition to diapers, wipes, and diaper cream, can be funded (or not funded) by this grant?

**Response:** Supplies purchased with the grant funds should be used to provide diapers (cloth or disposable), wipes, ointments, and formula to children up to 3 years of age. Should other supplies not

listed be needed, the grantee should get approval from Commerce to ensure the item(s) are an allowable cost under the terms of the grant.

**21. Nothing is stated in the RFA about expensing part of the funds for overhead. Will the expense of overhead be allowed?**

**Response:** This answer was provided in question 18.

**22. The RFA does not provide examples of the type of reporting that is required to be submitted to DOC as the funds are utilized. What type of reporting does the department envision requiring from its contracted vendors?**

Reporting Requirements are provided in Attachment A of the Grant Template, which was posted with the RFA. Please refer to Attachment A, under the section entitled Reporting Requirements for a list of anticipated reporting.

**23. I am not seeing a maximum amount of reimbursement in the materials. Is there an amount that these grants will not exceed?**

**Response:** The evaluation panel will review each application per Section 4.3 of the RFA. During this process individual grant amounts will be determined. The proviso language requires Commerce to give priority to providers serving or located in marginalized, low-income communities or communities of color; and providers that help support racial equity. Commerce intends to award a total of \$4.5 Million to awarded applicants during the 22-23 state biennium.

**24. Each diaper bank has core direct expenses to distribute diapers and other children's essentials (i.e. program staff, warehouse space, purchasing/shipping, etc) – will these direct expenses be included in budgets for this award?**

**Response:** This answer was provided in question 18

**25. Is personnel an allowable cost? For example, can we assign a % of FTE time for managing this grant?**

**Response:** This answer was provided in question 18

**26. May we hire 1 or .5 FTE for this proposal, separate from the costs of managing the grant, may we allocate a % of FTE time for the actual distribution of the diapers and other items?**

**Response:** This answer was provided in question 18. Hiring of staff is not prohibited by the grant and should be decided by the grantee.

**27. There is a 5% administrative fee that Commerce will deduct from the whole of the award. Should we account for this 5% in the grant budget by making a specific line item for it?**

**Response:** Commerce intends to issue a total of \$4.5 Million to all awarded grantees during the 22-23 state biennium. Please note: Commerce is not asking for applicants to provide a budget with the

application. The application asks to include a financial summary of the last three years of expenses as it pertains to your organization's purchase and distribution of diapers, wipes, and other essential baby products to families in need.

## IV. SCOPE OF WORK QUESTIONS

### **28. Will there be an opportunity for Diaper Banks to negotiate some of the items outlined in the RFA's Exhibit D - Attachment A: Scope of Work. In particular, my concerns are with these line items:**

**Item #1:** Diaper Banks often source diapers through a number of sources, looking for the lowest price and size/quantity availability. Our diaper bank, and most diaper banks, do not negotiate purchasing directly from manufacturers. Rather we shop the best prices available through various sources including our national association, wholesalers and other suppliers. Most diaper banks do not purchase in quantities to negotiate buying directly from manufacturers.

**Response:** We will delete the duplicated section from the scope of work before grant agreements are executed. Bulk purchases can include products from a manufacturer, retail wholesalers, retail stores, and/or other similar facilities.

**Item #9:** Our Diaper Bank, and many other diaper banks, do not distribute directly to families. Instead, many diaper banks create agreements with organizations in the community (other nonprofits and government agencies) to deliver goods to families. The way this most often works is a client/family being served by a partner works with a staff member to order goods from a diaper bank. The diaper bank fills that order with goods that it has purchased. The partner then picks up the goods and delivers it directly to the client/family. In this circumstance, the partner serves as an agent of the diaper bank, ordering and delivering goods for families. Diaper banks do not compensate partners and all items are provided without charge to end user recipients.

**Response:** This partnership arrangement would be allowable/permitted under the grant scope of work. Commerce recommends descriptions of supply/demand should be included in the applicants Statement of Need and Financial Summary.

**Item #11:** As stated above, many diaper banks do not work directly with the end user client. Rather, diaper banks serve as a centralized hub for the distribution of diapers, wipes and other essentials needed by families. One of the advantages of this model is that clients are able to utilize the case management and other services provided by the partner agency. For example, our Diaper Bank works with a variety of agencies including school districts, hospitals, Public Health districts, early education centers and human service agencies. All of these partners are equipped to provide additional resource and referral services to the clients and families served by our Diaper Bank.

**Response:** This partnership arrangement would be allowable/permitted under the grant scope of work. Commerce recommends descriptions of supply/demand should be included in the applicants Statement of Need and Financial Summary. Service delivery systems and details in the Scope of Work will be agreed upon as part of the grant award process.

**Item #12:** As stated above, many diaper banks distribute through partner agencies. In addition, our Diaper Bank and some other diaper banks, distribute diapers to food banks for distribution to the families they serve. In the case of our Diaper Bank, our Diaper Bank is often the sole or major source of

diapers, formula and baby food for the food banks it serves. We would like to continue to provide this service under the contract with the Department of Commerce. Would that be acceptable?

**Response:** Service delivery systems and details in the Scope of Work will be agreed upon as part of the grant award process.

**29. In Exhibit D, page 14, the scope of work states that grantees will purchase diapers at a negotiated bulk rate price from a diaper manufacture. If we receive a grant award must we buy directly from a manufacturer or will a wholesaler suffice?**

**Response:** Bulk purchases can include purchasing products from a manufacturer, retail wholesalers, retail stores, and/or other similar facilities. The intent is for grantees to purchase at a bulk rate, which usually provides for a discounted cost due to the quantity.

**30. To receive diapers and other essential baby needs, are grantees expected to screen families and collect proof of eligibility, such as income statement, current address, etc., in addition to creating a database for tracking families and the frequency of distribution?**

**Response:** Awarded grantees would not be expected to screen, prequalify families, and/or collect proof of income to distribute supplies under this grant. However, it is expected that client demographics would be obtained from families receiving supplies. This data will provide information that documents the use of funds for marginalized, low-income communities, and/or communities of color. The following reporting requirements will be needed in order to comply with the terms and conditions of the grant award:

Complete an annual report identifying diaper and supply distribution.

Provide an annual narrative report identifying accomplishments and challenges, and summarizing grant activities.

Obtain demographic information from clients upon distribution of supplies and provide summary of client demographics when submitting annual reports to COMMERCE.

**31. Regarding the end of the grant period: what might reporting responsibilities entail? Also, should the full amount of the grant not be spent by the end of the granting period, would that disqualify or penalize a reapplication by our organization?**

**Response:** (1) The following reporting requirements will be needed in order to comply with the terms and conditions of the grant award:

Complete an annual report identifying diaper and supply distribution.

Provide an annual narrative report identifying accomplishments and challenges, and summarizing grant activities.

Obtain demographic information from clients upon distribution of supplies and provide summary of client demographics when submitting annual reports to COMMERCE.

(2) Any unspent funds cannot carryover from one biennium into another. Commerce will de-obligate any unspent funds in each state fiscal year through a grant amendment. This proviso only funds



grantees through June of 2023, thus we do not yet know if there will be a future reapplication process through Commerce.

**32. The RFA does not provide examples of the type of reporting that is required to be submitted to DOC as the funds are utilized. What type of reporting does the department envision requiring from its contracted vendors?**

**Response:** (1) Please refer to the answers provided in questions 30 and 31. (2) This grant does not allow for sub-contracting of funds or services, thus no reporting would be required.

**33. Our organization does not have a direct service/distribution model, but instead partners with large networks of social service agencies providing critical services to promote better outcomes for families; we provide the items they need, and they serve as efficient, effective and equitable community resource hubs. In the Scope of Work, page 14 items #11 & #12 of the RFA indicates the following requirements:**

**#11:** Grantee will establish efforts to provide some level of case management or resource referrals to individuals and families receiving supplies funded by this grant so they may have the opportunity to work toward self-sufficiency.

**#12:** Without prior written consent from COMMERCE, Grantee agrees that items purchased under this grant will not be redistributed to another organization or agency.

**Will this consent be granted for organizational models like ours, who almost exclusively distribute through other organizations?**

**Response:** Yes

## V. GENERAL PROCUREMENT/CONTRACT QUESTIONS

**34. Can you please clarify the Diverse Business Inclusion Plan requirement? Is proof of a certificate required as part of this requirement?**

**Response:** For this RFA, we require the information on Exhibit B to be submitted. Proof of certification, as explained in Section 3.2.3 (3) is optional. Section 2.6 details the Diverse Business Inclusion Plan requirement. Please also reference RCW 39.19, RCW 43.60A.200, and RCW 39.26.005.

**35. We are not an OMWBE business but are a non-profit organization with a majority of the Board of Directors being women but I assume that does not qualify us as such?**

**Response:** The funding does not require that applicants need to be certified by OWMBE. Applicants will be accepted and considered for funding without OWMBE certification. State procurement requirements ask that state offices collect this information/data whenever possible.

**36. Does the Department of Commerce have a preferred RFP template to guide us?**

**Response:** In section 3. Application Contents, there is an order specified with specific headings to be used in a specific order. This is the "outline" or "template" to be used for each application.



### **37. Are there character limit recommendations per each section?**

**Response:** No.

### **38. Is there an application page limit?**

**Response:** No.

### **39. Is there a maximum award?**

**Response:** Proviso language identifies a total of \$2.5M per state fiscal year. Individual grant amounts will be awarded and determined as part of the Evaluation process.

### **40. Would a testimonial or two from our partner agencies help? If so, which section should we include them?**

**Response:** Section 3.2.3, Item 2, identifies documentation that can be used in response to this question. If partner testimonials meet the criteria listed under References, the applicant can include such.

### **41. Is it possible to lift the requirement for a small, nonprofit food bank to purchase specific insurance/liability coverage as a qualifying measure? This requirement would enable us from participating in this grant opportunity.**

**Response:** Contract requirements identify the Grantee must furnish COMMERCE with a certificate of insurance executed by a duly authorized representative of each insurer, showing compliance with the insurance requirements set forth in the grant. The insurance coverage amounts can be amended with each grantee.

### **42. What should be used for the Reference ID?**

**Response:** The insurance documentation covered in section 2.16 is required within 15 days of the grant agreement effective date, after an apparent successful bidder(s) has been identified and the contract(s) has been executed. The insurance documentation is not required as part of the grant application.

### **43. What should be listed for the Reference Agency?**

**Response:** The insurance documentation covered in section 2.16 is required within 15 days of the grant agreement effective date, after an apparent successful bidder(s) has been identified and the contract(s) has been executed. The insurance documentation is not required as part of the grant application.

### **44. What is the official name that should be listed on the COI?**

**Response:** The insurance documentation covered in section 2.16 is required within 15 days of the grant agreement effective date, after an apparent successful bidder(s) has been identified and the contract(s) has been executed. The insurance documentation is not required as part of the grant application.

### **45. What address should be listed for the additional insured?**

**Response:** Commerce will provide this information for all successful awarded applicants.

### **46. Can you explain what the process is for a reimbursable grant?**

**Response:** A reimbursable grant is one where the grantee receives the funds only after they have incurred the costs or expenses for a program or service. This means grantees cover costs initially, then once invoices are submitted; Commerce will reimburse the grantee for expenses/costs.

**47. Does the applicant need to include a 501c3 status for the application?**

**Response:** It is not required for applicants to have or include a 501c3 status.

**48. We have never contracted with the state, therefore I have no idea what type of documentation is going to be required for a) setting up an account, b) what documentation will be required for submission of expenses related to this program?, c) anticipated turn-around time of the funds once expenses are submitted, d) if needed, how often can expenses be submitted or does DOC prefer we aggregate expenses and only submit on a defined time period?**

**Response:** (a) Commerce will provide grantees with instructions on how to set up a Secure Access Washington (SAW) account to submit invoices electronically for reimbursement. (b) Invoices shall describe and document a description of the work performed, the progress of the project, and other related costs. Commerce will provide a template for this information, which needs to be attached to the Expense Reimbursement. Copies of receipts must be provided for any single expenses in the amount of \$50.00 or more in order to receive reimbursement. (c) Payment shall be considered timely if made by COMMERCE within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of properly completed invoices. (d) Expense reimbursement may be submitted no more than monthly; but no less that quarterly.

**49. If multiple programs within the same agency would like to apply to the program, do they need to turn in separate applications or compile all data into one application?**

Please provide one application for any and all programs within one organization.

**50. On page 3, 1.5 Period of Performance, it references that Commerce reserves the option at its sole discretion to extend the grant agreements for two additional two-year periods. Do you have additional information to share about what that would look like?**

**Response:** The proviso language provides funding under these grants from 7/1/21 through 6/30/23. Funding beyond 6/30/23 is not permitted for this specific proviso. COMMERCE would only extend grant agreements in the event of another proviso award for SFY24-25 was authorized by the legislature to awards funds for this purpose in the next biennium.

**51. How will award amounts be determined across diaper banks?**

**Response:** Proviso language identifies a total of \$2.5M per state fiscal year. Individual grant amounts will be awarded and determined as part of the Evaluation process.

**52. I am having trouble logging into WEBS, where can I get help?**

WEBS is run by the Department of Enterprise Services and there is a "help" email address on the site.

You can also download the RFP from the Commerce site, at <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/contracting-with-commerce/wa-state-diaper-bank-project-program-grant-opportunity/>

**53. The RFA explains the purpose of this grant will be to administer funds to reimburse organizations for purchasing diapers, wipes, and other essential baby products for distribution to families in need. Can COMMERCE list some examples of reimbursable baby products that will qualify for reimbursement?**

**Response:** Supplies purchased with the grant funds should be used to provide diapers (cloth or disposable), wipes, ointments, and formula to children up to 3 years of age. Should other supplies not listed be needed, the grantee should get approval from Commerce to ensure the item(s) are an allowable cost under the terms of the grant.

**54. There are not instructions for developing a budget. Should budget documentation be submitted with the proposal?**

**Response:** Upon successful awards, cost and expense categories will be defined and included in the grant budget template, which will be provided by Commerce.

**55. Will the award be exclusive to reimbursement for purchasing diapers, wipes, and other essential baby products, or is there any amount factored in for the operational cost of distributing these products?**

**Response:** Please see the answer provided under question 18.

**56. Does Commerce have a list of recommendations that you can provide for sourcing diapers and baby supplies from Certified Minority Owned, Certified Woman Owned, Certified Veteran Owned, or Washington State Small Businesses?**

**Response:** No. Please reference <https://omwbe.wa.gov/> for more information.

**57. Our organization is the fiscal sponsor for an existing Diaper Bank Network. The Network itself was established in 2020, in response to a community need for coordinated access to diapers. While the coordination is new, the actual distribution of diapers is not. The individual resource centers have a long history of distributing diapers. The RFA includes a minimum qualification that the organization must have at least two (2) years of experience distributing diaper resources. Under these circumstances, does the network we sponsor meet the 2 year minimum qualification? Note: the individual sites have requested the opportunity to submit a joint application, rather than submitting as individual sites.**

**Response:** Yes

**58. Is there a range in the dollar amount of individual awards? How will this award amount be determined?**

**Response:** Proviso language identifies a total of \$2.5M per state fiscal year. Individual grant amounts will be awarded and determined as part of the Evaluation process.

**59. Section 3.2.2 (Experience) item 2 asks that we provide a financial summary of the last three years of expenses as it pertains to your organization's purchase and distribution of diapers, wipes, and other essential baby products to families in need. Our organization would only be able to provide 16 months of expense records. Would this be acceptable?**

**Response:** Yes, as long as the applicant meets the qualifications required to receive funding under this grant. This information can be included in the Experience subsection under Statement of Need and Financial Summary.

**60. What are the rates or terms for allowable reimbursement for staffing costs?**

**Response:** Please see the answer provided under question 18.

**61. Under the scope of work (page 14, item 1), it states that all purchases must be made at a negotiated bulk rate price from the manufacturer. Our diaper bank is a National Diaper Bank Member and is able to receive discounted stock through the national network. We also have a negotiated discount through a local Costco distribution center. Would these partnerships meet this requirement?**

**Response:** Yes