

ANALYSIS

Department of Human Services Senior Medicare Patrol

Analyst: Gregory Jolivette

Request: Approve the submission of a federal grant application to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Community Living in the amount of \$2,205,790 over a five-year period for outreach and education to Medicare beneficiaries.

Analysis: This grant funds outreach and education to seniors about Medicare fraud and how to prevent it. Outreach and education are conducted by partner organizations, who make presentations to community groups and provide written materials at community outreach events. Partner organizations include the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, Centers for Independent Living, and the Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance program. In addition, in 2022, there were over 100 volunteers involved in the effort

Oregon received this five-year grant in 2018. It expires May 31, 2023. This new application if approved would allow the state to continue providing the service for the next five years from June 1, 2023 to May 31, 2028. Of the \$2,205,790 requested, \$369,805 would be used over five years to cover the staff costs of a project director, the balance of funds would support the work of partner organizations, including costs to translate and print outreach and education materials, travel to required conferences, and indirect costs. Most materials are available in English and Spanish, with some materials now printed in the top 10 non-English languages spoken by Medicare beneficiaries in Oregon.

The application due date is February 15, 2023. No state match is required.

Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends the Joint Committee on Ways and Means approve submission of the federal grant application.



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of Human Services

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January 19, 2023

Senator Elizabeth Steiner, Co-Chair
Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court St. NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem OR 97301

RE: HHS-2023-ACL-CIP-MPPG-0006 funding opportunity for Senior Medicare Patrol
State Project Grants

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) Office of Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) requests permission to apply for the funding opportunity HHS-2023-ACL-CIP-MPPG-0006, Senior Medicare Patrol State Project Grant. The total amount sought is \$2,205,790; a maximum of \$441,158 per year over a five-year period. This funding opportunity does not have a match requirement. The application due date is February 15, 2023. This opportunity became available on December 5, 2022.

Background

The recipient funded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) will collaborate with community-based partners and team members to provide outreach and education to Medicare beneficiaries about how to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud. The SMP program plays an important role in the broader Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control (HCFAC) Program by focusing on community outreach and Medicare beneficiary empowerment with the goal of stopping fraud before it occurs.

The mission of the SMP program is to empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education. To further this mission, all SMP program activities are organized around four strategic program objectives:

"Assisting People to Become Independent, Healthy and Safe"

1. Provide group education and one-on-one assistance to Medicare beneficiaries on a statewide basis, with a specific emphasis on those with greatest need.
2. Recruit, train, and retain a diverse, sufficient, effective, and representative workforce equipped to provide high-quality education and one-on-one support.
3. Monitor and assess SMP results through operational and quality measures.
4. Position SMP to respond to changes nimbly and effectively in the programmatic landscape.

ACL funds 54 state SMP projects, including grantees in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the US Virgin Islands. The SMP projects use this funding to provide local outreach, education, and assistance to Medicare beneficiaries through a trained volunteer and in-kind workforce. SMP projects teach Medicare beneficiaries to take proactive steps to protect themselves and the Medicare program from potential fraud, errors, and abuse. SMP projects actively disseminate fraud prevention and identification information through the media, outreach campaigns, community events, and one-on-one beneficiary support. SMPs help individuals and their loved ones understand how to review their health care statements and bills for accuracy, as well as how to identify and avoid potential fraud schemes. If suspicious activity is identified or suspected, SMPs can help answer questions, resolve errors, or report suspicious activity for further investigation.

One key role of the SMP projects is to assist beneficiaries by referring potential fraud complaints on to other investigate entities, as appropriate. This process can include facilitating referrals to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)-Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), Federal Trade Commission (FTC), state Medicaid fraud control units (MFCUs), state attorneys general, and other organizations. Capturing SMP program activity data is also a key function of the projects, including tracking, analyzing, and reporting of beneficiary complaints, referrals, potential savings, and other outcomes.

ODHS APD has operated the state SMP grant since at least 2010. Working in partnership with the Oregon Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance (SHIBA) program, the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO), and the Association of Oregon Centers for Independent Living (AOCIL), the Oregon SMP has developed a network of trained SMP team members who provide outreach and education to Oregon Medicare beneficiaries around the state.

ODHS was awarded this grant last time five years ago, which expires on May 31, 2023. A Program Analyst has been dedicated to this program (.5 FTE) and provides project leadership, technical assistance, grant oversight, and program reporting.

During the five-year project timeline, beginning June 1, 2023, and concluding May 31, 2028, APD plans to share SMP information with Oregonians through outreach, counseling, and education. By educating beneficiaries, their caregivers, and their families about the steps they can take to avoid becoming victims of Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse, the SMP helps protect those individuals from the economic and health-related consequences of these problems, as well as preserve Medicare funds for legitimate health care needs.

Agency Request

The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) Office of Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) requests permission to apply for \$2,205,790 for five years via HHS-2023-ACL-CIP-MPPG-0006.

Legislation Affected

None

If you have questions, please contact Rob Kodiriy at 503-689-7554.

Sincerely,



Fariborz Pakseresht
Director

ec: Amanda Beitel, Legislative Fiscal Office
Gregory Jolivette, Legislative Fiscal Office
George Naughton, Department of Administrative Services
Ali Webb, Department of Administrative Services
Mike Streepey, Department of Administrative Services
Eric L. Moore, ODHS CFO

Oregon Department of Human Services Streepey

Request: The Oregon Department of Human Services requests authorization to apply for a five-year grant of up to \$2,205,790 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the Senior Medicare Patrol Program to empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education.

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) is nearing the end of a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Community Living (ACL) for the Senior Medicare Patrol Program (SMP). The Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) division within ODHS has operated the SMP program since at least 2010. The program is implemented with the help of partners including the Oregon Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance program, the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, and the Association of Oregon Centers for Independent Living. Outreach and education are conducted by the partner organizations, together reaching the entire state. The majority of grant funds received by ODHS are passed through the partner organization to support the work, including the costs to translate and print outreach and education materials, convening community groups and tabling at community outreach events, traveling and indirect administrative costs. The SMP team across the state is over 100 individuals, many of which are volunteers.

ACL requires a grant application even though the funding level for each state is set by a standard formula. ODHS must submit an application for the grant by February 15, 2023. If the ODHS application is approved, the grant would begin on June 1, 2023, and would allow for up to \$441,158 per year for five years. No state matching funds are required for the grant. Much of the work is contracted out to partner organizations, with the contract administration responsibility residing in APD's Community Services and Supports Unit.

The department anticipates continuing the SMP Project Director position (0.50 FTE) to oversee the grant program and anticipates needing \$0.4 million for the position over the five years of the grant. The remaining \$1.8 million would be allocated to the work of partner organizations. No administrative funds, positions, or limitation are requested at this time; however, pending approval by ACL, the department may return to request additional Federal Fund expenditure limitation and position authority.