National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making State Grant Program Announcement and Guidelines

Program Overview and Objectives

The National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making (NRC-SDM) is pleased to announce its State Grant Program. The Program will award grants for state-based projects that:

(1) Adopt an innovative approach to increase knowledge of and access to Supported Decision-Making by older adults and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) across the life course;

(2) Collect and disseminate information to document the positive impacts of Supported Decision-Making in their state and, at least annually, issue a report documenting success stories, challenges and, any system changes that have been made to increase the understanding and use of Supported Decision-Making.

Over the past two decades, research has demonstrated a direct relationship between the self-determination of older adults and people with I/DD and their overall quality of life. The evidence shows that those who exercise greater self-determination are better problem-solvers, more independent, more likely to be employed at higher-paying jobs and less likely to be abused (Khemka, Hickson, & Reynolds, 2005; Wehmeyer, Kelchner, & Reynolds, 1996; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1998). One method designed to increase and maximize self-determination is Supported Decision-Making – which focuses on providing people with the help they need and want to understand the situations and choices they face, so they may make their own decisions consistent with their goals, wishes and desires. (Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities, 2014; Blanck, 2014).

Funded by a grant from the Administration for Community Living (ACL), NRC-SDM documents and disseminates successful Supported Decision-Making practices; conducts research to fill data and information gaps; develops training materials and provides technical assistance to ACL networks on Supported Decision-Making issues, including youth transition; develops strategy that measures and demonstrates the impact of Supported Decision-Making on the lives of people with I/DD and older Americans; and designs and commences implementation of this State Grant Program. The intent of these projects is to collaborate with aging and disability communities, networks, researchers, professionals, and providers to examine and reform policy and practice as needed to make Supported Decision-Making an alternative to guardianship and increase self-determination.

Up to 6 (six) projects may be funded through this application process. The purpose of the small grants is to stimulate innovative Supported Decision-Making practices the can be replicated around the country. Each project funded by this program will become a part of NRC-SDM's Community of Practice and receive logistical, organizational, technical, and other necessary and appropriate support from the NRC-SDM. The resources, research, best practices, and tools that are developed from these projects will be incorporated into NRC-SDM.

General Eligibility Guidelines

This Program will fund initiatives that meet Program objectives and criteria, are innovative and collaborative, and demonstrate knowledge of Supported Decision-Making and existing guardianship and other laws affecting older adults and people with I/DD in their states. Grantees who receive funding under the State Grant Program will be responsible for creating a unique Supported Decision-Making innovation tailored to the distinct characteristics and needs of their states' aging and disability networks and populations. We encourage partnerships among diverse stakeholders including older adults, people with disabilities, family members, advocates, professionals, and providers.

New applicants and former grantees of the State Grant Program are eligible for 12-month grants of up to $4,000.

Each project funded will have one principal grantee (the applicant, in most cases) plus designated partners. The principal grantee will receive the grant funds, manage the project, prepare and submit reports, and serve as the contact with the NRC-SDM. Program funds may not be used to replace lost staff or funding; to fund maintenance of effort or obligations under other grants; to acquire computers or other technology; to fund advocacy beyond that permitted by I.R.S. Code §501(c) or other applicable law; or in violation of other requirements.

The following organizations are eligible to serve as either the principal grantee or a project partner: Organizations providing services and supports to older adults and people with I/DD including private and publicly-funded entities providing advocacy, education, and rights protection, and other entities whose goal is to protect and increase awareness of the rights of older adults and people with I/DD.

Application Guidelines

Available Funding

This Program will provide 12-month grants of up to a maximum of $4,000. Larger budgets using matching funds are encouraged, but not required.

Award Period

Projects will be funded for one year – December 1, 2016, through November 30, 2017. At the discretion of the NRC-SDM, projects may be renewed for additional one-year grants. Priority will be given to projects designed to continue beyond the grant period.

Application Instructions

Our interest focuses on new initiatives and effective, innovative partnerships that meet overall program objectives and demonstrate the ability to identify and implement changes in policy and practice to increase the use of Supported Decision-Making in the applicant's state. Successful applicants will:

(1) Have active involvement by older adults and people with I/DD;

(2) Document commitment from relevant stakeholders in the public and private sector, at a minimum, including the state's DD network and the state's Aging network;

(3) Describe the current status of their state's law, policy, and practice regarding Supported Decision-Making;

(4) Describe their objectives to identify, develop, implement, and report on changes to policy and practice that increase the use of Supported Decision-Making across the life course for older adults and people with I/DD; and

(5) Commit to not use federal funds through the State Grant Program to lobby federal, state, or local officials or their staff to receive additional funding or influence legislation, and comply with all other applicable requirements.

(6) Commit to meet monthly and participate in quarterly virtual meetings of the NRC-SDM's Community of Practice.

To be considered, each application **must** include:

- **Part A – Application Narrative.** Identify the applicant and partners and describe their knowledge of and experience using Supported Decision-Making and their experience creating systems-change increasing the self-determination of older adults and people with I/DD. Describe the current use of Supported Decision-Making in your state and how your innovative project will increase the awareness and use of Supported Decision-Making by older adults and people with I/DD through the life course and help surmount any obstacles. Describe how the project will include the active involvement of older adults and people with I/DD.

- **Part B – Work Plan and Outcomes.** Describe key tasks, timeframe for tasks, anticipated measurable outcomes, and activities to be conducted by each partner.

- **Part C – Budget.** State the total project budget for the one year period from December 1, 2016 – November 30, 2017. Grantee or partner cash or in-kind contribution is not required, but encouraged. If the project will use cash or in-kind contribution by applicant or partners, the application must include the dollar amount of the match in appropriate budget category. Identify the time commitment to the project of key personnel and the total cost of that time commitment. *Note:* This program does not fund computer or other technology purchases.

- **Letters of Commitment.** The application must include a letter of commitment from each partner. The letter must describe the specific tasks that the partner will be responsible for, how collaborative tasks will be staffed and conducted, and the funds to be contributed by the partner. Letters must be submitted as part of application packet.

Application and Decision Due Dates

Applications, excepting Letters of Commitment, must be no longer than 10 pages.

Applications must be submitted on or before September 15, 2016 to:
MWhitlatch@DCQualityTrust.Org with "State Grant Program" in the subject line.
Application receipt will be confirmed by e-mail.

Applicants will be informed if their project was selected for funding by October 31, 2016.

Review Process and Selection Criteria

The NRC-SDM's Advisory Board, in consultation with ACL, will review proposals and select projects to be funded by October 31, 2016.

Projects will be selected based on the following criteria:

(1) Does the project meet overall program objectives?
(2) Does applicant demonstrate understanding of Supported Decision-Making as an alternative to guardianship and a way to increase and maximize self-determination?
(3) Does the applicant describe the need for the project in its state, how the need was determined, and how it will be met?
(4) Do the applicant and partners have the experience necessary to implement the project?

(5) Is the project collaborative and does it directly involve older adults and people with I/DD? Are partner roles adequately defined and confirmed?
(6) Are anticipated outcomes and outcome measurements appropriate to the project?
(7) Can the proposed outcomes be replicated in other parts of the country?
(8) Are staffing, budget, and timeframe consistent and appropriate?
(9) Will project activities continue beyond the project period and be replicable?
(10) Is the project innovative in concept, delivery, or impact on the community it will serve?
(11) Other criteria determined by the NRC-SDM and ACL, including, as appropriate, geographic diversity.

Deliverables:

1. Grantees are required to participate in a bi-monthly conference call with ACL, Quality Trust, and other grantees to discuss successes, challenges, and lessons learned. Grantees may be asked to lead a call on a particular issue that is occurring in their state.

2. Grantees are required, on a quarterly basis, to submit up to five bullet points on successes, challenges, and lessons learned (no more than 100 words total) to Quality Trust.

3. Grantees are required to submit a report no later than November 30, 2017. The report will briefly restate the project's goals, anticipated outcomes, and plans for achieving them, and describe any modifications to the plan and the impact of those modifications. The report will describe the progress made towards achieving anticipated outcomes, lessons learned, plans for continuation, and suggestions for replication. Grantees must include a final budget report and one copy of all products produced under grant. Products must include attribution to the NRC-SDM and the ACL.

The report will be used, in part, to determine whether to renew the project for another year.

Questions?

Contact Morgan Whitlatch, Project Director, at 202-459-4004 or MWhitlatch@DCQualityTrust.Org.