

WEBINAR - 03/01/10

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORTS (APRs) for 326C and 326T Projects

QUESTION & ANSWER FOLLOW UP

During the 03-01-10 webinar on Annual Performance Reports (APR) for FY 10 Continuation funding, several questions from participants were posted in the chat room. This document has been prepared in response to these questions.

Office of Special Education (OSEP) is subject to many layers of reviews regarding priorities, expenditures, and outcomes. What grantees need to be concerned about and focused upon is the completion of their Annual Performance Report (APR) for FY 10 continuation funding. Projects must demonstrate substantial progress during the last 12 month performance period for continued funding. These reviews are done by your Project Officer who must verify substantial progress – this has not changed; there is no panel reviewing APRs for FY 10 continuation funding.

Many of the questions posted during the webinar are NOT about APRs; instead these questions were about the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) that mandates evaluation of OSEP programs. The GPRA program measures for IDEA Part D TA&D Program (CFDA 84.326) are: quality, relevance, usefulness, and cost effectiveness.

To ensure greater alignment and congruence of your Project's APR among the array of projects funded under TA & D Program Authority, OSEP has provided guidance to grantees to include both individual grant project performance measures and the GPRA program measures (i.e., quality, relevance, usefulness, and cost) in your APR.

Important: Project objectives, performance measures and outcomes should align with GPRA program measures (i.e., quality, relevance, usefulness, cost). A panel review is conducted under GPRA evaluation of the OSEP TA&D Program (see Questions 9 and 11 below) and outcomes may impact the funding and types of projects funded under TA&D Program authority.

Questions generated during the webinar, along with OSEP's responses, are identified below:

QUESTION 1

Can performance measures change within a grant cycle? If we discover a better or more relevant way to measure, can we change the measure?

ANSWER

Yes, but you must check with your Project Officer to get approval before doing so.

QUESTION 2

If we indicate that an activity is a program activity, is that item reviewed by an “independent panel”

ANSWER

No. Annual Performance Reports are not reviewed by panels but are reviewed by your Project Officer. Also, see Questions 9 and 11 below.

QUESTION 3

Are the Deaf-Blind Projects now using the independent panels set up for the TA&D projects?

ANSWER

No. The independent panels are required by GPRA for the IDEA Part D TA&D Program – these independent panels are not part of the APR process for continuation funding.

QUESTION 4

Is it accurate to assume that the independent review panel isn't something 326C Projects need to be concerned about? I thought it might be our advisory committee members, our recipients of TA and training, etc.

ANSWER

Yes, that is accurate. Projects do not need to be concerned about the independent review. The independent review panels for the TA & D Program are part of GPRA evaluation process and are managed by OSEP.

Note: 326C Projects should align project objectives and performance measures with program measures (quality, relevance, usefulness and cost per unit of TA) and report this information in the Annual Performance Report.

QUESTION 5

Will OSEP have any guidance about how to calculate the 4th Program Goal: (cost per unit of TA)?

ANSWER

DRAFT Guidelines on cost per unit of TA were distributed via State DB ListServ on March 3, 2010. (See Attached “DRAFT Guidance on Program Measure 4 - Cost per unit of TA ”)

QUESTION 6

Should the APR be modeled after the SPP/APR reporting? It sounds a lot of the same?

ANSWER

Your performance report should reflect your project objectives and accomplishments/progress. See webinar PowerPoint.

A State Performance Plan (SPP) is developed by SEAs for OSEP Part B and C State grants.

QUESTION 7

If we wrote Goal Attainment Scale(s) (GAS) into our grant, can we stop using it and reporting on it?

ANSWER

Yes, but you must get permission from your Project Officer to modify the approved workscope of the grant. APRs need to have Project Objectives, project performance measures and program measures referenced. GAS has never been required as part of APR development.

Some projects find the use of GAS helpful and can continue to do so with approval and guidance of their Project Officer. In particular, many projects report the use of the GAS as a management tool to be helpful. Other projects report that use of GAS in addition to the required logic models, performance measures and program measures in APR is cumbersome and confusing. Therefore, questions about the use of the GAS for your project should be directed to your Project Officer.

QUESTION 8

Are any objectives that support APR automatically program objectives?

The continuation application or the Annual Performance Report (APR) needs to address specific project objectives (as outlined in the grant application) in order to establish satisfactory progress (did you do what you said you would do in the grant application?) The APR should contain *both performance measures and program measures*.

The TA Program measures are quality, relevance, usefulness and cost. (Program measures are used in the aggregate to collect data on the extent to which the OSEP TA & D Program authority is doing what it was funded to do.)

QUESTION 9

Is it true that an independent review panel reads the state deaf-blind grant applications and our annual reports and then decide if our report passes?

ANSWER

No. The determination that your project has made substantial progress is the sole responsibility of your Project Officer.

QUESTION 10

So if I've reported on performance measures that are really just activities, it is okay to stop reporting on them in the same way? I guess I thought there needed to be consistency every year once we reported the first time on targets.

ANSWER

You need to modify your project objectives and develop project performance measures for approval of your Project Officer. OSEP wants projects to be consistent in use of project performance measures and program measures in APRs.

QUESTION 11

I know that OSEP contracts with an agency to collect information regarding GPRA program measures. Does everyone get a letter from the OSEP contractor or is it only a sampling of projects chosen for this data collection?

ANSWER

No, 326 C and 326T projects are randomly selected for participation in the GPRA evaluation of OSEP. OSEP's contractor for this activity is NOT involved with review of APRs for continuation funding.

QUESTION 12

Is there any way OSEP can put one or two examples of "good" completed forms that we can use as a reference?

ANSWER

The Deaf-Blind Portfolio Workgroup is working on this and will work with NCDB to make it available once completed.

QUESTION 13

Where does the cost per unit information get reported? Should it be in Section B or under each Objective?

ANSWER

Cost per Unit data should be included under the Objectives. This may help you to complete your budget for Section B.