

TO: MCH-interested parties

FROM: Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
Division of Public Health, Lifespan Health Services

DATE: May 20, 2011

RE: Update on Competitive RFA for MCH Grants (subgrants of Title V/MCH Block Grant)

Thank you for your continued interest in improving the health of Nebraska's mothers, infants, children and adolescents, children with special health care needs, pregnant women, and women of reproductive age.

The federal Title V/Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Block Grant is awarded annually to Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The portion of the block grant subgranted by DHHS to support community-level work in our state has predictably been open for competitive application every three years. That process is an opportunity to consider new and re-consider existing activities that focus on one or more of Nebraska's MCH priorities over a three-year period.

The RFA release planned for March 2011 was to be for the three-year period beginning October 1, 2011. In March, an email was sent to "MCH interested parties" notifying this large group about a delay in the process. The delay was due exclusively to uncertainty of the funding level of the federal funds appropriated by Congress. To update you, news this week of the specific grants/programs within U.S. Department of Health and Human Services confirms a slight decrease in the block grant for FY 2011 ending in four months. Future FY 2012 funds may be further reduced, yet how dramatically cuts might be is unknown. Congress may not pass the final FY 2012 appropriation bill before the new federal fiscal year begins October 1st.

With that in mind, DHHS will not seek new MCH subgrant applications through a competitive RFA process for the upcoming fiscal year beginning October 1st. The decision is based on knowing that new ventures deserve reliable resources needed to hire staff, incur start-up costs, and to commit resources intended for sustainability at about the same level over three years.

DHHS plans to support local activities in the year ahead by maintaining, as needed, the investments made over the prior three-year period. Current subrecipients will identify status of work, and the level of support that may be needed for ongoing activities not fully sustainable without additional support. DHHS will not fund new projects or expansion of present work in the FY 2012 continuation requests from current subrecipients.

By March 2012, DHHS will re-evaluate whether to release a competitive RFA for FY 2013 – FY 2015 (October 1, 2012 – September 30, 2015). To be notified about MCH grant funds available in the future and other funding announcements, 'subscribe' to the DHHS webpage http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/grants_loans.htm to be automatically alerted whenever a change occurs to that webpage.