Guidelines for Preparing Performance Reports for Discretionary Grants Supported by the U.S. Administration for Community Living

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INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL) views the Guidelines for Preparing Performance Reports, including Semi-Annual Reports and Final Reports, as a template to assist grantees in organizing and preparing grant project Performance Reports supported by ACL funding. These Guidelines discuss timelines and methods of delivery; content and organization; and information dissemination.

ACL supports projects for the purpose of developing and testing new knowledge and program innovations with the potential for contributing to the independence, well-being, and health of older adults, people with disabilities across the lifespan, and their families and caregivers. Deliverables required by all ACL grantees are the semi-annual and Final Reports, as provided for in Department of Health and Human Services regulations, 45CFR Part 74, Section 74.51. These reports are a communication tool and should be clearly written and understandable for a wide range of readers. Performance Reports should document project findings, outcomes, activities, methods, lessons learned, and products of significance to the fields of aging and disability.

Recognizing that there may be reasonable variations depending on the grant opportunity, report authors should consult with the assigned ACL Program Officer about modifications of Performance Report requirements. Grantees should take note that failure to submit reports within the recommended timeframe may result in corrective action.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Performance Reports are a significant tool for informing ACL regarding project development and outcomes and in maximizing dissemination and utilization of the project results and findings. Semi-Annual and Final Reports provide the grantee the opportunity to document their innovative program from inception to completion and to assist ACL to understand the project experience and its implications for others. Success of a grant project is not measured by whether or not the project achieved anticipated outcomes, but rather by the lessons learned through the project and how well they are articulated so as to inform future activity. ACL encourages you to use Performance Reports as a tool to record your activities as well as to inform ACL and other interested parties of the significant knowledge you gained, what you would have done differently, and of any activities planned for the future.

A. Performance Report Submission

Semi-Annual Reports are due 30 days after each 6-month reporting period. Final Reports are due within 90 days of the project's completion date. The Final Report takes the place of the Semi-Annual Report at the end of the final year of the grant. For example, a project funded for one year will have one Semi-Annual Report and one Final Report, while a project funded for three years will have five (5) Semi-Annual Reports and one Final Report.

Grantees are required to submit all Performance Reports directly into their GrantSolutions electronic file.

B. *Performance Report Style*

Performance Reports should be written for all audiences, including professionals in the Aging and Disability Networks at the federal, state and local level. The author's intent should be simplicity in approach and language, with professional jargon kept to a minimum.   Technical terms should be defined.

C. *Performance Report Format*

The length of a Performance Report will be determined by the reporting period and subject matter. Final Reports, for example, will be longer since they cover the entire project period rather than a six-month reporting period. Performance Reports should:
- Use a font size of 12, preferably in Times New Roman
- Be double-spaced
- Include one (1) inch margins
- Include footnotes on a separate page in single line spacing

PERFORMANCE REPORT ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT

Below is a description of the content for each section required for Semi-annual and Final Reports listed in the order they should appear in your report. Grantees should direct any questions they may have about report content to their assigned Program Officer. Grantees (Project Directors/Principal Investigators) should ensure that submitted reports follow internal organizational policies and procedures.

Performance Report Organization Summary

Semi-Annual Reports
- Title Page
- Activities and Accomplishments
- Appendix

Final Reports
- Title Page
- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary
- Introduction

- Activities and Accomplishments
- Appendix

Performance Report Contents

A. *Title Page (All Performance Reports)*

The title page should contain the following information:
- Project Title
- Project Director/Principle Investigator contact Information including grantee organization name, address, phone number and e-mail address
- The byline credit with the names of all other report authors in addition to the Project Director.
- The ACL Grant Award Number
- Total Project Period
- Reporting Period (Semi-Annual Reports Only)
- The Date of Report
- ACL Program Officer
- ACL Grants Management Specialist

B. *Table of Contents (Final Reports Only)*

A table of contents should contain page references to all major sections of the report. List all main headings on the left side, and type corresponding page numbers for the start of each heading on the right.

C. *Executive Summary (Final Report Only)*

All Final Reports must begin with a 1 page Executive Summary. An Executive Summary should capture the project's purpose and scope; target population; results/important findings and lessons learned; products developed (including intended use and audience); program and policy implications; and recommendations, if any.

D. *Introduction (Final Reports Only)*

The introduction should provide a brief overview of the project and any background information that is necessary to understand the project planning strategies, goals, objectives, activities, and findings.

E. *Activities and Accomplishments*

The Activities and Accomplishments section serves as the body of your report. Below we have outlined the areas to be covered for Semi-annual Reports as well as for Final Reports. For each of these reports, grantees are asked to respond to a series of questions. Grantees should organize this section of their report by listing the question, followed by the response.

Semi-Annual Reports

   1. What did you accomplish during this reporting period and how did these accomplishments help you reach your stated project goal(s) and objective(s)? Please note any significant project partners and their role in project activities.

   2. What, if any, challenges did you face during this reporting period and what actions did you take to address these challenges? Please note in your response changes, if any, to your project goal(s), objective(s), or activities that were made as a result of challenges faced.

   3. How have the activities conducted during this project period helped you to achieve the measurable outcomes identified in your project proposal?

   4. What was produced during the reporting period and how have these products been disseminated? Products may include articles, issue briefs, fact sheets, newsletters, survey instruments, sponsored conferences and workshops, websites, audiovisuals, and other informational resources.

Final Reports

   1. What measurable outcomes did you establish for this project and what indicators did you use to measure performance? To what extent did your project achieve the outcomes?

   2. What, if any, challenges did you face during the project and what actions did you take to address these challenges?

   3. What impact do you think this project has had to date? What are the lessons you learned from undertaking this project?

   4. What will happen to the project after this grant has ended? Will project activities be sustained? Will project activities be replicated? If the project will be sustained or replicated what other funding sources will allow this to occur? Please note your significant partners in this project and if/how you will continue to work on this activity.

   5. Over the entire project period, what were the key publications and communications activities? How were they disseminated or communicated? Products and communications activities may include articles, issue briefs, fact sheets, newsletters, survey instruments, sponsored conferences and workshops, websites, audiovisuals, and other informational resources.

F. Appendix (All Performance Reports)

Include a copy of each project product as a separate attachment and identify each by capital letters in sequence, i.e. A, B, C, etc.

PERFORMANCE REPORT FOLLOW-UP

Upon receipt of each Performance Report, the Program Officer will review the report and communicate with the grantee should there be any questions or concerns. Program Officers are required to complete a Grants Monitoring Statement following the receipt of each Performance Report. The Grants Monitoring Statement summarizes the report and any follow-up recommendations and designates each report as either acceptable or unacceptable. If a report is found to be unacceptable, the Program Officer makes recommendations for any corrective action to be taken by the grantee. The Program Officer will then seek ACL approval and work with the grantee on any approved corrective action.   Approved Performance Reports become a part of the official grant file.

FEDERAL FINANCIAL REPORTS

The Federal Financial Report (SF-425) is required annually, unless otherwise noted in the Notice of Award. Annual reports are due 90 days after the end of the budget period and the final report is due 90 days after the project ends. Any project funds that remain unused at the end of the project period as reported on the SF-425 are returned to the Treasury, unless the grantee has requested an extension during the time the grant was active.

ACL requires cumulative financial reporting through consecutive funding periods. SF425s should be signed by the certifying official in the recipient's finance/budget office. SF425s should be submitted to ACL electronically. The e-copy of the SF-425 can be sent to: grants.office@acl.hhs.gov. A copy should also be sent to the grantee's Program Officer.

The Federal Financial Report Form (SF-425) can be found at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms; instructions for completing the SF-425 are available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/grants/standard_forms/SF-425_instructions.pdf.

SAMPLE: SEMI-ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT COVER SHEET

1. Grant #: _____

2. Project Title: _____

**3. Grantee Name
   & Address:** _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

4. Telephone #: _____

5. Project Period: _____

6. Reporting Period: _____

7. Final Reporting Period: _____

8. Project Director/Principal Investigator _____

   Telephone #: _____

9. Report Author _____

   Telephone #: _____

10. Date of Report: _____

11. ACL Program Officer: _____

12. ACL Grants Specialist: _____