Webinar on Simplifying the Funding Search Process with youth.gov

>> OKORI CHRISTOPHER: We'll get started in about five more minutes. Thank you for joining

>> AMBER HAMMOND: Hello, everyone, we're going to give everyone a few more seconds to get on at the top of the hour, especially people rushing from another meeting. While we're waiting on that, I'm going to go ahead and share my screen.

>> AMBER HAMMOND: Let's go ahead and get started. Welcome, everyone, we're glad to have you for this webinar on simplifying the funding search process. My name is Amber Hammond, and I'm the content manager and I'll be taking you on a tour of the website today.

Specifically, as it relates to helping your federal funding search and application process. We have a few housekeeping notes. First, there is a closed captioning pod open in your Adobe Connect screen. And you can follow along with this as you need to. We'll also be sharing the transcript along with a recording of this webinar on the youth.gov funding search page.

And I invite you to come back and listen to it at any time and share it with your colleagues. If you have technical difficulties during today's webinar, you are invited to enter them into the chat pod or ask a question. And we have somebody who is waiting on hand to help you troubleshoot those. We also have a question and answer portion and encourage you to put it in the question and answer pod and we'll be collecting those and get through as many as we can.

We'll also be asking a few poll questions today and invite you to share your answers with everyone in the chat pod. While we're getting started, it's my pleasure to introduce to you the Chair of the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs Cheri Hoffman, and she'll be giving you information about the entity that sponsors the youth.gov website called the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs.

>> CHERI HOFFMAN: Thanks, Amber. I want to add my welcome to you. We're excited that you've found us and you're interested in the topic of figuring out how to get some federal funding into the youth serving organizations that we consider our audience for youth.gov.

I serve as the chair of the Interagency Working Group. I work in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the U.S. Secretary of Planning and Evaluation. And it's really one of the highlights of my job that I have the opportunity to chair this working group which was established under an executive order from president George W. Bush back in 2008. And really aimed at coordinating and collaborating across the youth serving organizations in the Federal Governments to improve youth outcomes.

At this point, we're up to 20 plus U.S. departments and agencies. Everyone from the Department of Defense and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health. And the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Program. A lot of different offices. Hopefully, it's everyone with some programming that is directly touching youth.

And we are consistently meeting and working to find out how we can better coordinate and kind of break down those silos that people tend to run into when you have different federal funding streams and different objectives and goals from coming from different parts of the Federal Government. We work to work across the silos in an effective and coordinated way to improve outcomes for young people.

And the thing that most folks outside of the Federal Government would know us for operating youth.gov. The youth engage for change website, which is undergoing a refresh at the moment. And we're looking forward to relaunching that shortly.

But today, we wanted to give you a little bit more information about the funding center, which is part of youth.gov. Quite often, the first question we run into when we're out talking about the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs is where funding can be found and how it can be made available.

And so, the team at American Institutes for Research headed by Amber on this call has really done a fantastic job of relaunching this part of our website and creating an incredible resource for those of you out there who are looking to find out how to bring these federal streams of funding into your community.

So, we're really excited about it, we're thankful for their work and thankful to you all and the work you do every day on the ground with young people and hope we can be a resource for you. We look forward to it and we will be here to answer questions at the end. Thanks so much.

 >> AMBER HAMMOND: Thank you so much, Cheri. We'll go over the webinar objectives as a refresher from when you signed up. So, after today's webinar, we hope you'll be able to use youth.gov's custom funding search tool. It searches Grants.gov's funding base for opportunities specific to improving youth outcome.

You'll also be able to use youth.gov's mapping tool. This tool generates maps of local and federal resources so you can assess the assets in your community.

Finally, you'll be able to navigate youth.gov to find a plethora of tools and resources to support your federal funding search and application process. We'll begin with a look at the funding center lending page. It's the best place to get started for this process.

You can access this page from anywhere on the youth.gov site by clicking on this menu icon in the upper right corner and selecting funding search.

There we go. For our first poll question before we dive into this page, we wanted to know where you currently are in the funding search or application process. Are you new to the process? Have you been doing it for a while? Are you in the throes of preparing? Are you waiting on an application to be reviewed? Have you received funding and moving forward with it? Or you starting the process all over, again?

So please feel free to share your experience and your — where you are in the chat window for everyone. Looks like some people are typing. We'll give you a few minutes. Looking for grants, new to the process, great. Completed state but not federal. Good. Just beginning. Looking for opportunities. All right. Keep those answers coming. And looks like, there's a few different levels of where you're at and your experience.

And so, we have the funding search page set up in a way that lets you enter the process where you are. So, if you've already started — if you're already done with your preparation, you can jump right to the applying part, which also includes the search part. And then, if you're into the planning and the writing, then stages three and four will help you learn about the components and the tips. And we'll go into each of these pages in detail as we run through this.

So, thank you. The first section we want to look at is preparing. And that's number one. You click there. And there are several different ways that you can get ready to apply. We pull a lot of this information directly from Grants.gov and process it in the — here on youth.gov in a way that's applicable to those that are serving and working with youth so that you don't have to go through all of the pages. Grants.gov, we've already done that for you.

So, the first step is registration. You use these arrows to expand and collapse this information. And so, there's the first steps include setting up a number, a Sam.gov number and a Grants.gov user name and password. Do you already have these accounts and numbers? Have you heard of them? Are you — do you already have them and you've used them in other grant writing processes before? Just give us a little bit of an idea of where you are with those.

Looks like there are some new people to the process and some people already have them. And, again, that's what we would expect here in this webinar. And that's why we included this information here so you can see it all in one place, all of the stuff that you need to. And go through and if you click on each of these, you'll be able to go directly to the sites where you can access that information and there's even a quick start guide from Sam.gov on how to get started with theirs. So, we've pulled this all together for you. And outlined each of the steps of those. And also wanted to point out to you that you can create your Grants.gov username and password as an individual or an organization. And that can be done as soon as you have your number.

The next part we have on here is searching for grants. And we're actually going to put a pause on this one for just a moment because we really want to dive into that search process in our funding search tool. And before we get to that, I want to show you a few other details on the preparation process.

So, we'll put a pin in that and come back. And then, we have some advice here for conducting your background research. And all of these tools are related to the tools that we have on youth.gov. And that includes youth topics and I'll open that. You can either click right from here or, again, you can access that from any page in the website in the menu and it's our top item.

The youth topics, there are 27, 28 different youth topics that we have aggregated all of the federal partners that make up the Interagency Working Group. We've taken their information about how their programs and their research on each of these topics as it's related to youth. And it's we've aggregated that here. If you're looking for information on teen dating violence prevention instead of having to go with five different federal websites to define how they address that issue especially as it relates to youth, we've brought it all together here in this youth topic. So, this kind of acts like a mini website or microsite within youth.gov and allows you to find some information on the issue as the topic you're looking at.

This is good for writing background information, finding sources so you can explore and do some more research. We always start out with an introduction to the topic or the problem or the problem to be solved. And give some information. Statistics as updated as we can keep them. Always recommends going to the sources of the statistics that we have on here. And making sure that you're using the most up-to-date numbers.

And we discuss a lot of these topics. The same basic information you would need. The risk and protective factors. What are the consequences? What are the outcomes that you could expect from this topic as it relates to using teens and young adults?

And then, additional federal resources that you can go and explore those and tools and documents and websites and trainings and webinars. Anything that is related to this topic from the federal partners.

And that's in a list format. When you're on a different part of the topic and looking at prevalence, we've written it in a more informational, conversational tone so that you can get an idea of the framing of the issue. And it's always, always in youth topics, we have a set of references. So, anything that we've referenced in the footnotes within the youth topics, you can find the full set of citations in one place here. And use that as your own bibliography to find more information for your search.

So, back to this page on preparing. Another tool that we have is the map my community tool. And that's the mapping tool I referenced in the objectives earlier. And this is where you can find what's happening in your area. This map is good for you to identify potential partners to work with, see who is using — see who is using federal funds in your area that you might join forces with them.

This is also a way to see if this problem that whatever grant you're looking for is or is not being addressed in your community. And you can put that into your application as is necessary. The feature can be accessed, again, from any page on the website with this menu bar. There's a few ways to search, enter a keyword. If there's something specific, like, we're going to stick with the T11. There we go. And scroll in, there are related programs all over the US. If you want to drill down to just one specific area, we'll take Washington, D.C. Then, we can filter that down. And you can that with or without a set of key words already selected.

If you're looking for any programs in your area, you can just search by the ZIP Code. And as you can see in D.C./Georgetown area, there are quite a few programs in general. There's two different ways to look at this. Whenever your results come up, there's a list down here that is written. And you can also click on any of the individual map icons and it will also pull up the information that's in this chart below.

So two ways to access this. You can see, literally, down your street, what somebody is doing with federal funds in your neighborhood. You can also expand or tighten your search as you need to. You can also, then, for a keyword isn't working for you and it's either too — it's too narrow, so we have a list of the most used youth topics.

In these federally funded program. So, you can drill down to one or more of these. As you're looking and finding programs, say I want to find the programs — on bullying. Finding programs on mentoring, then, I can search that way. If I want to be a little bit more broad and find any programs in the area that come out of one of the departments that are partners in the Interagency Working Group, then I can choose that way. I can click on that and it'll show me with the pens and the map and the chart. Stay tuned and come back to this.

And in short order, we'll be having a functionality added to this that will let you download this list into a CSV or Excel file so you don't have to select and copy and paste. You can just have it exported and use that spreadsheet as you need to. The next item we have is the reviewing — your evidence-based programs. You might come across a requirement in RFP for a — for using something that is backed by evidence.

And we have a whole microsite on youth.gov about investing in evidence and using evidence. And promising practices. We want to bring your attention to a couple of things in here. One is the evidence-based program directories. This is another way to search program, and you can do this by partner agency.

And expand and collapse this. And the corporation for the National and Community Service has a program called evidence exchange.

From there, you can see what they're doing. And look at the programs and search their programs. And find out more about them, the type of study. This is an interesting place to explore in. We definitely urge you to do that.

Another item we want to bring your attention to, and this ties into one of the components we'll talk about is having an evidence-based program. If this is something you want to do and you found some examples in the directory and don't know where to start on this, there's a whole planning guide here. We could have a whole other webinar on this. I'll invite you to come back and look at this on your own. And use the tools we have in it.

One more thing we have in the preparation phase is we have key terms for you. If there's anything you're saying, what is that? Especially if I flip into using an acronym you might not be familiar with, we do have this glossary. And we give the definitions of some of the less familiar terms that we use throughout this whole section.

Wanted to bring your attention to that. Next, we have on the website, federal resources, also, we call them federal links. This is something in your research that — this is a database we also have you can search to find any resources that are — we pull these from the announcements. And so, if there's some a report that's important, we've added it here to the federal resources section. Let's choose one from the Department of Ed.

Again, the other search tools, there's different ways to filter key words, agencies, topics, departments. This houses all of the information we have. There's items on things you need to share in your programming information. This helps you narrow down to the resources that are out there. Some of these are available within the youth topics if you just want to hone in on a specific resource or a specific set of resources, this is a good way to make that search happen.

One other item for the preparation is our collaboration profile section. I mentioned earlier about partnering with someone. This is where we've highlighted examples of entities that have partnered organization to organization or organization to state, organization with a federal agency and what they've done and learned, most importantly. For each of these, again, click into this and becomes its own little microsite.

For this particular collaboration, you learn about what it is, how it's set up, promising practices and lessons and then, some accomplishments and resources. It gives you an idea in a model of how you might be able to do this, as well. Gives you an idea as to how you would write a proposal you would do similarly to what they've already done. Also have these organized by what stage they're in the collaboration.

Some of them were still in the initiation stage when we interviewed them, and this is what they wrote about. Some of them in the implementation stage. Some of them have already been implemented and they're in their sustaining phase. And this is something that also, you would want to look at system ability as one of the components we're also going to talk about.

So, without further ado, we're going to get to my favorite part of this. And it's the part that is the grant search. This is part of the part you've been waiting for. This is the actual search function. What we've done is we have mapped from Grants.gov any grants are related to youth, teens, adolescents, young adults, et cetera, within the 10 to 24 age group. Grants that are currently available, and competitions that are currently open. And that are related to this. So that way, you don't have to go into Grants.gov and do the searching there and find all the other things that come up that aren't necessarily related. We've done that hard part for you in the polling.

So, again, these are organized can be searched by keyword, agency. So, if you are a nonprofit without 5013C, and you don't want to have to look through all of the other — all the other competitions that aren't related to you or you're not eligible for, you can do that, you can narrow it down just to the ones you're eligible for.

You can also choose to narrow it down by topics. So, again, if the keyword search isn't coming up with what you're looking for, we have these related to our youth topic subjects. And again, we have the agencies.

Specifically, if you're looking for a Department of Defense competition, then you can just drill directly to that. And then, another thing that is really cool about this funding search is that when you are using these filters, let's say you are looking for one with the Department of Health and Human Services. Just did a quick refresh in the background there. Now, if I'm looking at eligible applicants and I'm — pick one next and I'm a county government. And I then have topics, can you see there are some that are grayed out? This is to let you know that there aren't any opportunities related to children of incarcerated parents for county government for the Department of Health and Human Services. That is currently not existing in Grants.gov. So, you can find that here without going through the trouble of clicking on it and coming up empty and thinking, what have I done? It's not working.

It is working, it's just not something that exists. So, you can further narrow it down to education and the top — and the 24 options show up for you. And for each of these, you can learn more about them through the information here. And it also provides you the CSDA number. If you need to go back into Grants.gov and get more information or apply for it, this is the funding number and the CSDA numbers are the numbers you're going to want to pay attention to.

And we go over what those numbers are in the key terms. And we're also working on an item here that will let you download these results. Stay tuned. We're excited to bring you that.

All right. Next step is applying. And this is a relatively new process. Grants.gov recently at the turn of the 2018, beginning of 2018 updated the application process. And so, we have the brand new process listed here. And also, linked back to Grants.gov so you can find the full set of information. But the process between from checking to see if you're eligible through registering and completing and then, checking your application are all here.

One of the things it asks for. I'm going to ask this in the poll question is how many people are there or will there be on your grant writing team? Or is it just you? Do you have more than three? Do you have somewhere in between? Just go ahead and pop those in there. That's an important thing to know going into this because when you register, might not be registered.

When you're registering your organization my apologies, this web site is changing all the time. We're trying to keep it right up to date with what — and here we go. This work space overview, there's three different avenues you can take to tailor your application work flow. And I asked the poll question about how many people do you think will be involved because that number will be the basis for which of these three actions you take.

If you just have a couple, then you'll want to go through the basic work space application. If you have three to five people, and people who will be registered users on Grants.gov, you'll want to go through this intermediate work space. And if you have more than five or external users on your team, you'll want to go through the more advanced one. All kinds of wonderful time lines and roles and and a good management type of system. And there's some information and how to keep going through that. We've simplified the basics of what you need to get organized right here.

Next, we have common proposal components. And I've referenced this a couple of times, especially when we've talked about sustainability and implementation if you're implementing an evidence — using evidence-based program. And this also links you back over to the microsites. Each of these items from developing a program through developing a budget and planning for sustainability and evaluation are all items that you might see in the request for proposals that you need to address.

So, for each of these items that we see a lot, we give you a little bit of a background on what that is, what you can expect to be doing when you're filling out that section. And then, some federal resources that are connected to writing to that, specifically.

And just encourage you to go through each of these, especially as you dig into what is required in your writing. And take advantage of these tools and they're gathered here in one spot. And for this next part of the process, we have given you some tips for writing in general.

Not only do we go over the common proposal components, which depend on who's funding the funding requests. We've given you sort of a checklist of what to make sure that you do regardless of what you're writing in and who you're writing to.

And so, more than anything is carefully reviewing the request for application or proposal. We can't stress enough how important it is to read that, reread it, make notes in it, tear it apart and make a checklist and figure it out and make sure that everything is addressed exactly how it's supposed to be addressed and don't skip anything. Don't think it's not important. If it's in the RFP, it's important to the people who are reading it.

If there's a chance for asking questions, take advantage of that time and ask those questions. If there's something that you feel like might be an issue that you weren't — that doesn't look like it's addressed, ask it.

And we've included something that seemed really minor, font size, margins, these matter. They're not just there for show. Pay attention to those indefinitely. And that's the small focus. And then from the

large focus, you want to also make sure you have a strategy at hand for what you want to say and how you want to say it.

And so, we hope that these tools that we have on the website can really help the wrap around for being able to address these components and address these tips for you.

And we also have some very practical links to very practical resources. So rather than giving you all the details right here, we've got some great items that we sent. Federal items that we found. And we put them in one place to be able to reference and help you.

And finally, I want to point out this federal funding sources page. This is the page where all of the partners for the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs are listed. If you can see. And it's not just in an about sort of way. This is in a way related to how they fund different opportunities.

For instance, let's say ED, click on here. It gives you a little bit about — it gives you the mission statement. And then, a direct link to the page on their website that has an overview of all of their funding opportunities.

Then, they have some different discretionary programs, formula programs and technical assistance centers that do more specialized funding. And any of these federal funding sources that you click into, we have these organized in this way to give you this high-level look of what's available.

So, for instance, for the Department of Health and Human Services, we have the links to their main funding opportunities page. But then, we also were able to identify several of the agencies within the Health and Human Services Department that have a youth or young adult related focus and found their pages where their funding opportunities are located.

So specific to the agencies, as well. So, this could be helpful if you're looking for a specific type of opportunity or program that if it's not listed and not current and open that — and found in our search tool, this can tell you some more about the background of previously funded programs and some pages have some information about forecasted programs. So, you can get more of a 360-degree view of that information.

And, again, this structure we have this on most of the pages just depending on what the funders have available. But there's some special programs that are related to youth, but we've pulled out the information for. So, these could serve as models for you to see what's being done at the federal level. And then, we have clearinghouses and the technical assistance centers, again, is a wealth of information for specific types of grants. We have the homelessness resource center. Which is going to provide different information than, say, the adolescent HIV/AIDS prevention resource center. And we recommend taking stock of what's here. And again, we've done all of the search for you. It's all in one place.

I want to go back to the funding source home because not only do we have all of our partners listed, then we also have them tagged in the way that lets you narrow down to if you're looking for funding that's specific to education and employment, then you can do that in the — it did change things in the background here. Let's do one that you can see. If you're looking for federal funding on health and wellbeing, did you see when I clicked that? The information that was here changed.

So, these are the partners that really have a focus in the health and wellbeing sphere. And then, youth support, family support, school and work. So, you can narrow it down or you can look at it from the bird's eye view here.

So, we have about 13 minutes left. And I want to open the floor now to any questions that you have. And if you've asked some before, we have somebody who has been taking a look. And if you have any now, we'd be happy to answer that. Cheri will also be glad to hop back on and answer questions from the Federal Government perspective and the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs' perspective. And we'll let you ask some questions. Is there something you want to see me go over, again? Or how I got to it? Or what else you might be able to do with that tool. Dream big. What do you want to be able to do here? I see a question that asks how long is the process from writing to funding?

And that — that's a fantastic question. I'm going to open it up to Cheri or Juliette on my team. I think I know the answer. And I think it would not be great. Go on.

>> CHERI HOFFMAN: That is really going to depend on, from grant application to application. So, each one of the funny amounts that gives you an idea of how long it's going to be be open. An agency is going to take time to review the grants and then, just the winners and award them.

It's going to depend to some degree at what point in the degree when the awards come out and when they have to distribute the funds by. Many federal grants have to be distributed by September 30th. And often the funding awards are running right up against that deadline. But sometimes, they're on different — sometimes, they have authority to dispense the funds later. It can be a varying time line.

Sometimes, they're working really quickly and put grants out with a five-day turn around for folks to get information in that's definitely not the ideal. I think you usually were trying to give folks or program agencies that do granting like this, trying to give folks, you know, 30 to 60 days to put their application together. And then, it's probably going to be a couple of months from that. But, you know, they should be communicating as much as they can in the funding announcement about the time and the — for that particular grant cycle.

>> AMBER HAMMOND: Thank you, Cheri. That's what my answer was going to be. It depends.

>> CHERI HOFFMAN: A favorite answer to every question.

>> AMBER HAMMOND: Exactly, exactly. So that question that came in about is there recording from today's webinar? Yes, we are recording today's webinar, and we will house that here in the funding search center.

But we will also be sending it out, the link to everyone who has registered via email early next week. So, thank you for asking that. And be on the lookout. And then somebody else asked is there an email list or newsletter that circulates new grant opportunities for youth programs? I'm very glad you asked that. And I promise, this is not a setup. We did not ask somebody to ask that.

But we have two places you can find that. One is our announcements page, which we had not talked about. And we have these organized by upcoming events and one of the categories we have is funding opportunities.

And also, another part of the website is that you're on, you might find yourself if there's any current opportunities that we have in our announcements. They'll show up in this blue bar up here. All of our announcements end up going to our to our newsletter. Here, and we'll include an invitation to subscribe to the newsletter when we send out the link to today's webinar. But you can sign up for youth.gov's email list. And that will give you twice a month a set of announcements that include funding opportunities as well as in topical information from our partners and what resources we have related to that topical information on the youth.gov site and our youth engaged for change site.

And then, a sort of tool from another federal partner to the topic at hand. And we try to coordinate those with current or upcoming observances to help you prepare for those. So, thank you for asking that. And we will be sending this out or else you can look right now the URL in your screen.

And maybe somebody on my team can drop that in the chat box. People can click on it as we're here. So, looking at other questions. If you're searching for programs within a state, there a way to find the point of contact? In the state? I think you're talking about current programs. I'm glad you asked that. Pulling up an example of what you can see here. And the information that is here. You can also see, we do have the recipient's name and that's usually the organization name and the recipient address. The reason we don't have a website or email address or a person's name here is because we pull this information from another website. And unfortunately, that other website does not have that information and provides that as an output for us to be able to include in the input.

We are racking our brains and trying to find ways around this and just to overcome this issue. But in the meantime, we have the information as we're given it. And unfortunately, just the address and the organization name.

Thank you for understanding. And am I missing any questions? Okay. Doesn't look like I am. And I'm not seeing any. But I'm going to go over one more thing. And while I do, we'll be glad to take any last-second changes.

I wanted to show you in addition to inviting you to join our email list, we wanted to invite you to join our twitter. And this is where we retweet and send out information from our website about youth related happenings, what we go through. Again, like we do on youth.gov. We go through all of the federal youth-related twitter accounts. Every day. And highlight by retweeting the most relevant youth related information that they've put out that day. Not have to follow — it says we're only following 45.

That's who we're officially following, we have a laundry list of additional accounts that we look at every day. And Tweet from. Also, share announcements through this, as well. We invite you to come and be a part of that as well as to subscribe to the email lists. I'm not seeing any more questions, so I want to thank you all for your time and for being here today and your interests and hope that you were able to find information you needed.

If you do have follow-up questions, please don't hesitate to write us or call us for our help desk and we'll be able to answer that one-on-one with you. Thanks, again, everyone, have a great day.

>> CHERI HOFFMAN: Thanks, everybody.