

NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS

Moderator: Michele Higgs
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3:00 p.m. EDT

Operator: Thank you for standing by and welcome to the Neighborhood Networks' conference call.

Today's call is being recorded.

At this time, I would like to turn the conference over to Ms. Michele Higgs; please go ahead, ma'am.

Michele Higgs: Thank you, Clara and welcome, everyone, to the Neighborhood Networks March conference call. I'm Michele Higgs and today I'm joined by Jonathon Rogers one of our technical assistance coordinators. We represent the technical assistance team that works with you to address the needs of the Neighborhood Network centers nationwide.

Today, I salute Neighborhood Networks Director Delores Pruden and the HUD staff for coordinating the contents of this call. The topic is one of great importance and that is HUD's Super Notice of Funding Availability or SuperNOFA. Delores is with us today so I'm going to ask her to introduce the topic. Delores?

Delores Pruden: Hello, Michele and good afternoon to everybody. Today's topic, as Michele has said, is the process for participating in the SuperNOFA. Here at HUD it's a very important event for us because it's when we annually advertise to the public about the money that we're giving out and

there's billions of dollars included in the SuperNOFA package. I know that it's very important for Neighborhood Networks centers to understand this process and figure out ways that they can participate. Even though many of you might not be eligible to participate directly, you can surely do so through a partner.

You'll hear from Barbara Dorf, who is in charge of managing this grant process for HUD, then Sherone Ivey who is in charge of the Office of University Partnerships, or OUP, and has a portion in the SuperNOFA. Sherone's presentation will talk about the importance of partnering with institutions of higher learning.

So we're going to start now with Barbara Dorf. Michele, did you have an introduction?

Michele Higgs: I have just a few more remarks. We have some centers to welcome today!

Thank you so much for your comments. As Delores has said, we're going to talk about the process for Neighborhood Networks centers to participate in the SuperNOFA. This topic has generated a lot of interest and I know you all are looking forward to the presentation.

There's one thing I want to mention before we get started and that is that our audience today includes Public Housing Neighborhood Networks stakeholders. We thank you for your participation. The response to the Public Housing Neighborhood Networks NOFA is due at the end of this week. We'd like to note that today's call is not designed to answer specific questions you may have regarding the Public Housing Neighborhood Networks NOFA. For questions regarding that NOFA, please contact the public and Indian housing information and resource center's toll-free line, which is 800-955-2232, or you may contact Dina Lehmann-Kim at 202-402-2430.

Now, we have five new centers to welcome to the neighborhood today. They are Plaza at Punch Bowl in Hawaii; Southmoor Hills Apartments in West Virginia; Joshua Arms also known as

Salem's Village in Illinois; Jason Lee Manor Neighborhood Networks Center in Oklahoma; and Repairing the Breeches Family Services Computer Center in Connecticut. Congratulations to all of those new centers!

As we welcome these new centers, I'll also tell you about the Neighborhood Networks resources. First, there's the Strategic Tracking and Reporting Tool, also known as the START business plan. START helps you to assess the needs of your residents, determine what resources in the community will meet their needs and keep track of the partnerships that address them. START also helps you examine the capacity of your center and provide the foundation upon which you can organize your activity. START can be your center's institutional memory. Once your center's information is compiled and entered into the plan, you have every thing in place that defines who you are and comprises a real business plan. Finally, START is the key to assessing your center's progress towards its goals by providing assessment and evaluation tools.

Now, for the remainder of the resources, if you have questions about the START business plan or resident surveys or general questions about the Neighborhood Networks Initiative, you can call the toll-free Neighborhood Networks information line at 888-312-2743. You can also visit the Neighborhood Networks Web site at www.neighborhoodnetworks.org. There's also online networking through the Neighborhood Networks online message board. There you can share information among yourselves. It's not a real-time resource yet, but when you post your information you can revisit the board in a day or so to see what kind of responses you have received.

Let me also remind listeners that a transcript of this call will be made available on the Neighborhood Networks Web site in about two weeks.

Now, for our topic today, "How to gain access to funds through HUD's SuperNOFA." One last reminder to our colleagues from public housing; I invite participants interested in the Public

Housing NOFA to direct their queries to the public and Indian housing information and resource center's toll-free line at 800-955-2232, or to Dina Lehmann-Kim at 202-402-2430.

In the final announcement for today's call there were additional materials attached for your review. To help you follow our presentation I encourage you to pull those materials out to help you understand the topic. I'm going to yield the floor to our speakers now.

Our first speaker today is Barbara Dorf. Delores Pruden has all ready given you some information about her. Barbara is the director for the Office of Departmental Grants Management and Oversight with HUD. This office serves as the sole point of contact for grants management information and is responsible for implementing the SuperNOFA.

Barbara has been with HUD for 33 years and has held a variety of policy and program positions in the Office of Administration, the Office of the Secretary and the Office of Community Planning and Development. Throughout her service, she has received numerous honors and awards including the Secretary's Award for Excellence, the National Grants Management Association Distinguished Service Award and the HUD Award for Advancement of Policies for Persons with Disabilities through the SuperNOFA in 2007. We're delighted to have her with us today.

Our next speaker is Sherone Ivey. Sherone is the Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for HUD's OUP. The OUP is located in the Office of Policy Development and Research. It provides funding to two and four-year accredited institutions of higher learning to implement a wide range of activities that address housing, community, and economic concerns. Sherone has been with HUD for 32 years in a variety of program and management positions.

The bulk of her work has been with the Office of Public and Indian Housing where she acquired expertise managing grants and contracts. Sherone has received numerous awards throughout her career and we are delighted to have her with us today as well.

Just a footnote before we begin. Since this call has received a lot of attention we are prepared to take as many questions as possible. We have a lot to share with you today so I'll end now and let our speakers begin. Barbara, won't you get us started please?

Barbara Dorf: Sure. I want to welcome everybody and thank you for participating. HUD's SuperNOFA is the announcement of funding opportunities available on a competitive basis across the departments. One of the documents that were sent to you was "Tips for a Good Application" and the other piece was the Federal Register announcement that went out yesterday. It is a notice on early registration. We hope that everybody takes the time to register because to submit our electronic grant application you have to be registered. What we're going to do today is go through the registration process as well as provide tips to help you put together a good application.

Even though we're not going to take questions on the Neighborhood Networks application that's out there, the one thing I do recommend is that the Neighborhood Networks staff pay attention to the submission requirements and timely submission. It takes 24 to 48 hours for an application to be validated on the Grants.gov site. Even when an application is validated there could still be problems with it. Sometimes applications are rejected because you used the wrong Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number or the person is not registered. So please pay attention, check your registration status. Make sure that your Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) has approved you and that you submit early enough so that if you do get an error message, you have enough time to complete and address that error and resubmit before the deadline.

The other thing I want to caution you about is attachments. When you submit attachments with your application, open up these attachments, scroll down to the bottom, and make sure it is the last version of what you want to submit. Very often people pull an earlier version by error

because they were in a rush and they submit the wrong version. That's all I'm going to say about the public housing application; the public housing application is out now, and is approaching the deadline. These are just a few helpful little hints for people so that they don't get caught in a bind.

And now for six steps that can help lead you to NOFA success. The first one is the registration process. There are five separate steps in the registration process. The first one is appending a DUNS number. I'm going to go through these relatively quickly, but the details of how to do this are in that Federal Register notice, and I suggest that all of you read it very carefully. We actually tell you what to do each step of the way; what to click on, what to submit as the information. So, the PowerPoint is not a substitute for reading the full details.

The organization seeking funding must obtain a DUNS number. If you already have a DUNS number, that's fine. You can use an existing DUNS number. But, you need to make sure that DUNS number uses your organization's legal name, the name that is used when submitting IRS information. That's because during the registration process, we check against IRS records. The Web site address to obtain a DUNS number is: www.hud.gov/offices/adm/grant/duns.cfm. It takes about 10 minutes and will give you a link to get a DUNS number. You can obtain a number either online or by phone.

The next step is Central Contractor Registration or CCR. The federal government has declared that CCR is the file of record for all vendors; that is, anybody obtaining funding from the federal government. We're asking that everyone register in CCR on a regular basis so that when we pay you we know that your organization correctly receives the payment.

During the registration process, you will be asked to establish roles and IDs. There are different roles, one being an e-business point of contact. People that are currently registered in CCR need only to update that registration on a yearly basis. CCR will notify you when that registration is due or notify the e-business point of contact. Then that contact will update the information. You can

get information on the registration process 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling 888-277-2423. If you can't access an 800-type number, you can call 269-961-5757. You can also get help online at www.ccr.gov. It's a central registration point for those wanting to obtain government grants or contracts.

The CCR also has a handbook that's available on its Web site. To access the handbook, click on "Help." If you fail to update or renew an existing registration, it will cause the Grants.gov registration to lapse because they're all linked. Then you'll have to complete every step in the process again. If you have already registered in CCR, all you have to do is update and then everything else stays the same. Once the CCR lapses, it sends a message to Grants.gov and Grants.gov takes down its information. DUNS then takes down its information, and you've got to go through everything all over again. So remember to please keep your information updated.

Your registration is good for one full year from the last time that you updated. So if you actually go into CCR at www.ccr.gov and click on the search feature, you can enter your DUNS number and it will bring up your record. The very top of the page will note that "the CCR registration is valid until" and it gives you a date. That's the last date that the CCR registration is good for until you update.

Registration in CCR can take a couple of weeks. One, there's a lot of information that you have to input into the registration process. Also, it will pull information from your Dun and Bradstreet, or D&B registration and ask you to validate it. It will say, "Is this valid or not?" Then when you say, "Yes, it is," or, "I accept it," it will take that information and send a message to the IRS to ensure its validity.

If there's a discrepancy between your D&B, CCR, and IRS records, you cannot complete this part of the registration until that discrepancy is resolved. That means returning to the D&B registration and correcting it, or if you have a problem with your official name and your legal name is with the

IRS, you have to go back to the IRS and correct those records. So that's why it takes this amount of time. Consequently, we ask people to start the registration process before the NOFA comes out. If you've never done this before or need to update your records, you're prepared. Then you're done with the registration and you can focus on the actual application. So we talked about the CCR registration, that's step two.

Step three is that the person who is going to submit the application has to register with a credential provider. A credential provider is an outside source that will issue an ID and password once you have provided information. That is to ensure that the person that is signing the application electronically is the person that has registered with a password and ID.

Whoever is submitting the application needs their organization's DUNS number that was registered with CCR to complete the credential provider application. So what you'll have to do is go into the credential provider. There are three choices on Grants.gov but you can use Operational Research Consultants, Inc. (ORC) as this is one of the most reliable credential providers. When you enter that site, you can submit the DUNS number and register with ORC. That only gets you your credentials. Keep your ID and password. The most frequent problem we find is that people forget their IDs and passwords.

If you do lose your ID and password, you can get them from the ORC again. The ORC will ask you for some security information and they'll get you your ID and password promptly.

The next step is registering this information with Grants.gov. So you are saying, "I am going to use this DUNS number. I'm going to use this password and ID. I'm going to apply for a grant." You don't have to identify which grant, but you're going to have to identify the organization's DUNS and password for the grant to which you're applying.

That information gets registered in Grants.gov and it will send a message to the e-business point of contact that was registered in CCR. That's why all of these steps are linked. Grants.gov asks the e-business point of contact that's on the listing in the registration process, "somebody wants to apply on behalf of your organization. Will you grant them authority to apply?" Then the e-business point of contact enters Grants.gov and grants that authority. So again, that's why whoever is applying for your organization must have the binding legal authority to make a commitment on behalf of the organization.

If the e-business point of contact does not grant that authority, your application will be rejected from Grants.gov. If you use the wrong password and ID, your application will be rejected because it does not match Grants.gov and the information for which the e-business point of contact has granted authority. So that's why you have to pay attention to those things.

So here are all five steps:

- Obtain a DUNS number or use your existing DUNS number.
- Register or update your CCR listing.
- Register with a credential provider to obtain a password and ID.
- Register that password, ID, and the DUNS number in Grants.gov
- Obtain the e-business point of contact to acquire authorization.

For those of you who have a new e-business point of contact make sure that they know who you are and that you're submitting a request for authorization so they pay attention. You have to make sure they're going to read their e-mail because some people don't read their e-mail. The same thing applies when you actually go to submit your application, you'll be getting e-mail messages back about validation. So make sure you read your e-mail.

Are there any questions about the registration process?

Michele Higgs: Clara, can you check the line for us to see if there are any questions for Barbara? Clara?

Operator: The question-and-answer session will be conducted electronically. If you would like to ask a question, please do so by pressing the star one on your telephone keypad at this time. If you're using a speakerphone, please make sure your mute function is turned off to allow your signal to reach our equipment. And again, that is star one to ask a question.

Our first question is from Cheryl Land with Crossline Towers.

Cheryl Land: I'm not sure if perhaps the former service coordinator was the point of contact when some original grants were done. So how will I check that?

Barbara Dorf: Go to ccr.gov, www.ccr.gov, use the search function, enter your DUNS number, and it will indicate the name of the e-business point of contact.

Cheryl Land: And if she's no longer with the company?

Barbara Dorf: They usually have an alternate. If not, then get in touch with your contact at that organization and find out who it is. They may have to update their information if both people are gone, which is why we put this out early so you can take the time to do that.

Cheryl Land: OK. All right. Thank you.

Barbara Dorf: You're welcome.

Michele Higgs: Thanks, Cheryl. Anybody else out there Clara?

Operator: Thank you. We have John Bowman from Community Care Center.

John Bowman: I just wanted to clarify. If we're already registered with Grants.gov should we still complete the registration process with CCR?

Barbara Dorf: When you registered with Grants.gov, if your organization did not register in CCR, then you've only completed part of the process. So you can check your status by going to Grants.gov. There's an applicant login box up there, I believe on the right hand side. Click on the login, enter your password and ID and it will show your five steps and whether or not you've completed them.

John Bowman: OK. Thank you.

Operator: OK. Thank you. And we will go our next question from Annie Foster with Philadelphia Neighborhood Networks.

Michele Higgs: Thanks, Annie.

Annie Foster: Hi. I have a question regarding step three. It sounds as though you made a recommendation for a particular credential provider but I didn't catch the name.

Barbara Dorf: It's on the handout. It's ORC. There are two others; the Department of Agriculture and I forget the other one. In my own personal experience, we get messages with some of the credential providers being down. I have never had a problem with ORC.

Annie Foster: Wonderful. OK. Thank you.

Michele Higgs: Thank you. Clara, is there anyone else on the line?

Operator: Yes, ma'am. We have three more questions at this time.

Michele Higgs: Great.

Operator: The first one will come from Jenelle Westbury with West Harlem Group Association.

Jenelle Westbury: Thank you very much. But the question that just came in regarding question number three answered my question. I thank you very much.

Barbara Dorf: You're welcome.

Operator: We will go to our next question from Joy Neubauer with Arlington Assembly.

Joy Neubauer: Yes. I'm new to this process and I can't open up Barbara's presentation. I want to double check that you said that this information will be sent out in a couple of weeks because that's so much information to write down.

Barbara Dorf: I'll give you my e-mail address and try to send it to you directly.

Joy Neubauer: OK.

Barbara Dorf: My e-mail is Barbara.Dorf D-O-R-F, as in Frank – @hud.gov.

Joy Neubauer: HUD.gov, OK.

Barbara Dorf: And the Federal Register notice is up on our Web site at www.hud.gov. Click on the left hand side where it says "grants."

Joy Neubauer: OK.

Barbara Dorf: I believe it's on the first page; there will be a link to it or go to "funds available" on that page. I just haven't looked to see where it is exactly. I know it's up there.

Joy Neubauer: OK.

Barbara Dorf: Also, if you register with Grants.gov to get information on HUD grants or any grants when they come out, they'll send you an e-mail. So if you register, when we put out our SuperNOFA or the early registration, you'll receive an e-mail. Each time we put something out you'll get an e-mail notification the same day that it's available.

Joy Neubauer: Thank you.

Barbara Dorf: You're welcome.

Michele Higgs: Thanks, Barbara for your contact information as well. I'm certain people will have more questions. Clara, is there anyone else on the line?

Operator: There are two at this time. The next one will come from Eleanor Piez with Oakland Community Housing.

Eleanor Piez: Hi. What does AOR stand for?

Barbara Dorf: Authorized organization representative.

Eleanor Piez: Thank you.

Barbara Dorf: Again, that's in the Federal Register notice that was sent out. I urge you all to read it carefully because it will actually help you walk through the process.

Michele Higgs: And our next question ...

Operator: Comes from James Connelly with Chelsea Plaza.

Michele Higgs: Hi, James.

James Connelly: Yes. I'd just like to give my e-mail address. I didn't receive a notification.

Barbara Dorf: Send me an e-mail and we'll send it to you. My e-mail again is Barbara – B-A-R-B-A-R-A-dot-Dorf D-O-R-F as in Frank@HUD.gov.

Michele Higgs: Let me inform everyone that the information will appear at the end of the transcript when it goes up online. So we'll have it out for you again to contact Barbara. Is there anyone else on the line, Clara?

Operator: There are two more at this time. We'll go to Francis Henry with Ampy Community Center.

Francis Henry: OK. Yes, I'm with Patricia Maulf with Ampy Community Center. Francis is here as well and some others. I have one question. Can an AOR be the e-business contact?

Barbara Dorf: Yes, they can.

Patricia Maulf: OK. Thank you.

Barbara Dorf: But make sure they register as such.

Patricia Maulf: OK.

Operator: And we will go next to Sandy House with Rosa Parks Apartments Neighborhood Networks
Community Center.

Sandy House: Hi. I just wanted to know if you have any manuals that you could send us.

Barbara Dorf: No. Everything is online these days. The information is all listed in that Federal Register
notice that you all received.

Sandy House: OK. Thank you.

Operator: There appear to be no additional questions at this time.

Michele Higgs: Barbara is there a specific reference number for people that are going to HUD.gov to get
this notice?

Barbara Dorf: I haven't been up on the site this morning.

Michele Higgs: Is that something you can provide to me after the call?

Barbara Dorf: We'll try to provide it ... Actually, if you go to Grants.gov it will say "search for
opportunities." Then it will pull up a page that says "browse by agency." HUD is on the left hand
side towards the bottom of the page. You click on that and it will come up.

Michele Higgs: OK. And did everybody get that? Those details will be in the transcript, as well. Did you
want to continue with your remarks?

Barbara Dorf: Sure. Are there any questions?

Operator: Yes, there is one more from Michelle Porter with the HUD DC Field Office.

Michelle Porter: Hello. I was looking at the Federal Register. On page 12753 it notes, "The CCR registration is not required for individuals. Applicants should be aware that HUD does not directly fund individuals through its NOFA process."

As far as future phone calls for Neighborhood Networks center, is there going to be something regarding the early registration for centers? Will there be something on our Web site that addresses the matter?

Barbara Dorf: No because we don't provide funds for individuals. And Neighborhood Networks centers are organizations.

Michele Porter: Understood. But sometimes people do a lot of searching trying to find funding as individuals to help out the centers.

Barbara Dorf: Well, we always tell individuals to go to Govbenefits.gov.

Michele Porter: OK. Thank you.

Michele Higgs: And we will go next to Peggy Payne with Lakeland Housing Authority. Peggy, are you there?

Peggy Payne: I'm here. My question doesn't fall in line with what everyone else was asking. I was wondering if you can tell us when the SuperNOFA will be announced.

Barbara Dorf: I don't even know that myself.

Peggy Payne: OK. Thank you.

Operator: And there are no further questions at this time.

Barbara Dorf: Alright. So what we're going to do is we're going to continue on with the presentation that was sent to you. For those that don't have it, hopefully you can follow along and then we'll send you a copy.

This year in '08 we are transitioning to Adobe Forms. We used to use PureEdge forms in the application. For those who are familiar with how Grants.gov operates, there are two pieces to every application that we put out. One is an application with a set number of forms in it that is listed under Grants.gov as an application download. It is accompanied by an instructions download. The instructions download includes copies of the NOFA. If there are any technical cures to that NOFA, they will be there. It will also include required additional forms that are not part of the application package. The reason for that is programs change forms from year-to-year if requirements change from year-to-year, and the Grants.gov form creation process takes months. So we don't have every form. We only keep those forms that are stable from year-to-year in that application package.

So there are two pieces that everybody has to download. The application package used to be in PureEdge. Now it is in Adobe. To use the Adobe Forms package, you have to download an Adobe reader 8.1.2. It's a free reader. You have to make sure that the reader is installed properly on your desktop. When we put in our general section, it will give you instructions for doing that. For those of you that have IT help, you can ask your IT person. But that is the biggest change that we have. Opening these forms is slightly different. With PureEdge you opened the form when it was on the left hand side of the page, and then you moved it over to the

right hand for submission. A lot of people were not moving forms over as part of the submission. If forms are not moved over they don't get submitted. The directions from Grants.gov states that to open a form you must first move it over to the right under submission and then fill it out on that side of the forms so that it gets included with your submission. So they took care of that problem.

Other than that, the application package works and looks very similar to the PureEdge forms.

The instructions we have are contained in a zip file. That's on the download instructions part of the application. Many people believe they have an application. They just start with the application and they don't bother reading anything else. As a result, they miss three-quarters of the actions they have to perform and they miss the instructions. I can't impress upon you how important it is to read the instructions. It really makes a difference as to whether you get a grant.

We'll start out on page 10 of the PowerPoint. For the first step, you download the application and instructions, open up the instructions, get all of the pieces out, and read the general section and the program section of the NOFA. The general section contains requirements and thresholds that apply both to the programs in the SuperNOFA and to all programs. Actually, the general section applies to all of the NOFAs that are put out over the course of a year. If there's an exception to a requirement it will be listed in the program section, but by and large these cover all of HUD's competitive programs.

When you open up the program section you really have to understand the purpose of the funding. That's because when Congress passes a program or appropriations for a program they define the purpose of the program. Our program staff design their programs based on that program purpose. The funding that comes from that design is to further the purpose of that program. So it's probably one of the most important things that you should understand when you are looking at a NOFA.

You should also identify the threshold factors that you have to meet for your application to be reviewed. There are some factors in the general section and there are some factors in the program section. The program section usually makes a reference to general section. So don't just skip over it, take the time to read it because it can make the difference. If you don't pass the threshold factors you will not get the money, I can guarantee you that. In some cases you will not be reviewed. In some cases you may be reviewed but not get any money.

The next item to understand is the program requirements. If there is a required match what is the percent or the amount of that match? Most of the statutes that have a required match identify 20 percent of the funds, or 30 percent of the funds, or 10 percent of the funds. Or they will say a dollar-for-dollar match, a one-to-one match. The program will specify those requirements and you need to be aware of them. If you don't meet a matching requirement, you're not going to get funded. It's a threshold.

Do you have to work in partnership with particular groups or organizations? Sometimes a NOFA will indicate that you have to form a partnership with some named groups or organizations. Or it will indicate that people have to be included as part of your activity program. You need to pay attention to those.

Are there specific program beneficiaries? In other words, are there people that are going to benefit from that program? Do they have to be certain types of people? Do they have to be minorities? Do they have to be low income? Do they have to be a certain level of low income? HUD's programs as an agency are geared to helping very low, low and moderate income people. Those are determined as a percentage of the median income for the area. So very low is 30 percent. Low is 50 percent. Moderate is 80 percent of the income for the area. So it varies by area. There's not one set standard across the United States.

Are there specific HUD policy priority areas that you can meet in addressing the needs of your community that would earn you higher points in the rating factor? Our entire program NOFAs specifies which policy priorities appear in the NOFA and all of the policy priorities are listed in the general section. Then a program area will either allow you to pick from any area, or a particular area, that will allow you to get points.

All of the policy priorities are worth one additional point. You have to demonstrate in your program of activities that you are actually implementing that policy priority. There's one exception, which is elimination of barriers to affordable housing. That is worth two points and is for an organization in a community or servicing a community that has reduced barriers to affordable housing. But you have to demonstrate through a questionnaire and references, or URL links where that information can be found on a public Web site, or actually attach the documentation that shows where that information can be found. When we put this out a couple of years ago, many of the state and local governments actually received a lot of requests for this information. They established a public Web site where the information can be found and they highlight what has been done to remove barriers to affordable housing.

As you read the NOFA take a highlighter and note the "must have" items. Those are the required items and the key elements in each rating sector. In other words, you're taking apart this NOFA and really understanding it, what you can do, and what you must do. Underline items that indicate, "You will receive higher rating points if you ..." and then they will specify what you need to do to receive higher rating points within a factor. The HUD reform act requires us to specify the basis upon which points will be awarded. So our NOFAs tell you what you can do to get points, their worth in terms of points and what qualifies for higher rating points.

Most people start writing before they think through their proposal. I can tell you as a reviewer that it comes across as a stream-of-consciousness writing. Sherone has been a reviewer and Delores has been a reviewer. You start out at one point and you end up somewhere that is totally

unrelated to the premise of what you're trying to do or what the program is trying to do. So take a moment, step back and write a short outline of what you really want to get across in your proposal.

Then you outline and evaluate what you're saying against the requirements, the rating factors and other items that you've highlighted. Because instead of just sitting down and writing, think about those factors because what HUD evaluates against is the factors for award. If the factor for award says you need to have community support, that's one thing you need to demonstrate. I can honestly tell you that a lot of people spend a lot of time getting Congressional backing; I have never seen a NOFA, at least a HUD NOFA, which says you'll get more points if you have a letter from Congress. HUD NOFAs indicate, "This is the basis. The rating factors are the basis upon which we give you points." So spend time on those.

Put yourself in the place of the reviewer of your proposal who knows nothing about you, your community or what you do. Assume they know nothing. Have you met the threshold requirement? Did you respond to the factors for award? Did your proposal lay out a convincing argument in favor of your capacity to do that work? The NOFA may ask, "What is your capacity to do the work?" We judge performance or that capacity by past experience within the last two, three, five years; a lot of people don't put in the number of years. So the reviewers assume, "Oh they're trying to hide something. This is really experience from way back when." So what they'll do is they'll give them lower points because they can't prove that it is recent experience.

Or most NOFAs ask, "What's the organizational experience?" "What about other people in the organization, what's their experience?" The reason for these questions are that sometimes you have a long standing organization but a lot of people retired or they had large staff turnover or the key person is gone. So the organization may have a long history of conducting this work but when we look at the people that are actually doing it, the luster diminishes. So it's a combination

of the two that are usually in both NOFAs. Again, we look at the experience in doing the type of work that you say you want to carry out.

Have you provided a timeline? Many NOFAs ask, "Tell us the timeline that you're going to get this work done. When are we going to see some progress on this?"

Have you provided documentation of need? We're not looking for anecdotal incidents but actually statistics, whether it is local statistics or census track. Some NOFAs will say, "We want census data." Sometimes they'll say from reports or from information that's available. Sometimes it's police reports. Sometimes it's homeless assistance reports. It just depends on what the NOFA is looking for. As you're working within your community, if someone is not collecting the types of data you need to start working with them, ask them to start.

Does your proposal outline the specific activities and tasks that you'll perform and the budget for accomplishing the work? HUD has to make a judgment, is this budget reasonable and appropriate for the types of activities.

Have you provided letters for matching or leverage funds? Some of the NOFAs state that you must have this documentation on file to reduce the paper coming in; however, if you're selected for award, we will ask for that documentation. It must be dated no later than the closing date of the NOFA. You can't provide us with two-year old documentation. We want it from the time the NOFA came out to the close date of the NOFA. Many of the programs ask for the specific timeframes on those letters of commitment. We track those letters of commitment because you may be getting an award based on leverage funds or matching funds. If you're not going to actually supply them, we take that into account in terms of your performance. During the next round we look at how did you perform? Did you actually come up with those dollars? Because somebody else might have gotten an award but it came to you and they would have fulfilled their promises.

Have you described how your program fits with other ongoing community activities? We look for that type of information to determine if you are operating in a vacuum or are you really trying to help. That is part of the partnership talk that Sherone is going to give.

If you are rating your application against the criteria in the NOFA, what score would you give your application? If you think it's weak, go in and beef it up. Give it to another person. Don't rate it yourself. What was that person's overall impression of the application's quality? What score were you given? Did they express any uncertainty or confusion on certain elements? If they're unclear I am sure that the reviewers will also be unclear. So, the best thing is to have someone else be a critic rather than your reviewers.

Can that person tell you in 10 sentences or less, your ability to do the work? The extent of the need? What are you doing with the money? Who are your partners? Are you leveraging funds? Can they answer those questions very quickly? Because that will tell you if your responses are clear. If someone starts hemming and hawing and says, "I thought I saw it somewhere." That's when you know your response is unclear.

When and what results can be expected to be achieved by awarding you the funds? HUD is very performance- and results-oriented these days because we're competing for funds across the federal government. We have to be able to demonstrate the value our program brings to the community. So you have to demonstrate to us what value you bring to your community.

Finally, if your reviewer has identified strengths or weaknesses in your proposal take their comments to heart. They're really trying to help you in this process. They really want to improve the quality of what you're proposing, so make the corrections.

Carefully follow your submission instructions. Make sure you adhere to the deadline date and time. Make sure you are following the directions on submitting an application. We received more than 4,600 applications last year. Less than half of 1 percent, or about 20 people, had problems because they all submitted at the last moment, and they received an error message. Or they submitted in a hurry and they forgot to include something. In some of the programs you are asked to zip all of the factors for award together or put them in one file. When the reviewers went to open up the application file, they found there were factors for award missing, which meant that the applicant had probably picked up the wrong file.

That's why our instructions tell you to open up that file, scroll down to the bottom and make sure that it is the version that you want to submit.

Michele Higgs: Can I jump in real quick? It sounds like you're giving folks key advice for preparing early, being careful in putting these applications together.

Barbara Dorf: Yes.

Michele Higgs: Is there anything else that you wanted to offer at this point or can I open the line up for questions?

Barbara Dorf: You can open the line up for questions.

Michele Higgs: Excellent. Clara, do we have anyone on the queue for questions?

Operator: We have no one at this time. But again if you have a question or a comment, please press star followed by the digit one. We do have one that just came in from Larry Tague with University of Tennessee.

Michele Higgs: Great. Thank you, Larry.

Larry Tague: Yes, I have a question regarding the PureEdge. At the university we're still using the PureEdge. Is that something specific to HUD applications?

Barbara Dorf: No. That's across the board. Grants.gov is converting to Adobe. We moved to Adobe for several reasons. Adobe is compatible with Macintosh Apple computers and with the Vista operating system, which is the new Microsoft operating system. It also is compatible with Microsoft Office 2007 as are HUD systems. So it was the more versatile technology.

Larry Tague: I agree. We've had real problems with PureEdge.

Barbara Dorf: So that's why we moved to it. In the '07 applications, there was an initial issue with Adobe that their programmers cured. We put out the application but we found that there was a problem, and so we reissued that NOFA. That's why that's still in PureEdge, because they did not have a solution in time and we didn't want to delay that application funding cycle. They have now solved the problem. If you have not downloaded the appropriate software and have it working properly on your machine when you open the Adobe application, it searches your computer and tells you if you don't have the software, or the software is not properly installed. It tells you to install the software, and then it will take you to the site.

Larry Tague: You're talking about the Adobe reader.

Barbara Dorf: The Adobe reader.

Larry Tague: OK. Yes, I've got that. Now when you're working on an application and you're using the Adobe product as your reader, can you actually enter information directly into a document?

Barbara Dorf: When you're using the application forms on Grants.gov, unless you have Adobe Professional, it will not allow you to save that file if it is a form-fillable PDF. You have to print it out and then we have the fax solution for getting those documents attached.

Larry Tague: OK. So we have to have Adobe Professional to actually save and/or submit to Grants.gov using the Adobe product, is that correct?

Barbara Dorf: No.

Larry Tague: No.

Barbara Dorf: Only if you have a PDF form that is form-fillable as an attachment file that that has to be submitted as part of the application. If you do not have Adobe Professional you'll have to just print out what you fill in and then use the HUD form 9601.

Larry Tague: OK. My question is, using the reader can we submit the information directly to Grants.gov?

Barbara Dorf: Not on your attachments. Only for the application.

Larry Tague: In other words, we can fill out the application using the Adobe reader and then click the submit button and it will submit it to Grants.gov.

Barbara Dorf: Yes. But you have to remember there are additional forms that have to be attached.

Larry Tague: OK. As Adobe PDFs?

Barbara Dorf: No. Additional forms, some of which may be Adobe PDFs that are form-fillable, but you need to have Adobe Professional.

Larry Tague: Now if they don't have Professional, they'll need Microsoft Word or something to generate these documents that need to be attached.

Barbara Dorf: Yes. We say that they have to submit the attached documents in Microsoft Office and they can do it in '07, but we give them the versions that we can read.

Larry Tague: But if we do it in '07 or, in 2008 Microsoft, we could convert those to PDF and submit them.

Barbara Dorf: Not every file. We say the logic model should not be converted to PDF.

Larry Tague: Which ones?

Barbara Dorf: The logic model for attachments.

Larry Tague: The logic model attachment.

Barbara Dorf: Yes, for 90 – 96010 cannot be converted to PDF.

Larry Tague: Would you repeat that number again?

Barbara Dorf: 96010 is the logic model form. We say you must save it as an Excel spreadsheet.

Larry Tague: OK

Michele Higgs: This is interesting for me, Barbara, and I'm sorry to break in on the question. But is there a number, a contact number where folks can call in with questions of this type? Because it seems like you might have to drill down a little bit, to understand how to submit these materials. Is there a toll-free number?

Barbara Dorf: It's all in the general section. When the general section gets issued, it will specify all that level of detail. It did last year.

Larry Tague: OK. I have another question before I disconnect.

Delores Pruden: Tell me ... tell me, sir, what Neighborhood Networks center are you from?

Larry Tague: I represent several Neighborhood Networks centers, St. Peter Manor, Plough Towers, Bethel Towers, and Madison Towers. These are all senior citizen Neighborhood Networks centers.

Michele Higgs: In what state, sir?

Larry Tague: This is Tennessee. West Tennessee.

Barbara Dorf: Great, thank you.

Larry Tague: Yes, the other question I have is we have a couple of consortiums. One is the West Tennessee Literacy Consortium, which is a consortium of senior citizen HUD sites. The other one is the Memphis Educational Computer Connectivity Alliance. And these are all 503c's.

Now, rather than submitting an application for each individual Neighborhood Networks center, is it possible for us to use our consortium to submit one application that will represent all of them?

Barbara Dorf: You have to look at the NOFA. It depends on the NOFA, what the NOFA will allow.

Larry Tague: OK, so some of them will allow it, some of them won't?

Barbara Dorf: You have to read the NOFA.

Larry Tague: OK, very good. Thank you.

Barbara Dorf: Let me describe the NOFA. The NOFA is a federally regulated document, there's a prescribed format for it. It's common across the whole Federal government, and it starts out by describing the purpose of the program, who is eligible to apply, what are the criteria for applying, and threshold requirements for getting your application submitted.

As part of that NOFA process, you are told what forms you have to submit and what has to be done. All the instructions are laid out step-by-step. And so, each program is tailored to what the original authorization bill or appropriation bill said that program should do. Each NOFA specifies those particulars of a particular program area, those things that are common across the government: Civil rights requirements, conflict of interest requirements, anti-lobbying requirements, threshold requirements in terms of meeting match requirements, what a match must consist of, and uniform administrative requirements that are part of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars.

Those are all spelled out in the general section. The program section will reference the ones applicable to them, but you've got to read both pieces. I don't even know right now how many programs are going to be in the NOFA. Last year there were about 40 funding opportunities that were issued across HUD. They vary, sometimes it's 20, and sometimes it's 40. It just depends on what's in the approach and where we are in terms of those applications.

The way that we work this process and the reason I don't know exactly when the NOFA comes out is that HUD is one agency that puts out the majority of its notices at once. We're working with all these programs across the departments. We're working with the programs to make sure that

the information provided is clear, consistent with consistent requirements, and allows these NOFAs to get reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget or OMB, which is the President's management arm.

We are at the mercy of OMB in terms of when they complete the reviews. When that review process is finished, we have to package this, get it signed off internally by each assistant secretary and then it goes to the Federal Register. The Federal Register takes 10 days to publish. So that's why I don't know the exact date that it gets published. I do know we aim for the first quarter of the calendar year.

Michele Higgs: I think that was very helpful in giving folks a primer on what the NOFA is all about. Do we have any more questions out there?

Operator: We do, the next question comes from Carol Johnson with Chattanooga Housing.

Carol Johnson: Yes, Hi. I just wanted to get some clarification in regards to the PureEdge versus the Adobe 8.1.2. Now you're stating that if the PureEdge is available, you're going to have to switch over to the 8.1.2 to submit?

Barbara Dorf: For 2008, we're making the switch, '07 applications for PureEdge, and that'll be for anything that's part of '07.

Carol Johnson: Oh, OK.

Barbara Dorf: For all the FT 08 applications, they'll be the Adobes.

Carol Johnson: Oh, OK. All right, thank you.

Barbara Dorf: You're welcome.

Operator: Again, that's star followed by the digit one should you have a question or a comment. And we'll pause for just a moment.

Barbara Dorf: I do want to say that our fax number is changing for '08. I don't have the fax number handy right now, but it will be in the general section. You need to pay attention to it because we are switching systems at HUD. So all the '07s are going to be in one system. All the program people can continue their reviews and processing in that system; and all the new applications and reviews are coming to the new system.

So we will not be able to reach back into the old system. If you sent it to the wrong fax number, it goes into the wrong system. So your '08 application will be in one system and your fax will be in another system. So you need to pay attention to the fax number that's going to be in the general section for the '08 NOFAs.

Michele Higgs: Quick question, Barbara. Is that fax number something that you can share with me to put along with the transcript?

Barbara Dorf: They need to read it in the general section.

Michele Higgs: Thanks much. Anybody else on the line, Clara?

Operator: There appear to be no additional questions or comments at this time.

Barbara Dorf: OK, the Federal Register notice on the early registration. If you go to www.hud.gov, then click on "grants" on the left side, about mid-way down the page, you'll see, "working with HUD," and it'll show the early registration notice up there.

Michele Higgs: Great, thank you much. And, of course, for those of you who weren't able to click on the notice that went out today, if you want to call the toll-free number, which is 888-312-2743, we can arrange to get it to you from there as well.

Barbara Dorf: Or you can go to Grants.gov, browse by agency and look under Housing and Urban Development, which is on the right-hand side toward the bottom when you get to the page which lists all the agencies. Click on "HUD" and it'll come up.

Michele Higgs: Thank you much.

Barbara Dorf: You're welcome.

Michele Higgs: Barbara you've been working for about an hour now.

I'm going to ask Sherone to give us a few minutes about what's going on with OUP and how that can help centers with the work of the SuperNOFA. Sherone, are you there?

Sherone Ivey: Yes, I'm here.

Michele Higgs: Thank you.

Sherone Ivey: Well, my presentation will certainly be a little shorter.

Michele Higgs: Oh, OK.

Sherone Ivey: Just as Barbara was saying, the SuperNOFA consists of several program NOFAs. The OUP probably has about six of them in the SuperNOFA. Right off, I would just really like to

encourage you and reiterate what Barbara said, "Please read both sections." Both the program NOFA and the general section get people in trouble all the time because they miss something, including fax numbers. HUD's OUP is committed to assisting institutions of higher education to join with community partners to address community and economic development problems in low, very low, and moderate-income communities.

As, Michele noted early on, HUD invites accredited two- and four-year institutions of higher education that are striving to make a difference in their communities to apply for grants under the programs that HUD sponsors. At one point, we had probably eight or more programs. Some of you may be familiar with what was a COPC program, Community Outreach Partnership Centers, and the Community Development Work Study programs. Neither of those programs has been funded since 2005. We haven't given up and maybe they'll show up again, but right now we don't have those.

So, I thought I would just mention the programs in which you might be most interested. The first one and the one that most of you might be more familiar with, is the Historically Black Colleges and Universities program, HBCUs. In 2008, we will have \$9,000,000 for grants in that program. The stated purpose of it is to expand the role and effectiveness of HBCUs in addressing community development needs in their localities. These include such things as neighborhood revitalization, housing and economic development, and as mentioned previously, for very low, low and moderate-income individuals.

We also have the Hispanic Serving Institutions Assisting Communities and that's approximately \$6,000,000 that we'll have available in '08. That's to help them expand their role and effectiveness in addressing community development needs in their localities.

The Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian Institutions Assisting Communities will have \$3,000,000 available this year. That's to expand their role and effectiveness in addressing community development needs in their localities.

And finally, we have the Tribal Colleges and Universities Program, which will have \$5,000,000, and is probably about twice the amount we've had in previous years. That program is quite different from the others in that it's for the institutions themselves to build, expand, renovate, and equip their own facilities. They can also expand their role in the community through the division of services, such as health programs, job training and economic development. However, they have facilities needs that so far exceed the available funding.

Each of these programs has to address the community development of block grants, eligible activities. Those that are most appropriate and where you might fit are special economic development activities. That's assistance to facilitate economic development by providing technical or financial assistance for the establishment expansion of microenterprises, including minority microenterprises, and this one in particular, the public service activities.

Now there is a cap on public service activities for the HBCU program of 15 percent unless the applicant requests a waiver. Public services include a wide range of activities, including employment, crime prevention, child-care, healthcare services, drug abuse, education, fair housing counseling, energy conservation, and homebuyer down payment assistance. We also included the establishment of Neighborhood Networks centers and federally-assisted or -insured housing, job training, and placement and recreational needs.

For those of you in public housing, when we provide funding for what is usually a computer lab or things of that nature, it could be a Neighborhood Networks center. But I have seen applications in all the programs that are supporting computer labs and programs that are located in public housing or communities around public housing.

So don't feel left out of this because you can partner. Some of the other eligible activities are acquisition of real property, grants and demolition, rehabilitation of residential property. They also do some new construction, but there are some requirements that have to be adhered to.

Neighborhood Networks centers and those centers that are located in public housing unfortunately, cannot apply for funding directly. You can, however, work with an HBCU, an Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian institution, or a Hispanic serving institution. I haven't seen much in Tribal Colleges, but just so you know you could work with those institutions by meeting with them early in the planning process. When they're thinking about applying for one of our grants, or if they're not planning, maybe you can convince them that there is such a need to establish a Neighborhood Networks center in an insured or federally assisted institution.

Those of you in public housing, show that there's a need for the kinds of activities you're doing in your centers. Work with them and partner with them. We can't say that they have to do it, but make your case, be a partner, be at the table to be part of that planning process, but do it now. As Barbara said, "Hopefully, the NOFA will be out this quarter," as she said, "You never quite know, but be ready."

Perhaps the school isn't ready now. We encourage schools to plan early, not to wait for the NOFA to come out. So it's not too early if you can't get into this year's planning process, if the school is going to apply for a grant, perhaps they might be interested next year. Partnering is extremely important for us because you never know about federal funding. So establishing partnerships makes the programs stronger, it draws on expertise from a variety of entities. You have lots of expertise in your areas; maybe you want to build expertise, additional expertise. Maybe that is what they identify as one of the problems or issues in the community they'd like to address. You're doing job training; you're doing a number of activities. What you need to know is who can do one or more activities. You might be one of three activities. What we do say is that

you don't get more points because you have more activities. What you get rated on is that you've got a strong proposal and that you've articulated whatever activity or activities you do in response to the NOFA requirements.

The other key issue about partnering is that it leads to sustainability because, as I've said, "There's no guarantee on federal money." Is the partnership a key? Be a part of the planning process. If you, as part of the planning or the partnering team, decide to get involved, look at what you're doing not only in terms of what the need is, but what you plan to accomplish, how you're going to get there, what are the outcomes. It's very important to figure out what's going to come out of this because we're always looking at the result.

Now, I know everything isn't successful, but every effort should be made to get there and you want to know what that is before you get there in that planning process. As you're working through the application, you'll be asked what the outcomes are. We are constantly talking about measurable results.

Think this through. One of the things I always tell grantees is the bottom line on the NOFAs: what do you want to do, what are you going to do, why are you doing it, who is going to do it, where's it going to be done, and how you are going to get there. I'll go over the NOFAs, but one thing is to remember you can't apply as the Neighborhood Networks center directly for our funds, but you can in partnership with an institution of higher education that's eligible for our funding.

In factor one, Barbara mentioned the team's capacity and capabilities, there's a distinction, as she mentioned. In our NOFAs you'll always notice that it's "recent and relevant experience." That doesn't mean you had to do exactly what you're proposing in your application, but that you have some similar experience that we can relate to that. As Barbara mentioned, dates are extremely important because if reviewers can't determine that it's recent experience, you're going to lose points right off.

We always look for a team: who is a part of it, what roles are they going to play, and that includes not only the institutions, but if you're part of the team, you need to have the key players from your organization that are going to be there and your recent and relevant experience. It all comes as a whole, we look at this as a whole.

Factor two is need. We want local statistics. Well, of course, the most recent census is usually updated. Go to the updates if you're using information, but whatever information you're looking at, whatever data, it needs to support what you're talking about. If you're talking about housing, and you're building housing, you don't want necessarily the crime statistics. It needs to relate, they need to link because you'll notice, as you read the NOFA, that these factors relate to each other and you'll be pulling information from one to another. So be mindful of that.

Factor three is basically the biggest of the factors in terms of points. There are a lot of subcomponents to it. The applicant needs to address all the components. You're going to say, here's what I'm doing, here's how I'm going to get there, here's our time frame. Who is going to be accountable for accomplishing a task or tasks? It's going to lead right back to factor one.

The time frame: that's where we have our policy priorities, and I can give you a hint. It's nothing new; look at last year's NOFA. Since I've been in OUP, which is probably the last three years or so, one of the give-aways that some schools miss is participation of minority-serving institutions. The applicants for our programs are all minority-serving institutions. It's a give-away point. You just have to say this is the one and this is how we address this factor.

We do not prescribe which policy priorities you pick. You pick the ones that are appropriate for the activities that you're undertaking. Whatever's appropriate is the one you should select and indicate how you're addressing it.

Factor four: Barbara mentioned leveraging resources and ours is not a required match.

Yes, they may be a partner, but as a partner, they would have a commitment letter stating what they are committing to or, it may be to help do something. Some of the funds will be going there. But at the same time, maybe some of the staff are committing time. It's not only cash, it can be in-kind resources. So it may be that you have something to offer and all this is not that you just need money, but you may have something to offer in terms of in-kind resource, like time, space, any of those kinds of things. Those need to show up. As Barbara said, we've stopped asking for the commitment letters at application time because we are trying to reduce the volume of data that's coming across electronically.

We do say that you have to have the commitment letter dated as of the date the applications are due, but no earlier than nine months prior to the publication of the NOFA. So look at those kinds of things. Make sure that the letters fall into that category and make sure that they are on file.

Factor five is the logic model. The logic model is an executive summary and it reflects what's in that application.

So look at those again. It all goes back to carefully reading the program NOFA and the general sections because there may be, although our match is not required, a whole breakdown on levels of matching that gets "x" number of points.

I'm just telling you this because for you as a partner, one of the things you want to do is read that application prior to its being submitted. Maybe you can be the third-party, but somebody needs to look at the application to make sure it addresses all the factors, that it makes sense, and that it tells the story clearly, because when we have our reviewers looking at the application, they don't assume anything. So make sure that whatever the school puts in that application is reflective of the information that makes your story clear on that activity. Again, the school, an HBCU, the

Alaska Native, Hawaiian institution, the Hispanic serving institution, or the Tribal college is the applicant. You may be included as one of the partners.

If you want to try to do that, I've seen applications that have been awarded that they have a Neighborhood Networks center or they have a computer lab in a public housing center. But they're already partners and I would encourage you, if you're interested in receiving some of this funding, to work with the schools that are applicants and they will be the guide. But as part of that team, you need to make sure that you're very clear and that what's reflected in the application. Tell your story clearly and fully so that we know what's going to be done, why it's being done, who's going to be accountable for those tasks that relate to your particular activity and the time frames to do them.

Are there any questions about any of the OUP programs or partnering with schools that might be eligible for participation of programs?

Michele Higgs: Sherone, let me jump in real quick and say first of all, I think you're preaching to the choir when discussing partnerships and gathering information regarding accountability for the partners. With us here in Neighborhood Networks, that's what we look to do all the time, but talking about what happens with OUP gives us yet another tool when we're out there working with our centers. Thanks a bunch. Let's see, Clara, are you there? Do we have any callers?

Operator: And again, that's star, followed by one should you have a question or a comment. So we'll go first to Eleanor Piez with Oakland Community Housing.

Eleanor Piez: Hi, we're in the San Francisco Bay area and we have a pretty good relationship with our local community college, but they haven't looked into OUP programs yet, that I know of. So I'd love to bring this to them, but here in the Bay area I don't think that most of our colleges and

universities would sit under one of those ethnic categories because we're a majority/minority state and our student body is very, very diverse. So how would we be able to qualify?

Sherone Ivey: You wouldn't, however, there are schools in the San Francisco area. There are some schools, I don't know if they're right in the Bay Area, but maybe some a little further south. Maybe some of the other schools that are eligible would be willing to work with you.

Eleanor Piez: Well, we're in Contra Costa County.

Sherone Ivey: I don't know the schools right off. We do have a Web site; it's www.oup.org, and you can go there. You can see some of the existing grantees. The other place for general information is the Department of Education. They have a Web site that has a list of some of these minority-serving institutions. It's not the most up-to-date Web site from my understanding.

Eleanor Piez: Well, these are minority-serving, but they're not necessarily serving in one particular minority group as opposed to others.

Sherone Ivey: No, I understand what you're saying. But to be eligible, it has to be an HBCU, or Hispanic-serving. I think at least 25 percent of the undergraduate headcount enrollment had to be Hispanic.

Eleanor Piez: OK.

Sherone Ivey: Some of them may not even be on the list of Hispanic-serving institutions. If they can certify to that, that they have that level of Hispanic undergraduate enrollment, they can participate. They have to self-certify and that has to be indicated in the abstract of their application. The Hispanic-serving institutions in California would be the closest that might help you. But real close by, you're probably right. On the OUP.org Web site, you can see the list of

our grantees, a brief description of the grants that they've had thus far, and the dollar award. We also have some of the winning applications for each of the programs. Barbara mentioned that you can also see those on the Freedom of Information Act Web site (FOIA).

Barbara Dorf: Yes, we have a FOIA site that we are placing on our site, starting with those seven highest-rated applications for each of the programs that were awarded last year. You can go to www.hud.gov, and in the search function just enter "FOIA" to review them and the most frequently requested information.

Barbara Dorf: Well, there are about 15 up there now. Everyday there's some more, because the lawyers have to redact certain information for privacy concerns.

Eleanor Piez: OK, but basically, if you're not certified as one of these types of institutions serving one of these specific groups, you can't qualify for OUP.

Sherone Ivey: If you're not certified and are on one of the lists that is maintained by the Department of Education and/or if the school cannot self-certify that they have the requisite undergraduate headcount enrollment.

Eleanor Piez: So they can provide that and see if that certifies them.

Sherone Ivey: Yes, but they shouldn't as they can know from their enrollment data. It has to be the undergraduate headcount enrollment that determines the percentage. Then they can self-certify. Otherwise, they would not be eligible to apply.

Eleanor Piez: OK. Thank you.

Sherone Ivey: The instructions on eligibility are in the NOFA. Each of the program's NOFAs has the eligible applicant description. It has all the percentages for each of the programs, except for HBCUs, because that's a defined list, and the Tribal Colleges and Universities is a defined list.

Michele Higgs: Let me just bring a question in here, Sherone, on behalf of the Neighborhood Networks centers. If a center wants to partner with a university, who would they contact at the school to find out information about their participation with OUP?

Sherone Ivey: If they have a grant, that information may be on the Web site with the description of the program. The other thing you can do is contact our office, and my contact information is Sherone – it's S-H-E-R-O-N-E – dot-Ivey – I-V as in Victor, E-Y@hud.gov (sherone.lvey@hud.gov). I also have a lead staff person that's responsible to each of the programs. For the HBCU programs, it's Ophelia Olson; the HCI program, Madeline Wohlman-Rodriguez; and for the Tribes and the Alaskan Native Program, since I'm low on staff, that would be me. Contact me. We can get you a contact person if the school has a grant. If we don't have a grant with them, I would just suggest calling the school. You can call the president's office or the chancellor of that school or you can call the deans of the various schools within the institution and talk with them.

Michele Higgs: I see.

Sherone Ivey: They can, hopefully, direct you.

Michele Higgs: Thank you much. Let's see if Clara has anyone else on the line out there. Clara?

Operator: We do. We'll go next to Hubbard Riley with Waco Board.

Hubbard Riley: Hello. I'm calling from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I was wondering, here in Milwaukee, what schools are available here for us to partner with?

Sherone Ivey: To be perfectly honest, I don't know. There are no HBCUs up there.

Hubbard Riley: Yes. Right.

Sherone Ivey: Wisconsin has a tribe, but they're not really doing HCI work. I don't remember seeing any of them there.

Hubbard Riley: Yes.

Sherone Ivey: I don't think you have any.

Hubbard Riley: OK. So, we have to possibly maybe go outside of Milwaukee to partner with someone?

Sherone Ivey: You could. But I don't know if that's going to work.

Delores Pruden: What she described is one part of the SuperNOFA. There are many other programs in the SuperNOFA.

Hubbard Riley: OK.

Delores Pruden: If you cannot partner with an institution of higher learning, you need to look at some other organizations in your community that you can partner with.

Hubbard Riley: That's possibly a part of the program?

Sherone Ivey: No. They have their own program NOFAs. You'd have to look at what the requirements are and who the eligible applicants are for that particular program.

Hubbard Riley: OK.

Sherone Ivey: It is very important, because as we said, there could be from 20 to 40 or more different programs listed in that SuperNOFA. They all have their own individual requirements, eligible applicants. You have to search through that.

Barbara Dorf: And also, don't rely just on the HUD programs: The federal government operates in strange but wondrous ways.

Hubbard Riley: OK.

Barbara Dorf: Very often, Congress has multiple programs across the agencies that deal with technology centers, increasing the use of technology for which you may qualify. What I advise people to do is sign up on Grants.gov for their notification service. Sign up for all grants.

Hubbard Riley: OK.

Hubbard Riley: So, to sign up for those grants, we would go to www.HUD.gov.

Barbara Dorf: No. You go to www.Grants.gov.

Hubbard Riley: Oh, Grants.gov. Regarding the NOFA application, how do I get on the application mailing list?

Barbara Dorf: Go to that Web site, and if you sign up for all the grants that are available, as soon as HUD or another agency publishing something, it will pop up in your e-mail.

Hubbard Riley: So, when I access the www.Grants.gov Web site, I'd immediately be connected as far as signing up then? What's the process?

Barbara Dorf: Go to www.Grants.gov There on the left-hand side, there's a sign up for the notifications service or sign up to be informed about grants.

Hubbard Riley: OK.

Barbara Dorf: Click on that, and then there'll be a page that it'll ask you for your e-mail address. And then it'll ask you to identify what you're interested in signing up for. If you want "all;" if you want "some;" if you want to be particular by agency, etc.

Hubbard Riley: OK.

Barbara Dorf: I recommend that you just get everything.

Hubbard Riley: You just click "all" then. OK. That's great. That answers my question.

Barbara Dorf: Let me finish.

Hubbard Riley: Oh, sorry. Go ahead.

Barbara Dorf: If you sign up for all, everyday including Saturdays and Sundays, you will get an e-mail notification that identifies the name of the agency and then it will say something about the grant program that was put on their site. Then it will give you a link to read the summary of that site for that application. If you want to find out more information and pull down the full application and the full instructions, you can do that. Or, if this is something you're not interested in, you can just move right along. But you'll get it in one e-mail.

Hubbard Riley: OK.

Barbara Dorf: A lot of people find it very convenient. They used to search multiple sites across the federal government; now, they just go to their e-mail, look at it, and they just click on the ones they are interested in. If there's nothing there for them that day, they move on.

Hubbard Riley: OK.

Barbara Dorf: So, that's what I recommend for everybody. The other thing is the NOFAs are competitive programs that are put out by the agencies on an ongoing basis. Most every year, there's a group of them that come out. It varies, as Sherone says, we never know what NOFAs are going to be funded each year, or how much money is going to be available. There are a series of programs that are funded across the agencies called Formula or Entitlement grants that are available year after year. Those programs are usually given to states, local governments, and public housing agencies. There may be partners in your community that are interested in increasing technology for the residents. So they may be offering to partner, or you may approach them, and say, look, we have this capability, are you interested? Maybe we can do something for you. So, there's always that possibility. That money is much greater than what goes out in the NOFA every year. So, I encourage people to make those connections with those ongoing institutions in their community and not just rely on these competitive programs.

Hubbard Riley: OK. Now, one more question with this. I do think you were saying go to other organizations as far as partnership. We do have a 501(c)(3) non-profit status and we have just programs that we want to institute ourselves. Can we just go for it?

Barbara Dorf No. Because most of the time, the way the competitive programs and the other programs are organized, the Congress decides who is eligible.

Hubbard Riley: OK.

Barbara Dorf: There are some parameters about the content of the program, and how it can operate, and so on. At least in HUD, there are no unsolicited proposals accepted. Maybe other agencies have that, but we do not have unsolicited proposals.

Hubbard Riley: OK.

Barbara Dorf: So there's no money to fund something that says, "I have this idea and I'm going to do it."

Hubbard Riley: OK. So we have to work through others as part of the program.

Barbara Dorf: Correct.

Hubbard Riley: OK. Sounds good. OK. Thank you.

Michele Higgs: Clara, do we have anyone else on the line?

Operator: Yes, we have Elnoria McDonald with A&M TSU Rural Economic.

Elnoria McDonald: Hello?

Michele Higgs: Yes, go ahead.

Elnoria McDonald: I'm from Texas, and in Houston, we have Texas Southern University(TSU) that gets the Historically Black College funding from HUD. I found out historically black colleges use their economic development departments to partner with the community outside of the college, and if

it's not an Historically Black College like the University of Houston or Texas A&M, what do you call that funding? They have those entitlement monies through the state.

Sherone Ivey: Community Development Block Grant?

Elnoria McDonald: Yes. Those entitlement monies. I just know they come down through the state and then they can trickle to colleges or to different communities or community development agencies.

Sherone Ivey: Yes.

Elnoria McDonald: That's how they help the Neighborhood Networks programs. They conduct business like a consortium where they will go collaborate on the grant and they will help write the grant.

Sherone Ivey: I know that they can do it under our program. But what she's describing is the community development block grant. There's nothing wrong with layering funds. If they get money from community development block grant and you can do something a little different to complement it, and they also come in under the Historically Black Colleges program, you can do that.

Elnoria McDonald: OK. Under the Historically Black Colleges, we had two Neighborhood Networks centers; we bought and opened up computer labs. Now, the way we participated, we got the intern from the colleges to work at the lab.

Sherone Ivey: OK.

Delores Pruden: That's the kind of partnering that we're talking about. Yes, exactly. TSU has been involved a long time with Neighborhood Networks partners.

Sherone Ivey : Are you working with Ellen Nunn?

Elnoria McDonald: Yes. I'm working with Ellen Nunn and then I'm on the board of Neighborhood Networks.

Sherone Ivey OK. That's precisely how you would do it.

Elnoria McDonald: Yes.

Sherone Ivey: That's a great example of it.

Elnoria McDonald: I've been waiting to talk to you guys.

Michele Higgs: That's the magical combination.

Elnoria McDonald: Yes.

Michele Higgs: Thanks so much for calling in.

Elnoria McDonald: OK. Thank you.

Michele Higgs OK. Is there anyone else on the line?

Operator: There appear to be no additional questions at this time.

Michele Higgs: OK. In that case, I have one little question of my own, and this might go to Barbara.

When we're talking about our Neighborhood Networks centers, a number of them are privately owned and 501 (c)(3) organizations. Do you think that they would need to review the general

section of the NOFA to determine if they would be eligible to apply for funds? Would they need to do that to learn that information?

Barbara Dorf: Not the general section.

Michele Higgs: OK.

Barbara Dorf: The general section does not talk about eligible applicants by a particular program. Each NOFA does that. We also put out a guidebook each year. It'll be on our Web site. It's not out yet because, again, the NOFA is not out. But you can look at last year's.

Last year's is up there under SuperNOFA Archive. Go to grants at www.hud.gov, the grants page, click on the left-hand side on "Grants." Go to "Funds Available" and they'll say, "SuperNOFA Archive." You'll get all the archived SuperNOFA information from 2000, I believe, or 2002.

You can view last year's guidebook. Each year we put out a guidebook. It tells you about all of HUD's programs, those programs in the SuperNOFA that year, plus the entitlement programs, plus the programs we think are going to be out later in the year.

Barbara Dorf: It gives a list on page 23 of last year's guidebook of SuperNOFA programs listed by applicant type.

Michele Higgs: OK.

Barbara Dorf: If you're a state, you can apply for these programs; if you're a unit of local government, you can apply for these programs; if you're a public housing agency, you can apply for these; if you're a tribal counseling agency, you can apply for these; if you're a tribal designated housing agency,

you can apply for these; if you're an Indian tribe, you can apply for these; if you're a non-profit, you can apply for these.

Michele Higgs: Got you.

Barbara Dorf: So it lists them. Each program may have some specific requirements, whether it's 501 (c)(3) status or other things. There are some that we can even do for-profit. It just depends on what it is. So each year, we break out the listing so it's convenient for people to see.

Michele Higgs: That's what I wanted to know. You've given out a lot of information today. We really appreciate it. But I know that minds are spinning trying to figure out what comes next. So, that's helpful in terms of finding out what kinds of organizations can qualify? Now, I'm going to ask, do you have any more comments for us? Because I'm going to go ahead and close out otherwise.

Barbara Dorf: I want to just summarize what people have to do regarding the registration process and the notice of funding. For those that send me an e-mail because you didn't get the information, I'll send it out to you. That's the first thing you need to concentrate on. Get your registration done. Make sure you're registered so that when the NOFA comes out, you're ready to deal with it. The next step in this process is that the general section will come out.

Read the general section, make sure you understand it and that you're ready. Then the program sections will come out. The program sections will announce the SuperNOFA. When we publish it, there'll be this guidebook. It'll tell you who is eligible for in terms of type of entity.

You need to read and focus on what it is you're saying and doing. I can't stress that enough. The thing that most people fall down on is they don't read. They just start filling in an application, and they don't pay attention to what's required. I would suggest that all of you sign up on Grants.gov for the notification system so that as these grants come out, you'll get them, so you

don't have to hunt around, they'll be in your e-mail. In the meantime, you can look at last year's applications, the winning ones that are on that FOIA Web site. Go to hud.gov and search on FOIA, and you'll be able to find it easily. Again, you can look at last year's, but don't copy it, because things change every year.

I can't tell you how many times people have said, "Well, I submitted the same application as last year ..." and they got fewer points one year than they did another because they just copied the application over thinking that was going to get the grants for them.

Michele Higgs: Fantastic. I appreciate your contribution. And with that, I think I'm going to thank Barbara Dorf and Sherone Ivey, and Dolores Pruden. Thank all of you for your words this afternoon. Now before we close, I just want to tell you a little bit about the resources from Neighborhood Networks. I'm sure you've noticed on the Web site that the RTAWs are coming.

The Neighborhood Networks' RTAW will take place in Nashville, Tennessee from April 23rd through 25th, and in San Francisco, California from July 9th through 11th. Preceding each workshop, there will be a two-day grantwriting session. That's a two-day session before each workshop. Check your Neighborhood Networks Web site at www.neighborhoodnetworks.org, check it tomorrow for online registration for the RTAWs, or you can ring the toll-free information line at 888-312-2743, and register for more information. Again, you can look at the Neighborhood Networks Web site at www.neighborhoodnetworks.org to find more information about the upcoming RTAWs.

Now our calls in the coming month will continue to focus on helping you to build the capacity of your centers. The call on April 8th is entitled, "What Are They Doing? Constructive Activities for Young People." Then on the May 13th, we'll talk about event planning and how events can spread the news about your center. Please save those dates. Mark your calendars.

Again, I thank you Barbara, Sherone, Dolores for this afternoon's presentation, and I thank all of you for ringing in today. Take good care. We'll talk to you next time.

Operator: And this concludes today's conference call. Thank you for your participation, and have a great day.

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