

87.1 Discretionary grants.

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(a) This section is not applicable to the programs governed by the Charitable Choice regulations found at 42 CFR Part 54a.

(b) Religious organizations are eligible, on the same basis as any other organization, to participate in any Department program for which they are otherwise eligible. Neither the Department nor any State or local government and other intermediate organizations receiving funds under any Department program shall, in the selection of service providers, discriminate for or against an organization on the basis of the organization's religious character or affiliation. As used in this section, "program" refers to activities supported by discretionary grants under which recipients are selected through a competitive process. As used in this section, the term "recipient" means an organization receiving financial assistance from an HHS awarding agency to carry out a project or program and includes the term "grantee" as used in 45 CFR Parts 74, 92, and 96.

(c) Organizations that receive direct financial assistance from the Department under any Department program may not engage in inherently religious activities, such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization, as part of the programs or services funded with direct financial assistance from the Department. If an organization conducts such activities, the activities must be offered separately, in time or location, from the programs or services funded with direct financial assistance from the Department, and participation must be voluntary for beneficiaries of the programs or services funded with such assistance.

(d) A religious organization that participates in the Department-funded programs or services will retain its independence from Federal, State, and local governments, and may continue to carry out its mission, including the definition, practice, and expression of its religious beliefs, provided that it does not use direct financial assistance from the Department to support any inherently religious activities, such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization. Among other things, a faith-based organization may use space in its facilities to provide programs or services funded with financial assistance from the Department without removing religious art, icons, scriptures, or other religious symbols. In addition, a religious organization that receives financial assistance from the Department retains its authority over its internal governance, and it may retain religious terms in its organization's name, select its board members on a religious basis, and include religious references in its organization's mission statements and other governing documents in accordance with all program requirements, statutes, and other applicable requirements governing the conduct of Department-funded activities.

(e) An organization that participates in programs funded by direct financial assistance from the Department shall not, in providing services, discriminate against a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary on the basis of religion or religious belief.

(f) No grant document, agreement, covenant, memorandum of understanding, policy, or regulation that is used by the Department or a State or local government in administering financial assistance from the Department shall require only religious organizations to provide assurances that they will not use monies or property for inherently religious activities. Any restrictions on the use of grant funds shall apply equally to religious and non-religious organizations. All organizations that participate in Department programs, including organizations with religious character or affiliations, must carry out eligible activities in accordance with all program requirements and other applicable requirements governing the conduct of Department-funded activities, including those prohibiting the use of direct financial assistance from the Department to engage in inherently religious activities. No grant document, agreement, covenant, memorandum of understanding, policy, or regulation that is used by the Department or a State or local government in administering financial assistance from the Department shall disqualify religious organizations from participating in the Department's programs because such organizations are motivated or influenced by religious faith to provide social services, or because of their religious character or affiliation.

(g) A religious organization's exemption from the Federal prohibition on employment discrimination on the basis of religion, set forth in section 702(a) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000e-1, is not forfeited when the organization receives direct or indirect financial assistance from the Department. Some Department programs, however, contain independent statutory provisions requiring that all recipients agree not to discriminate in employment on the basis of religion. Accordingly, recipients should consult with the appropriate Department program office if they have questions about the scope of any applicable requirement.

(h) In general, the Department does not require that a recipient, including a religious organization, obtain tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code to be eligible for funding under Department programs. Many grant programs, however, do require an organization to be a "nonprofit organization" in order to be eligible for funding. Funding announcements and other grant application solicitations that require organizations to have nonprofit status will specifically so indicate in the eligibility section of the solicitation. In addition, any solicitation that requires an organization to maintain tax-exempt status will expressly state the statutory authority for requiring such status. Recipients should consult with the appropriate Department program office to determine the scope of any applicable requirements. In Department programs in which an applicant must show that it is a nonprofit organization, the applicant may do so by any of the following means:

(1) Proof that the Internal Revenue Service currently recognizes the applicant as an organization to which contributions are tax deductible under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code;

(2) A statement from a State or other governmental taxing body or the State secretary of State certifying that:

(i) The organization is a nonprofit organization operating within the State; and

(ii) No part of its net earnings may benefit any private shareholder or individual;

(3) A certified copy of the applicant's certificate of incorporation or similar document that clearly establishes the nonprofit status of the applicant; or

(4) Any item described in paragraphs (h)(1) through (3) of this section if that item applies to a State or national parent organization, together with a statement by the State or parent organization that the applicant is a local nonprofit affiliate.

(i) If a grantee contributes its own funds in excess of those funds required by a matching or grant agreement to supplement Department-supported activities, the grantee has the option to segregate those additional funds or commingle them with the Federal award funds. If the funds are commingled, the provisions of this section shall apply to all of the commingled funds in the same manner, and to the same extent, as the provisions apply to the Federal funds. With respect to the matching funds, the provisions of this section apply irrespective of whether such funds are commingled with Federal funds or segregated.

(j) To the extent otherwise permitted by Federal law, the restrictions on inherently religious activities set forth in this section do not apply where Department funds are provided to religious organizations as a result of a genuine and independent private choice of a beneficiary or through other indirect funding mechanisms, provided the religious organizations otherwise satisfy the requirements of the program. A religious organization may receive such funds as the result of a beneficiary's genuine and independent choice if, for example, a beneficiary redeems a voucher, coupon, or certificate, allowing the beneficiary to direct where funds are to be paid, or through a similar funding mechanism provided to that beneficiary and designed to give that beneficiary a genuine and independent choice among providers.