

Frequently Asked Questions: Direct Component of Gulf Restoration RESTORE Funds¹

This information is provided based upon 31 CFR Part 34: Department of the Treasury Regulations for the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund and “Direct Component Guidance and Application to Receive Federal Financial Assistance” (August 2014).² This is an *Interim Final Rule* subject to 30 days of public comment before going into effect October 15, 2014. This FAQ document addresses funds available directly under the “Direct Component”.

When can the County start applying for funds and how does the County apply? In the month of September, as soon as Treasury publishes notice of funding availability on www.grants.gov and the County must apply online on an application available at GrantSolutions.gov.

What needs to be done for the County to apply for and receive funds? Prior to receiving Direct Component funding for activities, the County must:

1. Submit all standard federal grant forms
2. Submit a Multi-Year Implementation Plan
3. Enter into a Grant Agreement

How much can the County apply for in Direct Component funds now? According to the Treasury website, \$8,370,163 is currently available for distribution to Escambia County.³

How will the County manage the funds distribution process? Once the County has applied for funds, submitted its Plan and can proceed with its planning or projects, the County will then be able to apply for individual grants. The County may “pair” or “group” projects in one grant application subject to approval. The County may then make subawards of grant funds to other parties for project implementation known as “subrecipients”. Federal procurement requirements for grants will apply.

Administrative costs for general management, general accounting, budgeting, human resources, general procurement and general legal services are capped at 3% and are the costs associated with managing the County’s entire RESTORE program. There will be more guidance forthcoming relative to administrative costs.

Will money be available upfront to create the Plan and process for funds distribution? Yes, the County will be able to apply for funds to develop its Plan. The County may also be able to seek reimbursement for some funds already spent and program set up costs. Further guidance is expected.

What are the responsibilities of Subrecipients receiving County funds? The County is responsible for overseeing compliance if awarding funds to another entity. If the County awards funds to another entity (or “subrecipient)

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² Direct Component Guidance: http://www.treasury.gov/services/restore-act/Documents/Direct%20Component%20Guidance_August%202014.pdf

Interim Final Rule: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-08-15/pdf/2014-19324.pdf>

³ Any final figure of funds currently available in the Trust Fund for which the County can qualify is subject to final verification by Treasury. <http://www.treasury.gov/services/restore-act/Documents/Trust%20Fund%20Allocations%20Available%20for%20Distribution.pdf>

that subrecipient will be subject to all of the same requirements as the County. They will enter into an agreement that will require them to meet those requirements and this will be a legally binding document.

What must go into the County's Multi-Year Implementation Plan? The County could create more than one Plan because the plans can be incremental, phased and amended over time. In the Plan(s), the County could group projects according to similar type or it could group projects according to a different set of priorities and available funds over time. Plans must be available for public comment for 45 days.

Will the County be required to undergo a National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") review on its Plan? Treasury has stated that they do not anticipate that County Plans will need to undergo NEPA review at this time. This may be subject to change once Treasury publishes its NEPA guidelines. Individual projects may need to undergo NEPA and regulatory review⁴.

Where can I get more information? The first place to get more information on the Direct Component is from Treasury's website.⁵ Additionally, Treasury will have information webinars as follows:

1. Direct Component and Centers of Excellence Overview Webinar. An optional one hour webinar to provide an overview of the Direct Component and Centers of Excellence grant application process and requirements.
 - August 19 10:00 – 11:00 am EDT
 - August 26 3:00 – 4:00 pm EDT (repeat)
2. GrantSolutions.gov Online Training. The first training session to guide applicants in using the GrantSolutions.gov grant application and management system. The training will be recorded and available online. Subsequent training sessions will be offered for applicants who are unable to attend the first session or who may be submitting applications later in 2014 or early in 2015.
 - September 15 10:30 am – 12:30 pm EDT
3. Direct Component Training. In-person training to provide detailed information to applicants regarding requirements for multiyear plans and Direct Component grant applications, including applications for planning assistance to prepare a multiyear plan. Information on dates and locations will be provided by Treasury shortly.
 - Week of September 16 – Florida counties (3 locations - TBD)

⁴ This could include State Environmental Resource Permits (Chapter 373, F.S.), Coastal Zone Management Act (15 CFR, Part 930), Endangered Species Act, Magnuson-Stevens Fisher Conservation and Management Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Coastal Barrier Resource Act, Rivers and Harbors Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, etc.

⁵ <http://www.treasury.gov/services/restore-act/Pages/default.aspx>