

# CARES Act Funds for COVID19 Relief

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## Navigating CARES Act Funds for COVID19 Relief

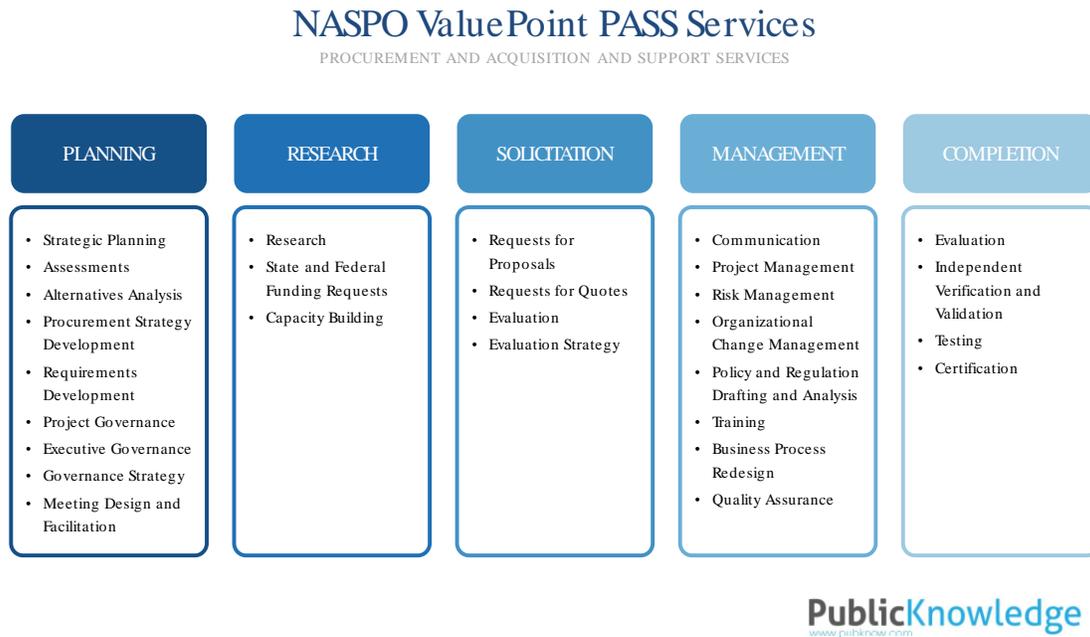
The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) established the Coronavirus (COVID) Relief Fund appropriating \$150 billion dollars to states and certain local governments. The CARES Act appropriation allows states to use funds for necessary expenditures due to the public health emergency incurred from March 1, 2020 to December 30, 2020, provided the costs were not accounted for in the budget approved on March 27, 2020.

What does this mean? It means funds are available to help states get through the COVID crisis. States can use CARES Act funds to cover medical expenses including testing, temporary medical facilities, medical transportation, and telemedicine; public health expenses such as communication and enforcement, acquisition and distribution of medical supplies, cleaning, technical assistance, and quarantining; payroll expenses; and increasing citizen access to services and resources such as food delivery, distance learning, telework capabilities, paid sick and family leave, and more.

How can Public Knowledge help? We are a national management consulting firm that exists to help government agencies solve tough problems and thrive in complex situations. We can quickly help you identify opportunities to use CARES Act funds to address high priority concerns and develop a plan and implementation strategy. We do this by customizing our core approaches to your unique situations.

As a chosen NASPO ValuePoint Procurement Acquisition Support Services (PASS) supplier, we can help with a timely response. We are here to support all stages of your acquisition, procurement, and contracting processes as detailed in Figure 1. You can access our services quickly compared to a traditional procurement through the benefit of the master contract we have in place with many states. If your state does not currently have a contract in place, contact us and we can help expedite the process. We are here to support you through this challenging time.

Figure 1. PASS Services



Specific services we offer and are available under our PASS contract include:

### Acquisition Planning

- **Strategic Planning.** Whether you need to launch a small project or set the direction for an entire agency, we provide facilitation that guides leaders and staff in defining a vision, along with realistic strategies and timelines for achieving your vision. Our structured, self-documenting approach will help you quickly create the return on investment or other justification you need for state or federal funding requirements, such as advance planning documents or business cases, to move a project forward.
- **Assessments.** We perform independent program evaluations, organizational reviews, readiness assessments, and needs assessments. Our assessments provide an understanding of root causes, strengths, barriers, and a realistic path forward to meet a specific challenge or begin planning for a specific initiative. Needs assessments and feasibility studies to support alternative comparison are especially useful when your path forward is unclear.
- **Alternatives Analysis and Procurement Strategy Development.** An alternatives analysis starts with defensible information regarding costs, associated timelines, and resources needed to achieve your objectives. Our proprietary approach consists of a facilitated process that results in clear recommendations. The goal is to obtain a quantifiable score that objectively supports the funding and realization of your project while considering the multiple quality factors.
- **Requirements Development.** We believe more than half of system errors originate in requirements or are present before system design begins. These defects might result from omitted requirements or user misunderstanding. Our consultants combine extensive requirements research, facilitation experience, and documentation expertise to develop accurate, understandable requirements, which results in fewer defects downstream.
- **Project Governance.** Many large projects with diverse stakeholders benefit from a governance structure that identifies a clear vision, purpose, and responsibilities. This structure, when done right, can

set the tone for cooperation, give decision-making authority to non-hierarchical project teams with many stakeholders, and coordinate communication among important groups and individuals. Getting this right is key to a successful project.

- Executive Governance and Governance Strategy. Communication flow, including clear roles and responsibilities, is essential for smooth program and project delivery. We help you design and implement an effective governance structure that has the right people making the right decisions at the right times. We help you design processes that avoid communication breakdowns and ensure quality, timely decisions.
- Meeting Design and Facilitation. In a world of endless meetings we help you make yours count. We provide individualized meeting planning and coaching to help leaders pinpoint clear goals, desired outcomes, and participants. We then design your meeting and craft an agenda to support your goals. We facilitate your meetings or workshops using an inclusive and engaging approach that increases effectiveness and follow through after the meeting.

## Market Research

- Research. To support your decision making, we augment our existing inventories and methodologies, we conduct research to address your priorities. Our nationwide network of clients and consultants bring a wide range of best practices to our research efforts. We provide alternatives and options to help you make decisions that are based on timely, strategic, and relevant information.
- State and Federal Funding Requests. We develop the business case or funding request documentation you need for state and federal funding approval. Our consultants understand the program areas and approval requirements in state budgets. We can also assist in drafting grant applications for project or program funding.
- Capacity Building. Government is increasingly asked to do more with less. We help agencies deal with staffing shortages and decreasing resources by developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes, and resources you have so you can thrive in complex environments. This could include development of new service models, a reduction in low value activities, or a return to core mission work.

## Solicitation and Award

- Requests for Proposals or Requests for Quotes. You have decided to go outside of your agency to acquire a vendor for an outsourced system, service, or project. This can be an exciting time, but also risky. We write requests for proposals or requests for quotes to meet your needs and ensure bidders understand those needs. We help with vendor identification and communication to generate attention and competition so that you acquire the product that best meets your needs.
- Evaluation and Evaluation Strategy. You released a procurement, and you have all the responses. How do you choose the right vendor? The risks during evaluation and selection can quickly undo even the best procurement plans. We help you avoid the gaming and protests that can result from inappropriate evaluation and cost scoring. We have a proven approach that begins with a proposal evaluation plan and includes the development of custom scoring sheets for submitted proposals and oral presentations.

## Contract Management

- Communication. Effective communication underlies everything you do. We have seen projects and initiatives succeed or fail based on the agency's or program's communication strategy. We understand how messages flow in public sector organizations, including opportunities and limitations. We develop

practical, useful communication plans and help you implement them, whether it be for a short-term project, a system transformation, a program redesign, or a large-scale organizational change.

- **Project and Risk Management.** We employ a standards-based approach to project and risk management based on Project Management Institute guidelines, and enhanced with our proprietary framework, Managed Project Management. We help make big and complex projects easier to understand and implement.
- **Organizational Change Management.** One thing we know about government agencies is that the only constant is change. We help agency leaders anticipate the impacts of changing conditions and expectations and respond with appropriate organizational change efforts. We help you choose the right change management model and communication elements for your organization and your staff. A customized change readiness approach will win the hearts and minds of the people who work for your agency and make the change stick.
- **Policy and Regulation Drafting and Analysis.** Policy and regulation drafting requires careful research, review, and analysis of federal, state, or agency rules against a research question or new initiative. Our approach to drafting rules, policies, and procedures saves your staff time and helps streamline and clarify existing regulations. We can also train your staff on state and federal requirements or how to draft their own regulations.
- **Training.** Training is an iterative process that begins with a needs assessment and development of learning objectives, leading to content delivery and evaluation of the learning transfer. The cycle starts again with a re-assessment of needs. Whether we assist with one element (such as planning) or with the entire cycle, your training effort will be evidence-based and adult learner-centered. All our training services focus on positively influencing the behavior of your leaders or staff.
- **Business Process Redesign.** Whether you need to improve core business processes or support implementation of a new system, we help you identify, plan, and implement process improvements and changes. We use a collaborative approach to map your current (as-is) processes, identify an ideal future state for the program's delivery of products or services (to-be), and complete a gap analysis between the two. A business process redesign effort will reveal needed changes to the integration of people, processes, systems, or structures, leading to more efficient product or service delivery.
- **Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC).** Quality oversight services is the process of ensuring interim and end products meet accepted standards and are of acceptable quality. We supplement the classic quality management approach to include forward-looking performance measures, based on our proprietary framework Predictive Management, to provide state and vendor teams with practical recommendations based on empirical data. The result is an independent assessment of a project's condition and realistic options for mitigating risks and quality issues.

## Completion and Closeout

- **Evaluation.** We use and identify data, key performance indicators, and metrics to monitor, assess, and improve your projects, programs, and agencies. We use real-time data dashboards that you can filter and sort to dig in to a measure in more detail.
- **Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V).** Our approach to IV&V is built upon the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers specifications, expanded to include other standards from International Organization for Standardization, Capability Maturity Model Integration, National Institute of Standards and Technology, and Project Management Body of Knowledge. In addition to these standards, we leverage our proprietary framework, Predictive Management, to help project teams forecast areas of risk. Predictive Management principles are based on 30 years of IT project management experience, and they address weaknesses sometimes found with standards-based

approaches. For example, we develop a set of project metrics to more accurately predict project completion dates based on project data. We then compare these metrics to the project's planned performance to assess the plan's veracity. Our IV&V reports are invaluable to maintaining multiple reporting relationships between agencies at the state and federal level and managing decisions.

- **Testing.** Testing traditionally comes at the end of the project and is easily neglected as part of a schedule trade-off. We do things differently. As one of our consultants often said, "You really only need to test those features of the system that you care about..." Our clients get it and they do not trade testing for a rushed implementation. Our approach is to verify appropriate levels of testing are conducted throughout the software development lifecycle and avoid surprises.
- **Certification.** Our approach to certification involves a range of services from training agency staff to participating in certification reviews alongside our state clients. We do not wait until the end of a project to consider certification needs. We believe that understanding the assessment standards up front will reduce risk to the funding stream.