

**TO:** TCDD Executive Committee

**FROM:** Joanna Cordry, Planning Coordinator

**SUBJECT:** Complaint regarding RFP submission process

**DATE:** July 30, 2015

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The Culturally Appropriate Family Supports Request for Proposals (RFP) was posted via DD Suite on April 10, 2015, and proposals were due by 5 PM on June 10, 2015. Staff provided two informational teleconferences and were available to answer questions by phone or email and also to provide technical assistance to assist people with accessing DD Suite. Instructions for using DD Suite were also provided.

At approximately 2:50 PM on the due date, staff received an email stating that an applicant could not create accounts for the Organization Director and Financial Director, and that when trying to add them, she could not see the name of her organization (to which they must be added). She said the two individuals in question could not create accounts. The application had been returned to her because it was incomplete without these individual's names. TCDD staff responded several times and tried to assist. Unfortunately, she was not able to work through the issue before 5 PM. The other two individuals she said tried to create accounts did not contact TCDD.

TCDD's stated policy is that late applications are not accepted.

On June 13, 2015, the applicant emailed staff the following:

"I think that after all the work we did to complete the grant application and because of our past successful history providing the Communication Skills Training to Spanish speaking families through TCDD, it is more than disappointing to have a technicality bar the way for us to even have a chance at having the opportunity to at least, get it reviewed.

We would like to appeal this, based on the fact that the site is not user friendly and that our organization was not on the drop down menu so that persons trying to register were unable to do so."

Staff reviewed TCDD policies with Chair Mary Durham and Executive Director Beth Stalvey. TCDD's appeal process is open to organizations that are denied grants, and the appeal must be based on a belief that TCDD did not follow its policies in reviewing grants. In this case, an appeal was not appropriate. Discussion noted that there was sufficient time and technical assistance available throughout the eight week application period to work through any technical issues. In this case, neither individual trying to create an account contacted TCDD, and we were not aware of the issue prior to the time noted above.

The applicant was notified of this and informed that she could file a complaint. She was also informed that a Leadership Development and Advocacy Training RFP would be posted in September, that it was the same funding amount, and she could apply to receive funding for her project through that RFP.

On June 23, 2015, the applicant emailed an official complaint. The text is as follows:

“Thank you Joanna.

This notice is my official complaint. It was down to the wire as I previously referenced, but a lot of very hard work was done on the grant application which was fully completed. I hope you have had a chance to at least review it. There was no way for any of us to foresee a technical issue, even if it was right before the deadline. We had been more focused on the details and contents of the grant and budget.

Thanks again for your efforts. I am glad to see TCDD continue its funding efforts and we will continue to monitor any RFP's that are appropriate for the Spanish speaking community.”

This was acknowledged and forwarded to Chair Durham and Executive Director Stalvey.

For clarity, TCDD staff since added to RFPs posted on DD Suite, "Organizations unfamiliar with DD Suite or would like assistance using DD Suite may receive technical support by emailing [Joanna.Cordry@TCDD.Texas.Gov](mailto:Joanna.Cordry@TCDD.Texas.Gov) or calling 512-437-5410. They are encouraged to do so as early in the process as possible. User errors that result in a failed or late submission will not be grounds for an exception to the deadline."