



DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE
AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

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SUBJECT: Support Our Students

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DATE SIGNED: 4/28/05

RELATED STANDARDS: N/A

RELATED NCAC CITATION: N/A

RELATED LEGISLATION:

1. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143B-152.1, *Establishment of program; purpose; goals;*
2. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143B-152.2, *Definitions;*
3. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143B-152.3, *Administration of the Program;*
4. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143B-152.4, *Eligible applicants; application for grants;*
5. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143B-152.5, *Grants review and selection;* and
6. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143B-152.7, *Program evaluation; reporting requirements.*

INDEX AS: Program Standards

PURPOSE: To ensure programmatic and administrative effectiveness and accountability of Support Our Students (SOS) programs.

POLICY STATEMENT: All Support Our Students (SOS) programs must adhere to the *SOS Requirements for Program Operations*. Funding is contingent upon initial and continued adherence to:

1. the SOS mission and goals;
2. financial and programmatic record-keeping requirements;
3. on-site evaluations performed by State SOS staff, or contractors authorized by those staff;
4. ethical conduct and serious incident reporting procedures consistent with the Department's Code of Ethics (*DJJDP 13*);
5. conflict of interest policy, "DJJDP Conflict of Interest Policy and Disclosure Form" (*Form DJJDP13 001*); and
6. any corrective action prescribed by State SOS staff within the allotted timeframe.

State SOS staff shall monitor SOS programs for compliance with these requirements during each program's three (3)-year funding cycle.

I. DEFINITIONS

A. At Risk or At-Promise Children: Youth who, because of a wide range of personal, familial, social, or academic circumstances, may experience school failure, or become involved in anti-social activities without intervention to reduce the risk factors. Factors to identify these youth include: school performance below grade level, non-promotion, substance abuse, delinquency, truancy, unstable home environment, family income at or below the poverty level, physical or mental health problems, learning disabilities and low self-esteem.

B. School-aged Children: Children enrolled in kindergarten through the ninth grade. 9th grade students may be served by SOS programs if they are attending a traditional junior high school which has grades 7, 8 and 9 **or** if the program incorporates a 9th grade transition program into the regular program (4-8 grade) for those youth who have been served and want/need continued SOS services through the 9th grade.

While legislation allows children in kindergarten through the 9th grade to be served, the emphasis is on the prevention of latch-key status and anti-social behavior by older students. Funds provided at the elementary school level could be used to bridge the early school years and the middle school program. In other cases, applicants choose to focus on programs that serve children from the same family but attending elementary and middle schools. Applicants also configure programs where younger and/or older middle class children pay their way and SOS funds primarily subsidize at risk middle schoolers.

II. SOS MISSION AND GOALS

A. Mission: Support Our Students Programming targets middle school youth during those critical after-school hours. Caring adults help them with homework and organize enrichment activities in a structured setting, to help ensure the North Carolina's children stay on the road to lifelong success.

The Support Our Students (SOS) program is a community based after-school initiative that provides support and guidance to youth by involving them in constructive activities to keep them focused and out of trouble. The SOS program provides high quality, after-school activities for school-aged children through award of grants to neighborhood and community-based organizations. These programs provide comprehensive, collaborative delivery of services by public and non-public agencies. The SOS program links youth with the caring adults in their community. The adults help them with homework and organize clubs and athletic activities in a structured setting designed for positive learning experiences. By involving middle school students in creative and educational activities with positive role models, the SOS program helps ensure that North Carolina's young people stay on the road to lifelong success.

B. Goals: SOS programs are tasked by Statute to fulfill the following goals:

1. To reduce the number of students who are unsupervised after-school, otherwise known as “latchkey” children;

2. To improve the academic performance of students participating in the program;
3. To meet the physical, intellectual, emotional, and social needs of students participating in the program and improve their attitudes and behavior; and
4. To improve coordination of existing resources and enhance collaboration so as to provide services to school-aged children effectively and efficiently.
5. To reduce juvenile crime in local communities served by the program; and
6. To recruit community volunteers to provide positive adult role models for school-aged children and to help supervise after-school activities.

III. GRANT PROCESS

A. Request for Proposals: The State SOS Office shall make available an RFP process in accordance with statute (*N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143B-152.4*).

B. Funding Priorities: SOS State Office places priority on those SOS programs that serve the targeted demographic, youth in grades 4 through 8. Ineffective programs will not be funded.

C. RFP Review Process

1. Selection of Grant Review Team: The selection of the SOS grant review team shall adhere to statute (*N.C. Gen. Stat. 143B-152.5*). Team members serve at the discretion of the Department and must relay immediately any potential conflict of interest between the team member and the applicant(s). Failure to demonstrate the highest degree of ethical conduct will negate the team member's scoring of applicants.
2. Grant Reviewing Scoring: Scoring shall be administered equitably and without regard to race, religion, sex, or ethnic background. SOS State Office staff shall make scoring criteria available to applicants prior to scoring.
3. Selection of Award Recipients: The Team shall recommend one (1) program per County to the State Office. State SOS staff shall review the Team's recommendation for funding, the local Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) recommendation, as applicable, and the current program operation. The State Office shall make recommendations to the Secretary. The Secretary, or his designee, shall make the final selection of grant awards.
4. Notification of Applicants: Applicants will be notified of grant request funding decisions upon the Secretary's decision.

IV. SOS STATE OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Standards: State SOS staff shall:

1. Afford professional and ethical service to SOS providers;
2. Provide services consistent with the Department's mission and policies;
3. Promote efficient, effective programming through the Request for Proposals (RFP) process;
4. Treat all SOS provider applicants equally and without prejudice; and
5. Notify the Assistant Secretary of Intervention/Prevention, or his designee, orally and in writing when any conflict of interest arises between the staff member and the SOS provider or program staff.

B. SOS Advisory Council: An SOS Advisory Council, composed of equal representation from each area of the State, shall be created. Representatives shall be SOS program providers of at least one (1) year and in good standing with the Department. This Council shall organize the SOS annual training conference and act as a resource to providers in their respective region. Representatives are liaisons, and are thus empowered to disseminate new policy and procedures as conveyed by State SOS staff and bring information from providers to the State SOS staff.

C. Annual Reporting: As required by statute, the State SOS Program Coordinator shall ensure reports are provided to the Department for submission to the General Assembly.

V. FUNDING AND FISCAL MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

A. Funding Period: The funding period for SOS contracts is July 1 to June 30. Through the contract renewal process, the Department may extend the contract for two (2), one (1) year periods. The Department may amend contracts in the event of changes in scope of work or an increase/decrease in available funds.

B. Budgeting

1. Program Submission of Annual Budget: All providers shall submit an annual budget to the Department. Budgets are submitted during the RFP application, contract renewal, and/or budget revision processes, and upon request by the Department. Annual budgets shall reflect expenditures in accordance with Program Standards.
2. Approval: The Department has discretion in approving all budgets submitted by a provider. Incomplete or inaccurate budget information shall not be approved and may result in loss of funds for falsification of records. The Department shall approve budgets by signing the "DJJDP/SOS authorization signature" section of the "SOS Budget Sheet" (*Form SOS B*).

2. Budget Revisions: Providers shall submit a budget revision and narrative (*Forms SOS 1010B and 1010C*) with January and August “Cost Reports” (*Form SOS 1010*) in order to request changes greater than \$1,000 to the approved budget. For changes less than \$1,000, the provider must submit a revision budget and narrative reflecting changes by June 15th. The revision must reflect and explain any variances to the original budget submitted. The Department has discretion in approving all revisions.

C. Accounting

1. Department Disbursements

- a) Funds approved for SOS providers shall be disbursed in payments over a twelve (12) month period based on total contract amount.
- b) A statement of projected unexpected funds, the “Third Quarter Accounting Form” (*Form SOS 1016*) shall be filed with the State SOS Office by the 15th of April. This statement shall be prepared jointly by the Program Director and the Chairman of the Board of Directors.

2. Program Fiscal Records

- a) Each provider shall maintain program-specific financial records that reflect all expenditures, incurred and revenues received related to the program. The financial records shall:
 - (1) Properly and clearly reflect all other sources of funds available to the SOS program;
 - (2) Provide clear and precise justification and support for entries included in the cost report and included in related budgets; and
 - (3) Include, at a minimum, separate accounts for each type of expense, revenue, and other funding resources (donations, fund-raisers, etc.) included in the annual cost report. All items on the cost report must be supported by clear and precise, financial records. Expenditures shall be identified by source/vendor, item name, brand, and quantity if the receipt does not evidence this information.
- b) SOS providers shall maintain a bank account for direct deposit and keep accurate and detailed records of funds received from the Department and related expenditures.

3. End of Year Refunds: The Department shall prepare invoices for all providers that report an expenditure of funds less in comparison to the total of amount of Department funds disbursed during the fiscal year.

VI. OVERSIGHT AND MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

A. Monitoring Methods: There are a number of established methods for conducting SOS monitoring visits.

1. State Office On-Site Monitoring: State SOS staff, or persons authorized by those staff, shall visit each program site and perform a general audit of programmatic, auditing, and budgeting records. Records shall be reviewed for consistency, accuracy, and completeness. Program activities observed, adherence with Program Standards requirements in this policy, areas of strength and areas for improvement shall be identified and provided in writing to the SOS provider. Findings shall be kept in the program's file at the State SOS Office.
2. Financial Accountability Monitoring: The Department's Internal Auditor shall conduct financial monitoring visits selected for auditing due to indicators from SOS program reporting or from Department staff observation.
3. External SOS Monitoring: The contract between the Department and external monitors shall provide for at least twenty-five (25) site visits per contract year to providers with the focus on compliance with quality program operations and compliance with SOS program standards. The State SOS Office shall identify these twenty-five (25) sites, in collaboration with the external monitor.

B. Corrective Action: Upon completion of monitoring efforts, the Department or a designee shall prepare a formal report documenting all findings, including areas of non-compliance. The provider shall prepare and submit to the State SOS Office a required response to corrective action or recommendations as indicated on the report within the designated timeframes. The response shall identify strategies and timelines for resolving compliance issues.

VII. PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Eligibility

1. A community or neighborhood-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit, or a consortium consisting of one (1) or more local nonprofits and one (1) or more local school administrative units may apply for an SOS grant.
2. Applicants must submit applications in accordance with the "Request for Proposals" distributed by State SOS Staff and posted on the Department's web page.

B. Planning: In accordance with *SOS Requirements for Program Operations*, each provider shall create and maintain a written plan for participants. Programs shall maintain records for each participant enrolled in the program.

C. Communication

1. SOS providers shall:

- a) Maintain an operational computer, equipped with email and software sufficient to exchange information and complete recordkeeping requirements;
- b) Provide State SOS staff with any change in staffing (persons or responsibilities), contact information, site location, and program policy; and
- c) Not share information about program participants unless a confidentiality release form is signed. A copy of this form must be provided to the parent/legal guardian of the program participant, State SOS staff, and filed with the county's information.

2. Communication with program participants, their families, schools, and Human Services agencies is essential and required of SOS providers.

D. Collaboration: Programs shall demonstrate local collaborative efforts with local schools, agencies including juvenile counseling services, community organizations, and JCPC, and others.

E. Monitoring: All SOS programs must maintain current and accurate program data to evaluate the overall success of its program and to provide information to the State SOS staff when requested.

F. Accountability

1. There are a number of reports required of programs providing information on program operation and providing greater clarity of expectations of program accountability.
2. "Monthly Statistical Report" (*Form SOS 1037*): Each provider is required to submit a monthly *1037* report.
3. The "Monthly Statistical Report" is used to monitor compliance with minimum numbers of participants to be served in relation to grant funding amount. In addition, it captures non-departmental revenue sources, which are compared to the anticipated revenue (*Form SOS E*) required at contract renewal.
4. Cost Reports: Twice per year (January 15th and August 31st), providers are required to submit the "Cost Report" (*Form SOS 1010*), which captures year-to-date expenditures, cash received to date, and ending cash balance.
5. "Third Quarter Accounting Forms" (*Form SOS 1016*): Due in March of the contract year, this form is required of all providers.

6. “Personnel Itemization Form” and “Professional Development Form” (*Forms SOS C and G*): These forms are required of all providers during contract renewal.
7. “Equipment/Inventory List” (*Form SOS D*): This form is required of all providers annually. It is used to monitor compliance with the requirement to gain prior approval for equipment costs totaling \$350 or more as well as the requirement to keep detailed inventory of all equipment over \$350 purchased with SOS grant dollars.
8. “Revenue Summary Form” (*Form SOS E*): This form is required of all providers annually.
9. “Subcontract Approval Form” (*Form SOS H*): This form must be submitted from all providers during the contract renewal process and at any time during the contract period, as applicable. It will assist in monitoring the requirement that all subcontracts of \$1000 or more gain prior approval from the Department.

VIII. PROGRAM STANDARDS

A. Operation: All SOS programs must provide at least four (4) days per week of after-school programming of at least three (3) hours per day or five (5) days of programming of at least two and a half (2 ½) hours per day.

B. Clients: Youth served by SOS programs shall be treated fairly and without physical punishment. The use of force against a program participant is grounds for grant termination and revocation of unspent funds. Program staff shall:

1. Respect and protect the civil and legal rights of participants;
2. Not discriminate against any juvenile, volunteer, employee or prospective employee on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, or handicapping condition;
3. Respect the confidentiality of fellow volunteers, employees and juveniles by carefully safeguarding the integrity of private information, seeking only that personal data needed to perform my job and revealing information concerning juveniles or personnel information only to those authorized to receive that information;
4. Report immediately any corrupt, illegal or unethical behavior which could affect either a participant's welfare or the integrity of the program or Department; and
5. Immediately report serious incidents to the State SOS Office.

C. Staffing

1. Eligibility: Applicants for employment within SOS programs must be at least 18 years of age to be eligible for employment. Volunteers shall be 18 years of age in order to provide direct services to youth. Volunteers under the age of 18 years of age must be supervised at all times when in a direct service capacity.

2. Background Checks: All SOS staff must receive a criminal history background check prior to employment. Evidence of completed checks shall be maintained in local personnel files and submitted to the State SOS Office upon request. Unsupervised volunteers must also receive a criminal history background check prior to volunteering.

3. Staff Training

a) All SOS program staff shall receive training in all program requirements during mandatory-attendance training in the beginning of the program year.

b) State SOS staff and the external monitor shall conduct trainings as well as provide information to SOS providers on available training opportunities and best practices.

c) Eight (8) hours of professional development is required of all program staff. State SOS staff shall place limitations on the subject of training to ensure maximization of resources. Recommended subject areas include CPR/first aid; blood borne pathogen containment; de-escalation of conflict; crisis intervention; minority sensitivity; and behavior management. Additional recommended training areas shall be provided by the State SOS Office.

d) Technical assistance shall be made available to all SOS providers.

4. Records: All accounting, budgeting, and program files are subject to review at any time by Department staff. These records shall immediately be made available to requesting staff.

D. Licenses/Certifications: At least one (1) program employee present during operating hours must be certified in CPR/First Aid.

IX. ATTACHMENTS

DJJDP Conflict of Interest Policy and Disclosure Form (*Form DJJDP13 001*)

NOTE: The SOS Budget Sheet (Form SOS B), Third Quarter Accounting Form (Form SOS 1016), Personnel Itemization Form (Form SOS C), Professional Development Form (Form SOS G), Cost Reports (Form SOS 1010), Budget Revision (Form SOS 1010B), Budget Narrative (Form SOS 1010C), Equipment/Inventory List (Form SOS D), Revenue Summary Form (Form SOS E), Subcontract Approval Form" (Form SOS H), and Monthly Statistical Report (Form SOS 1037) are available at <http://www.juvjus.state.nc.us/sos/index.html>.