

Single Source Award

Applies to:

Discretionary awards (grants and cooperative agreements).

Definition

A discretionary award specifically given to a known recipient (e.g., a friends' group, fundraising partner, non-governmental organization, landowner, or geographically positioned entity) either statutorily designated or determined by a bureau or office to be an appropriate partner based on demonstrable criteria, such as unique expertise or capacity.[1] This award type does not apply to awards made under mandatory programs.[2]

Department Policy

505 DM 2.14 Single Source Determinations

Competition in making awards through cooperative agreements is strongly encouraged in awarding discretionary grants; however, the Department recognizes that there are circumstances where an organization or individual may be determined to be an appropriate partner based on demonstrable criteria to receive an award through a cooperative agreement without competition. In order for an assistance award to be made without competition, the award must satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

1. Be an [unsolicited proposal](#)
2. Be a continuation of an activity presently being funded
3. Be legislatively restricted to a particular recipient or purpose
4. Be to a recipient having unique qualifications pertaining to performance of the activity, based on a variety of demonstrable factors (e.g. location, property ownership, voluntary support capacity, cost-sharing ability, technical expertise, etc.)
5. Be for an emergency situation, e.g. an insufficient amount of time available to go through the competitive process because of a compelling and unusual urgency, or substantial danger to health or safety

Decisions to transfer funds under a cooperative agreement to a single source without engaging in competition must

- withstand scrutiny
- protect the public interest
- be consistent with management priorities, agency objectives, and statutory requirements

Service Policy

516 FW 6 "Issuing Discretionary Grant and Cooperative Agreement Awards Without Competition"

Program offices must follow Departmental policy (see above) to determine single source eligibility for all discretionary financial assistance awards issued without competition. Additionally, all single source determinations, regardless of award amount, must be documented by the program office.[3] Only single source awards \$25,000 or more must be posted on Grants.gov.[4]

References

[1] 505 DM 2.5 D.

[2] 516 FW 6 B(2).

[3] *ibid.*, 6.8 "What are the requirements when the Service issues a single source award?"

[4] *ibid.*, 6.9 "Do programs have to post information about single source awards on Grants.gov?"