CARE Regional Coordinators (RCs) Responsibilities

New Regional Coordinators (RCs)

- Regions should allow time for overlap between old and new RCs.
- Managers from the old offices should share information on what had been going on in the regional CARE program with the new office.
- Take advantage of the experienced RCs in other regions- take time to talk to them.
- CARE program will set up mentors for the new RCs.
- Talk to your current and past project officers to find out what the past RCs have done to help the regional project officers and what other roles and responsibilities the RC has had.

Managing the CARE regional travel budget

- Develop a working relationship with your budget analyst so you are kept informed when the CARE travel funds are received in the regional office and when travel requests are submitted for funding.
- Make sure no travel authorizations are funded unless you approve them.
- Work with your project officers to find out travel needs.
- Develop a list of trips, cost them out, and make sure you have enough funds for these trips.
- Budget for the following:
    - Trip for the RC or regional representative to attend the national CARE grant review meeting held in DC in May.
    - Travel for a new RC and new project officers to attend the CARE project officer training held in June and may be held via webinar (in the past this training has been held in Region 7 and 1).
    - Travel for CARE RC, project officers or management to attend the national CARE workshop each year.
    - Travel to your CARE communities. Sometimes there is little to no cost if a GOV or public transportation can be used.
- Track the expenses so you do not overspend. The Region 10 RC has been giving out updates on CARE travel spending from the EPA financial warehouse.
- Although CARE travel funds are two-year money, remember these funds need to be obligated by September 30 in the fiscal year they are received.
- Check with your management and/or Regional programs to determine if any other department/office will be able to supplement your CARE travel budget. Some Regional Programs/Offices will allow staff to travel under their Program's own travel funds.

CARE Project Management

- Work as needed with your Project Officers. Some POs need more help than others managing their grant.
- Ensure that POs know to notify you immediately re: any concerns/problems during the grant period.
- RCs are responsible for notifying HQ about any major problems with the workplan.
- RCs should notify HQ if a grantees' quarterly report will not be submitted in a timely manner.
- To understand if there are any problems or missed schedules, work closely with your POs and ensure that they communicate with you and you with HQ.
- Review with your PO CARE reporting requirements, how to fill out the CARE quarterly reporting forms and matrix and what the time schedule for submission is.

- Go over the Terms and Conditions line by line with your PO (and Grant Specialist if possible). The information in this document has requirements which must be followed and which dictate the POs and the Grantees actions (e.g. protocols, requirements, etc.)
- Some RCs will review all reports prior to submitting them to HQ. If this is your Region's protocol, review quarterly reports that have been submitted to you by your PO in a timely manner. Quarterly reports must be posted to the ESC CARE project website. Get directions on how to access the ESC and how to create and post your reports from your previous RC or another Regional RC.
- Read some of these postings (including your own reports) - this is a good way to keep up on what is happening with each of your CARE grants.
- You may want to work with your PO re: edits to the quarterly reports.
- Ensure that grantees' progress and challenges are adequately reported.
- Review and help the PO with any necessary additions or revisions to their documentation so that a comprehensive explanation of the grantee's work is understood. If the grantee cannot meet the reporting timetable, inform HQ right away and report to HQ when the grantee will meet the schedule and explain why there was a delay. If there are any concerns/problems you do not know how to address, consult with your management, your Grant Specialist, and/or any of the HQ or RC staff. The CARE staff will be more than willing to help you. Many of the seasoned RCs have encountered similar issues and may be of assistance.
- Monitor through the Quik Reports Tool how your grantee is drawing down their grant funds.
- Headquarters and Regional Finance Offices want each PO and RC to keep an eye on the efficient use of the funds (i.e. your grantee should not be a year into their grant without yet drawing down any funding.) As a RC you and the PO should be monitoring their budget drawdowns on at least a quarterly basis.
- **Quik Reports Tool -** The Quik Report Tool was created based on Region 2's Grants Office. The Quik Reports tool is designed for managers, grants specialist and project officers who need access to reports to help them better manage their grants. The tool features prompts that allow users to tailor reports for specific information needs (e.g. a specific project officer's workload.) The tool includes both Pre-Award and Post Award reports.
    - Project Officers and Grant Specialist can also use Quik Reports Tool to monitor and track Baseline Monitoring due dates. Speak to your Grant Specialist to better understand the use of this tool and process. Also, the following link provides a guide to using the Baseline Tracking tool that is a part of the Quik Reports Tool:

      http://intranet.epa.gov/ogd/igms_tools/post_award_baseline_tracking_tool_guide.pdf

    - The tool includes the ability to assess and view workload and prioritize the work. Other features include a link page which allows users to hotlink to various parts of the IGMS. You can also link to other IT resources that may be needed in the award and the management of grants.

    - Finally, Quik Reports will also help your Grant Specialist track progress in conducting Unliquidated Obligations (ULO) reviews.

    - **Please Note: Quik Reports will utilize the same URL as Post Award Baseline Tracking**. Once you click on the URL the following three tabs appear:
        - Tab 1 - **Quik Report**
        - Tab 2 - **Post Award Baseline Tracking**
        - Tab 3 - **ULO Metrics**
        - URL: http://cfint.rtpnc.epa.gov/baseline/

- Work with your Grant Specialist to learn about Quik Reports Tool and how to use it to better manage your regional Project Officers and your CARE projects.

CARE Conference Calls

- **CARE Regional Coordinators' conference calls**
    - RC calls occur once a month – usually the third Wednesday of the month.
    - Participate in these calls to find out what is going on with the CARE program nationally.
    - Relay information learned to your management and project officers.
    - Submit agenda items if you have an issue you would like to raise with other RCs.
    - Region 9 and 10 RCs develop the agenda and host the calls.
    - The call in number for the conference call currently is
866-299-3188 & 282-635-2749
This number changes when CARE management at HQ changes.

- **Project officer conference calls**
    - Participate in these calls.
    - Encourage your project officers to participate.
    - Relay information to regional staff who can/should participate. Share the notes with those that were not available for the call.
    - Submit agenda items if you or your project officers have an issue you would like to raise with other project officers.
    - When it is your region's turn, organize and develop an agenda for a project officer call.
    - Take the notes for the call and send them out to the CARE RCs, Project Officers and HQ CARE Administration Team (CAT). Place notes on the new CARE shared drive.
    - See **Attachment A** to understand how to access the CARE shared drive. Contact another RC or Gale Bonnano to receive the email with the hotlink.

- **Grantee conference calls**
    - These calls are held randomly and on-demand only.
    - Participate in these calls.
    - Encourage your grantees and project officers to participate and other Regional staff that might benefit from the call.
    - Relay the information to grantees and regional staff who could not participate.
    - Submit agenda items.
    - Take the notes for the call and send them out to the grantees, CARE RCs, Project Officers, and HQ CAT, etc. Place notes on the new CARE shared drive. See Attachment A to understand how to access the CARE shared drive. Contact another RC or Gale Bonnano to receive the email with the hotlink.

CARE National Training Workshop

- Volunteer to be on the planning committee, organize a session, or help plan the EPA only meeting that usually takes place the day before the national workshop.
- Always attend the workshop.

- Bring back information to project officers who could not attend and to your managers.
- Arrange to spend time with your Region's grantees at the conference. Often times they will look to the RC to guide them on what sessions to attend.
- Often RCs will arrange a Regional meal/meeting with their Project Officers and grantees for one of the evening dinners, lunches, etc.

CARE Workgroups

- There is a real need for RC help for the CARE Program. There are <u>many</u> opportunities to participate on national CARE teams other than the training workshop workgroup. Please consider to help the CARE Program as much as possible.

Regional CARE Personnel

- Check with your management re: how your RC position is documented. Most RCs have CJEs in place with Human Resources and are evaluated on them during their performance evaluations.
- Check with our RCs if you need an example of their CJEs. RC CJEs can also be found on the ESC.

Grant Award Roles and Responsibilities

- National review and decision meeting in DC takes place around mid-May. This year it will take place on **May 17-18, 2011.**
- HQs managers approve selection decision soon after the review process. This year it will be by **May 19, 2011.**
- After the regions are notified of the HQs managers' approval of the CARE national selections (finalists), Headquarters will prepare and send out letters to the finalists. Do not contact the finalists until these letters have been sent out.
- During this time the RCs should be finalizing their project officer selections.
- RCs and any project officers, especially any new RCs or project officers, should plan to attend the project officer training to be held this year in Boston on **June 7-9, 2011** (the 7th is the travel day – this was changed to be a webinar to save travel funds). Stacey Johnson, the Region 1 RC, will be sending out more info soon.
- After the training, the RC should encourage the Project Officer(s) to contact the grant finalist/finalists to:
    - Congratulate them on being selected as a finalist
    - Start negotiating the workplan (see Negotiating a CARE workplan document)
    - Find out from your Grants Office what the deadline for submitting complete applications/IGMS award work so the grant application can be awarded by September 30, 2011. Many Regions have deadline dates for your award paperwork being around July 15.
    - Work with your Grant Specialist to finalize a formal workplan and grant award.
    - Collectively make any necessary changes to the grant workplan and award document.
    - You will need to understand the IGMS grant tracking system. Your Grant Specialist can help you through the database. It is this database that you will use to upload all formal documents applicable to your CARE grant.
    - These grant negotiation meetings are best done in person (at least the first one).
    - Be prepared with all of your questions and concerns re: HOW the grantee will manage and implement the grant. Often, the negotiation process takes 1-3 months and includes many conference call conversations. An initial phone call with follow up emails and then additional phone conversations may also suffice, if there are not travel funds to meet in person.

- Some Grants Specialists review the application with the Regional Coordinator and Project Officer, especially the budget, so that the Region understands the necessary changes that they will be required before we contact the finalist.
    - Provide and review with the project officers the CARE terms and conditions. Ensure that the PO understands these. These help the PO know about acceptable/required grant processes (i.e. how does a grantee award a stipend, how does a grantee request a change in the workplan, extend the closing date of the grant.)
    - Gale Bonanno or Marva King will send out information from the CARE HQs office regarding what each region needs to award the CARE grants (e.g. funds will be program identified (all CARE funds come from four different programs OSWER, Water, Air and OPPTS). Once identified, the funds will be moved to the regions for your CARE grant/grants.
    - Find out who in your Finance Office monitors those incoming funds. Let them know when the funds are being sent, so that the Finance Office can let you know when they "arrive." Then, the CARE RCs will be notified by their Finance/Budget Office when the funds have arrived in their region and are ready to be used to fund your project.
- RCs should stay in close contact with their project officers to help them answer any questions and to help if any issues/concerns arise with getting the grant applications submitted in a timely manner.
- Ensure that the grant funds are obligated by September 30 of that year.
- Marva King or Gale Bonanno will also send out to all of the RCs the "Decision Memo" that is signed by Rob Brenner, and the Assistant Administrator Discretionary Grant certification that is signed before the RFP is issued. These two memos will be a part of the Funding Recommendation paperwork that is required as part of the "Award" paperwork.
- RCs should take the lead in working with the Regional Public Affairs Office in preparing a press release and "big check" event or another kind of event to announce the grant award. RCs should always be on the lookout for publicity opportunities for the regional CARE program and projects.
- RCs should meet at least once a month with the PO(s) to ensure that the project is on track.

<u>Attachment A</u>

Announcing the new CARE Shared Drive - Please use it! -
04/26/2011 03:33 PM -

Gale Bonanno	to: CARE Administrative Team, CARE Regional Coordination Team

Dear CARE Administrative Team and Regional Coordinators,

I am excited to announce the new and unique Shared Drive that OSWER set up for the CARE program. This is an important step for the CARE program as it continues to mature. I encourage you to use the Shared Drive to store and access important CARE documents and files, e.g., briefings, logos, memos, etc.

The CARE Shared Drive is designed to be a central storage location for important files related to the CARE program that allows the CARE program to better share information and keep records (which can be challenging due to the cross-Agency structure of the program). The link to the shared folder is below. If you drag and drop it on to your desktop, you should have a direct link to the shared folder.

Tai Lung and Kati Kallins developed the following brief guidance to help us ensure the continued organization and usefulness of the Shared Drive:

What to Store: -

- Files which are useful for others doing similar work (i.e. briefings, memos, etc) -
- Files which help record the history of the program (i.e. meeting notes, press releases, etc) -
- Official records -
- CARE documents (i.e. Themes Document, etc) -
- General use files (i.e. photos, logos, etc) -

General Rules:

- Do not delete files that you did not place in the drive without the consent of the files creator.
- Please place all files in folders. If there is not an appropriate folder or subfolder then create one however please make sure to follow the existing structure.
- Keep only the most recent version of a document (unless the iterative versions provide important information).

File Naming Conventions:

Example: OCFO Briefing Jan2011 Strauss.ppt

1. Make sure the document contains what the document is first; make the name distinct not simply 'Briefing' or 'Agenda' (i.e. OCFO Briefing)
2. Please include a date in the title (i.e. OCFO Briefing Jan2011)
3. If this is a document that has multiple people working on it, please include the last name in the person that posted it (i.e. OCFO Briefing Jan2011 Strauss)

Protocol for CARE Shared Drive.docx

PS> The Shared Drive is easy to use - - I posted the CARE Monthly Reports that I submit to Mike Shapiro in the Administrative/Program Reports folder.

Thank you,
Gale

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