

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7921

To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants to community-based nonprofit organizations to operate navigator programs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 31, 2020

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Reform

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants to community-based nonprofit organizations to operate navigator programs, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Connecting Commu-
5 nities to Grant Opportunities Act of 2020”.

1 **SEC. 2. GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS**
2 **PROVIDING CERTAIN SERVICES AS A RESULT**
3 **OF PANDEMIC-RELATED PROGRAMS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and
5 Human Services, in collaboration with the Secretary of
6 Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of Labor,
7 and the Administrator of the Small Business Administra-
8 tion, shall award grants to community-based nonprofit or-
9 ganizations to operate a navigator program.

10 (b) NAVIGATOR PROGRAMS.—A navigator program
11 shall consist of recruiting, training, assigning, and employ-
12 ing eligible navigators to facilitate application for, or pro-
13 curement of, eligible benefits during the emergency period,
14 including by performing any of the following:

15 (1) Acting as contacts, including by assisting in
16 the application for any eligible benefit provided to
17 individuals, families, or small business concerns.

18 (2) Screening individuals, families, or small
19 business concerns that are potentially eligible, but
20 currently not receiving, an eligible benefit.

21 (3) Coordinating with appropriate Federal
22 agencies to distribute materials relating to eligible
23 benefits.

24 (4) Conducting ongoing outreach to populations
25 regarding eligible benefits.

1 (c) APPLICATION.—To seek a grant under this sec-
2 tion, a community-based nonprofit organization shall sub-
3 mit an application to the Secretary—

4 (1) containing such agreements, assurances,
5 and information, and submitted in such form and
6 manner, as the Secretary may require;

7 (2) including a complete description of the or-
8 ganization’s plan for the operation of a navigator
9 program, including—

10 (A) a description of the training program
11 to be implemented for navigator personnel;

12 (B) a plan for publicizing the availability
13 of the navigator services to be provided;

14 (C) a plan for providing service to non-
15 English speaking persons seeking navigator
16 services that—

17 (i) is based on data from the Bureau
18 of the Census, is consistent with the demo-
19 graphics of the local areas where the navi-
20 gator program will operate, and outlines
21 which languages are most prevalent and
22 commonly requested in such areas for
23 translation services; or

24 (ii) is based on qualitative and quan-
25 titative observation from community serv-

1 ice providers, including providers of health
2 and mental health services, social services,
3 transportation, and other relevant commu-
4 nity services; and

5 (D) a plan for facilitating access to naviga-
6 tors by persons with hearing impairments;

7 (3) explaining the organization's inability to op-
8 erate the navigator program without Federal assist-
9 ance; and

10 (4) providing assurances that the organization
11 will, to the extent practicable, seek, recruit, and hire
12 navigators who are members of racial and ethnic mi-
13 nority groups and women in order to increase diver-
14 sity within the navigator program.

15 (d) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this sec-
16 tion, the Secretary shall give priority to applicants that
17 demonstrate—

18 (1) an intent to provide navigator programs in
19 or serving residents living in a qualified census tract,
20 as defined in section 42(d)(5)(B)(ii)(I) of the of the
21 Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C.
22 42(d)(5)(B)(ii)(I)); and

23 (2) that the applicant has previous experience
24 in providing services to such residents.

1 (e) RENEWAL OF GRANTS.—The Secretary may
2 renew a grant to a community-based nonprofit organiza-
3 tion under this section, without limitations on the duration
4 of such renewal, if the organization demonstrates that it—

5 (1) has used the funds provided to it under this
6 section in accordance with its approved application;
7 and

8 (2) has made progress in achieving the objec-
9 tives specified in the approved application.

10 (f) NO-COST EXTENSIONS.—Notwithstanding sub-
11 section (e), the Secretary may extend the period of a grant
12 under this section, without limitations as to the duration
13 of such extension, to provide additional time to complete
14 the objectives of the grant award.

15 (g) SUSPENSION OF FUNDS IN CERTAIN CASES.—If
16 the Secretary determines that the recipient of a grant
17 under this section is not in substantial compliance with
18 the terms and requirements of the grant agreement, the
19 Secretary may revoke or suspend funding for the grant,
20 in whole or in part.

21 (h) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act
22 shall be construed to limit a community-based nonprofit
23 organization from receiving a grant under this section for
24 a population otherwise served by such organization with
25 other Federal funds.

1 (i) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—

2 (1) GRANTEE REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not
3 later than 90 days after the end of each fiscal year
4 for which a grantee receives a grant under this sec-
5 tion, the grantee shall submit to the Secretary a re-
6 port that contains an evaluation of the results of the
7 activities, including financial expenditures, made
8 during such fiscal year to carry out the program for
9 which the grant is received.

10 (2) ANNUAL REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not
11 later than January 1 following the end of each fiscal
12 year for which funds are appropriated to carry out
13 this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Congress
14 a report describing the progress achieved through
15 programs funded through grants under this section
16 for the preceding fiscal year.

17 (j) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

18 (1) The term “eligible benefit” means any ben-
19 efit under any of the following Acts (including the
20 amendments made by such Acts):

21 (A) The Coronavirus Preparedness and
22 Response Supplemental Appropriations Act,
23 2020 (Public Law 116–123).

24 (B) The Families First Coronavirus Re-
25 sponse Act (Public Law 116–127).

1 (C) The CARES Act (Public Law 116–
2 136).

3 (D) The Paycheck Protection Program and
4 Health Care Enhancement Act (Public Law
5 116–139).

6 (E) Paycheck Protection Program Flexi-
7 bility Act of 2020 (Public Law 116–142).

8 (2) The term “eligible navigator” means a navi-
9 gator with direct knowledge of the communities to
10 be served.

11 (3) The term “emergency period” means the
12 period beginning on January 31, 2020, and ending
13 on the date that is 12 months after the later of—

14 (A) the end of any emergency or disaster
15 declared by the President pursuant to the Na-
16 tional Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et
17 seq.) or the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief
18 and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121
19 et seq.) with respect to SARS-CoV-2 or an-
20 other coronavirus with pandemic potential (in-
21 cluding any renewals thereof); and

22 (B) the end of any emergency declared by
23 the Secretary of Health and Human Services
24 pursuant to section 319 of the Public Health
25 Service Act with respect to SARS-CoV-2 or

1 another coronavirus with pandemic potential
2 (including any renewals thereof).

3 (4) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary
4 of Health and Human Services.

5 (k) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To carry
6 out this section, there is authorized to be appropriated to
7 carry out this section \$100,000,000 for each of fiscal year
8 2021 and fiscal year 2022, to remain available until ex-
9 pended.

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