

§ 7526. Low-income taxpayer clinics**(a) In general**

The Secretary may, subject to the availability of appropriated funds, make grants to provide matching funds for the development, expansion, or continuation of qualified low-income taxpayer clinics.

(b) Definitions

For purposes of this section—

(1) Qualified low-income taxpayer clinic**(A) In general**

The term “qualified low-income taxpayer clinic” means a clinic that—

(i) does not charge more than a nominal fee for its services (except for reimbursement of actual costs incurred); and

(ii)(I) represents low-income taxpayers in controversies with the Internal Revenue Service; or

(II) operates programs to inform individuals for whom English is a second language about their rights and responsibilities under this title.

(B) Representation of low-income taxpayers

A clinic meets the requirements of subparagraph (A)(ii)(I) if—

(i) at least 90 percent of the taxpayers represented by the clinic have incomes which do not exceed 250 percent of the poverty level, as determined in accordance with criteria established by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget; and

(ii) the amount in controversy for any taxable year generally does not exceed the amount specified in section 7463.

(2) Clinic

The term “clinic” includes—

(A) a clinical program at an accredited law, business, or accounting school in which students represent low-income taxpayers in controversies arising under this title; and

(B) an organization described in section 501(c) and exempt from tax under section 501(a) which satisfies the requirements of paragraph (1) through representation of taxpayers or referral of taxpayers to qualified representatives.

(3) Qualified representative

The term “qualified representative” means any individual (whether or not an attorney) who is authorized to practice before the Internal Revenue Service or the applicable court.

(c) Special rules and limitations**(1) Aggregate limitation**

Unless otherwise provided by specific appropriation, the Secretary shall not allocate more than \$6,000,000 per year (exclusive of costs of administering the program) to grants under this section.

(2) Limitation on annual grants to a clinic

The aggregate amount of grants which may be made under this section to a clinic for a year shall not exceed \$100,000.

(3) Multi-year grants

Upon application of a qualified low-income taxpayer clinic, the Secretary is authorized to

award a multi-year grant not to exceed 3 years.

(4) Criteria for awards

In determining whether to make a grant under this section, the Secretary shall consider—

(A) the numbers of taxpayers who will be served by the clinic, including the number of taxpayers in the geographical area for whom English is a second language;

(B) the existence of other low-income taxpayer clinics serving the same population;

(C) the quality of the program offered by the low-income taxpayer clinic, including the qualifications of its administrators and qualified representatives, and its record, if any, in providing service to low-income taxpayers; and

(D) alternative funding sources available to the clinic, including amounts received from other grants and contributions, and the endowment and resources of the institution sponsoring the clinic.

(5) Requirement of matching funds

A low-income taxpayer clinic must provide matching funds on a dollar-for-dollar basis for all grants provided under this section. Matching funds may include—

(A) the salary (including fringe benefits) of individuals performing services for the clinic; and

(B) the cost of equipment used in the clinic.

Indirect expenses, including general overhead of the institution sponsoring the clinic, shall not be counted as matching funds.

(6) Provision of information regarding qualified low-income taxpayer clinics

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, officers and employees of the Department of the Treasury may—

(A) advise taxpayers of the availability of, and eligibility requirements for receiving, advice and assistance from one or more specific qualified low-income taxpayer clinics receiving funding under this section, and

(B) provide information regarding the location of, and contact information for, such clinics.

(Added Pub. L. 105-206, title III, §3601(a), July 22, 1998, 112 Stat. 774; amended Pub. L. 116-25, title I, §1402(a), July 1, 2019, 133 Stat. 997.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2019—Subsec. (c)(6). Pub. L. 116-25 added par. (6).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2019 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 116-25, title I, §1402(b), July 1, 2019, 133 Stat. 997, provided that: “The amendment made by this section [amending this section] shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act [July 1, 2019].”

EFFECTIVE DATE

Pub. L. 105-206, title III, §3601(c), July 22, 1998, 112 Stat. 776, provided that: “The amendments made by

this section [enacting this section] shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act [July 22, 1998].”

§ 7526A. Return preparation programs for applicable taxpayers

(a) Establishment of Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Matching Grant Program

The Secretary shall establish a Community Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Matching Grant Program under which the Secretary may, subject to the availability of appropriated funds, make grants to provide matching funds for the development, expansion, or continuation of qualified return preparation programs assisting applicable taxpayers and members of underserved populations.

(b) Use of funds

(1) In general

Qualified return preparation programs may use grants received under this section for—

(A) ordinary and necessary costs associated with program operation in accordance with cost principles under the applicable Office of Management and Budget circular, including—

(i) wages or salaries of persons coordinating the activities of the program,

(ii) developing training materials, conducting training, and performing quality reviews of the returns prepared under the program,

(iii) equipment purchases, and

(iv) vehicle-related expenses associated with remote or rural tax preparation services,

(B) outreach and educational activities described in subsection (c)(2)(B), and

(C) services related to financial education and capability, asset development, and the establishment of savings accounts in connection with tax return preparation.

(2) Requirement of matching funds

A qualified return preparation program must provide matching funds on a dollar-for-dollar basis for all grants provided under this section. Matching funds may include—

(A) the salary (including fringe benefits) of individuals performing services for the program,

(B) the cost of equipment used in the program, and

(C) other ordinary and necessary costs associated with the program.

Indirect expenses, including general overhead of any entity administering the program, shall not be counted as matching funds.

(c) Application

(1) In general

Each applicant for a grant under this section shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may reasonably require.

(2) Priority

In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to applications which demonstrate—

(A) assistance to applicable taxpayers, with emphasis on outreach to, and services for, such taxpayers,

(B) taxpayer outreach and educational activities relating to eligibility and availability of income supports available through this title, including the earned income tax credit, and

(C) specific outreach and focus on one or more underserved populations.

(3) Amounts taken into account

In determining matching grants under this section, the Secretary shall only take into account amounts provided by the qualified return preparation program for expenses described in subsection (b).

(d) Program adherence

(1) In general

The Secretary shall establish procedures for, and shall conduct not less frequently than once every 5 calendar years during which a qualified return preparation program is operating under a grant under this section, periodic site visits—

(A) to ensure the program is carrying out the purposes of this section, and

(B) to determine whether the program meets such program adherence standards as the Secretary shall by regulation or other guidance prescribe.

(2) Additional requirements for grant recipients not meeting program adherence standards

In the case of any qualified return preparation program which—

(A) is awarded a grant under this section, and

(B) is subsequently determined—

(i) not to meet the program adherence standards described in paragraph (1)(B), or

(ii) not to be otherwise carrying out the purposes of this section,

such program shall not be eligible for any additional grants under this section unless such program provides sufficient documentation of corrective measures established to address any such deficiencies determined.

(e) Definitions

For purposes of this section—

(1) Qualified return preparation program

The term “qualified return preparation program” means any program—

(A) which provides assistance to individuals, not less than 90 percent of whom are applicable taxpayers, in preparing and filing Federal income tax returns,

(B) which is administered by a qualified entity,

(C) in which all volunteers who assist in the preparation of Federal income tax returns meet the training requirements prescribed by the Secretary, and

(D) which uses a quality review process which reviews 100 percent of all returns.

(2) Qualified entity

(A) In general

The term “qualified entity” means any entity which—