

Standard OCB Grant: Coach's Role in Capacity Building

To augment the success of Organizational Capacity Building (OCB) projects, The Retirement Research Foundation (RRF) offers Standard OCB grantees the opportunity to engage an organizational coach. RRF covers the costs associated with this benefit.

Organizational coaches are individuals with broad nonprofit management experience who are available to grantees for the life of an OCB grant. They provide guidance, support, and an objective point of view on the project undertaken.

Here's what a few OCB grantees have said about coaching:

Our experience with our organizational coach was overwhelmingly positive. She helped us organize our thoughts, think strategically, and take action. Capacity-building work can be really hard, so it was helpful to work with her, especially when we hit some bumps in the road.

The coach provided insight, suggestions, and support that were incredibly valuable to me in my role as Executive Director, but also to our organization as a whole. Everyone should take advantage of this opportunity.

At the start of our project I couldn't have predicted how much we would come to value our coach. Much of the success of our project can be attributed to her insight into how to handle things that did not go as planned. We were so lucky to have someone whose professional expertise and style were such a good fit for our organization.

The coach is available to offer guidance to the team on a continuing basis throughout the grant. While RRF will help identify potential coaches, the final selection of a coach is determined by the grantee. Because each OCB project is unique, roles and responsibilities of coaches and grantees may vary. Here are some general characteristics that guide the coaching process.

Characteristics of the Coaching Process

Coaching:

- is relationship-driven and is based on trust and respect between the coach and the grantee.
- begins where a grantee is and acknowledges a grantee's expectations.
- emphasizes capacity building, rather than doing for the grantee.
- works from the strengths of the grantee organization.
- is based in confidentiality and discretion.
- is a catalyst that will generate new ideas and help grantees think about leveraging their existing resources in different ways.
- accommodates the different styles and needs of grantees and their organizations and changes as the project progresses.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Coach

A good coach will:

- review the strengths and opportunities for growth within the grantee organization, as well as its capacity building goals.
- assist the grantee in identifying goals for coaching to guide the grantee/coach relationship.
- work flexibly and understand the gray areas between coaching and consulting.
- provide opportunities for the OCB team to engage in self-reflection and take action for accomplishing objectives.
- provide referrals to other resources and technical assistance opportunities.
- assist the grantee in setting priorities and providing guidance in problem solving.
- seek feedback on the coaching relationship and make adjustments as needed.