



Developing a Competitive SAMHSA Grant Application

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INTRODUCTION

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), was established by an act of Congress in 1992 under Public Law 102-321. SAMHSA was created to focus attention, programs, and funding on improving the lives of people with or at risk for mental health and substance use disorders. SAMHSA supports numerous activities that focus on substance use/misuse prevention, substance use disorder treatment, and mental health services through its discretionary grant programs.

Purpose of This Manual

The “Developing a Competitive SAMHSA Grant Application” manual is designed to provide applicants with information about how to prepare competitive, well-developed SAMHSA grant applications.

Objectives

This manual will provide information on how to:

- Review current organizational materials and processes and determine which materials/documents need to be updated;
- Review SAMHSA funding opportunities to determine whether you meet the eligibility criteria for a particular announcement;
- Determine if you can realistically implement a project;
- Assemble data to justify the need for funding;
- Identify your resources and individuals to participate on the writing team; and
- Write an application that effectively responds to the evaluation criteria.

CHAPTER 1 – SAMHSA’s Structure

Overview

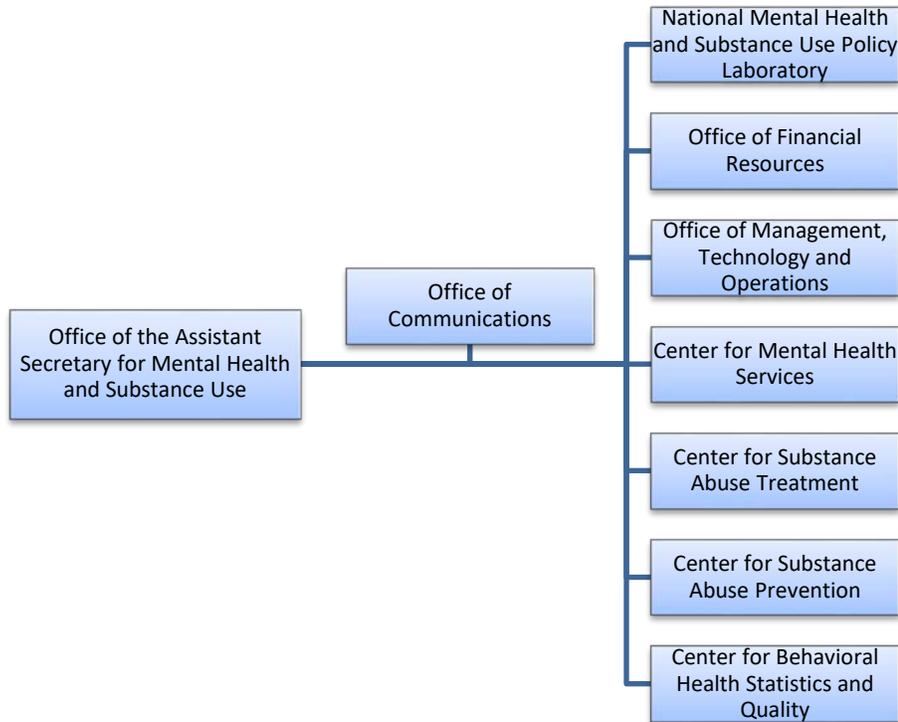
The purpose of this chapter is to discuss SAMHSA’s mission, priorities, and organization and to acquaint you with the three centers in SAMHSA that provide funding opportunities, specifically the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), and the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT).

SAMHSA’s Structure and Mission

SAMHSA is the agency within HHS that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. Its mission is to reduce the impact of substance use/misuse and mental illness on America’s communities. SAMHSA’s organizational chart is provided in Figure 1. More information on SAMHSA is available on the website at SAMHSA.gov.

Figure 1

SAMHSA ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



SAMHSA's Centers

Grant funds are available from the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), and the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT). SAMHSA's grant programs are focused on improving the quality and availability of substance use/misuse prevention, substance use disorder treatment, and mental health services nationwide. Some SAMHSA grant programs enable states to build or enhance substance use disorder and mental health services, while other grant programs give states and local communities the resources to better identify and address emerging substance use disorder and mental health service needs. SAMHSA grant-supported projects implement evidence-based approaches to prevention and treatment.

Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS)

CMHS leads federal efforts in expanding the availability and accessibility of high-quality, community-based services for adults with serious mental illnesses and children with serious emotional disturbances. CMHS administers the Mental Health Services Block Grant Program (MHBG) as well as a portfolio of discretionary grant programs that include efforts to help prevent and treat mental health disorders. The Center collects, analyzes, and disseminates national data on mental health services.

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)

CSAP's mission is to improve behavioral health through evidence-based prevention approaches. CSAP works with federal, state, public, and private organizations to develop comprehensive prevention systems by:

- Providing national leadership in the development of policies, programs, and services to prevent the onset of illegal drug use, prescription drug misuse and abuse, alcohol misuse and abuse, and underage alcohol and tobacco use; and
- Promoting effective substance abuse prevention practices that enable states, communities, and other organizations to effectively apply prevention knowledge.

As a result of its efforts, CSAP's work creates:

- Supportive workplaces, schools, and communities;
- Drug-free and crime-free neighborhoods; and
- Positive connections with friends and family.

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT)

CSAT promotes community-based substance use disorder treatment services for individuals and families. CSAT works with States and community-based organizations to improve and expand existing substance use disorder treatment and recovery services through its discretionary grant programs and the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant Program (SABG). It

also supports SAMHSA's free treatment referral service to link individuals and families with the community-based substance use disorder treatment services they need.

CHAPTER 2 – Review Current Organizational Documents and Processes

Overview

This chapter will help you to identify internal organizational documents and processes that may be useful in writing your grant application. It discusses the importance of identifying, compiling, and updating needed program and community information. This step should be done well in advance of applying for a grant award as the time frame for grant application development is usually limited to 60 days. With advanced planning and organizing, the process of writing your application will be easier.

Clearly Define the Mission of Your Organization

If your organization does not have a clearly defined mission statement, it is important to develop one. If you already have a mission statement, make sure it has been updated to reflect any changes to the priorities of the organization.

The following are core elements of a Mission Statement:

- **“Who we are”** is your name and type of organization (i.e., The ABC Agency for Women in Recovery, a nonprofit, community-based organization in Chicago);
- **“What we do”** means the services you provide (i.e., counseling, training, and support groups for women in recovery);
- **“Who we do it for”** is your population of focus, the people you serve (i.e., women in recovery);
- **“How we do it”** discusses the activities you provide (i.e., workshops, support groups, and public service announcements);
- **“Where we do it”** is the specific geographic area in which you provide services, such as neighborhoods on the Southeast side of Chicago; and
- **“Why we do it”** is the community problem you want to change, including your goals and desired outcomes (i.e., increasing the employment rate for women in recovery and decreasing the relapse rate in this particular population of focus.)

Sample Mission Statement

Arlington Youth Against Violence, Inc. (AYAVI) is a nonprofit organization that provides violence prevention and intervention services for youth, ages 14 to 20, who are economically disadvantaged. AYAVI's prevention and intervention services include training, education, and community collaboration activities. AYAVI serves the youth of Falls Church, Arlington, Fairfax, and Rosslyn, Virginia.

The project's goals and desired outcomes include:

- *Reduction of violence among youth;*
- *Training and education on alternatives to violence; and*
- *Partnering to enhance violence prevention.*

Review and Update your Program/Organizational Materials

The information that is submitted in your grant application must be current. In preparation for starting the grant application process, make sure your program/organizational information is up-to-date and that you have compiled statistics on the characteristics of your population(s) of focus and the current substance use and/or mental health issues in your community or geographic catchment area. Information you may need to include in your grant application is outlined below.

Program/Organizational Information

- Mission Statement
- Organizational chart
- Certifications/Licensure
- Board of Directors/Advisory Board information and minutes of meetings
- Outreach/recruitment strategies for obtaining consumer/client input
- Key community partnerships
- Stakeholder information
- Referral sources
- Consent forms
- Cultural competence materials/trainings conducted
- Admission/assessment procedures

Evidence-Based Practices

- Description of EBPs being used
- Research justifying use of the EBPs with your population of focus
- How staff are trained to implement the EBPs
- How fidelity of the EBPs is monitored
- Justification of any modifications that have been made to the EBPs

Staff and Organizational Experience

- Job descriptions of staff
- Resumes of key management personnel and staff providing services
- Monthly financial accounts/Program costs
- Recent audits
- Experience managing grants and providing services
- Facility licensing and compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Accounting procedures

Data

- Data specific to your population(s) of focus – numbers served, demographic characteristics, number/type of services delivered
- Local statistics and census data
- Outcome data
- Data collection instruments and procedures
- Information on service gaps

Understand the Reasons for Partnerships and Networks

While reviewing and updating your organizational documents and processes, you should also devote time to developing and nurturing partnerships and networks. Partnerships are composed of community organizations and/or groups that you collaborate with to provide services. Funding opportunity announcements often ask you to discuss these relationships to demonstrate your involvement with other organizations within the community.

Partnerships can allow for increased opportunities for alternative funding. Sharing information, resources, and data will give you much-needed background and support for your project ideas. Partnerships and networks can serve as forums to share and receive information. It is also important to consider how partnerships may factor into your sustainability plan and assist you in maintaining the project when Federal funding ends.

Some reasons for building partnerships and networks can include:

- Building project support and improving prospects for sustainability;
- Sharing information about your community;
- Sharing resources and data;
- Obtaining buy-in and validation;
- Developing solid public relations;
- Enhancing cultural competence; and
- Encouraging community dialogue at all levels for project design and service delivery.

Partnerships and networks can provide you with data, lessons learned, and feedback to help you design effective services.

Recognize the Importance of Building Coalitions

Building coalitions is important because they allow an organization to develop relationships with people, programs, and processes that strengthen community resources and move the whole community toward positive social change. One program cannot solve all the problems in a community. Coalition building helps bring together all the programs in your community, such as health, religious, school, social services, and housing programs, to identify how to work together to meet community goals. Your program should contribute to coalition building in your area. Your relationships with other organizations can also demonstrate a “continuum of care”.

Work With a Local Advisory Committee

Does your program have an advisory committee? Is it a local committee? If your agency has a *national* advisory committee, it is definitely a useful tool. However, a *local* advisory committee can greatly assist your organization with specific tasks that match community needs. It is important that local advisory committee members are residents and are familiar with the community.

A local advisory committee may help with:

- Increasing program status in the community;
- Identifying individuals in the community with expertise in program evaluation;
- Project planning;
- Obtaining information on past experience with grant projects and input on a variety of fields, such as accounting, medicine, research, fundraising, and marketing; and
- Recruiting focus group participants and soliciting consumer/client involvement.

When working with a local advisory committee, ask the following questions:

- Does the committee represent the diversity that exists within your community?
- Does the committee have representation from the population(s) of focus?
- Do committee members have access to resources, expertise, information, and/or funding sources?
- Does the committee meet on a regular basis?
- Can the organization take advantage of and learn from the expertise of committee members?

Identify Potential Funding Opportunities and Conduct a Literature Search

Review the grants on the SAMHSA website that have been announced in the past several years. This can give you an idea of the types of grants that may be announced in future years. If you identify a potential funding opportunity of interest, it is worthwhile to begin collecting information about strategies that might be pursued to address the problem area within your community or population(s) of focus. It is recommended that you conduct a literature search as the information you collect will be useful for completing several sections of the grant application, including the Population of Focus and Statement of Need, Proposed Implementation Approach, and Proposed Evidence-Based Service/Practice.

A literature search can be overwhelming. The trick to conducting a good literature search is to be as specific as possible. Try to list words or phrases that specifically focus on your project service area, population(s) of focus, methodology, and project performance assessment plan. The SAMHSA website also contains a wealth of information and resources that are available from other sources.

It is also important to become familiar with the Evidence-Based Practices Web Guide on the SAMHSA website - [EBP Web Guide](#).

Plan a Community Needs Assessment

A Community Needs Assessment can be an important element in the process of planning a project. Information gathered from conducting a Community Needs Assessment will help you develop sections of the application, such as the Population of Focus and Statement of Need. The Statement of Need should include a clearly established baseline for the project; that is, it must provide an accurate appraisal of the current situation that you seek to change.

Documentation of need may come from a variety of qualitative and quantitative sources. You can obtain qualitative and quantitative data by:

- (1) Compiling existing data – this involves gathering and comparing national, State, and local information and/or data already collected by individual agencies, State and county public agencies, school systems, health systems, and court systems (e.g., alcohol, tobacco, drug abuse, and mental health data from SAMHSA at [SAMHSA data](#), SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health, and the National Center for Health Statistics/Centers for Disease Control reports at [CDC Reports](#));
- (2) Conducting surveys that gather information from a representative sample of your population(s) of focus;

(3) Utilizing the key informant approach – identifying and interviewing community leaders, stakeholders, and decision-makers who are knowledgeable about the community and can accurately identify priority needs and concerns; and

4) Using a community forum approach - conducting public meetings to obtain information from community members about the needs facing the community and to identify the needs that should be prioritized.

Any technique you choose must reflect an understanding and appreciation of the cultural characteristics of your community and population(s) of focus.

Reading and reviewing current materials written by leaders in the field can help you determine the most effective strategy for implementing the project in your area. Community assessments focus on local assets, resources, and activities as well as gaps, barriers, or emerging needs. Understanding your community will help you tailor selected strategies and activities for your specific project and population(s) of focus.

Develop an Understanding of the Processes That Are Involved in the Financial Management of a Grant

It is important to gain an understanding of the financial processes that are involved in managing a grant. SAMHSA recipients must follow standards for financial management of grant awards which are outlined in 45 CFR Part 75 ([45 CFR Part 75](#)). Your existing accounting and personnel policies and procedures must include necessary management controls. For specific information about these necessary controls, go to [Financial Management Requirements](#).

CHAPTER 3 – The Funding Opportunity Announcement

Overview

This chapter provides information about SAMHSA grant announcements and grant application documents. You will learn how to search for funding opportunities, determine basic grant eligibility requirements, review specific requirements of the grant, and identify individuals who can provide assistance before you submit an application.

Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)

To announce the availability of grant funds, SAMHSA releases FOAs. The information in an FOA includes a description of the project, the project expectations, application review criteria, directions on how to apply, application due dates, and eligibility requirements. These announcements can be found at [SAMHSA grant announcements](#). The Grants.gov website is the vehicle that is used to apply for these grants. All applications must be submitted online through Grants.gov to SAMHSA using eRA ASSIST, Grants.gov Workspace, or another system to system provider. SAMHSA strongly encourages you to sign up for Grants.gov email notifications regarding the grant you are interested in applying for. If the FOA is cancelled or modified, individuals who sign up with Grants.gov for updates will be automatically notified.

Carefully Review the FOA

1. Determine if your organization meets the eligibility requirements

Each FOA clearly specifies the entities that are eligible to apply. Carefully review the Eligibility Section of the FOA to ensure that you meet the requirements. Please note that some FOAs limit applications to States while other are open to any domestic public or private non-profit organization. In addition, FOAs often indicate that entities that received funding under previous grant announcements are not eligible to apply.

2. Determine whether your organization has the capability to implement the grant project

Carefully review the Purpose section of the FOA. You will find specific information about the intent of the grant program, the population of focus, the activities you are required to implement, and the performance data that must be collected and reported to SAMHSA. It is important to ascertain whether your program/organization has the infrastructure, resources, and expertise to carry out the requirements of the grant. It is also important to evaluate whether your organization has the fiscal infrastructure to meet the financial management requirements and related tasks.

3. Review the evaluation criteria (Project Narrative)

It is important to examine the evaluation criteria to understand what information you must compile to respond to the criteria. The quality of the information you present in the Project Narrative will be assessed and scored by a panel of peer reviewers.

4. Take note of screen-out criteria

In addition to eligibility criteria, some FOAs have other requirements which must be met in order to be considered for review. The requirements are referred to as screen-out criteria. For example, the FOA may stipulate that the applicant must provide a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a required partner and if the applicant does not submit this MOU in its application package, it will be screened out.

5. Communicate with resource people and potential partners

If you decide to apply for a SAMHSA grant, you will benefit from communicating with resource people and potential partners at the local and State levels:

- **State Point of Contact (SPOC)** – Applicants are required to notify the State that they are requesting Federal dollars if their state has a designated State Point of Contact. If your state has a SPOC, be sure to let them know that you are applying for a Federal grant. Remember to ask about free training and technical assistance that may be available to you from other sources. (This requirement does not apply to applications submitted by States and American Indian/Alaska Native tribes or tribal organizations).
- **Single State Agency (SSA)** – The SSA for drug and alcohol abuse and for mental health often provides technical assistance and may assist you with identifying opportunities for funding, training, and networking.
- **Program and Grants Management/Budget Issues** – Every FOA identifies SAMHSA staff that you can contact to obtain information about the FOA.
- **Project Partnerships and Community Groups** – Relationships developed with coalition groups and advocates will be helpful with your project design and performance assessment plan. You can organize a meeting to present ideas or set up a focus group to test your project plans and obtain feedback.
- **Consumers, Clients, and Families** – Individuals and families who access your services are excellent sources of information about improvements that would enhance the services provided by your organization. Set up meetings and focus groups with these individual to obtain needs assessment information.

CHAPTER 4 – Understanding the Registration and Application Process

Overview

Grants.gov is the source for finding federal grant opportunities, accessing most of the required forms, and submitting applications. Additional forms available only on SAMHSA's website also may be required. Read the FOA carefully to determine which forms you must include in your application.

All applicants must register with NIH's eRA Commons in order to submit an application. This process takes up to six weeks. If you believe you are interested in applying for a funding opportunity, you MUST start the registration process immediately. Do not wait to start this process. If your organization is not registered and you do not have an active eRA Commons PI account by the deadline, the application will not be accepted. No exceptions will be made.

Getting Started

Complete the registration process

It is important to carefully read the application and registration requirements outlined in the FOA. For new applicants, please take note of the fact that you must complete **four (4) registration processes** that are all distinct, one-time registrations in order to submit an application:

1. Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (to obtain a DUNS number); (the DUNS number is being phased out - see information below)
2. System for Award Management (SAM);
3. Grants.gov; and
4. eRA Commons Registration.

If this is your first time submitting an application, you must complete all four registration processes. If you have already completed registrations for DUNS, SAM, and Grants.gov, you need to ensure that your accounts are still active, and then register in **eRA Commons**. If you have not registered in Grants.gov, the registration for Grants.gov and eRA Commons can be done concurrently. You must register in eRA Commons and receive a Commons Username in order to have access to electronic submission, receive notifications on the status of your application, and retrieve grant information. **If your organization is not registered and does not have an active eRA Commons PI account by the deadline, the application will not be accepted.**

The organization must maintain an active and up-to-date SAM and DUNS registrations in order for SAMHSA to make an award. If your organization is not compliant when SAMHSA is ready to make an award, SAMHSA may determine that your organization is not qualified to

receive an award and use that determination as the basis for making an award to another applicant.

1. Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS number)

At the end of 2020, the DUNS number will be replaced by a SAM-generated unique Entity ID. Until that time all applicants for federal grants must obtain a DUNS Number. This is a unique nine-digit identification number for each physical location of a business. There is no charge to obtain a DUNS number. To obtain a DUNS number, access the Dun and Bradstreet website at: [Dun and Bradstreet](#) or call 866-705-5711. To expedite the process, let Dun and Bradstreet know you are a public/private non-profit organization getting ready to submit a federal grant application. The DUNS number you use on your application must be registered and active in the System for Award Management (SAM).

2. System for Award Management (SAM)

The System for Award Management validates applicant information and electronically shares the secure and encrypted data with the federal agencies' finance offices to facilitate paperless payments through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Applicants must register with the System for Award Management (SAM) and continue to maintain active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal award or an application under consideration by an agency. To create a SAM user account, Register/Update entity, and/or Search Records, go to [SAM.gov](#).

If you already have a SAM account, it is highly recommended that you renew your account prior to the expiration date. **SAM information must be active and up-to-date, and should be updated at least every 12 months to remain active (for both recipients and sub-recipients).** Once you update your record in SAM, it will take **48 to 72 hours** to complete the validation processes. Grants.gov will reject electronic submissions from applicants with expired registrations.

If your SAM account expires, the renewal process requires the same validation with IRS and DoD (Cage Code) as a new account requires. The renewal process can take up to one month.

3. Grants.gov

You can register to obtain a Grants.gov username and password at [Grants.gov](#). Grants.gov requires a one-time registration in order to submit applications. While Grants.gov registration is a one-time only registration process, it consists of multiple sub-registration processes (i.e., DUNS number and SAM registrations) before you can submit your application.

Registration information can be found at the Grants.gov "Applicants" tab. Be sure the person submitting your application is properly registered with Grants.gov as the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) for the specific DUNS number cited on the SF-424 (first

page). See the Organization Registration User Guide for details at the following Grants.gov link: [Grants.gov organization registration](#).

4. eRA Commons Registration

eRA Commons is an online interface managed by NIH that allows applicants, recipients, and federal staff to securely share, manage, and process grant-related information. Organizations applying for SAMHSA funding must register in eRA Commons. This is a one-time registration, separate from Grants.gov registration. In addition to the organization registration, Business Officials and Project Directors listed as key personnel on SAMHSA applications must also register in eRA Commons and receive a Commons ID in order to have access to electronic submission and retrieval of application/grant information. It is strongly recommended that you start the eRA Commons registration process **at least six (6) weeks** prior to the application due date. **If your organization is not registered and does not have an active eRA Commons PI account by the deadline, the application will not be accepted.**

For organizations registering with eRA Commons for the first time, either the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) from the SF-424 or the Business Official (BO) from the HHS Checklist must complete the online [Institution Registration Form](#). Instructions on how to complete the online Institution Registration Form is provided on the eRA Commons Online Registration Page.

[Note: You must have a valid and verifiable DUNS number to complete the eRA Commons registration.]

After the organization's representative (AOR or BO) completes the online Institution Registration Form and clicks Submit, the eRA Commons will send an e-mail notification from era-notify@mail.nih.gov with the link to confirm the email address. Once the e-mail address is verified, the registration request will be reviewed and confirmed via email. If your request is denied, the representative will receive an email detailing the reason for the denial. If the request is approved, the representative will receive an email with a Commons User ID (with the Signing Official 'SO' role) and temporary password. The representative will need to log into Commons with the temporary password, at which time the system will provide prompts to change the temporary password to one of their choosing. Once the designated contact Signing Official (SO) signs the registration request, the organization will be active in Commons and any user with the SO role will be able to create and maintain additional accounts for the organization's staff, including accounts for those designated as Project Directors.

Important: The eRA Commons requires organizations to identify at least one SO, who can be either the AOR from the SF-424 or the BO from the HHS Checklist, and at least one Project Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) account in order to submit an application. The primary SO must create the account for the PD/PI listed as the PD/PI role on the HHS Checklist assigning

that person the 'PI' role in Commons. Note that you must enter the PD/PI's Commons Username into the 'Applicant Identifier' field of the SF-424 document.

You can find additional information about the eRA Commons registration process at [eRA registration](#).

Download the required application components

Applicants **must** go to both Grants.gov ([Grants.gov](#)) and the SAMHSA website ([SAMHSA.gov](#)) to download the required documents needed to apply for a grant.

On the Grants.gov site ([Grants.gov](#)), select the 'Apply for Grants' option from the 'Applicants' Tab at the top of the screen. You will be directed to the '[Apply for Grants](#)' page. Click on the 'Get Application Package' tab located on the right of the Grants.gov 'Apply for Grants' page. You will be directed to the '[Get Application Package Now](#)' page where you will search for the appropriate funding announcement number (called the funding opportunity number) or the Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number. You can find the funding opportunity number and CFDA number on the cover page of the FOA.

For more information on the application download process, go to the Grants.gov 'Apply for Grants' page. Download both the Application Instruction and Application Package on the 'Apply for Grants' page. You can view, print, or save all the forms in the Application Package and then complete them for electronic submission to Grants.gov. Completed forms also can be saved and printed for your records.

Additional documents for submission (SAMHSA Website)

You will find additional materials you will need to complete your application on the SAMHSA website at [SAMHSA.gov](#).

CHAPTER 5 – Completing and Submitting Your Grant Application

Overview

In this chapter valuable tips are provided to guide you as you complete and submit your grant application.

Tips on Completing and Submitting Your Application

1. Learn how to effectively navigate Grants.gov Workspace and eRA ASSIST

SAMHSA requires applicants to **electronically submit** their application using eRA ASSIST, Grants.gov Workspace, or another system to system provider. Information on eRA ASSIST and Grants.gov Workspace are listed below:

- 1) **eRA ASSIST** – The Application Submission System and Interface for Submission Tracking (ASSIST) is an NIH sponsored online interface used to prepare applications using the SF-424 form set, submit electronically through Grants.gov to SAMHSA and other participating agencies, and track grant applications. [Note: ASSIST requires an eRA Commons ID to access the system]
- 2) **Grants.gov Workspace** – You can use the shared, online environment of the Grants.gov Workspace to collaboratively work on different forms within the application package.

The specific actions you need to take to submit your application will vary by submission method as listed above. Information on how to submit your application through eRA ASSIST or Grants.gov Workspace can be found at:

- To submit to Grants.gov using ASSIST: [eRA Modules, User Guides, and Documentation | Electronic Research Administration \(eRA\)](#)
- To submit to Grants.gov using the Grants.gov Workspace: [Grants.gov Workspace](#)

See [Appendix H](#) for more information. Regardless of the option you use, your application will be subject to the same registration requirements, completed with the same data items, routed through Grants.gov, validated against the same agency business rules, assembled in a consistent format for review consideration, and tracked in eRA Commons. All applications that are successfully submitted must be validated by Grants.gov before proceeding to the NIH eRA Commons system and validations.

2. Begin the necessary groundwork before the FOA is announced.

Ensure that you have the proper registrations completed so you can respond to a SAMHSA grant announcement. Organizations **MUST** be registered in order to submit an application.

In addition to the organization registration, Business Officials and Project Directors listed as key personnel on SAMHSA applications must also register in eRA Commons and receive a Commons ID in order to have access to electronic submission and retrieval of application/grant information. **If your organization is not registered and does not have an active eRA Commons PI account by the deadline, the application will not be accepted.**

You should give yourself as much lead time as possible to write your application. Keep your program materials up-to-date and be aware of current and emerging SAMHSA projects that match your interests and needs.

In addition, many professional organizations and national associations highlight Federal grant programs in their newsletters to constituents well in advance of the official notice. Take advantage of lead time to develop ideas and to begin the necessary groundwork before the grant project is officially announced.

Develop a network of contacts that can help, such as State and local government entities, university staff, and individuals and other organizations that may provide support to the project. Develop a committee and get key participants in place to assist with the application development.

3. Establish a timetable to develop your grant application as the FOA is announced

Establish a plan for what needs to be accomplished, by whom and when. Developing a grant application requires the same diligent planning and scheduling as does any other labor-intensive, priority project. For example, it is recommended that you identify individuals (called your grant writing team) who can complete certain necessary tasks:

- **A person responsible for writing the application**—Although several individuals may write specific sections of the application, one person should pull the entire application together to make sure it flows and that nothing is omitted or repeated.
- **A person or small committee removed from the process to critique the first draft and identify questions or gaps**—In particular, this individual or committee should carefully review the Project Narrative to make sure that thorough responses have been provided for the evaluation criteria.
- **A person to request and coordinate receipt of letters of commitment** — This individual might help the organization by writing a draft letter of commitment outlining how the potential partners or organizations will contribute to the proposed project. Many partners/organizations may be willing to commit to becoming involved in the project but may not have time to draft a letter. The letters must be recent and specific about the roles and responsibilities of these entities. The letter of commitment should include four items:

- How long and in what capacity has the organization been working with your organization?
- What are the specific responsibilities the organization is going to assume during the proposed grant award period for the project?
- Why does the organization support the project?
- How does the project better the community/clients?

A template for a letter of commitment is included in [Appendix C](#). A letter of commitment is different from a letter of support. A letter of support describes general support of the grant project whereas a letter of commitment outlines the specific contributions an organization will make in the project. SAMHSA's FOAs specify that letters of support are not to be included in the application. A letter of commitment is also different from a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). An MOA is a formal and contracted partnership that allows sharing of services between organizations according to agreed-upon terms. A template for an MOU is also included in [Appendix C](#).

A sample work plan is included in [Appendix D](#).

4. Make sure your proposed project matches the intent of the FOA

It is critical that the project you are proposing fully aligns with the parameters for the grant project outlined in the FOA. Carefully review the grant project goals, description, and evaluation criteria to ensure that your proposed project approach can fulfill the actual project requirements.

5. Lay out a master plan

A good application should provide a master plan, a vision of where the project is going and the expected results. The master plan should cover key questions of who, what, where, when, and why. The application should include realistic goals, measurable objectives, tasks required to accomplish the objectives, and a methodology to evaluate accomplishments.

Within the required page limits, describe the project and how it will be carried out. Do not provide unnecessary detail. Be sure to provide evidence-based justification for your goals and a convincing description of how and why you think you will be able to accomplish them.

6. Take advantage of SAMHSA resources for technical assistance

SAMHSA staff is available to answer questions as you prepare your application. You can seek information about grants management, budget issues, and project requirements. Each FOA has identified a staff member from the Division of Grants Management and a staff member from the center to help answer your questions.

For some FOAs, an applicant webinar may be conducted. Webinars are announced on the SAMHSA website and posted next to the FOA announcement. In addition, some FOAs include Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the grant. The FAQs would be posted on the SAMHSA site for that respective FOA. Therefore, it is critical to periodically check the website to see whether any additional information about the grant has been posted.

7. Follow instructions about formatting your application

Carefully review the formatting requirements for your application. An application that fails to follow the required format may not be forwarded for review. In particular, pay attention to directions about **page limits** and font size. In addition, all attachments must be in PDF format. One strategy to make sure you stay within the page limitations is to put a header at the top of each page of the Project Narrative that indicates how many pages have been used, such as Page 1 of 10, Page 2 of 10. You would start the headers at the top of Section A of the Project Narrative. It is possible to save some space by putting all of the citations in an Attachment but make sure you indicate where reviewers can locate the citations. SAMHSA does not require that you use a specific style for formatting citations.

8. Make a reasonable funding request and match the budget to the scope of work.

It is important that the budget request clearly reflects the project scope. The justification for funds must match the amount of funds requested. Be specific and justify each item for all years of support requested. Specify the need for consultants and travel. Be mindful of the funds available per year and do not exceed the dollar limit as noted in the FOA. Applicants are encouraged to apply only for the grant amount which they can reasonably expend based on the activities proposed in the application, including the number of clients they propose to serve annually. ([See Chapter 10](#)).

9. If applicable, thoroughly address all participant protection elements

Unless otherwise indicated, all applicants for SAMHSA funding must address confidentiality and participant protection guidelines. All of the participant protection elements must be addressed. Please take note of the fact that most of the elements have multiple components and all components must be addressed. If any of these components are not applicable to your project, explain why. It is not acceptable to just include a statement that approval of the project will be obtained through your organization's Institutional Review Board (IRB), to just insert a copy of your Policy and Procedure Manual in this section, or to not address the elements. Even if your application will be reviewed by an IRB, you **must** thoroughly address all of the components of participant protection in your application ([See Chapter 9](#)).

10. Do not wait until the last minute to submit your application

SAMHSA recommends that you submit your application at least **24-48 hours** prior to the deadline. Too often applicants try to submit their application an hour or two before the

deadline and encounter technical problems or receive error messages which results in not getting their application in before the deadline. You need to allow time to resolve any issues that may arise.

You will receive three emails after you submit your application:

- 1) An email confirming receipt of your application;
- 2) An email notifying you if the application was successfully validated or has errors;
- 3) An email notifying you that the application has been received by SAMHSA.

It is important to monitor your application through Grants.gov and eRA as both systems can reject the application. The FOA contains information about how to contact the Grants.gov helpdesk and the eRA service desk if you experience any technical difficulties in the submission process. You are responsible for viewing and tracking your applications in eRA Commons after submission through Grants.gov to ensure successful submission.

11. Complete the abstract

Do not forget to include an abstract in your application submission. The abstract is a summary of the grant proposal and highlights the most important components of the proposed project. It must not be longer than 35 lines. It should include the project name, population(s) to be served, strategies/interventions, project goals and measurable objectives, including the number of people to be served annually and throughout the lifetime of the project, etc. In the first five lines or less of your abstract, write a summary of your project that can be used, if your project is funded, in publications, reports to Congress, or press releases.

CHAPTER 6 – The Project Narrative – Responding to the Evaluation Criteria

Overview

The Project Narrative describes what you intend to do in your project and is written in response to the evaluation criteria. In this chapter you will learn about what information you will likely need to include for each section of the Project Narrative. In addition, important points are raised for you to consider as you respond to the evaluation criteria (Note: DFC applicants, see Chapter 7). Finally, critiques will be provided of actual responses to evaluation criteria.

Sections of the Project Narrative

In the Project Narrative, you will describe how you intend to implement the project. The Project Narrative is generally comprised of four or five sections with each section assigned a point value. The total point value is 100. It is critical to take note of the page limits for the Project Narrative specified in the FOA. Peer reviewers evaluate the technical merits and assign a score for each section. Your application will be reviewed and scored according to the quality of your response to the requirements in the Project Narrative.

Sections of the Project Narrative that are often included in FOAs are:

Population of Focus and Statement of Need

In this section, you are expected to describe the unmet need(s) or emerging problem(s) to be addressed by the project in your catchment area.

The following information may need to be included in this section:

- The specific geographic catchment area where the project will be implemented;
- The population(s) of focus;
- The demographics characteristics of the population(s) of focus, including cultural and racial/ethnic considerations;
- The nature of the problem within the geographic catchment area, including the extent of need, barriers to care, and gaps in service for the population(s) of focus;
- Health disparities evident in the population(s) of focus;
- The need for an enhanced infrastructure to address the identified need; and
- Resources that may be available to the project.

You will be expected to use current quantitative data to describe your population(s) of focus and the geographic catchment area. Additionally, to the extent available, use local data to

describe the need and service gaps, supplemented with state and/or national data. It is important for you to remember to always identify your sources of data.

Sources of local data may include:

- State and county public agencies;
- School systems;
- Court systems;
- HIV/AIDS planning councils;
- Community health assessments;
- Arrest data;
- United Way organizations; and
- Hospitals.

Sources of national data may include:

- U.S. Census Bureau;
- SAMHSA; and
- Other federal agencies, e.g., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA).

Links to websites for quantitative data can be found in [Appendix I](#).

In addition to quantitative data, it is also recommended that you compile qualitative data about the need in the catchment area, such as data obtained through focus groups with consumers, clients, family members of consumers, and/or other key constituents or informants.

Proposed Implementation Approach

This section requires you to delineate the goals and measurable objectives of the project and how you plan to implement the required activities.

The following information may need to be included in this section:

- The purpose of the proposed project;
- Goals and measurable objectives and how they align with the Statement of Need;
- Unduplicated number of individuals that will be served;
- A timeline for the entire grant period; and
- How the required activities will be implemented.

Proposed Evidence-Based Practices

This section requires you to identify the Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) that you will implement and to justify their use with the population (s) of focus.

The following information may need to be included in this section:

- A description of the EBPs you plan to implement. This description should reference why each EBP is appropriate for the problem area you plan to address and your population(s) of focus;
- Specific information about any modifications you plan to make to the EBPs and a justification for making these modifications; and
- How you plan to monitor the implementation of the EBPs to ensure they are implemented according to EBP guidelines.

If you plan to implement services or practices that are not evidence-based, you must show that these services/practices are effective. You will need to cite sources, such as articles from research journals, to document the effectiveness of these services or practices. If this type of information is unavailable, you may provide information from other sources, such as unpublished studies or documents describing formal consensus among recognized experts.

It may be that you want to provide services that you can show have been successful, but you want to implement the services with another population of focus or in a different community. This plan is acceptable as long as you thoroughly explain what you are trying to do, your anticipated outcomes, what you will do to modify the project if needed, and why you believe these modifications will improve the project. This supporting material must be based on evidence from the field and included as part of your documentation.

Staff and Organizational Experience

In this section, you are expected to describe the capability and experience of your program/organization to implement the project, your history in providing services to the population(s) of focus, and your experience with similar projects.

The following information may need to be included in this section:

- The linkages of your organization to the population(s) of focus and ties to grassroots/community-based organizations that are rooted in the culture(s) and language(s) of this population;
- The capability and experience of other organizations/partners that will be participating in the project;
- Key staff that will be involved in the project, including their roles, level of effort and qualifications as well as their experience providing services to the population(s) of focus and their familiarity with its culture(s) and language(s); and

- A description of how you will ensure the input of consumers, clients, and family members of consumers in the project.

Data Collection and Performance Measurement

All Federal programs require that performance data be collected and reported. In this section, you will need to document your ability to collect and report on the required performance measures and describe your performance assessment plan. To document your ability to collect and report on the required performance measures, you may describe your experience and success in collecting and reporting data for other grant awards. Furthermore, some programs require that recipients participate in a national cross-site evaluation which may require additional data collection using standard data collection instruments.

The following information may need to be included in this section:

- What data collection instruments will be used;
- How data will be collected and what staff member(s) will oversee this component;
- How the data collected will be utilized to manage, monitor, and enhance the program;
- How you plan to conduct the performance assessment; and
- The quality improvement process that will be implemented.

You will need to determine what tools you will use to collect the required performance data and to take note of how frequently the data needs to be reported to SAMHSA.

In considering the assessment of the project, some points to consider are:

- Your local university may offer help in providing experts in the performance assessment field;
- It may be worthwhile to have an evaluator involved in the project from the start to help you identify the tools and techniques that can be used in the project; and
- All performance assessment components must be integrated - goals and objectives, assessment questions, methodology, instruments, analysis, and Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requirements.

The Government Performance and Results Act was passed in 1993 as a data reporting mechanism for holding government programs accountable for the outcomes of their programs. GPRA requires regular reporting of performance data to the Office of Management and Budget in order to monitor the effectiveness of government programs. As part of the GPRA mandate, all SAMHSA grants are required to collect and report performance data. The GPRA measures for each program will be included in the FOA and cannot be altered by recipients. The FOA will also include instructions on how the data are to be collected and reported, what instruments are to be used, and how the data are to be submitted.

Responding to the Evaluation Criteria

As your response to the evaluation criteria is the most critical component of the application, extensive information is provided about how to effectively complete this part of the application. In addition, examples are provided to illustrate some of the points that are raised.

Key points to consider:

- It is not necessary to type the criterion in the Project Narrative. However, you must indicate the Section letter and number before your response to each criterion (A.1, B.2).
- It is important to note that many of the criteria have multiple components and all components of the criteria must be addressed. For example, the following criterion has three components that must be addressed:

Describe how you will screen clients for the presence of co-occurring disorders, including the screening tools that will be used. For clients that need further assessment, describe the assessment process and the assessment tools, and how you develop appropriate treatment approaches for these clients based on the results of the assessment.

The three components are:

- How you will screen clients, for the presence of co-occurring disorders, including the screening tools that will be used;
 - How you will assess clients, including the assessment tools that will be used; and
 - How you will develop appropriate treatment approaches for clients based on the results of the assessment.
- Clearly delineate your response to each component so reviewers do not have to sort through several pages of narrative or paragraphs to find your responses.
 - Define all acronyms before you use them.
 - Provide **explicit detail** for all of your responses to the evaluation criteria. Do not simply re-state or “parrot” the information in the FOA. The one comment that reviewers consistently make is that applicants do not provide sufficient detail in their responses to the evaluation criteria. If you provide a very general response to the criteria, it will be difficult for reviewers to get a clear understanding of whether your implementation plan will effectively address the identified problem in your community. However, make sure the detail that is provided directly relates to the criterion you are addressing. Consider the following criterion: *Describe how the key activities in your timeline will be implemented.* Reviewers are looking for specific information about the activities you are

proposing to implement. If a reviewer cannot answer “who” “what” “how” “when” and “why” after reading the response, there may not be enough detail for the reviewer to determine that you have a viable plan to implement the activity.

- It is important to be mindful of the page limits as well as the number of points allocated for each section. The Project Narrative (including all Evaluation Criteria) may be no longer than 10 pages. Within the required page limits, you need to describe the project and how it is to be carried out. Do not provide extraneous information that is not pertinent to the criteria or unnecessary detail. For example, in some instances applicants provide extensive detail about research related to the EBPs they plan to implement and a step-by-step description of how they will be implemented. This level of detail is not required by the criterion. In addition, if one section is 30 points and another section is 10 points, it may be prudent to ensure that the number of pages of narrative allotted to each of these sections to some degree aligns with the point value.
- Be sure to put information under the appropriate criterion. Do not answer a criterion by referencing the information that was provided in another section. If you reference information in another criterion, it will not be considered by reviewers.
- Make sure you carefully read each criterion and provide a response to exactly what is asked for. For example, if one of the criteria in the section on Staffing and Organizational Experience asks you to discuss how **key staff members** have demonstrated experience and are qualified to serve the population(s) of focus, it is expected that you will discuss the qualifications of specific key staff members, **not** the experience of your organization in providing services to population(s) of focus.
- If possible, explain why requested information is not provided. If one of the evaluation criteria asks for information that is not available, it is important to explain why this information is not available and what your plan is to collect it.
- It is recommended that you do not use vague terminology, such as “ongoing” or “regular”. Provide specific time frames for processes that will be implemented.
- If you are confused and have questions about the evaluation criteria, contact the program staff identified in the FOA.

Population of Focus and Statement of Need

- It is critical to **clearly** define the population(s) of focus.
- An important element that needs to be considered in the design of the project is the size of the population of focus. For example, proposing to implement a project serving both undergraduate and graduate students on a large university

campus that has over 40,000 students may not be realistic. Carefully evaluate how large a population can realistically be served.

- **Clearly** define the geographic catchment area for the project. For example, if the statement is made that the project will be implemented in New York City, it would be critical to indicate whether the entire city would be the catchment area or specific boroughs as the scope of the project would be very different if the entire city was the catchment area as opposed to one or two boroughs.
- To help reviewers understand the need for the project, it is recommended that you explain why the geographic catchment area was selected.
- In your description of the statement of need, make sure you reference **current** data. In addition, if you are describing the need in your community, use local data to give reviewers a clear picture of the extent of need in this community rather than focusing on state or national data. If local data is not available, indicate this in your response and discuss how you plan to collect local data.
- If the purpose of a project is to provide services to a specific population, such as youth and young adults up to and including age 24, make sure the statement of need provides data specific to this population. For example, if your project will focus on suicide prevention, you may elect to provide documentation of suicide rates in the State but suicide rates for youth and young adults in your geographic catchment area should also be provided.
- Make sure you provide citations for data that is provided. Citations can be placed in an attachment. They do not need to be included in the Project Narrative.
- To display demographic information, sample tables are provided in [Appendix E](#).

Proposed Implementation Approach

- In developing your timeline, read the criterion carefully. For example, this criterion generally states that the timeline must cover **the entire project period**, not just the first year. In addition, the criterion stipulates the timeline must delineate responsible staff, **not** the organization that will be responsible but specific staff members. If there are important tasks described in the required activities section that must be completed by a specific date, such as the development of a Disparities Impact Statement, these tasks should be included in the timeline. Finally, make sure the activities in your timeline are presented in a logical sequence and that sufficient time is allotted for certain tasks, such as hiring staff. (See [Appendix B](#) for sample templates for timelines)
- Develop realistic goals and measurable objectives (see [Chapter 8](#)). The objectives must be linked to specific goals. In addition, in the section on data

collection and performance measurement, make sure you discuss how you plan to collect data to evaluate whether the objectives have been achieved.

- The goals and measurable objectives should align with the statement of need outlined in the Statement of Need section of the Project Narrative.
- In describing the screening and assessment tools that will be used, include the following information:
 - Whether it is evidence-based;
 - The content of the instrument (i.e., a 10-item questionnaire);
 - Whether it evaluates substance use/misuse and/or mental health issues;
 - How it is administered (i.e., clinician-administered, self-administered); and
 - Whether it has been validated for use with the population of focus.
- Concisely but thoroughly describe how you will implement all of the required activities in your project, including any allowable activities you have selected.
- Develop a realistic plan to implement the project. Reviewers will be evaluating whether it is feasible to implement all of the components of the project. For example, do not assume that more is better. For example, if you propose to implement ten EBPs, the reviewers will expect you to specifically address how you will realistically train staff on all of the EBPs and how you will effectively monitor the delivery of all of the EBPs to ensure that they are delivered according to EBP guidelines.

Evidence Based Practices

- It is important to clearly describe why specific EBPs were chosen for the project.
- Provide documentation of the evidence base for the use of the EBPs with the population(s) of focus and anticipated outcomes. If a statement is made that an EBP has been found to be effective with a specific population, literature citations must be included to support this statement.

Staff and Organizational Experience

- In describing your organization's experience with similar projects, clearly describe your experience collecting data and reporting on performance measures in terms of past funders, types of evaluations conducted, and outcomes achieved. If the statement is made that the performance assessment will be conducted by an evaluator outside of the organization, such as a professor from a local university, make sure you document this individual's experience with federally funded projects to include the collection, analysis, and reporting of GPRA data and other performance measures.
- Make sure the level of effort for the Project Director or other management/supervisory staff is sufficient to effectively oversee the project. If the level of effort for the Project Director, for example, is relatively low it is

important to identify which staff members will be responsible for managing the grant and explain this in the Project Narrative.

- In describing how staff members are familiar with the culture(s) and language(s) of the population(s) of focus, it is not sufficient to indicate that “he/she serves the population of focus and understands its culture”. It is also not sufficient to provide a general statement stating that all staff members have experience with the population of focus. Make sure you document each individual’s experience providing services to the population of focus and their familiarity with the culture and language of this population.
- If staffs members are identified in this section, make sure they are included in the budget narrative.
- If partners are identified that will participate in the project, make sure Letters of Commitment for all of the partners are included in the specified attachment. In addition, it is not sufficient to just describe the services provided by the partners. You must clearly delineate their roles and responsibilities **in the project**.
- Many applicants fail to include all the required information about project staff, such as qualifications, roles, and level of effort. To ensure that you provide all of the information, one option is to provide it in a table. See [Appendix G](#) for a sample table that shows how this information might be displayed.

Data Collection and Performance Measurement

- In responding to the criteria on performance assessment, it is recommended that the following points are addressed:
 - The data (i.e., performance indicators) that will be used for the performance assessment;
 - The plan for reviewing and reporting on progress achieved in meeting the goals and objectives, barriers encountered, and efforts to overcome these barriers; and
 - Who will be responsible for collecting, analyzing and reporting on the data to be used in the performance assessment?
- If an evaluation team will be responsible for data analysis and reporting, the individuals that comprise this team must be specified.
- See [Appendix F](#) for more specific information about responding to this section.

CRITIQUES of APPLICANT RESPONSES

Weakness: Not specifically responding to the criteria

Evaluation Criterion: Describe the Evidence-Based Practice(s) (EBPs) that will be used to help implement the program and justify its use for your population(s) of focus, program, and the intent of the FOA.

Applicant's Response: The Community Recovery Project is a comprehensive approach to suicide elimination utilizing the public health model to fulfill the identified elements of the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. Evidence-based interventions are proposed at all levels of the public health model in order to ensure the maximum number of intercepts in order to prevent deaths by suicide in the identified population and sub-populations. To be effective, comprehensive programming focused on strategies to address issues in the individual, the environment, and the means. Interventions that target individuals, such as immediate access to integrated medical and behavioral health services, combine with interventions targeting the environment, such as seamless care coordination, effective sharing and uses of data, peer and family supports, and strong community-based prevention initiatives, that combine with interventions designed to disrupt the means of suicide and reduce access to lethal means from the architecture of this proposal.

Critique: *The applicant organization notes its understanding of the need for evidence-based practices and its plans for incorporating them in the project. However, it does not identify any specific EBPs it will implement in the project.*

Weakness: Not specifically responding to the criteria

Evaluation Criterion: Describe how you will identify, recruit, and retain the population of focus.

Applicant's Response: In alignment with best practices, individuals who have historically experienced sustained discrimination or reduced social opportunities because of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion or socioeconomic status must receive the same opportunities as other citizens to participate in substance abuse treatment programs. To support this fundamental belief, the program has developed eligibility criteria that are nondiscriminatory. It has developed a "no wrong door" entry policy with numerous referral sources and will ensure that all clients receive the same level of care and quality of treatment. The program has been adapted to better meet the needs of clients with co-occurring disorders and utilizes EBPs and practices to engage and retain clients. The program also keeps track of retention rates and reviews these retention rates to identify factors contributing to the rates as part of the quality improvement process.

Critique: *Although the applicant outlines its approach to the provision of services, it does not specifically address **how** it will identify, recruit or retain clients.*

Weakness: Not specifically responding to the criteria

Evaluation Criteria: Describe how the community-based organization will change community norms to prevent and reduce substance abuse/HIV.

Applicant's Response: The Center has a rich history of addressing health disparities in disparate communities. In 2000, the Center received funding to establish a state-wide HIV Education Center to address the needs of African American and Latino young adults living with HIV/AIDS. The partnership was established with the local university and a prominent Latino serving organization. In that time, the Center conducted community assessments, held focus groups and established a national research committee to address HIV/AIDS prevention in young adults. Data gathered from this intervention was used to develop strategies for the prevention of HIV/AIDS in young adults. As such, the Center will build upon this experience and its 15-year history of health disparities work to inform and educate the community on methods to prevent and reduce substance abuse and HIV/AIDS.

Critique: *The applicant organization provides information about how it has been involved in addressing health disparities, particularly relative to HIV. However, it does not specifically address **how** it **will** change community norms to prevent and reduce substance abuse/HIV. It mentions that it will work to inform and educate the community on methods to prevent and reduce substance abuse and HIV/AIDS but does not provide any specific information about **how** it will do this.*

Weakness: Lack of detail/specific information related to the criterion

Evaluation Criterion: Describe how you will identify, recruit, and retain the population of focus

Applicant's Response: We are well-established as a resource in the health and human services community, with long and productive relationships with most referring agencies in our area, including the County Health Department, the University Health Center, and the Local Management Board. We play a key role in providing health information from the Health Department, the University, and others to women with substance abuse and mental health problems, including homeless women. We have credibility with the target population due to our long history of providing culturally sensitive and responsive services. We also do a considerable amount of outreach work centered around health education and HIV. We sponsor and/or attend multiple health fairs every year, conduct door-to-door activities, provide basic social services and assistance, and draw clients from our exercise classes, cooking classes, and other community wellness programs. These services also help us both recruit and retain participants.

Critique: *Although this applicant describes its collaborative relationship with other organizations and its provision of outreach and other services in the community, it does not provide **specific** information about **how** it will identify, recruit, and retain the population of focus. For example, within the larger group of individuals it provides services to, the applicant*

does not describe **how** it will identify the population of focus, **what** techniques/methods it will use to recruit the individuals to be involved in the project after it has identified them, and **what** specific strategies it will implement to retain these individuals in the project. In addition, the applicant states that the services it provides helps it recruit and retain participants but does not provide any documentation to support this assertion.

Weakness: Lack of detail/specific information related to the criterion

Evaluation Criterion: Explain how you will monitor the delivery of the EBPs to ensure that they are implemented according to the EBP guidelines.

Applicant's Response: As research demonstrates that poorly executed EBP programs are seldom successful in achieving positive outcomes, the agency will monitor program delivery by requiring partners to work in conjunction with the project staff to assess the needs and identify appropriate evidence-based interventions, provide training and technical assistance, and hone current systems to improve adherence to fidelity of the EBPs to ensure that the EPBs are delivered according to EBP guidelines.

Critique: *The applicant organization provides a limited response. There is a lack of detail on **how** training and technical assistance will be provided (**who** will conduct the training/TA with partners, **how often** will it be conducted, the staff members that will be required to attend) and the monitoring processes will be implemented (**what** processes or tools will be used - onsite, self-assessment, focus groups, **who** will be responsible for overseeing the monitoring, and the **frequency** of monitoring). There is also no specific information about **what** changes would be made to the supervision of individuals delivering the EBPs based on the results of the monitoring that is conducted.*

Weakness: Lack of detail/specific information related to the criterion

Evaluation Criterion: Describe the quality improvement process that will be used to track whether your performance measures and objectives are being met, and how these data will inform the ongoing implementation of the project.

Applicant's Response: An overall goal of the evaluation is to provide feedback to inform and support implementation and improvement. Staff will deliver information summaries on a regular basis to encourage improvements in coordination and service delivery as the project unfolds. Regularly scheduled meetings between the Evaluator, Project Director, and sub-grantee staff will encourage data-driven dialogue about project successes, barriers and potential solutions to those barriers. Sub-grantees may make adjustments to program implementation as needed based on evaluation reports.

Critique: *The applicant organization does not provide adequate specificity about the quality improvement process. For example, **what** information will be included in the information summaries? **What** monitoring tools will be used to collect this information? **How** will the*

information be collected? For example, will satisfaction survey be conducted or input obtained from consumer advisory boards? In addition, on a regular basis or regularly scheduled meetings needs to be more clearly defined. Finally, it is not fully evident **what** processes will be put into place to ensure that both the applicant and the sub-recipients implement the necessary adjustments, such as monthly quality improvement meetings or monthly trainings to address changes that need to be made to the clinical and/or administrative operations of the project.

Weakness: Lack of detail/specific information related to the criterion

Evaluation Criterion: Describe how your staff will ensure the input of patients in assessing, planning, and implementing your project.

Applicant's Response: Patient engagement is critical to the development of the project. The organization is committed to outreach and active engagement of patients, partners, and stakeholders to ensure the best possible assessment, planning, and implementation of the project. Patients will have the opportunity to engage with staff regarding the project in many ways, including but not limited to webinars, webpages, community events, and email distribution lists. Effective communication and feedback from patients regarding issues, concerns, and recommendations for the project will help assure that the Department is fully informed.

Critique: *The applicant organization does not provide **specific** information about the strategies that will be used to solicit input from patients, at what point in the process this input will be obtained (assessment, planning, or implementation) or **how** this input will be utilized.*

Weakness: Lack of detail/specific information related to the criterion

Evaluation Criterion: Discuss the capacity and experience of the applicant organization with similar projects and populations. Demonstrate that the applicant organization has linkages to the population(s) of focus and ties to grassroots/community-based organizations that are rooted in the culture(s) and languages(s) of the population(s) of focus.

Applicant's Response: The applicant, the County Department of Behavioral Health (CDBH), provides care and treatment to adults, children, and adolescents with mental illness, substance use disorders, and intellectual disabilities, through county-operated programs and contracts with community agencies. Services include intensive short-term treatment as well as extended care of persons with serious mental illness. The partnership between CDBH and the Drug Court ensures that clients of the Drug Court have immediate access to the full gamut of treatment services for co-occurring disorders provided by the CDBH. CDBH has developed a vast network of treatment and recovery support service providers, including faith-based organizations. Connection to the population(s) of focus has increased due to the availability of faith-based and multicultural organizations that provide services that are responsive to gender, race, ethnicity, language and sexual preference. These services are also provided in multiple languages.

Critique: *(The applicant was responding to a FOA funding Drug Court projects). The applicant does not document any direct experience working with Drug Court programs, other than providing treatment services to Drug Court participants, or experience working with judicial staff. In addition, one of the primary populations of focus for the project is Veterans but this population was not mentioned in this response. Furthermore, the applicant does not describe experience managing similar projects. Finally, the applicant provides general information about the fact that its network includes faith-based and multicultural organizations. The response must provide examples of specific grassroots/community-based organization in its network that are responsive to the culture(s) and language(s) of the population(s) of focus.*

Weakness: Directing reviewers to find the response in another numbered criterion and not providing an in-depth response to the criterion.

Evaluation Criteria: Describe the Evidence-Based Practice(s) that will be used. Document how each EBP chosen is appropriate for the outcomes you want to achieve. Justify the use of each EBP for your population of focus. Explain how the chosen EBP(s) meet SAMHSA's goals for this program.

Applicant's Response: Our choice for this project is the MISSION Model. The evidence for using this EBP is discussed in more detail below. In brief, we selected this approach because of the diverse and complex needs of individuals with a co-occurring disorder (COD) in the program which includes the need for timely care coordination, COD services, vocational support, trauma-informed care, and peer support, the latter of which assists with treatment initiation and ongoing engagement. Furthermore, MISSION offers ongoing monitoring of risk and need levels along with rapid treatment plan adjustments as needed to meet the diverse needs of clients served in the program. As described in Section B.4, MISSION has been employed in a wide range of populations and is effective in meeting client needs while working in collaboration with the courts.

Critique: *The applicant does not include the required information in the criterion but refers to information in B.4. In addition, insufficient detail is provided about **how** this EBP is appropriate for the outcomes it seeks to achieve or **how** it meets SAMHSA's goals for the program.*

Weakness: Merely restating the information that is included in the FOA

Evaluation Criteria: Describe your specific plan for: data collection, management, analysis, and reporting. The data collection plan must specify the staff person (s) responsible for tracking the measurable objectives that are identified in your response to B.1.

Applicant's Response: Data collection will be completed by the Clinicians and Case Managers. Progress reports and performance assessments will be completed by the Evaluator. Data will be collected at baseline, discharge, and 6 months post-baseline for a minimum of 80% of all clients who receive a baseline interview. All data will be entered into SAMHSA's GPRA data entry and reporting system within 7 business days. GPRA performance data will be reported to

the public, OMB and Congress. The evaluation plan revolves around three fundamental questions (1) What are we trying to accomplish: 2) How will we know if a change has occurred: 3) What can be measured that will indicate improvement? The project will report on the SAMHSA client-level performance measures. This information will be gathered using the SAMHSA data collection tool. The collection of this data will enable SAMHSA to report on the NOMS which have been defined by SAMHSA as key priority areas relating to substance use.

Critique: *Other than identifying the staff members who will be involved in the data collection and reporting, the applicant provides no specific information about the processes that will be implemented for this project within the organization. For example, the applicant does not specifically address **what** processes will be implemented to collect data on the objectives it identifies in B.1, **what** tools will be used to collect this data, **how** it will collect data from partners, or identify the staff member who will be responsible for tracking these objectives. This presents a significant problem as many of the objectives are not measurable. Furthermore, the applicant does not provide substantive detail on **how** data will be managed or analyzed to include information about **how** data will be protected and the role of the Evaluator in the data analysis process. Finally, information is not provided about **how** data will be reported to staff, stakeholders, and other partners.*

CHAPTER 7 – DFC Applicants – Responding to the Project Narrative Questions

Overview

In this chapter, important points are raised about how to effectively respond to the questions in the Drug Free Communities (DFC) FOAs. In addition, sample formats are included for completing the Action Plan as well as critiques of responses to questions.

Tips

- Tasks that can be completed prior to the release of the FOA:
 - Assess the readiness of the community;
 - Document the history of the coalition;
 - Collect data on the youth substance use problems in the community (quantitative, qualitative, and social indicator data); and
 - Describe the organizational structure and operations of the coalition.
- Take note of all of the attachments that need to be submitted with the application. Allow sufficient time to complete and compile these attachments. In particular, start early to get the Coalition Involvement Agreements signed.
- It is not advisable to recycle responses from applications you may have submitted in previous years as many of the questions change from year to year.

General Points

- It is necessary to include the question you are responding to in the Project Narrative, such as 4.1.1 –What is the history of the coalition? For each lettered element of the question, it is important to write the letter before your response. It is very difficult for reviewers to clearly identify your response to each element of the question when the responses are not labeled.
- It is important to note that many of the criteria have more than one component and all components of the criteria must be addressed. For example, the following criterion has two components that must be addressed: *Describe the youth substance use problems in the community as well as their effects on adults and families.*

The two components are:

- Youth substance use problems in the community
- The effect of these problems on adults and families

- Clearly delineate your response to each component so peer reviewers do not have to sort through a several pages of narrative or paragraphs to find your responses.
- Define all acronyms before you use them.
- Provide explicit detail for all of your responses to the evaluation criteria. Do not simply re-state or “parrot” the information in the FOA. The one comment that reviewers consistently make is that applicants do not provide sufficient detail in their responses to the evaluation criteria. Consider the following criteria: *Describe the youth substance use problems in the community*. Reviewers are looking for specific information about these problems, including relevant data to document the extent of the problem. If you provide a very general response to the criterion, it will be difficult for reviewers to get a clear understanding of the severity of these problems in your community. In addition, make sure the detail that is provided directly relates to the youth substance use problems in the community.

Coalition History and Coalition Member Involvement

- Relevant information to include: when the coalition was formed, how long it has been operational, community readiness.
- Provide specific information (examples) about the impact the coalition has had on reducing youth substance use in the community and on increasing collaboration among agencies/community groups to address this issue. For coalitions that have been operational for a number of years, it is important to document accomplishments that have been achieved using a variety of the seven strategies.
- In describing the 12 sector members, document how these individuals are representative of the catchment area for the project in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation.
- In discussing how the coalition will ensure cultural competency, it is not sufficient to state that the coalition will provide trainings for members on cultural competency. It is critical to discuss what steps will be taken to ensure cultural competency in planned strategies and activities. If possible, identify the specific trainings that will be offered to coalition members.

Statement of the Problem

- In presenting data about surveys that have been conducted in the community to document the youth substance use problems, provide specific information about the when the surveys were conducted, how many individuals responded, and how the participants were recruited.

- Most of the data (both data on youth substance use and social indicator data) that is presented should relate to the substances that the coalition plans to prioritize. For example, it is not worthwhile to present extensive data on overdose deaths when prescription drug use is not one of the prioritized substances.
- Both qualitative and quantitative data must be included in the Project Narrative. Collecting qualitative data (key informant interviews, surveys, and focus groups) is one activity that can be completed in the months prior to the release of the FOA.
- Present thorough social indicator data, not just data in one or two areas. If data is not available in some areas, provide an explanation and describe possible strategies to obtain this data in the future.

Completing the Action Plan

Carefully review all of the objectives to make sure they are measurable. It is recommended that you develop a worksheet listing all of the objectives and note whether each objective meets all of the requirements. The following sample worksheet may assist you in this process.

Objective	Covers 9/30/18 - 9/29/19	Type of change	How much change	Population to be addressed	Date when change accomplished	How change is measured	Only one substance addressed	Strategy/activity specific to the substance
Goal 1 Objective 1								
Goal 1 Objective 2								
Goal 2 Objective 1								
Goal 2 Objective 2								

Points to Consider

- The date by when the activity will be completed should not be the same for each activity, such as the end of the first year of the project, Sept 29. It would be expected that there would be varying time frames for the activities to be completed.
- All of the dates must be for the first year only.

- Include a mix of the seven strategies in the Action Plan and clearly identify which strategy is being implemented.
- For the “Who is Responsible” column, specific individuals should be referenced, not a general description, such as “Coalition Members”.
- The strategies that are proposed in the Action Plan should align with the Statement of the Problem. For example, if survey data shows that 51% of youth obtain alcohol from friends or acquaintances, the strategies should target this issue. In addition, make sure the strategies and activities are comprehensive enough to achieve the stated objective.

The FOA includes the template that must be used for the Action Plan. To clearly outline which of the seven strategies are being implemented, two samples are provided to illustrate how this information might be displayed.

The first sample template specifies which strategy is being implemented for each activity.

DFC Goal One: Increase community collaboration

Objective 1: By 9/29/2020, increase coalition membership by 25% from 60 community members to 75 members as measured by signed membership agreements forms

Strategy 1: Develop and implement a plan to recruit and train new members

Activity	Who is responsible?	By when?
<i>Provide Information:</i> Conduct presentations about the coalition to local community groups/organizations	Project Director	4/1/2020
<i>Enhance Skills:</i> Conduct bi-monthly orientation and training sessions for new members	Membership Committee	8/1/2020

Strategy 2: Develop and implement a plan to retain new and current members

Activity	Who is responsible?	By when?
<i>Enhance Access/Reduce Barriers:</i> Identify factors that lead to member drop-out and develop a plan to prevent drop-out	Project Coordinator	11/1/2019
<i>Enhance Skills:</i> Conduct monthly skill development workshops to increase	Program Director	9/1/2020

knowledge and strengthen commitment of members		
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DFC Goal Two: Reduce youth substance use

Objective 1: By 9/29/2020, decrease the past 30-day alcohol use of County High School students (grades 9-12) by 5% as measured by the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).

Strategy 1: Reduce youth access to alcohol within the community

Activity	Who is responsible?	By when?
<i>Provide information</i> – Conduct presentations at local businesses about strategies for preventing youth alcohol use	Business Representative	3/1/2020
<i>Reduce Access/Enhance Barriers</i> – Work with law enforcement to conduct alcohol compliance checks each quarter.	Law Enforcement Representative Business Representative, Youth Project Coordinator	6/1/2020

Strategy 2: Increase the capacity of parents to address underage drinking

Activity	Who is responsible?	By when?
<i>Provide Support</i> – Support the development and implementation of a Parent Network	Project Coordinator	2/1/2020
<i>Enhance Skills</i> - Conduct Strengthening Families workshops on a quarterly basis	Project Coordinator/Treatment Representative	8/1/2020

The second sample template groups the activities under one of the seven strategies.

DFC Goal One: Increase community collaboration

Objective 1: By 9/29/2020, increase coalition membership by 25% from 50 community members 6to 75 members as measured by signed membership agreements forms

Strategy 1: Provide Information

Activity	Who is responsible?	By when?
Conduct presentations about the coalition to local community groups/organizations	Project Director	4/1/2020

Strategy 2: Enhance Skills

Activity	Who is responsible?	By when?
Conduct bi-monthly orientation and training sessions for new members	Membership Committee	8/1/2020
Conduct monthly skill development workshops to increase knowledge and strengthen commitment of current members	Program Director	9/1/2020

DFC Goal Two: Reduce youth substance use

Objective 1: By 9/29/2020, decrease the past 30-day alcohol use of County High School students (grades 9-12) by 5% as measured by the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).

Strategy 1: Provide Information

Activity	Who is responsible?	By when?
Conduct presentations at local businesses about strategies for preventing youth alcohol use	Business Representative	3/1/2020

Strategy 2: Provide Support

Activity	Who is responsible?	By when?
Support the development and implementation of a Parent Network	Project Coordinator	2/1/2020

Strategy 3: Enhance Skills

Activity	Who is responsible?	By when?
Provide training for law enforcement on best practices to prevent underage drinking	Law Enforcement Representative	6/1/2020

Monitoring and Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Action Plan

- It is not sufficient to state that all sector members will be involved in reviewing and updating the Action Plan. The specific role that identified members will play in this process must be described.
- Delineate how often (i.e., monthly, quarterly) reviews will be conducted to determine whether any modifications need to be made to the Action Plan.
- In describing how the coalition plans to disseminate outcomes to the community, it is important to address how the communication strategies will take into consideration the cultural diversity in the community.

Successful Implementation of the DFC Grant

- In addressing how the coalition will work with other community systems/organizations to successfully implement the grant, it is relevant to provide an example of how the coalition has effectively collaborated with another community system/organization to address a specific problem related to youth substance use.

CRITIQUES of APPLICANT RESPONSES

Weakness: Not providing all of the information required by the criterion

Evaluation Criterion: Identify the minimum of two substances that the coalition will be addressing and explain the specific problems related to those substances that will be addressed in the 12-Month Action Plan.

Applicant's Response: Based on the student data and the recent dramatic increase in student prescription drug use, the Tri-County Coalition will target Marijuana, Alcohol and Prescription Drug use. Our 12-Month Action Plan will address issues surrounding these substances illegal for youth through:

- Formal education and prevention programming for middle and high school students;
- Education targeted at families and community members; and
- Formal follow-up supportive services for youth struggling to overcome addiction or who are coming out of treatment.

These strategies have been selected to address the needs demonstrated through the statistics and qualitative data described in the previous section.

Critique: *The applicant identifies the three substances that will be addressed but does not describe the **specific problems related to the three substances** that will be addressed in the Action Plan. The applicant only describes the strategies that will be implemented.*

Weakness: Recycling responses from previous years

Evaluation Criterion:

2017 Question: Describe how the coalition plans to disseminate the data outcomes to the community and how it will ensure that all of the segments receive the information.

2016 Question: Describe how the evaluation findings will be used to engage the community in moving the coalition forward to accomplish its work and address its challenges.

Applicant's Response: It is important for the coalition to be transparent. Publicizing evaluation findings is key to keeping the community engaged. The information keeps the community abreast of the accomplishments and barriers to the action plan and seeks to engage the community in finding helpful solutions. As evaluation information is made public, the community at-large is invited to coalition meetings and are provided the opportunity to have input.

Critique: *It is evident that the applicant provided a response to the question from the 2016 FOA. As a result, the response did not specifically address the points that needed to be covered in the question from the 2017 FOA. The applicant did not provide information about **how** it plans to disseminate the evaluation findings. It also did not address **how it will ensure that all segments of the community receive the information.***

Weakness: Not providing the specific information required by the criterion

Evaluation Criterion: Describe how the evaluation findings will be used to engage the community in moving the coalition forward to accomplish its work and address its challenges.

Applicant's Response: The coalition will use its relationships with other local organizations, and leverage our connections among sector representatives to engage the local community in further supporting the coalition's mission. For example, the coalition will use its position within the Chamber of Commerce to approach local businesses whose missions align with the overarching goal of the coalition to improve the community through connections. We will be searching for partners who support the efforts of the coalition to build funding for the continued sustainability of the coalition. The coalition's sector representatives, Board, and Advisory members all offer unique connections to the vast and vibrant support network that spans the town and the surrounding communities.

Critique: *The applicant describes its work building relationships within the community and networking but does not specifically address how the **evaluation findings** could be used to engage the community and move the coalition forward.*

Weakness: Not providing adequate detail

Evaluation Criterion: Describe the specific processes for making improvements and/or enhancements to the 12-Month Action Plan.

Applicant's Response: The information gathered during the evaluation process will be carefully used to monitor progress, coordinate efforts, and increase accountability. Evaluation data will allow coalition members to critically reflect on their shared work and look for opportunities for improvement. The coalition will monitor process and outcome evaluation findings to assess and improve its work as necessary. Process evaluation often results in specific recommendations for improvement. Outcome data will also stimulate reflection on the progress made towards reaching goals. The group will use the process information to brainstorm and arrive to consensus on the ways in which the 12-Month Action Plan may be adjusted or revised to address issues or concerns that have been addressed.

Critique: *The applicant does not provide substantive detail on the processes that will be implemented to make changes to the Action Plan. The response would be strengthened by including the following information: **what** data sources will be examined, the specific coalition member(s) **who** will monitor evaluation findings, **how often** the findings will be reviewed, **who** will oversee the decision-making process to determine what changes need to be made, and **who** will be responsible for implementing the recommended changes.*

Weakness: Not providing adequate detail

Evaluation Criterion: Describe how the coalition will work with community systems, protocols, and procedures to enhance prospects for successful implementation of the DFC grant.

Applicant's Response: The coalition already works successfully with numerous organizations within the community, including the Community Mental Health Clinic, the local hospital, all local healthcare providers, and all six local high schools. Because of its standing credibility with the community and organizations within the community, the coalition will utilize this rapport to implement any and all parts of the programs the DFC Grant allows. The coalition has maintained an upstanding relationship with the community for more than a decade thus making it familiar with the protocols and procedures necessary to work with and implement programs within the community.

Critique: *The applicant cites successful partnerships with existing entities to deliver programs, but does not provide detailed information about **how** it will work with **community systems, protocols and procedures** to enhance prospects for successful implementation of the DFC grant.*

Weakness: Not providing the specific information required by the criterion

Evaluation Criterion: Describe how the coalition will measure key successes by the end of the five-year DFC funding cycle.

Applicant's Response: Key successes will be measured through the coalition's ability to continuously build capacity through the five-year DFC funding cycle. Quarterly evaluation reports will be turned into annual reports and the community will be engaged on a continuous basis to determine how the program can be enhanced and how the coalition can overcome barriers. True success will be determined by the degree to which various sectors adopt action items, protocols, and programs into their current strategic planning. Community involvement, sector commitment, and the adoption of practices shown to reduce youth substance use by individuals, agencies, and governing bodies will demonstrate that progress has been successfully endorsed by the community.

Critique: *The applicant does not provide **specific** information about how key successes will be **measured**. The response could be improved by the coalition describing specific indices that would be examined to determine whether the project was successful, such as changes in core measures, the number of activities that are conducted, changes in practices or procedures, and new policies that are adopted.*

CHAPTER 8 – Developing Goals and Measurable Objectives

Overview

To be able to effectively evaluate your project, it is critical that you develop realistic goals and measurable objectives. This chapter will provide information on developing goals and measurable objectives. It will also provide examples of well-written goals and measurable objectives.

Developing Goals and Measurable Objectives

The following information is provided to assist you in developing goals and measurable objectives.

GOALS

Definition - a goal is a broad statement about the long-term expectation of what should happen as a result of your program (the desired result). It serves as the foundation for developing your program objectives. Goals should align with the statement of need that is described. Goals should only be one sentence.

The characteristics of effective goals include:

- Goals address outcomes, not how outcomes will be achieved;
- Goals describe the behavior or condition in the community expected to change;
- Goals describe who will be affected by the project;
- Goals lead clearly to one or more measurable results; and
- Goals are concise.

Unclear Goal	Critique	Improved Goal
Increase the substance use/misuse and HIV/AIDS prevention capacity of the local school district	This goal could be improved by <i>specifying an expected program effect in reducing a health problem</i>	Increase the capacity of the local school district to reduce high-risk behaviors of students that may contribute to substance use/misuse and/or HIV/AIDS
Decrease the prevalence of marijuana, alcohol, and prescription drug use among youth in the community by increasing the number of schools that implement effective policies, environmental change, intensive training of teachers, and educational approaches to address high risk behaviors, peer pressure, and tobacco use.	This goal is not concise	Decrease youth substance use in the community by implementing evidence-based programs within the school district that address behaviors that may lead to the initiation of use.

OBJECTIVES

Definition – Objectives describe the results to be achieved and the manner in which they will be achieved. Multiple objectives are generally needed to address a single goal. Well-written objectives help set program priorities and targets for progress and accountability. It is recommended that you avoid verbs that may have vague meanings to describe the intended outcomes, like “understand” or “know” because it may prove difficult to measure them. Instead, use verbs that document action, such as: “By the end of 2019, 75% of program participants will be *placed* in permanent housing.”

In order to be effective, objectives should be clear and leave no room for interpretation. **SMART** is a helpful acronym for developing objectives that are *specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound*:

Specific – includes the “who” and “what” of program activities. Use only one action verb to avoid issues with measuring success. For example, “Outreach workers will administer the HIV risk assessment tool to at least 100 injection drug users in the population of focus” is a more specific objective than “Outreach workers will use their skills to reach out to drug users on the street.”

Measurable – how much change is expected. It must be possible to count or otherwise quantify an activity or its results. It also means that the source of and mechanism for collecting measurement data can be identified and that collection of the data is feasible for your program. A baseline measurement is required to document change (e.g., to measure the percentage of

increase or decrease). If you plan to use a specific measurement instrument, it is recommended that you incorporate its use into the objective. Example: By 9/19 increase by 10% the number of 8th, 9th, and 10th grade students who disapprove of marijuana use as measured by the annual school youth survey.

Achievable – objectives should be attainable within a given time frame and with available program resources. For example, “The new part-time nutritionist will meet with seven teenage mothers each week to design a complete dietary plan” is a more achievable objective than “Teenage mothers will learn about proper nutrition.”

Realistic – objectives should be within the scope of the project and propose reasonable programmatic steps that can be implemented within a specific time frame. For example, “Two ex-gang members will make one school presentation each week for two months to raise community awareness about the presence of gangs” is a more realistic objective than “Gang-related violence in the community will be eliminated.”

Time-bound – provide a time frame indicating when the objective will be measured or a time by when the objective will be met. For example, “Five new peer educators will be recruited by the second quarter of the first funding year” is a better objective than “New peer educators will be hired.”

Non-SMART Objective	Critique	SMART Objective
Teachers will be trained on the selected evidence-based substance use/misuse prevention curriculum.	The objective is not SMART because it is not <i>specific, measurable, or time-bound</i> . It can be made SMART by <i>specifically</i> indicating who is responsible for training the teachers, how many will be trained, who they are, and by when the trainings will be conducted.	<i>By June 1, 2019, LEA supervisory staff will have trained 75% of health education teachers in the local school district on the selected, evidence-based substance use/misuse prevention curriculum.</i>
90% of youth will participate in classes on assertive communication skills.	This objective is not SMART because it is not <i>specific or time-bound</i> . It can be made SMART by indicating <i>who</i> will conduct the activity, <i>by when</i> , and <i>who</i> will participate in the lessons on assertive communication skills.	<i>By the end of the 2019 school year, district health educators will have conducted classes on assertive communication skills for 90% of youth in the middle school receiving the substance use/misuse and HIV prevention curriculum.</i>
Train individuals in the community on the	This objective is not SMART as it is not <i>specific, measurable or</i>	<i>By end of year two of the project, the Health Department will have trained</i>

Non-SMART Objective	Critique	SMART Objective
prevention of prescription drug/opioid overdose-related deaths.	<i>time-bound.</i> It can be made SMART by specifically indicating who is responsible for the training, how many people will be trained, who they are, and by when the training will be conducted.	75% of EMS staff in the County Government on the selected curriculum addressing the prevention of prescription drug/opioid overdose-related deaths.

The first step in developing your goals and objectives for a specific grant announcement is to review the specific purpose of the grant and the required activities. For example, the FOA may state that the purpose of the grant is to prevent suicide in institutions of higher education and indicate that one of the required activities is increasing the amount of training to students, faculty, and staff on suicide prevention and mental health promotion. It would follow that a relevant goal could be:

Increase the number of suicide prevention and mental health promotion trainings delivered to students, faculty and staff at the State University

To assess whether the number of trainings have increased you would need to collect data on the number of trainings that have been delivered in the past within a specified time period. This data could be incorporated into the statement of the problem to document the need for the grant at the university. Once you have the baseline data for the university, a determination would need to be made as to what a realistic objective would be in terms of the number of training events that could be accomplished during the grant period.

Once a goal has been established, the next step is to determine what objectives need to be developed to address this goal. The objectives that might be developed could include specifying how many individuals would need to become certified to conduct the trainings and by when this would need to be accomplished. It would also be relevant to determine how many university staff members are certified trainers and how many additional individuals would need to become certified. An objective might be:

By 3/15/19, ten staff members of the University Counseling Center will have become certified gatekeeper trainers.

Another objective could address how many trainings will be conducted during a specified time frame, such as:

By end of year three of the project, the staff of the University Counseling Center will have conducted 30 suicide prevention and mental health promotion trainings to students, faculty and staff on the selected curriculum (name of EBP) addressing the prevention of suicide.

An example of how the goals and measurable objectives could be presented in the Project Narrative (Proposed Implementation Approach section) is included in Figure 3. If your objectives reference increases or decreases in measures, make sure you have baseline data. By including the last column in the table (How Objectives Will Be Measured) you will clearly outline for reviewers what data will be collected to evaluate whether the objectives are achieved. It is important that you describe in the Data Collection and Performance Measurement section how you plan to collect the data and analyze this data.

Figure 3

Goals	Objectives	How Objective Will Be Measured
Goal 1.	1.A	
	1.B	
	1.C	
Goal 2.	2A.	
	2B.	
	2C	
Goal 3.	3A.	
	3B.	
	3C.	

CHAPTER 9 – Confidentiality and SAMHSA Participant Protection/Human Subjects Guidelines

Overview

This chapter will provide an overview of SAMHSA participant protection requirements and explains when IRB approval is needed.

SAMHSA Participant Protection Requirements

The FOA will describe SAMHSA requirements and Federal regulations regarding participant protection. Applicants and recipients are expected to develop and implement appropriate procedures to address confidentiality and other ethical issues pertinent to the protection of individuals in proposed projects. This component of the application is not optional unless otherwise noted.

Confidentiality is particularly important in SAMHSA grant projects because of the potential for stigmatization of participants receiving treatment or counseling for drug abuse, mental illness, HIV/AIDS, and related problems. If participants in the proposed project could be exposed to any risk of problems through any failure of the project to keep information about them confidential, the applicant must develop procedures to prevent these risks and describe them in the application.

It is important to note the following regarding confidentiality:

- Recipients who provide substance use/misuse diagnosis, treatment, or referral for treatment must maintain the confidentiality of any patient or client records for alcohol or drug abuse treatment. All recipients must act in accordance with [Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2 \(42 CFR Part 2\)](#), Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records.
- Confidentiality regulations are applicable to any information obtained by a federally assisted project, as defined in regulations, about patients who abuse alcohol and other drugs.
- Projects that offer treatment for mental illness must maintain confidentiality in accordance with professional standards of practice and applicable law.

There are generally seven Participant Protection elements that must be addressed. However, for some training and technical assistance FOAs, fewer elements may need to be addressed. It is important to read the information and directions in the FOA carefully.

Standards for SAMHSA Participant Protection include:

- Protection of clients and staff from potential risks;

- Fair selection of participants;
- Absence of coercion;
- Data collection;
- Privacy and confidentiality;
- Adequate consent procedures; and
- Discussion of risks and benefits.

As was noted in the discussion of the evaluation criteria, most of the elements of participant protection include multiple components. It is critical that you address all of the components. As there are no page limitations in this section, you may want to consider inserting each bullet in your response and then writing the response to the bullet below. This will ensure that you address all the components and makes it easy for the peer reviewers to evaluate how you responded to each component.

Common issues that reviewers identify in their assessment of the response of applicants to the Participant Protection criteria:

General Issues

- Making the statement that the project will undergo an IRB review and not addressing any of the criteria. Even if the project will undergo a review by an IRB, all of the Participant Protection elements must be addressed.
- Omitting this section in the submission of the application
- Stating the participant protection elements are not applicable to the project
- Inserting chapters of the organization’s Policy and Procedure Manual in this section but not specifically addressing the seven elements
- Indicating that the response to a specific element can be found in the Project Narrative

Protection of Clients and Staff from Potential Risks

- Responding that there are no risks to clients. If services are being delivered as part of the project, it is **very unlikely** that there will be **no** foreseeable physical, medical, psychological, social or legal risks or potential adverse effects as a result of the project.
- Addressing potential risks to clients but not addressing risks to staff
- Neglecting to describe how the organization will provide guidance and assistance in the event there are adverse effects to participants and whether alternative treatments will be available to clients

Fair Selection of Participants

- Not addressing how the participants will be recruited and selected and who will select them
- Not addressing how potential participants will be informed of the voluntary nature of participation
- Not explaining reasons for including or excluding participants

Absence of Coercion

- Indicating that you do not plan to compensate participants, such as through incentives, but including funding for incentives in the budget or describing the use of incentives in the Project Narrative
- Not specifying how participants will be told that they may receive services even if they do not participate in the data collection component of the project

Data Collection

- Describing the use of drug testing in the Project Narrative but not providing the requested information about specimen collection
- Not including data collection instruments/interview protocols (or links to websites for the instruments) in the specified attachment

Privacy and Confidentiality

- Not providing detailed information about how data will be stored, who will or will not have access to the data, and how the identity of the participants will be kept private
- Not specifying that you agree to maintain the confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse client records according to the provisions of Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part II

Adequate Consent Procedures

- Not providing copies of sample consent forms in the specified attachment

Risk/Benefit Discussion

- Indicating there are no risks to participants in the first element and noting that this element is therefore not applicable

Protection of Human Subjects

Depending on the performance assessment and data collection requirements of the particular funding opportunity or the performance assessment/evaluation design you propose in your application, you may have to comply with the human subjects provisions of **Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46 (45 CFR 46)**,

Protection of Human Subjects. The only difference between the SAMHSA Participant Protection Requirements and the Protection of Human Subjects is that when the Protection of Human Subjects is required, an additional element (Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval) must be obtained.

General information about Human Subjects Protections can be obtained on the website for the HHS Office of Human Research Protections at www.hhs.gov/ohrp. SAMHSA-specific questions should be directed to the program contact identified in the FOA.

CHAPTER 10 –Preparing the Budget

Overview

In this chapter, specific information will be presented about what factors must be taken into consideration as you develop the budget for the project.

Guidelines for Preparing Your Budget

SAMHSA requires applicants to submit the SF-424A Budget Information Form. It is important to follow the instructions included with the SF-424A when preparing your budget. The budget provides your projection of all costs for all years of the grant. You are expected to stay within the funding limits for the grant. In addition, a budget narrative is required to support all of the proposed costs in your budget. This narrative provides an explanation of how your organization will use the funds that you are requesting. It should provide sufficient detail for the various line items where funds are being requested. Your plan must demonstrate that grant funds will be spent in compliance with grant provisions and Federal regulations. It is important to review the Appendix in the FOA which outlines standard funding restrictions. SAMHSA reviews the proposed budget and budget narrative to ensure costs are reasonable, allocable, necessary, and allowable per the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and cost principles (See [Appendix A](#) for definitions of these terms).

Key points to take into consideration:

- The total cost equals indirect plus direct costs.
- In the FOA, there will be an Appendix which includes a sample budget and justification. In this appendix there is information about the indirect cost rate and how to apply for an indirect cost rate. If you have any questions about the indirect cost rate, you can contact the grants management staff member listed in the FOA. For grants that only address the provision of training and/or technical assistance, the indirect rate cannot exceed 8%.
- Make sure your budget and project narrative align. The activities, resources, staff and other items described in the Project Narrative must be referenced in the budget. For example, all of the staff members who will be involved in the project must be included in the Personnel or Contractual sections of the budget even if they will not receive a salary or compensation from the project.
- You must justify why resources, staff, and supplies are being included in the budget.
- If there are funding limitations specified in the FOA, make sure you clearly document the funds that you are proposing to use for that component of the project. For example, if the FOA indicates that no more than 10% of funds can be used for infrastructure development, specifically identify funds being proposed for infrastructure development in your budget. It is recommended that you put documentation of how

your budget is in compliance with the funding limitations in a separate table as illustrated in the Appendix in the FOA.

The categories listed below are examples of some of the more common items found in project budgets.

A. Personnel

List all staff positions by title. Provide the annual salary rate and the percentage of time to be devoted to the project. Compensation paid for employees engaged in grant activities must be consistent with that paid for similar work within your organization. In Section I of the FOA, Key Personnel for the project will be identified. Make sure the job titles for the key personnel that are listed in the table for Personnel are identical to the job titles for Key Personnel noted in the FOA.

As a general rule, non-profit organization salary rates of pay should not exceed an Executive Level II salary rate. The Executive Level II salary can be found in SAMHSA's standard terms and conditions for all awards at [SAMHSA terms and conditions](#). This amount reflects an individual's base salary exclusive of fringe and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties to your organization. This salary limitation also applies to sub-awards/sub-contracts under a SAMHSA grant or cooperative agreement.

Individual and companies involved in drafting or preparing the grant application cannot be paid as consultants or contractors on the grant (See 45 CFR § 75.328 – Competition).

The salaries of facilities and administrative (F&A) administrative and clerical staff are normally treated as indirect costs (45 CFR §75.413c). Direct charging of these costs may be appropriate only if all of the following conditions are met: (1) Administrative or clerical services are directly integral to a project or activity; (2) Individuals involved can be specifically identified with the project or activity; and (3) The costs are not also claimed as indirect costs.

The Project Director must be the same as on the HHS Checklist.

B. Fringe Benefits

Fringe benefits are for the personnel listed in budget Category A and only for the percentage of time devoted to the project. Fringe benefits include, but are not limited to, the cost of leave, employee health insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans. The budget narrative should delineate your organization's fringe benefit rate.

Fringe benefits charged to an award must comply with HHS regulations at 45 CFR §75.431 ([ECFR- Compensation - fringe benefits](#)).

C. Travel

Costs for travel required by the grant must be included in this section. In addition, you must explain the need for all travel costs. Travel costs charged to an award must comply with HHS regulations at 45 CFR §75.474. If your organization does not have documented travel policies, the federal GSA rates must be used ([GSA rates](#)). If specific travel details are unknown, the basis for proposed costs should be explained (i.e. historical information).

Funds requested in the travel category should be only for project staff. Travel for consultants and contractors should be shown in Category F (Contracts) along with consultant/contractor fees. Travel for training participants, advisory committees, review panels, etc., should be itemized the same way as in this section but listed in Category H (Other).

D. Equipment

This category includes items of equipment equal to or in excess of \$5,000 and having a useful life of more than one year. You must include relevant details, such as the type of equipment, cost, and a brief narrative on the intended use of the equipment for the project. The justification should include information about how the costs were estimated (i.e. fair market value, quotes, etc.). It should also include a lease versus purchase analysis, or a statement to the effect of whether it is feasible and/or more cost effective to lease versus purchase an item of equipment.

E. Supplies

Supplies are materials costing less than \$5,000 and often having a one-time use. This category may include office supplies, educational materials, and office equipment, such as computers and printers. The justification must include an explanation of the type of supplies to be purchased, how the supplies relate back to achieving the project objectives, and the basis for the estimate of supplies, i.e., historical use on similar projects.

F. Contracts

Contractual costs are those services carried out by an individual or organization, other than your organization, in the form of a procurement relationship. The arrangement may be in the form of a sub-award, contracts, consultants, or consortium agreements. The differences between sub-awards, contracts, consultants, and consortium agreements are as follows:

- **Sub-recipient** means a non-Federal entity that receives a sub-award from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a Federal award, including a portion of the scope of work or objectives. Your organization is responsible ensuring sub-recipients comply with the terms and conditions of the award, per 45 CFR §75.101.

- **Contracts** are legal instruments by which your organization purchases good and services needed to carry out the project or program under a Federal award. Contracts include vendors (dealer, distributor or other sellers) that provide, for example, supplies, expendable materials, or data processing services in support of the project activities. Your organization must establish written procurement policies and procedures that are consistently applied. All procurement transactions must be conducted in a manner to provide to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition.
- **Consortium Agreements** are between entities (which may or may not include your organization) working collaboratively on an award supported project. They address the roles, responsibilities, implementation, and rights and responsibilities between entities collaborating on an award.
- **Consultants** are individuals retained to provide professional advice or services for a fee. Travel for consultants and contractors should be shown in this category along with consultant/contractor fees.

In this section, you should list the proposed contract activities and provide a brief description of the scope of work or services to be provided. It is important to justify the necessity of each sub-award or contract as it relates to the Project Narrative.

G. Construction – NOT ALLOWED

H. Other

This category includes expenses not covered in any of the previous budget categories. These expenses may include:

- Minor alteration and renovation (define and obtain prior approval);
- Rent – information about determining rent costs can be found at: [SAMHSA.gov rent worksheet](https://www.samhsa.gov/rent-worksheet);
- Client incentives;
- Telephone and postage;
- Travel for training participants, advisory committees, etc.; and
- All costs associated with training activities (except costs for consultant and/or contracts).

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are those incurred by your organization for a common or joint purpose that benefits more than one cost objective or project, and are not readily assignable to specific costs objectives or projects as a direct cost. In order for indirect costs to be allowable, your organization must have a negotiated indirect cost rate. For information on applying for the indirect rate go to: [PSC indirect rates](#). Effective with 45 CFR 75.414(f), any non-federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, except for those non-federal entities

described in Appendix VII part 75 (D)(1)(b), may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. If your organization has a federally approved rate of 10%, the approved rate would prevail.

If the funding opportunity is for a training grant, the indirect cost rate is limited to **8 percent**. Refer to 45 CFR §75.414 at [ECFR - definitions](#) for more information about indirect costs and facilities and administrative costs.

Completing a budget that requires cost-sharing/matching funds

The terms "matching" and "cost sharing" are often used interchangeably. "Matching" usually refers to a statutorily specified percentage, whether specified as a fixed or minimum percentage of non-federal participation in allowable program or project costs, which must be contributed by a grant recipient to be eligible for federal funding. "Cost sharing" refers to any situation in which the grant recipient shares in the costs of a project other than as statutorily required matching. In-kind contributions are goods and services donated to the organization. These services/contributions can often be used as matching funds. Examples of in-kind contributions include:

- Corporate volunteers and pro-bono professional services;
- Use of a building and utilities;
- Advertising;
- Donation of computers or other technology resources; and
- Transportation.

Base the value of these services at their market value. For example, a volunteer working in an unskilled position would be calculated at minimum wage dollar value. To indicate this in a budget you might include a formula, such as five volunteers X hourly wage X hours per week for X number of weeks.

Key Points in Preparing Your Budget

- If you are submitting a budget for multiple years, remember to include a cost of living raise in staff salaries and allow for inflation for supplies, utilities, etc.
- In preparing the budget, be realistic about the amount of funds that can be spent during the first year of the project, particularly relative to salaries and contracts. For example, try to accurately determine the amount of time it will take to recruit and hire staff, particularly if many new staff members must be hired. If it is not realistic to have new staff on board until two months after the onset of the project, make sure your salary figures for the first year reflect only ten months of salary and fringe benefits.

APPENDIX A: Acronyms and Glossary of Terms

ACRONYMS	
AOR	Authorized Organization Representative
BO	Business Official
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
CFDA	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CLAS	Culturally and Linguistic Appropriate Services
DGM	Division of Grants Management
DGR	Division of Grant Review
DUNS	Data Universal Numbering System
EBiz POC	E-Business Point of Contact
EBP	Evidence-Based Practice
EHR	Electronic Health Record
EIN	Employer Identification Number
eRA	Electronic Research Administration
F & A	Facilities and Administration
FOA	Funding Opportunity Announcement
FON	Funding Opportunity Number
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GMO	Grants Management Officer
GMS	Grants Management Specialist
GPO	Government Project Officer
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act
HRSA	Health Resources and Services Administration
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LOC	Letter of Commitment
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTDC	Modified Total Direct Cost
NoA	Notice of Award
NOMs	National Outcome Measures
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
PD	Project/Program Director
PHSIS	Public Health System Impact Statement
PI	Principal Investigator
PL	Public Law
PMS	Payment Management System

ACRONYMS	
POF	Population of Focus
SAM	System for Award Management
SF	Standard Form
SOC	System of Care
SPF	Strategic Prevention Framework
SPOC	State Point of Contact
SSA	Single State Agency
TA	Technical Assistance

Allocable Cost

A cost is allocable to the extent the services and/or goods benefit the project.

Allowable Cost

A cost incurred by a recipient is allowable if it is:

- Necessary and reasonable for the performance of the grant;
- Allocable;
- In conformance with any limitations or exclusions set forth in Federal cost principles;
- Consistent with the applicant organization’s regulations, policies, and procedures that apply to both federally supported and other activities of the organization;
- Accorded consistent treatment as a direct or indirect cost;
- Determined in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles; and
- Not included as a cost in any other federally supported award (unless specifically authorized by statute).

Authorized Organization Representative (AOR)

A member of an organization who is approved by the EBiz Point of Contact to submit grant application in Grants.gov on behalf of the organization. Only an AOR has the authority to sign and submit grant applications.

Baseline Data

Basic information or data that is available or can be collected before a project begins. Such data is used to provide a starting point against which to compare data collected later in the project in order to determine if there has been a change in specific conditions over time.

Budget Period

Budget periods are usually 12 months long. The Notice of Award will show the approved budget for the applicable budget period.

Contract

A legal instrument by which a non-Federal entity purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under a Federal award.

Cooperative Agreement

An alternative assistance instrument to be used in lieu of a grant whenever substantial federal involvement with the non-Federal entity during performance is anticipated. The difference between grants and cooperative agreements is the degree of federal programmatic involvement rather than the type of administrative requirements imposed.

Direct Cost

Any cost that can be specifically identified with a particular project, program or activity or that can be directly assigned to such activities relatively easily and with a high degree of accuracy. Direct costs include, but are not limited to, salaries, travel, equipment, and supplies directly benefitting the grant-supported project or activity.

E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC)

A user registered as an organization applicant who is responsible for the administration and management of grant activities for his or her organization. The EBiz POC is likely to be an organization's chief financial officer or authorizing official. There can be only one EBiz POC per DUNS number.

Grant Agreement

Is used to enter into a relationship the principal purpose of which is to transfer anything of value from the Federal awarding agency to the non-Federal entity to carry out a public purpose authorized by Federal statute. It is distinguished from a cooperative agreement in that it does not provide for substantial involvement between the Federal awarding agency and the non-Federal entity in carrying out the activity

Indirect Costs

Costs incurred for common or joint objectives that, therefore, cannot be readily identified with an individual project, program, or organizational activity. These costs generally include facilities operation and maintenance costs, depreciation and administrative

expenses. Organizations must have or negotiate an indirect cost rate to support a request for reimbursement of indirect costs.

Local Government

Any unit of government within a state, including a: (a) County; (b) Borough; (c) Municipality; (d) City; (e) Town; (f) Township; (g) Parish; (h) Local public authority, including any public housing agency under the United States Housing Act of 1937; (i) Special district; (j) School district; (k) Intrastate district; (l) Council of governments, whether or not incorporated as a non-profit corporation under state law; and (m) Any other agency or instrumentality of a multi-, regional, or intra-state or local government.

Matching or Cost Sharing

The terms “matching” and “cost sharing” are often used interchangeably. Matching usually refers to a statutorily specified percentage, whether specified as a fixed or minimum percentage of non-federal participation in allowable project costs, which must be contributed by a grant recipient to be eligible for federal funding. Cost sharing refers to any situation in which the grant shares in the costs of a project other than as statutorily required matching.

MPIN

The Marketing Partner ID (MPIN) is the access code/password that must be used by the EBiz POC to log into Grants.gov.

Necessary Cost

A cost is necessary if it is vital for the operations of the grant program.

Non-Federal Entity

A state, local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education (IHE), or nonprofit organization that carries out a Federal award as a recipient or sub-recipient.

Non-Profit Organization

Any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization, not including institutes of higher education, that: (a) Is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (b) Is not organized primarily for profit; and (c) Uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operations of the organization.

Notice of Award (NoA)

The Notice of Award is the official, legally binding document, signed by the Grants Management Officer (GMO). It notifies the grant recipient of the award of a grant; contains or reference the

terms and conditions of the grant and federal funding limits and obligations; and provides the documentary basis for recording the financial and programmatic obligations.

Project Period

The project period is the total time SAMHSA has programmatically approved a project for federal support. This does not constitute a commitment by the Federal Government to fund the entire project period. Each budget period within a project period is subject to the availability of funds and satisfactory progress of the project.

Reasonable Costs

A cost is reasonable if it does not exceed what a prudent person would incur under similar circumstances.

State

Any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any agency or instrumentality thereof exclusive of local governments.

Sub-Recipient

A non-Federal entity that receives a sub-award from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a Federal program; but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such program. A sub-recipient may also be a recipient of other Federal awards directly from a Federal awarding agency.

Third Party In-Kind Contributions

Third-party in-kind contributions means the value of non-cash contributions (i.e., property or services) that- (a) Benefit a federally assisted project or program; and (b) Are contributed by non-Federal third parties, without charge, to a non-Federal entity under a Federal award.

APPENDIX B: Sample Timelines/Completing the Timeline

To assist you in developing your timeline for the grant project, the following examples are provided. *These examples are not the only format that may be used to complete the timeline but may give you some ideas on displaying the information that must be included in the timeline.* Please note that only a few sample activities have been included in the figures. **The key activities should include the Required Activities outlined in the Expectations section of the FOA.**

Figure 4 allows you to clearly delineate all of the activities that must be started in the first year of the project. The first year is the time period when the most detail needs to be provided.

Figure 4

Key Activity & Responsible Staff	Year 1 (in Months)												Year 2		Year 3		Year 4	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13-18 mo	19-24 mo	25-30 mo	31-36 mo	37-42 mo	43-48 mo
START-UP																		
Recruit new staff (PD)	X																	
Hire staff (PD)		X																
Organize Steering Committee (PD)	X																	
Finalize MOUs with partner organizations (PD)			X															
Train staff on EBPs (PC)			X						X				X					
Develop policies and procedures (PD)		X																
IMPLEMENTATION																		
Conduct community outreach (PC)		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Screen referrals and conduct psychosocial assessments (PC)				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
EVALUATION/REPORTS																		
Develop data collection plan (E)		X	X															
Collect project data (DM)				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Develop Disparities Impact Statement (SC)					X													

Key: PD – Project Director, PC – Project Coordinator, SC – Steering Committee, E – Evaluator, DM – Data Manager

Figure 5

Figure 5 is similar to Table 1 but the key activities are grouped under the goals for the project.

Goal/Activity/ Responsible Staff	Year 1 (in Months)												Year 2		Year 3		Year 4	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	19	25	31	37	43
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	24	30	36	42	48
	mo	mo	mo	mo	mo	mo	mo	mo	mo	mo	mo	mo	mo	mo	mo	mo	mo	mo
Goal 1: Increase delivery of substance use/misuse prevention services in the community																		
Activity 1 (PD)																		
Activity 2 (PC)																		
Goal 2: Increase the number of young adults screened for substance use problems																		
Activity 1 (PD)																		
Activity 2 (PD)																		
Goal 3:																		
Activity 1 (E)																		
Activity 2 (DM)																		

Key: PD – Project Director, PC – Project Coordinator, SC – Steering Committee, E – Evaluator, DM – Data Manager

Figure 6

In Figure 6, the activities are also grouped with the goals but instead of using the time frame of months, the start date and completion date are delineated for each activity.

Goals	Key Activities	Responsible Staff	Start Date/Completion Date
Goal 1	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		
Goal 2	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		
Goal 3	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		

Key: PD – Project Director, PC – Project Coordinator, SC – Steering Committee, E – Evaluator, DM – Data Manager

Some suggestions:

- It is fine to use abbreviations for Responsible Staff, such as PD for Project Director, but make sure you include a key to explain the abbreviations.
- Make a list of all of the required activities outlined in the FOA and include them in the timeline. Don't forget to include the submission of required reports.
- Some activities may span several months and other activities may need to be repeated periodically. For example, staff training will need to occur at the beginning of the project but also at different times during the course of the project due to staff turnover or a need to strengthen staff skills and ensure fidelity to the model when implementing the EBPs.
- Keep the timeline simple. If a very complex timeline is provided it is often difficult for reviewers to clearly understand when the activities will be implemented.
- Make sure you include activities related to data collection and performance measurement.
- For responsible staff, put the position title of the person who will be responsible for overseeing the completion of the activity not just their name.

Weaknesses frequently cited by reviewers:

- Most FOAs include a requirement that service delivery must started by the fourth month of the project. Many applicants include a table similar to Table 1 but which breaks down the time frame for each year into quarters. If the table indicates that service delivery will begin in the 2nd quarter, it is not be possible to determine if service delivery will begin in month 4 or not until month 6.
- Not including a timeline which covers all of the years of the project period
- Using a small font in the timeline, such as Times New Roman 8, which is not permitted
- For Responsible Staff, putting the name of an organization or “All” and not specific staff members.
- The timeline is not realistic, particularly not allowing for sufficient time to recruit, hire, and train staff before services are implemented. This issue is most apparent when many of the project staff members have to be hired.

APPENDIX C: Sample Templates -Memorandum of Understanding/Letters of Commitment

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN NON PROFIT AGENCY AND COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), while not a legally binding document, does indicate a voluntary agreement to assist in the implementation of the plans described in the “Title of Project”, a substance use/misuse prevention demonstration grant targeting high-risk female adolescent populations. This grant is funded through the Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and is expected to have a three-year funding cycle.

Overall Project Goals, Services and Outcomes: *very brief program overview*

Term One: This MOU shall begin upon grant funding approval. The agreement is renewable from year to year, unless either party gives notice of intent to withdraw from the project.

Term Two: Agency Provisions: In addition to continuing the ongoing program planning and review process of “Title of Project”, the non-profit organization will provide the following services in specific support of this project:

- a. b.
- c. d.

Term Three: Agency Provisions: In addition to participating in the ongoing planning and review process of the above mentioned project, the community-based organization will provide the following services in specific support of this project:

- a. b.
- c. d.

Term Four: Termination: This MOU may be terminated by either party, for any reason, by giving 30 days written notice.

Non-Profit Agency Signature

CBO Agency Signature

Title

Title

Date

Date

SAMPLE TEMPLATE - LETTER OF COMMITMENT

On Letterhead of Partnering Organization

Insert date

*Project Director
Applicant Organization
City, State*

Dear *Project Director*,

[Optional short introduction of the partnering organization]. Include information about how long and in what capacity the partnering organization has worked with the applicant organization.

We commit to participating in and supporting the 2020 application to SAMHSA entitled *Project Title*, for the time period of *[include dates of commitment within proposed project period]*.

We will provide the following services for the proposed project:

Describe how the partnering organization will commit to being involved in the project, including its roles and responsibilities.

The individuals and our organization agree to work collaboratively with *Name of Applicant Organization* to insure our goals are in alignment with the goals of the proposed project, including efforts to track and report on outcomes. We believe that the proposed project will contribute to *how the proposed project will positively impact the state/community/clients.*

Sincerely,

Signature of AR

Name of AR (Authorized Representative)

AR's Title (e.g., Executive Director)

Address and telephone number if that information is not on the letterhead

APPENDIX D: Sample Work Plan

The sample work plan below will give you some ideas about how to organize the various tasks that need to be completed as part of the application process, assign responsibility for completing each task, and ensure that the tasks are completed in time to allow for submission of the application two or three days prior to the deadline.

Figure 7

Name of Grant:	Drug Court			
Grant Release Date:	January 2, 2020	Grant Due Date:	March 2, 2020	
Proposal Component	Person(s) Responsible	Draft Due Date	Final Due Date	Complete (✓)
Registrations				
Register for DUNS Number				
SAM Registration				
Grants.gov Registration				
eRA Registration				
Project Narrative/Abstract				
Statement of Need				
Implementation Plan				
Evidence Based Practices				
Staff and Organizational Experience				
Data Collection/Performance Assessment				
Abstract				
Budget				
Budget Narrative				
Budget Justification				
SF-424/424A				
Appendices/Required Forms				
Assurances				
Participant Protection				
Letters of Commitment/MOUs				

Name of Grant:	Drug Court			
Data Collection Instruments				
Staff Qualifications				
Job Descriptions				
HHS Checklist				
Consent Forms				
Copy of Letter to SSA				
Charitable Choice Form				
Coalition Involvement Agreements (DFC)				
FINAL REVIEW				
Submit to Grants.gov			February 28, 2020	

APPENDIX E: Presenting Demographic Data

It is not necessary to present demographic data in a table but it is an option. Two samples are presented below.

Some FOAs require applicants to compare the demographic characteristics of the population of focus with the population in the larger geographic area, which may be a county or state. Figure 8 provides an example of how this information might be displayed.

Figure 8

Demographics			
	Population of Focus	County	State
Male	Number/percentage		
Female			
Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender			
White			
African American			
Hispanic/Latino			
Asian			
American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN)			
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander			
Other			
Non-English Speaking			
Unemployed (+16)			
0-18 years			
Over 18			
High School Diploma (+25)			
Bachelor's Degree (+25)			
Below Poverty Level			
Uninsured			
On Medicaid			
Median Household Income			

Figure 9 specifically highlights all of the demographic information that applicants may be required to submit. One of the weaknesses that reviewers often identify is that applicants do not provide information on all of the required elements outlined in Section A of the Project Narrative. Including all of the required components in a table will allow you to clearly document this information for reviewers and you can be confident that all of the elements were addressed.

Figure 9

	County 1	County 2	County 3
Race/Ethnicity			
White	Number/percentage		
African American			
Hispanic/Latino			
Asian			
AI/AN			
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander			
Other			
Federally Recognized Tribe(s)			
Name of Tribe(s)			
Language			
Non-English Speaking			
Sex			
Male			
Female			
Sexual Orientation/ Gender Identity			
LGBT			
Age			
0-18			
18-64			
Over 65			
Socioeconomic Status			
High School Diploma (age 25+)			
Bachelor's Degree (age 25+)			
Below Poverty Level			
Uninsured			
On Medicaid			
Median Household Income			

Points to keep in mind:

- Thoroughly discuss the information in the table, particularly demographic information that is noteworthy and specifically ties into the focus of the FOA. For example, if the table shows that there is a relatively high percentage of the population of focus that reside in non-English speaking families, it would be important to note this and also reference how this factor would be addressed in the section of the Project Narrative focusing on the implementation of the project.
- The data on age will depend on the age group that is the focus of the FOA. For example, if the FOA focuses on the provision of services to children, it would be important to provide a breakdown of age ranges below age 18.
- Additional categories may need to be added depending on the focus of the FOA, such as percentage of homeless individuals or veterans.

- Explain what languages other than English are spoken in the geographic catchment area.
- Make sure the demographic information that is provided is for the population of focus not the general population in the geographic catchment area. For example, if the FOA specifies that the project must provide services to youth and young adults aged 13-24, the demographic data that is provided must be for this age range.
- The demographic data should be relatively current. If current data is not available, it is important to explain why.
- Identify the source of the data.

APPENDIX F: Developing the Plan for Data Collection, Performance Assessment and Quality Improvement

Information is provided in this Appendix about points that you should consider in responding to the section of the Project Narrative addressing data collection, performance assessment and quality improvement.

Data Collection

In describing your plan for data collection, consider addressing the following points:

- The electronic data collection software that will be used;
- How often data will be collected;
- The organizational processes that will be implemented to ensure the accurate and timely collection and input of data;
- The staff that will be responsible for collecting and recording the data;
- The data source/data collection instruments that will be used to collect the data;
- How well the data collection methods will take into consideration the language, norms and values of the population(s) of focus;
- How will the data be kept secure;
- If applicable, how will the data collection procedures ensure that confidentiality is protected and that informed consent is obtained; and
- If applicable, how data will be collected from partners, sub-recipients.

It is not necessary to provide information related to data collection and performance measurement in a table but the following samples may give you some ideas about how to display the information.

In Figure 10, an example is provided about how information about the required performance measures could be displayed.

Figure 10

Performance Measures	Data Source	Data Collection Frequency	Responsible Staff for Data Collection	Method of Data Analysis

In Figure 11, an example is provided about how information could be displayed about the data that will be collected to measure the measurable objectives outlined in B.1of the Project Narrative

Figure 11

Objective	Data Source	Data Collection Frequency	Responsible Staff for Data Collection	Method of Data Analysis
Objective 1.a				
Objective 1.b				
Objective 1.c				
Objective 2.a				
Objective 2.b				

Data Management, Tracking, Analysis, and Reporting

After you have finalized your data collection plan, the next step is to develop the plan for data management, analysis and reporting. Points to be addressed for each element are as follows:

Data management:

- How data will be protected, including information about who will have access to data?
- How will data be stored?

Data tracking:

- The staff member who will be responsible for tracking the performance measures and measurable objectives.

Data analysis:

- Who will be responsible for conducting the data analysis, including the role of the Evaluator?
- What data analysis methods will be used?

Data reporting:

- Who will be responsible for completing the reports?
- How will the data be reported to staff, stakeholders, SAMHSA, Advisory Board, and other relevant project partners?

Performance Assessment

In describing your plan for performance assessment, address the following:

- Information on how frequently performance data will be reviewed;
- How you will use this data to monitor and evaluate activities and processes and to assess the progress that has been made achieving the goals and objectives? and
- Who will be responsible for conducting the performance assessment?

Quality Improvement

It is not sufficient to state that you will use data reports to inform the QI process. Specific information about the following should be provided:

- If applicable, the QI model that will be used.
- How will the QI process be used to track progress?
- The staff members who will be responsible for overseeing these processes.
- How you will implement any needed changes in project implementation and/or project management?
 - What decision-making processes will be used?
 - How often and by whom will decisions be made concerning project improvement?
 - What are the thresholds for determining that changes need to be made?
- Will the Advisory Board have a role in the QI process? and
- How will the changes be communicated to staff and/or partners/sub-recipients?

APPENDIX G: Sample Template for Displaying Personnel Information

It is not necessary to display information about project staff in a table but presenting the information in this format allows you to be confident that all of the required elements to be addressed are included in your response.

Figure 12

Key Personnel and Other Significant Project Staff	Level of Effort	Role	Qualifications
Project Director – Dr. Jane Smith	.75 FTE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project oversight • Manage relationships with project partners • Lead trainer and supervisor • Functions in a leadership role on the Advisory Board • Oversees the Quality Improvement team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ph.D. in Psychology • 20 years of clinical experience, including 15 years of managing programs in children’s mental health • Expertise in working with culturally diverse, at-risk populations, bilingual (Spanish)
Clinical Coordinator (to be hired)	1.0 FTE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee implementation of clinical services • Supervise counselors and case managers • Assist with completing required reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensed Clinician (minimum - Master’s Level) • 15 years of clinical experience working with children and/or families to include experience providing clinical supervision and provision of training on EBPs
Evaluator – Dr. Elaine Miller	.6 FTE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee data analysis/performance assessment • Serves as a member of the Quality Improvement team • Prepares required reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ph.D. in Public Health • Evaluator on 3 SAMHSA grants • Faculty, University Health Research Institute for 15 years with emphasis on Mental Health program evaluation

APPENDIX H: Using eRA ASSIST and Grants.gov Workspace

Information on how to prepare and submit your application using eRA ASSIST can be found at: [eRA ASSIST](#).

The following information outlines how to complete and submit an application through [grants.gov Workspace](#). Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team can simultaneously access and edit different forms within an application. It also allows an organization to reuse and edit forms that have been created for other applications. Another benefit of Workspace is that upfront validation will allow your organization to correct application errors prior to submission and reduce the likelihood that the application will be rejected.

Step 1: Create a Workspace Package

Prior to creating your Workspace package, it is important to understand the roles that staff members in the organization will be assigned in the Grants.gov account. When the organization completes the SAM registration, an E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) is designated. This individual is responsible for the administration and management of grant activities for the organization, which includes authorizing Grants.gov roles. After a staff member in your organization creates a Grants.gov account, the EBiz POC will receive an email notifying them that the staff member has registered. The EBiz POC must log into the EBiz POC section of Grants.gov to assign the appropriate role to the staff member. The three main roles that staff members can be assigned are: Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) role, Manage Workspace role, or a Participant role. See the chart below for information about what the staff member with each role is permitted to do in your organization's Workspace for a specific grant application. To learn about how to assign and manage roles, go to: [Grants.gov help](#).

Role	Level of Access
Workspace Participant	The Workspace Participant has access to at least one workspace. They can perform actions on forms within the specific workspace(s) to which they have been added. They can be members of the applicant organization or registered Grant.gov applicants outside of the organization. Workspace Participants can have more than one role, including the role of Workspace Manager.
Workspace Manager	This role enables a user to create a new workspace. Upon creating a workspace, the user with the Workspace Manager role inherits the Workspace Owner role
Workspace Owner	A Participant with the Workspace Owner access level allows the user to manage other users' access to the workspace. The ownership role can be transferred to from one individual to another.
Standard AOR	Users are authorized to submit an application and can serve as the Workspace Owner
Expanded AOR	An AOR given additional access to perform EBiz POC actions. An AOR with expanded access is able to view and submit the application for any Workspace within the organization
EBiz POC	Administrator with access to SAM who manages users and assigns roles – can assign the AOR and Manage Workspace roles.

Once the Manage Workspace role has been assigned, your organization can create a Workspace package. The staff member with the Manage Workspace role will log in and then search for the grant opportunity for which you want to create a workspace. Click on the Apply Now link under the Grant Applications heading. Enter the Funding Opportunity Number that corresponds to the grant you are applying for. Create a descriptive application name in the Application Filing Name field, such as Family Drug Court Grant Application. The Application Filing Name is required and the maximum length is 240 characters. Click on the Create Workspace button. The staff member who creates the Workspace becomes the Workspace Owner.

Step 2: Complete a Workspace Package

The next step is to add participants to the Workspace. Participants are colleagues and team members who will contribute to the development of the application package and complete forms. This is an optional step but most organizations work with a team to complete the application. Your organization needs to decide how many staff members you want to have access to the Workspace.

Each Workspace has six tabs: Forms, View Application, Attachments, Participants, Activity and Details. The Forms tab contains individual forms that are part of the Workspace application package. In this section, you can edit online forms, lock/unlock forms, download/upload forms,

and reuse forms. The View Application tab lets users preview and download the application's package and/or individual forms along with any accompanying attachments. The Participants tab lists the participants of a Workspace who work as a team to complete the required forms. In this section, you can add or remove participants and reassign ownership of the Workspace. The Activity tab lists the actions that participants have taken within the Workspace. The Details tab lists submission history, including links to download every submitted (or re-submitted) application.

There are three ways to complete the required application forms within a Workspace. You can complete forms online in a web browser, download and complete individual PDF forms, or reuse forms from another Workspace application. A series of videos about how to complete forms in Workspace can be found at: [Grants.gov applicant training](#).

When you use Workspace, forms are validated individually as they are uploaded and checked back into your online Workspace. You will also find a Check Application button that performs an additional set of validations. These validations will help to cut back on the potential for data-entry and last-minute submission errors.

Once all the forms have been completed, click the Complete and Notify AOR button and the AOR will be notified that the application is ready for submission.

Step 3: Submit a Workspace Package

An application is submitted through Workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage My Workspace page, under the Forms tab. The button will be visible and activated for the staff member with the AOR role under the following circumstances:

- The Workspace does not have an alert message highlighting a submission issue;
- The forms selected for submission are in the "Passed" status;
- The Workspace has an active SAM registration; and
- The application due date has not passed.

If you receive an error message during the submission process, see information on resolving problems and errors at: [Grants.gov help](#).

Step 4: Track a Workspace Package

After successfully submitting a Workspace package, a Grants.gov Tracking Number is automatically assigned to the package. The number will be listed on the Confirmation PDF that is generated after submission. You can also find the Grants.gov Tracking Number on the Manage Workspace page, under the Details tab.

To track and check the status of your submitted applications, enter the tracking number and click the Submit Tracking Number(s) button.

APPENDIX I: Resources

Data Resources for the Statement of Need	
American Community Survey	Census Surveys and Programs
American Fact Finder	American Fact Finder
Bureau of Justice Statistics	Bureau of Justice Statistics
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Data and Statistics	CDC Data and Statistics
County Health Rankings	County Health Rankings
Health Data and Profiles for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Public Health Professionals Gateway	CDC Health Data
Healthy People 2010 Data	CDC Healthy People 2010
Health Professional Shortage Areas and Medically Underserved Areas	HRSA-Health Professional Shortage and Medically Underserved Areas
National Center for Education Statistics	National Center for Education Statistics
National Center for Health Statistics	National Center for Health Statistics
National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention (NCHHSTP) Atlas	CDC-NCHHSTP
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism	NIAAA-NIH
National Institute on Drug Abuse	National Institute on Drug Abuse
National Library of Medicine	https://www.nlm.nih.gov/
National Vital Statistics	National Vital Statistics

Data Resources for the Statement of Need	
Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion	<u>Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion</u>
Office of National Drug Control Policy	<u>Office of National Drug Control Policy</u>
SAMHSA Data	<u>SAMHSA Data</u>
State or Territorial Health Departments	<u>State or Territorial Health Departments</u>
State Primary Care Associations	<u>State Primary Care Associations</u>
The Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT	<u>KIDSCOUNT</u>
United States Bureau of Labor Statistics	<u>Bureau of Labor Statistics</u>
United States Census Bureau	<u>Census Bureau</u>