

# FY 2018 Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program Frequently Asked Questions

## Electronic Submission Questions

- 1. How do I apply for a SAMHSA grant electronically?**  
SAMHSA has transitioned to NIH's eRA grants system (eRA Commons). In order to submit an application, you must register in NIH's eRA Commons, in addition to the System for Award Management (SAM) and Grants.gov.
- 2. Who can submit the electronic application?**  
eRA Commons requires organizations to identify at least one signing official (SO), who can be either the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) from the SF-424 or the BO from the HHS Checklist, and at least one Program Director account in order to submit an application.
- 3. Will we need a DUNS number?**  
Yes, you need a DUNS number and an EIN number when applying. The DUNS number **must** be registered and active in the System for Award Management (SAM). You can apply for a DUNS number at <http://www.dnb.com/get-a-duns-number.html> (this is free) and register your DUNS number with SAM at <https://www.sam.gov>.
- 4. How often do we update our SAM registration?**  
You **must** update the SAM registration on a yearly basis. Allow at least 72 hours for completing the SAM registration and another 72 hours for the updated SAM registration to migrate to Grants.gov. Applications without an updated SAM cannot be submitted electronically.

**Note: Applicants must complete four registration processes that are all distinct, one-time registration in order to submit an application:**

1. Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (to obtain a DUNS number),
2. System for Award Management (SAM);
3. Grants.gov; and
4. eRA Commons

## Questions on Statutory Eligibility Requirements

### Requirement #1: 12 Sectors

- 1. What is the purpose of the Coalition Involvement Agreements (CIA)?**  
The application requires 12 CIAs (Attachment 1) to document the 12 individuals identified as sector representatives. The CIAs document that an individual understands what he/she represents, for the purposes of this application.

2. **My coalition has many members. How do I determine which members should be listed as the representative for each of the 12 sectors?**

In completing your CIAs (Attachment 1), it is important that you provide the name of the individual who demonstrates the greatest likelihood of leveraging resources, including other members of his/her sector. Please do not submit more than the required 12 CIAs.

3. **Is there a timeframe prior to submitting an application that the 12 required sectors have to be members of the coalition?**

No, but all 12 sectors are required at the time of application and no CIA can be more than 12 months old.

4. **How is "Youth" defined?**

Youth is an individual 18 years of age or younger. On the CIA, the youth's age **must** be provided and where he/she attends school.

5. **What signatures are needed on the CIA?**

Two signatures are required on each CIA. One **must** be that of the individual for each of the 12 required sectors and the other **must** be the individual who signs the documents on behalf of the applicant coalition grant recipient or the non-coalition grant recipient. A staff person who is/will be paid by the DFC grant (should it be awarded) *may not* be listed as a sector representative, but may be the coalition representative. A youth sector representative may sign for her/himself; however, we will also accept the signature of their parent or guardian, if clearly identified in the CIA.

**Requirement #2: Six Months Existence**

1. **We have not been listing our attendees at each meeting by sector. What do we do?**

Attachment 2 requires that meeting minutes include those in attendance and the sector that each attendee represents. Please amend the minutes to include the sector each attendee represents. If you need to, do so by hand.

2. **Can a person represent more than one sector?**

The Coalition is required to have 12 distinct sector representatives. Coalition staff cannot represent a sector. All Coalition members **must** be community volunteers and non-salaried. Please refer to the FOA for more information.

**Requirement #6: Entity Eligible to Receive Federal Grants**

1. **Who can be a grant award recipient/legal applicant for a DFC application?**

Grant award recipient/legal applicants may be domestic, public or private non-profit entities, such as state, local, or tribal governments; public or private universities and colleges; professional associations; voluntary organizations, self-help groups; consumer and provider services-oriented constituency groups; community- and faith-based organizations; and tribal organizations.

2. **Our coalition is in the process of applying for tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), but we do not anticipate having that completed until after the DFC application is due. However, it will be in place by the start of the grant period. How should we proceed?**

A private, non-profit organization **must** include evidence of its non-profit status at the time of application. Therefore, not having your 501(c) (3) at the time of application makes you ineligible to apply for the DFC grant on your own.

#### **Requirement #7: Substantial Support from Non-Federal Sources**

1. **Can pro-rated savings for office space, utilities, etc., be used toward the match requirement?**  
Yes.
2. **Can staff salaries be considered part of in-kind match, and how is this documented?**  
Yes, as long as the costs are consistent with those paid for similar work in the organization or the current market rate. Provide documentation for costs according to the sample budget in the FOA.
3. **If the budget includes a match/in-kind cost and something happens where we cannot get the item or service donated, can it be purchased and the budget amended?**  
No, the applicant **must** find another source of non-federal match funds.

#### **Requirement #9: Zip Code Overlap**

1. **How can I find out which zip codes/communities DFC-funded coalitions serve?**  
A list of DFC grant recipients is available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/grants-programs/>. You will need to contact the listed coalitions in your area to determine all of the zip codes they serve.
2. **How does a coalition demonstrate cooperation with another coalition that exists in the same community?**  
A Letter of Mutual Cooperation between the two coalitions is required in the applying coalition's application. The letter **must** outline the coalition's efforts to collaborate and include two signatures: one from the applicant coalition and one from the currently funded/applying coalition.
3. **As a new coalition seeking a grant, what is our chance to receive a grant if there is already a DFC grant award recipient in our city?**  
DFC grants are not awarded based on how many are in a state, county, city, town or any other geographic boundary. The DFC peer review process utilizes experienced substance misuse prevention specialists to serve as peer reviewers. Each application is assigned to a panel of three peer reviewers for scoring, and the composite of the three scores becomes the application's final score. Upon full completion of the statutory eligibility review process and review of final scores, ONDCP begins funding with the highest scoring grant

until all funds are exhausted. Please review the Application Scoring Criteria provided in Appendix R.

### **Questions Related To Evaluation**

1. **The grant requirements state that we must address multiple drugs, but we only have to supply data on alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and prescription drugs. What if my coalition is addressing methamphetamine?**

The DFC National Cross-site Evaluation currently requires that all grant award recipients collect specific data on four substances (alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and prescription drugs) in three grade levels (6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade) every two years. If you choose to focus your efforts on methamphetamine, you will still need to comply with the collection of the measures for the DFC National Cross-site Evaluation.

2. **Is there a particular survey you would like us to use to measure the four core measures?**

No. DFC does not require that you use a specific survey. However, if funded, surveys used to measure the DFC four core measures must be approved by the DFC National Evaluation Team. You can email it to [dfc\\_evaluators@icfi.com](mailto:dfc_evaluators@icfi.com).

### **Questions Related To Budget**

1. **Can I include training in my travel line item?**

Yes. All items included in the Budget Narrative must be justified. A sample budget and justification is included in Appendix F.

2. **Does the grant cover organizational development for a newly formed coalition (i.e., training, technical assistance, leadership development, etc.)?**

Yes. All items included in the Budget Narrative must be justified. A sample budget and justification is included in Appendix F.

3. **Can the budget pay stipends for coalition members?**

Incentives may be paid to coalition members up to \$20 per person per budget year.

4. **Can the cost of food be counted as matching funds?**

As outlined in the FOA, food and/or meals are generally unallowable. However, exceptions within the DFC program, may allow food to be used as a small incentive (not to exceed \$3.00 per person) to encourage participation in a community-wide event. Therefore, cost of food not to exceed \$3.00 per person is allowable as match. *Food and/or meals are not allowable for general coalition or subcommittee meetings.*

5. **Does the DFC announcement stipulate a budget amount or percentage related to evaluation services?**

Yes, no more than 10 percent of the total grant award may be used for data collection and

evaluation purposes. All of the proposed costs listed within the DFC Budget Narrative, whether supported by federal or matching funds, **must** be reasonable and necessary to accomplish project objectives, allowable in accordance with applicable federal Cost Principles, auditable, and incurred during the project period.

**6. Is there an administrative cap on how much of the budget can be used for salaries for paid staff?**

No, but it **must** be reasonable for the specific function/activity related to the approved project and within the locale in which the coalition operates.

**7. Can a coalition member with special expertise be contracted for services (i.e., epidemiologist or evaluator)?**

Yes. Unless the situation gives rise to at least the appearance of a conflict of interest and violates the administrative requirements regarding competition, as cited in 2 CFR 200.112/45 CFR 75.112 (Uniform Administrative Requirements).

**8. If we get a negotiated indirect rate, can that be put under match?**

No, unless the organization has another source of funding to pay for those costs other than federal funds.

**9. If some of our coalition members are paid by their employers with federal grants (e.g., SPF-SIG, school teacher, etc.), can we still count their contribution with the coalition as in-kind match?**

No, nor can you count any federal dollars that pass through another entity (such as the State Government) as match.

**10. Does the indirect cost proposal need to be approved before the grant submission date, and can you explain the provisional rate?**

An indirect cost rate does not have to be approved before the submission date, but if you plan to negotiate with a federal cognizant agency, as it is explained in the grant announcement, then SAMHSA may provide your organization with a provisional indirect cost rate of up to 10 percent the modified total direct costs (MTDC). Your organization **must** submit an indirect cost proposal within 90 days from the start date of the project in order to use the provisional indirect costs.

**11. Do you allow institutions to take indirect costs? If so, what is the percentage?**

SAMHSA allows the grant award recipient/legal applicant organization the use of indirect costs if you have a current indirect cost rate agreement negotiated with a federal cognizant agency. Indirect costs may be charged as direct costs if the applicant does not have a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement.

**12. Can we apply for less than \$125,000? Are there advantages to doing so? Why would I apply for less than \$125,000?**

Yes, applicants may ask for less than the allowed \$125,000/year, but the amount written into the application budget is the maximum that can be requested in future funding years. There is absolutely *no* advantage to asking for less than the \$125,000. You are encouraged to ask for the full allowable amount, as long as you can provide the match. Regardless, all

funds should be spent efficiently and effectively in the implementation of the DFC grant.

**13. Can law enforcement overtime be used as match when he/she performs DUI/Safety Checkpoints, Alcohol Compliance Checks, and other enforcement activities?**

Yes.

**14. How do you calculate the value of volunteer time to be used as match?**

There are many volunteer time calculators available online. Cite which calculator you used in your application and remember that it **must** be reasonable for your coalition's location. Conduct market research as appropriate.

**15. We plan to use volunteer hours as part of our match, but are not sure how to figure out the dollar value of their hours.**

In regard to volunteer rates, there are various calculators on the web that provide volunteer rates for volunteer contributions. For example, the Independent Sector provides the value of volunteers per state at [https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer\\_time](https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time). You may find other calculators that are more specific to your state, county or community. SAMHSA does not endorse any specific calculator.

**16. What organizations are eligible to apply for DFC funding?**

The purpose of the DFC funding is to support community-based coalitions dedicated to advancing and implementing community-wide prevention efforts. A coalition may be a legal entity with 501(c) (3) status or partner with a legal entity to apply on their behalf.

The purpose of the DFC is to establish and strengthen collaboration to support the efforts of community coalitions working to prevent youth substance use. Grants awarded through the DFC are intended to support established community-based youth substance use prevention coalitions capable of effecting community-level change. A coalition is defined as a community-based formal arrangement for cooperation and collaboration among groups or sectors of a community in which each group retains its identity, but all agree to work together toward a common goal of building a safe, healthy, and drug-free community. Organizations interested in applying should carefully review all of the DFC Statutory Eligibility Requirements identified in Table 1 of the FOA.

**17. Do we need to have 501(c) (3) status?**

Your coalition **must** be incorporated and have 501(c)(3) IRS status in order to apply for DFC funding; or, your coalition may partner with an agency that does and is willing to be the recipient of the DFC funds.

**18. Where can I find the allowable travel per diem rates applicable to our community?**

Government per diem rates are established by the Government Services Accountability Office and can be found on their website <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>.

## **Questions Related To Eligibility**

**1. Our coalition received 10 years of DFC funding and since that time we have seen a**

**shift in the type of substance misuse most prevalent in our community and need to address these concerns in different ways. Does the 10 year funding limit still apply?**

Yes, the 10 year funding limit still applies. A coalition may not receive more than 10 years of DFC funding. Coalitions that have received 10 years of funding are not eligible to apply for this grant.

Or

A coalition may not receive more than 10 years of DFC funding whether the coalition was legally eligible to receive the federal funds or the coalition partnered with an agency. A partnering agency, however, that has agreed to be the legal applicant on behalf of a different coalition that has not received a DFC grant may be eligible to apply on behalf of that new coalition.

**Note:** Applications will be thoroughly reviewed to ensure compliance with the 10-Year Funding Limit. It is important that all applicants understand that providing false or misleading information is unlawful and subject to criminal penalties, as per 18 USC1001.

**2. What activities are unallowable under the DFC Support Program?**

The DFC program does **not** fund the following (not a fully exhaustive list):

- After-school programs
- Youth mentoring programs
- Sports programs
- Treatment services/programs/facilities
- Drug Courts
- Construction
- Park lighting
- Landscaping/neighborhood revitalization projects

**Questions Related To the 12-Month Action Plan and Core Measures Data**

**1. Are we expected to address all four substances (alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and prescription drugs) in our work plan? Do we need to have strategies for each of the core measures?**

The 12-Month Action Plan should be comprehensive and include measurable objectives, strategies, and activities addressing at least two of the substances most commonly used/abused by youth in the communities served. Irrespective of the substances addressed in the applicant's work plan, the DFC National Evaluation requires that each funded DFC **recipient** collect and report core measures data on alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and prescription drug use.

**2. Does the ONDCP require that a DFC applicant use a specific survey to collect the four core measures?**

No, DFC applicants are not required to use a specific survey. However, once funded every DFC coalition will be required to seek prior approval of their coalition's survey by the DFC Evaluation Team.

3. **Are we required to hire an evaluator?**  
No, you do not have to hire an evaluator.

### **Questions Related To Format**

1. **May we use “greyscale,” shading to help make the table more readable?**  
Yes, you may.
2. **Is it permissible to use bullet points in the narrative?**  
You may use bullets in the narrative section, but keep in mind that you will need to fully answer each question as comprehensively as possible to obtain the highest rating and there is a 15-page narrative limitation.

### **General Questions**

1. **Are “Letters of Support” (from community organizations, congressional members, state legislators, etc.) a factor in the review/funding process for DFC?**  
No. Letters of Support are not required or requested to apply for DFC funding. They are not scored and do not positively or negatively affect the score of a DFC application. They are not used in any way to determine funding in the DFC Program.
2. **What parts of the application do the Peer Reviewers receive for review?**  
Peer Reviewers receive the entire application. They are instructed to score only the 15 page narrative. They may use the Attachments as tools to help them understand the applicant coalition, but do not score the application based on those documents. Do not send coalition brochures, CDs or other printed materials as these are not sent to Peer Reviewers and does not affect the overall score of an application.
3. **If you have been a DFC "mentee" coalition, but never received DFC funding, are you still considered a new applicant?**  
Yes.
4. **If you applied last year and did not receive the grant, is this a blemish?**  
No, this will not affect the review.
5. **Regarding the number of new grant awards and the funding available, do the Year six applicants have any inherent advantage to receive funding over Year one applicants?**  
No. By law, Year one and Year six applicants **must** be treated equally in the funding process.
6. **If our application is not funded, can we get specific feedback in order to improve the following year?**  
Yes. You will receive comments including identified strengths and weaknesses from the Peer Reviewers through the SAMHSA Office of Grant Review.

7. **Which title goes on page 2 of the SF-424?**

Drug-Free Communities Support Program

8. **Can we contract with another agency to handle payroll and financial administration?**

Yes, as long as the agency/organization is not a federal agency. However, DFC grant award recipients **are** expected to conduct the day-to-day operations of the grant program. DFC grantees are not permitted to serve as a conduit for DFC funds passing through them or to another agency. Therefore, the grant award recipients may not contract a substantive portion of the day-to-day operations to another agency and/or coalition.

## **Eligibility & Compliance**

1. **Does the recipient of the grant have to be a 501(c)(3) organization?**

Yes, eligibility requirements outlined in the DFC Regular FOA states that DFC grant recipients **must** be legally recognized domestic public or private nonprofit entities, which requires IRS approved 501(c)(3) status.

2. **If the coalition uses a fiscal currently, but also has its own 501(c)(3), can it seek to be its own fiscal in future years?**

Yes

3. **Our coalition is not a 501(c)(3) now, but we plan to become one. When we become one, if we wanted to become our own fiscal agent would we have to go through that same process that you described including relinquishing the grant, etc.?**

If a coalition obtains a 501(c)(3) designation and desires to become a DFC legal applicant, a request for transfer of the grant would be required.

4. **Are grant funds only available as an expense reimbursement or also available as an advance? What is the difference between reimbursement and free access?**

Restricted Status (formerly High Risk) recipients have their Payment Management System (PMS) account restricted. This subjects the grant award to a Reimbursement only status, requiring the grantee to submit SF-270 requests for Advance or Reimbursement before accessing the approved grant funds. All other grantees not designated as having Restricted Status can draw down funds from the Payment Management System without prior approval, in accordance with PMS requirements.

## **Allowable Costs & Activities**

**1. What are alterations and renovations?**

Work that changes the interior arrangements or other physical characteristics of an existing facility or installed equipment so that it can be used more effectively for its currently designated purpose or adapted to an alternative use to meet a programmatic requirement

**2. Can the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) membership fee be paid with federal funds?**

Yes, CADCA membership fees can be paid with DFC grant funds.

**3. How do you find federal grant rates (ex. travel, food, etc.?)**

This information can be obtained by visiting the Government Services Administration (GSA) website at [www.GSA.gov](http://www.GSA.gov).

**5. Can local/state membership fees be paid with federal funds (i.e. a Substance Abuse professional org)? And/or can the test fee for the certified Prevention Specialist exam (through IC&RC) allowable with these funds?**

In general, membership fees/dues are allowable as an indirect cost for organizational membership in business, professional, or technical organizations or societies. Payment of dues or membership fees for an individual's membership in a professional or technical organization is also allowable as a fringe benefit or an employee development cost, if paid according to an established organizational policy consistently applied regardless of the source of funds. (GPS: II-33)

## **Cost-Sharing/Matching**

**1. Are Year one grant recipients required to provide 100 percent match, and are they required to match exactly as it was budgeted in the original approved application (i.e. within the exact categories we specified)?**

As stated on the FOA and terms and conditions of the Notice of Award, all Year one grantees are required to match 100 percent for every federal dollar spent. Match can be reported in all categories, it does not need to be in the exact way it was originally submitted.

**2. Before we can draw down funds, are we required to have matching funds?**

Grant recipients are required to have match counted or agreed to be donated before drawing down funds.

**3. If match of food and meals are donated can that be counted since food acquisition is not allowed?**

As outlined in the FOA, food and/or meal are generally unallowable. However, exceptions within the DFC program, may allow food to be used as a small incentive (not to exceed \$3.00 per person) to encourage participation in a community-wide event. Therefore, cost of food not to exceed \$3.00 per person is allowable as match. *Food and/or meals are not allowable for general coalition or subcommittee meetings.*

**4. Is there a list or resource for value of rental rates and volunteer time?**

SAMHSA does not have a reference list. We recommend grantees conduct the necessary research to compare pricing/rental rates within their respective areas. Every state, county or municipality has an average volunteer rate. Please refer to your applicable State sites for volunteer rates.

**5. What are reasonable volunteer match rates per hour?**

This will depend on the state, county or municipality.

**6. Can we include additional match not listed in the original grant, i.e. food sponsors, incentives and additional volunteers?**

Additional match can be logged and reported. As long as the cost is allowable, reasonable, and allocable towards the DFC program.

**7. How to document matching funds – Volunteer hours, office space, meeting space?**

Grantees are required to adhere to the 17 management control areas outlined by SAMHSA (<https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grants-management/policies-regulations/financial-management-requirements>), which requires grantees to have accounting and personnel policies and procedures (P&P) applicable to Matching or Cost-Sharing. Grantees must follow their internal P&Ps to ensure compliance with the mandatory requirement of maintaining match information for auditing purposes.

**8. Match? Volunteer rates should be valued at normal cost. So should a lawyer be valued higher than a line cook for participation in the coalition?**

If a lawyer is providing their services towards the grant and donating his or her time, the rate should be counted towards the full amount. However, if the lawyer is simply participating with the coalition on any particular activity, the rate should be the same from the other volunteers.