

FAQ for FY 2023 Project AWARE: Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education SM-23-001

Pre-Application Webinar Q & A

1. How many LEAs must be partnered with?

At least one LEA

2. Is for-profit small business allowed to apply?

For-profit entities are not eligible to apply. Eligible applicants include:

States and Territories including the District of Columbia

Political subdivisions of States (e.g., county, LEA)

Indian tribes or tribal organizations (as defined in section 5304 of title 25)

Health Facilities

Programs operated by or in accordance with a contract or grant with the Indian Health Service

Other domestic public or private nonprofit entities

3. If the applicant is a community-based public or private non-profit provider and not a SEA, LEA, or TEA, and our SEA has implemented a Suicide Prevention Policy, can we include Attachment 9: Student Suicide Prevention and Awareness Training Policy without penalty?

There is no penalty, Attachment 9 is not a required activity, it is an allowable activity.

4. Can we label Section V. in the second bullet, A-1, A-2 etc., or are we to include the full heading for each section such as SECTION A: Population of Focus and Statement of Need, SECTION B: Proposed Implementation Approach?

See Appendix B of the NOFO

5. Do Behavioral health providers meet the requirements for applying for this NOFO?

*Eligible applicants are States and Territories, including the District of Columbia; political subdivisions of States (e.g., county, LEA); Indian tribes, or tribal organizations (as such terms are defined in section 5304 of title 25); health facilities, or programs operated by or in accordance with a contract or award with the Indian Health Service; or **other public or private non-profit entities**. See Section III-1 for complete eligibility information.]*

6. Can the local community based behavioral health agency be one offering telehealth from a different city/county/state?

The local community based behavioral health agency - needs to be a LOCAL community based behavioral health agency, if you want to have an additional provider that is teletherapy ready as a service provider, you can propose that in your application.

7. **In the Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3 examples, do we only need to select one activity under each tier, or all listed under each tier?**

*No later than six months after award, develop an **implementation plan** that is based on a **three-tiered public health model**: (Tier 1) universal prevention and mental health promotion; (Tier 2) secondary prevention and brief intervention services; and (Tier 3) tertiary intervention and behavioral health treatment. The implementation plan shall include the following with **each item** infused with an equity perspective. Please see pages 11-12 of the NOFO.*

8. **Many states already have Project AWARE grants. If a state already has a Project AWARE, can the staff written into those grants for the SEA and SMHA reallocate some of their time to a new Project AWARE grant applied for by an LEA? The SEA/SMHA in our state are concerned about trying to identify an additional .25FTE and think they could contribute under their current staff allocations.**

Each AWARE grantee will need to have a separate .25FTE. It can be the same person on both grant projects, but it can't be one person splitting .25 between the two projects.

9. **Can you give examples of the responsibilities and duties of the SEA Coordinator and the SMHA Coordinator?**

Please see the Key Personnel section in the NOFO

10. **Are state, public universities eligible?**

*Depends on the designation of your state, public university - Eligible applicants include:
States and Territories including the District of Columbia
Political subdivisions of States (e.g., county, LEA)
Indian tribes or tribal organizations (as defined in section 5304 of title 25)
Health Facilities
Programs operated by or in accordance with a contract or grant with the Indian Health Service
Other domestic public or private nonprofit entities*

11. **Is there a required annual revenue for the applicant organization?**

Please email foacmhs@samhsa.hhs.gov

12. **Can a 501C3 or University apply for this opportunity?**

*Eligible applicants include:
States and Territories including the District of Columbia
Political subdivisions of States (e.g., county, LEA)
Indian tribes or tribal organizations (as defined in section 5304 of title 25)
Health Facilities
Programs operated by or in accordance with a contract or grant with the Indian Health Service
Other domestic public or private nonprofit entities*

13. **Do we need a partnership with each one or only one of the SEA, LEA, TEA, SMHA?**

Please see Key Personnel section of the NOFO

14. Is tribal agency required? Or just SEA LEA SMHA and community-based partner?

See pages 8-11 of the NOFO

15. Can we use current Project AWARE funding to pay a grant writer to apply for the new funding as part of sustainability?

Project AWARE grant funds can not be used to pay for a grant writer.

16. Does 'school aged youth' include college students?

Please refer to the required activities and allowable activities; it depends on your proposed project and target population to be served.

17. As an LEA, will we pay 25% of an FTE to a SEA and a SMHA employee to serve as a coordinator?

The cost for the .25 SEA and SMHA Coordinator is an allowable expense to be included in your budget.

18. Does the aware program have to be k-12?

The NOFO does not stipulate K-12 only. The purpose of this program is to develop a sustainable infrastructure for school-based mental health programs and services. Recipients are expected to build collaborative partnerships with the State Education Agency (SEA), Local Education Agency (LEA), Tribal Education Agency (TEA), the State Mental Health Agency (SMHA), community-based providers of behavioral health care services, school personnel, community organizations, families, and school-aged youth. Award recipients will leverage their partnerships to implement mental health related promotion, awareness, prevention, intervention, and resilience activities to ensure that school-aged youth have access and are connected to appropriate and effective behavioral health services. SAMHSA expects that this program will promote the healthy social and emotional development of school-aged youth and prevent youth violence in school settings.

19. In Puerto Rico, there is only 1 LEA, would they need .25 coordinator for LEA? There is No SEA.

If there is no SEA then you would not be able to have an SEA coordinator, you will need to have the remaining key personnel, as available in your locality.

20. What is the age parameter for the program, as a tribal department do, we only address grades 6-12 evidence-based training? What are the youth age restrictions for the overall grant.

The NOFO does not stipulate a grade range. It does not specify age restrictions.

21. If we are awarded, can we use new funding to pay grant writer if the grant writer is the evaluator for the new grant.

Grant funds cannot be used to pay for a grant writer.

- 22. Since our state has a SPOC, are we required to submit anything for Attachment 6: Letter to the Single State Agency (SSA)? If so, what documentation do we submit as evidence of intergovernmental review? Our understanding of the NOFO requirements is that we only submit a Public Health System Impact Statement (PHIS) to the SSA if our state does not have a SPOC.**

Please see Appendix J

- 23. Are there specific things required in the letter of Commitment? (Ex. Written Signature, specific content)**

Please see LOC in NOFO, it will tell you what is needed in the LOC, for example, what specifically they are committing to provide to the project. specific role/responsibilities, individuals who are providing those services/supports.

- 24. LOCs are only needed for identified organizations on page 10, no other LOCs are needed?**

Please see page 10 of the NOFO

- 25. Can you expound upon what should be included in attachment 9?**

In alignment with the STANDUP Act of 2021(P.L. 117-100), which amends the PHS Act to include Section 520B (42 USC 290bb-32), SAMHSA will prioritize funding by giving five additional points to SEAs, LEAs, and TEAs (submitted directly or through a State or Indian Tribe) who have implemented or plan to implement a student suicide awareness and prevention training policy in secondary schools. The student suicide awareness and prevention training policy may include, as applicable, youth suicide early intervention and prevention strategies found in Section 520-E of the PHS Act, as amended. Applicants must submit the requested information in Attachment 9 to receive the five additional points. See Section 1.4 Allowable Activities for more information.

- 26. If we need to hire staff for the key personnel, we will not have their biographical sketches. Do you need both a biographical sketch and a CV for each required position?**

If a staff position is TBD, then the bio would not be included at time of application. You will only need to submit the position description. Prior to hiring, Key Personnel need SAMHSA approval which includes submission of position/job description and CV/Resume.

- 27. Does eligibility include a university-based community counseling clinic (not for university students) but is not a non-profit. Can a university foundation (501c3) apply?**

Public or private non-profit entities are eligible to apply

- 28. Can we have two project directors? .50 and .50?**

The requirement for the key personnel, Project Director is 1.0 FTE. The NOFO does not stipulate that the position must be one person.

29. Beyond organizations that are required can an applicant partner with additional organizations? For instance, we have Regional Offices of Education, and we would like to include them in the grant.

Yes, additional partnerships can be included. Please review the required activities for collaborative partnerships

30. If there are additional partners that we would be working with that, for example, can we partner with a training and technical assistance provider to provide training to teachers and staff?

Yes, per required and allowable activities listed in the NOFO

31. Are we required to partner with ALL listed partners or just a few. For example, can a nonprofit applicant still apply if we have LOCs/partnerships with an SEA and LEA but not with a TEA?

A TEA only applies to Indian tribes, or tribal organizations (as such terms are defined in section 5304 of title 25)

32. Can these funds be used for Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) positions (social work) that are ending in 2024?

Grant funds can only be used for AWARE activities. Grant funds are not to be used for supplanting. See Section C of NOFO, Staff and Organizational Experience.

33. Would Sonoma County Office of Education be considered an LEA?

Please review the NOFO for definitions of LEA and SEA. A county office of education (depending on their state designation) can be an LEA or a political subdivision of a state.

34. Do all organization types, including TEAs, need to partner with an LEA?

If the applicant is a tribal organization or consortia of tribes, the tribal organization/consortia must partner with the Education Agency/Authority overseeing American Indian/Alaska Native school-aged youth, and at least one community-based private or public non-profit provider of behavioral health services that is located in the geographic catchment area.

35. Regarding page 10 involving leadership FTE that is needed. I am with community mental health. We have 5 school districts in our county. We were assuming we would need 1 FTE as the manager for this project, but this appears to imply that I need 5 full time managers, one for each district. Does the LEA project manager need to be employed by the LEA?

Please see Key Personnel, each LEA requires 1.0 FTE Project Manager

36. For community-based provider applicant, re: the 1.0 FTE Project Manager for each LEA, can that be staffed by the applicant, or do you mean the actual employee of the specific LEA assigned as Project manager to the project? Or is either allowed?

Please see Key Personnel, the NOFO stipulates A 1.0 FTE Project Manager for each of the LEA(s)

37. Does the non-profit organization need to be a behavioral health provider in order to apply?

Please eligibility and Key Personnel sections of the NOFO. A non-profit community behavioral health service provider and a non-profit community-based service provider are both eligible to apply.

38. Are public charter schools able to apply? In NC, each charter school is their own LEA.

Please see eligibility section of the NOFO. Be prepared to submit the state designation as an LEA for the charter school.

39. Is an external evaluator required?

No, please review the NOFO regarding the KEY Personnel

40. Is a school district an LEA?

Yes

41. What types of agencies could be identified as an SMHA?

Please see Appendix J

42. What is the difference between the implementation plan description in B2, vs. the implementation plan due by 6months after funding?

There isn't a difference, after award you will be expected to submit a complete/detailed implementation plan.

43. What roles/requirements should be a part of the liaison roles to the SMHA and the SEA? Are there guidelines for what they are required to do?

Please see Section C: Staff and Organizational Experience

44. Can the project managers be employed by the funded agency (if non-profit)? Or do they need to be employed by the LEA/SEA?

Please see Key Personnel, the fact that the applicant is a non-profit is irrelevant.

45. Can a Tribal Organization/Association that is a 501c3 eligible to apply?

Yes, see eligibility section of NOFO

46. If you are an LEA, do you have to submit the PHSIS, or SEA stated we did not, but I would like to clarify.

Please see Appendix J

47. Can the local community based behavioral health agency be one offering telehealth from a different city/county/state?

You are required to partner with a Local community-based provider. There is nothing that excludes you from also partnering with a telehealth provider.

48. Can you give us an idea of how many non-profit community-based organizations have received these funds previously. Just a ballpark percentage.

Please refer to www.samhsa.gov/grants and search grant archives for a list of past awards

49. How many awards are you giving?

An estimated 21 awards will be made

50. Is this a Single State submission that only one applicant per state will be accepted for review

Please see Appendix J, SAMHSA does not have a single state submission stipulation for this NOFO.

51. To apply for this grant, one must have partnership with an SEA, LEA, TEA and SMHA? or just one of them will do?

Please see Required Activities, The type of applicant determines the required partners.

52. Am I correct that if you are NOT a SEA, LEA, or TEA then you cannot earn the 5 extra points for the Suicide Prevention program? For example, we are a university

Correct, see Attachment 9

53. Just to clarify if the SMHA was asked to sign a letter of commitment to be a partner but are not going after this funding what activities are they required to perform under this grant?

They will need to provide a .25 Coordinator and be able to list their commitment to the project. Please see Letter of Commitment (LOC) in the NOFO.

54. In California the Dept of Healthcare Services is the SMHA. In California we have a Department of Health Care Agency, we don't have a SMHA - please provide guidance.

Please follow your state's designation for the agency/authority that serves the function of the SMHA.

55. If we are a nonprofit agency that is the lead agency, but we have partners with LEA's who are willing to do the additional work for Attachment 9, are we able to get the 5 bonus points?

No, the applicant has to be the SEA, LEA, or TEA.

56. We have both a County and a State SMHA. Is there a preference?

The State MHA is required to provide a .25 Coordinator. The County MHA can be the local behavioral health provider.

57. Does the time commitment need to be specified in the LOC? (Ex. .25, .5, etc.)

It should be a commitment for the full 5 years of the project. Please see Section 3, Required Activities

58. If a behavioral health organization is the lead applicant, what are the roles of the SEA and the SMHA in the collaboration (for .25 FTE).

Please see key personnel section of the NOFO

- 59. Can the grantee provide the position of SEA Coordinator and SMHA Coordinator if the SEA/SMHA can't provide one? (i.e., LEA hire a person to be the coordinator between LEA and SEA and SMHA)**

The SEA and SMHA are required to be partners, and each provide .25 Coordinators. The LEA is required to have a 1.0 FTE Project Manager.

- 60. For the SSA letter, the NOFO references local health agencies but then only provides directions for the state agency. Do we need to send the SSA letter to local health departments too?**

Please see Appendix J

- 61. If the SEA currently is operating a Project AWARE grant with a 1.0 program director can this position also be used to staff another cycle and divide time between the two cycles of AWARE funding?**

Each grantee/applicant is required to have a 1.0 FTE Project Director. See Key Personnel

- 62. Do we need a partnership with each one or only one of the SEA, LEA, TEA, SMHA?**

See page 10 of the NOFO

- 63. Will there be additional rounds of funding in future years for the 5-year length of project period? Or is the 1,800,000 estimated award amount multi-year funding?**

According to the NOFO, "Up to \$1,800,000 per year per award" up to 5-years. Additional rounds of funding are dependent on an approved federal budget and congressional appropriations.

- 64. In the application, will we need to designate the duties and desired qualifications of the additional positions that are required for the other agencies (i.e., the .25 FTE for SEA Coordinator and .25 FTE for State Mental Health Coordinator)?**

The SEA and SMHA will include role/responsibilities in the Letter of Commitment.

- 65. This is what the NOFO said "If the applicant is a community-based public or private non-profit provider of behavioral health services, the provider must partner with at least one LEA, the SEA, and the SMHA." it is still vague.**

As a community-based public or private non-profit provider of behavioral health services you are required to partner with at least one LEA, the SEA, and the SMHA.

- 66. Can a LEA charge the grant writer fees forward to the new grant cycle in the new budget?**

No, grant writing is not an allowable expense

- 67. Is 4th and 5th Grade fine?**

The NOFO does not prescribe/specify grade levels.

- 68. Does a non-profit organization as a lead, need an SEA, LEA, and a SMHA?**

Yes, see key personnel in the NOFO

69. If we are a behavioral health provider, can we work with our LEA partner to develop a suicide prevention and awareness education policy?

Yes, see attachment 9

70. If you are serving only grades pre-k through 1st grade, must a suicide awareness prevention program be included?

Suicide awareness prevention program is an allowable activity; it is not a required activity.

71. Can these funds be used for ESSER positions (social work) that are ending in 2024?

Grants funds cannot be used to supplant existing positions. AWARE funds can only be used to fund positions to carry out AWARE activities.

72. What are allowable resiliency activities? Do these need to be an evidence-based practice?

Evidenced Based and Evidenced-Informed activities are allowed. SAMHSA does not prescribe the resilience activities you propose as appropriate for your project.

73. Is there a funding minimum and maximum?

Up to \$1,800,000 per year up to 5 years per award

74. For section B, would you prefer the format to be in the table form with goals, smart objectives and how it is related to standard A.2. Section A.3 also refers to needs in terms of service gaps so how do you want us to refer to that in the grant, can we refer to the need in both sections or does it need to be only in A.2.?

Please refer to Appendix B for formatting instructions

75. Do you need the 5-year budget or just year 1?

Please refer to Section IV. Application and Submission Information

76. Will there be additional funding opportunities beyond the 5 years of funding? If the school district is willing to do part of the sustainability plan, can the recipient non-profit apply for the additional funding?

Additional funding is dependent on an approved federal budget and congressional appropriations. It would be a new funding opportunity so the eligibility criteria will need to be followed.

77. When submitting a non-standardized data collection instrument, what would be the best guidance to look to?

See page 22, Attachment 2: Data Collection Instruments/Interview Protocols and Page 28, Section D

78. When will funding begin for awardees? October or before?

Anticipated start date is September 30, 2023

79. Is an external evaluator required?

A: No, please review Key Personnel in the NOFO

80. Is an evaluator will need to be hired? 1.0 FTE?

An evaluator is not a required key personnel

81. School districts are referring students to mental health, off campus. Does this require us to work only with schools/districts that have existing school based mental health services?

No, please see required and allowable activities.

82. Do you prefer a logic model?

Please refer to formatting guidance and evaluation criteria in the NOFO

83. Please clarify the SMHA ... can it be any state mental health agency

It should be the/a state's designated state mental health authority

84. eRA commons can take 6 weeks, but the grant due date is sooner than that, should we still try if we are interested?

It can take up to 6-weeks.

85. What if some of these people/staff/positions are currently not our staff, so how do we submit biographical sketches

Please submit the position descriptions for these roles.

86. Our State Education Agency would prefer for our Dept of Mental Health to be lead. The Dept of MH is part of the State Administration. We do not have county-level government. Can the Dept of Mental Health be lead?

Please refer to the eligibility criteria in the NOFO. The Department of Mental Health needs to be designated by the state to be a political subdivision of the state.

87. Can these funds be used to hire onsite mental health clinicians in a school district in addition to working with other clinicians from the local mental health agency clinicians?

Please review required and allowable activities

88. Is there any update on Grant.Gov having issues logging in?

Please contact the Grants.gov Applicant Support Center at support@grants.gov to create a support ticket with any issues. Please check grants.gov for alerts.

89. What scope is appropriate? Is it ok to work with only one school district?

You must have at least one school district (LEA) as a required partner.

90. If I am a university applying, and I am working with an LEA that has a suicide prevention program does that qualify us for the 5 extra points?

The applicant must be a SEA, LEA, or TEA to be eligible for the 5 points.

91. Does the LOC from School district have to be from the Superintendent? a school board member? Community partnership director? Who all are acceptable?

The Authorized Representative for the school district/LEA must sign the LOC

92. If there are additional partners that we would be working with that, for example, can we partner with a training and technical assistance provider to provider training to teachers and staff?

Please refer to required and allowable activities. The NOFO does not stipulate partners beyond the required partners.

93. Can an LMHA (local) suffice for the SMHA requirement?

No, the SMHA is required and depending on the applicant a local behavioral health provider is a required partner.

94. Can this supplant a project from an OSPI grant that is ending and fits into Project AWARE activities?

Supplanting is not allowable. Please email foacmhs@samhsa.hhs.gov for additional information.

95. Would a regional university be considered a LEA?

Typically, not, but it depends on the university's designation through the SEA

96. If we have an LOC from one of the LEA's we are working with to submit the application, but we are a nonprofit organization, can we get the extra 5 points for our application?

No, only the SEA, LEA, TEA as the applicant is eligible for the 5 priority points

97. Can we still apply if the eRA commons takes longer to register. We are in the process.

You will have to have the eRA commons ID at time of submission.

98. Can a municipality submit application in support with LEA?

The municipality can apply as a political subdivision of a state. It will need to have a LEA as a required partner.

99. Can the project director be contracted with another agency?

The PD is required to be employed by the applicant agency.

100. We have a regional educational organization that we will be working with (in addition to LEAs. Do we need a 1.0 FTE coordinator for the regional educational organization?

The regional education organization should be considered a LEA, so will require a 1.0 FTE project manager.

101. The project manager for each LEA can be hired by the community based mental health agency as long as they have 1.0 FTE attached to each LEA?

The NOFO stipulates that there is a 1.0 FTE Project Manager for each LEA

102. Does the PD have to be Master level and/or licensed?

You will submit a project description with qualification/education requirement and resume/CV of candidate prior to hire.

103. If we are unable to download the files, can the ppt. slides be emailed, please? Lastly, will Q & A be established since we had many questions today?

The slides are taken directly from the NOFO. The Q &A will be posted on the NOFO website

104. I want to make sure I heard you correctly, can a university apply for its own population?

The NOFO stipulates school-aged youth. You will need to partner with at least one LEA.

105. We are a nonprofit community organization that wants to keep the AWARE managers as employees under our payroll and direct supervision, but we will assign one FTE to each of the 4 LEAs, is that allowed?

The NOFO stipulates that there is 1.0 FTE Project Manager for each LEA

106. If we have two PDs, what is the minimum FTE any one PD could devote (such as one devotes 0.1 and the other devotes 0.9 FTE).

The requirement is to have 1.0 FTE PD

107. Can a PD be the PD for more than 1 grant.

The FTE requirements for the NOFO must be fulfilled, 1.0 PD for each project. Also, one person may not exceed 1.0 FTE.