



Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

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July 2023

Tribal Listening Session Framing Paper

Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorder Resources for Native Americans Program

Background:

On December 29, 2022, Congress approved the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023. This Omnibus Funding Bill amended Section 506A of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 290aa–5a) to create a Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorder Resources for Native Americans Program (BHSUDRNA). The purpose of the program is to provide services for the prevention of, treatment of, and recovery from mental health and substance use disorders among American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Eligible entities include any health program administered directly by the Indian Health Service (IHS), a Tribal health program, an Indian Tribe, a Tribal organization, an Urban Indian organization, and a Native Hawaiian health organization (Papa Ola Lokahi’).

The program is authorized such that the Secretary acts through the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use in consultation with the Director of the Indian Health Services (IHS). This new amendment to the statute states that these entities along with those serving Native Hawaiians shall develop a formula to determine the amount of an award for BHSUDRNA.

Discussions:

SAMHSA welcomes this authority in that-it provides an opportunity to be responsive to needs for behavioral health and substance use resources coming from our Tribal partners. Therefore, SAMHSA began engaging with IHS and other federal partners on this initiative.

In May 2023, SAMHSA officials met with the IHS Office of Self-Governance to discuss the formulas for funding Title I and V through contracts and compacts. During June 2023, SAMHSA officials met with the Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) Bureau of Primary Health Care to discuss programming and funding for Native Hawaiians. During July 2023, SAMHSA officials also met with the IHS Office of Urban Indian Health Programs. SAMHSA is committed to ongoing discussions regarding the process for funding and implementing BHSUDRNA, should funds become available.

Listening Session:

Tribal consultation, as well as conference with Urban Indian Organizations and engagement with the Native Hawaiian Health Organization, is required regarding the development of funding allocations and program evaluation and reporting requirements.

SAMHSA will initially hold a Tribal listening session on August 29th, 2023, at 4:00 PM EDT. The listening session will provide an opportunity for SAMHSA to share information about the statute and engage with Tribal Leaders.

Engagements with Urban Indian Organizations and the Native Hawaiian Health Organization are still under development.

Questions:

Specifically, the listening session will seek recommendations and feedback on the following questions should these funds become available for BHSUDRNA:

- A. What factors should be considered in determining noncompetitive awards to each of the eligible entities including any health program administered directly by Indian Health Service, a Tribal Health Program, an Indian Tribe, and a Tribal Organization? What methodology or formula should be considered for determining the amount of an award and equitable distribution of an award to each eligible entity given their needs?
- B. An applicant must agree to submit program evaluation data under this program. What measures should be established to demonstrate outcomes and report data on results of services provided as required for participation in the program?
- C. How can the administrative process be streamlined to sufficiently capture the program requirements and facilitate assisting the eligible entities in submitting applications for funding?