

RFA #16-21

Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Interventions

Q&A

	RFA Section	Question	Answer
1		Can funds be used to support incentives for individuals to participate and stay in treatment? For example, gift cards that are provided at specific treatment milestones or that are part of a door prize-type of drawing that incentivize keeping appointments and compliance with treatment.	Funding may not be used for incentives for individuals to participate and stay in treatment.
2		Can funds be used to support individuals wishing to get their GED (ie for classes) or in need of prescription medication that they cannot afford? Will they support other social supports such as emergency housing, food or child care?	Funding may not be used to support individuals wishing to get their GED, prescription medication, emergency housing, food, or childcare.
3		It is my understanding that this mechanism is the mechanism that replaces previous categorical funding for organizations, such as Prevent Suicide PA. However, this new RFA appears to be heavily aligned with services and service delivery. Can you please clarify if these funds may only be used for service provision or if it is also available to non-service-oriented projects and program, provided that the organization’s proposal aligns with the Commonwealth’s priorities?	Applicants may propose to use funding for direct services or non-direct services that address one or more of the strategic priorities listed in RFA 16-21, page 1. Non-allowable expenses are listed in RFA 16-21, page 5.
4		RFA 16-21 indicates that the Department of Human Services will not support the following as part of this funding opportunity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgets with retirement costs • Budgets with insurance costs <p>Could you please clarify the definition of retirement and insurance costs? Does this include employer 401(k) contributions and premiums for employee health insurance paid for by the employer? Does insurance costs include liability policies?</p>	This is a time limited opportunity. As a result, benefit costs, including retirement and insurance costs, are allowed for the direct costs of personnel providing program services only. Benefit costs are a non-allowable expense for indirect personnel costs. See Budget Submittal for additional information on direct and indirect personnel costs. Liability insurance is an allowable cost.

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			<p>Retirement costs are defined as any retirement plan that an employer has in place for its employees. This would include employer matching contributions to an employee’s plan.</p> <p>Insurance costs are defined as the employer’s contribution toward an employee’s health care benefits or an organization’s liability insurance policy.</p>
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
5		<p>In response to the RFA for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorder Interventions, Merakey has the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you elaborate on the ineligible costs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is meant by insurance? Does that include company liability insurance that would be included in indirect cost? ○ What is meant by retirement costs? If a full time employee is hired, does that mean the company could not provide retirement as part of the benefit package? • Could a proposed education/training be expanded to cover family members who are not directly receiving services themselves? 	<p>See responses to Question No. 4.</p> <p>The Department is not dictating what employment package an Applicant must offer to newly hired employees. An Applicant, however, cannot use grant funds for indirect costs of employees not providing program services.</p> <p>Applicants may propose to use funding for the education and training of family members.</p>
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
6		<p>What is the timeline for program operations? Can this funding be used for program start-up/implementation rather than direct program support?</p>	<p>The term of the Grant shall commence on the Effective Date (as defined below) and shall end on the Expiration Date identified in the Grant, subject to the other provisions of the Grant. The Effective Date shall be fixed after the Grant has been fully executed by the Grantee and by the Commonwealth and all approvals required by Commonwealth procurement procedures have been obtained. The Department anticipates an</p>

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			Effective Date of July 1, 2021; however, this date is subject to change. Applicants may propose to use funding for program start-up and/or implementation.
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
7		We are a nonprofit treatment center in Bucks County. Can you send me the eligibility guidelines for this grant and what specifically the grant will fund? Technology? Salaries? Programs? Etc.	Eligibility guidelines and allowable costs can be found in RFA 16-21 available at the following link: http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Solicitations.aspx?SID=RFA%2016-21
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
8		What is the proposed date for projects that are funded to initiate activities? Will organizations be permitted to use funds for capacity building such as expanding fundraising and development resources, hiring consultants, staff development and training, technology resources that enhance an organization’s database and infrastructure, etc.? Will costs for start-up business ventures be reimbursable such as peer run businesses activities?	See response to Question No. 6 for the proposed Effective Date. Funding may not be used to purchase fundraising and development resources or consultants. Applicants may propose to use funding for staff development and training and technology resources. The Department cannot answer this question with this limited information. Applicants may propose to use funding for certified peer support programs.
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
9		May we use these funds to purchase a franchise to use in our supportive employment program?	Funding may not be used to purchase a franchise.
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
10		May we use these funds to start up a substance-free ‘sober bar’?	Funding may not be used to start up a substance-free ‘sober bar’.

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11		<p>May we use these funds to support a number of community-wide events produced by our employees as part of our supportive employment services?</p> <p>For example, may we use the funds to pay for staff time to develop and execute the event, marketing materials, and supplies needed for our Annual Art Show or Wellness Conference?</p>	<p>Applicants may propose to use funding for community-wide events.</p>
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
12		<p>Our organization receives DHS funding for particular programs/activities. Are we eligible to apply for our programs that don't receive DHS funding?</p>	<p>Applicants are eligible to apply for funding to support programs that do not receive DHS funding.</p>
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
13		<p>Thank you for the opportunity to ask questions about the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorder Interventions (MHSUDI) Application. Our questions include the following,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the date or timeline in which an applicant can expect to be notified of project funding approval? 2. Can applicant begin to expense funds at the time of funding approval notification, or must applicant wait for the distribution? 3. Can applicant apply funds to supplement full time employee salaries while program is starting up? For example, during start up applicant expects to negotiate fee for service with BMCO. Once billing can start, but is not yet fully sustainable, may the applicant use the grant funds to supplement the difference while caseloads reach sustainable levels? 4. Should applicant include evidence of existing county/regional DHS interest and/or support of project? If yes, how do you want applicant to show evidence? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Department anticipates notifying Applicants of their selection or non-selection by June 30, 2021. For the Effective Date of the agreement, see response to Question No. 6. 2. The Commonwealth is only able to make payments after an agreement with a selected Applicant has been fully executed and all approvals required by Commonwealth procurement rules have been obtained and the selected Applicant has submitted an invoice. Selected Applicants will not receive an upfront funding award. The Commonwealth will put forth reasonable efforts to make payment by the required payment date. 3. Applicants may propose to fund salaries for direct personnel costs but see Budget Submittal Instructions on the allocation of these costs. Applicants also may propose to

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			<p>fund indirect salary costs (less any non-allowable costs) as part of the administrative expenses; however, these costs are capped at 10%. See Budget Submittal Cost Description for additional information.</p> <p>4. An Applicant should provide the information that it thinks will best address the objectives of the RFA.</p>
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
14		<p>We are a behavioral healthcare organization in Lawrence County and the biggest barrier our clients face is transportation. Although we are currently offering telehealth services due to the pandemic, once we are back to face-to-face delivery, our clients will have issues finding transportation to their appointments. Therefore, I was wondering if the MHSUDI funding could be used to purchase a vehicle and hire an employee to transport clients to and from their appointments.</p>	<p>For personnel costs, see responses to Questions Nos. 4, 5 and 13. Applicants may not propose to use funding for the purchase of a vehicle.</p>
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
15		<p>My question is: Can the project could encompass overlapping/more than one priorities?</p>	<p>Applicants may propose a project that encompasses overlapping priorities.</p>
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
16		<p>Do advocacy services qualify as prevention and intervention?</p>	<p>Applicants may propose to use funding for advocacy services provided the application does not include unallowable costs. Advocacy services should be clearly defined in an applicant's application to verify that it is an allowable cost.</p>
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17		Is it more favorable to do collaboration with more than one agency, or just a singular agency to apply?	Applicants should propose an operational structure that is most likely to support the project's success.
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
18		I am opening up a women's safe place for the women coming home from SCI Muncy and SCI Cambridge Springs. I was once incarcerated and I find that there isn't much assistance for women coming home with mental health issues, as well as having a safe, secure, and stable environment, providing resources to assist them with becoming and staying self-sufficient. Please can you let me know if this is something that you could assist me with, in obtaining funding to help me with establishing these women when they come home?	Applicants may propose to use funding for projects that support formerly incarcerated individuals.
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
19		Is the RFA 16-21 Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Intervention funding available only for new projects or can it be used to expand existing projects?	Please see page 2 of RFA 16-21 found at the following link: http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Solicitations.aspx?SID=RFA%2016-21 which states: DHS will consider funding for new and innovative projects or programs that have a clear plan for sustained funding beyond this initial investment; increasing the scope of existing programs with demonstrated positive outcomes; capacity building initiatives, particularly those that focus on diversity, equity and inclusion, or on treating trauma or both; initiatives that address mental health and substance use disorder disparities; initiatives that demonstrate a strategy to reduce stigma (more than raising awareness); and recovery and resiliency strategies.
	RFA Section	Question	Answer

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20		It is my understanding we must spend the money and then get reimbursed. Since we have a fiduciary, this is an issue. Is this the case, and if so, what is the turn around time for them to get reimbursed?	Please see response to Question No. 13 on invoicing for payments. Payment provisions are found in Appendix B of RFA 16-21 found at the following link: http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Solicitations.aspx?SID=RFA%2016-21
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
21		For the funding opportunity RFA 16-21, Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Interventions, it states that <i>if your organization is submitting requests for multiple projects, you must submit a separate application for each project</i> . Does this mean that one organization can submit multiple \$500,000 applications for different projects, or the \$500,000 would be the maximum amount one organization could receive?	Applicants may submit multiple \$500,000 applications for different projects.
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
22		Regarding the first strategic priority – <i>“Improve the health and well-being of people with either mental illness, or substance use disorders or both as well as that of their family members”</i> : 1. Would a project to develop an Overdose Review Board consisting of active, integrated community partners be considered for funding? The work of the board would be to identify what factors into an overdose death to inform policy, assist advocates, and help families understand overdose.	Applicants may propose to use funding for the development of an Overdose Review Board.
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
23		Regarding the fourth strategic priority – <i>“Increase the number of clinical professionals and certified support professionals with training and experience specific to modalities shown to be effective in the treatment or management of the impacts of trauma”</i> : 1. Please define “certified support professionals”	Certified support professionals are individuals who have received specialized training to support individuals with mental health and substance abuse needs and are credentialed by the Pennsylvania Certification Board. Applicants may propose to use funding for community efforts.

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		2. Can we expand project activities beyond clinical providers and certified support professional (while including both of these professions) to other pockets of community members?	
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
24		Are the submission of questions due on 5/13/21 a requirement for potential bidders? Are vendor permitted to submit bids without submitting questions as "potential applicants?"	Applicants are not required to submit questions prior to submitting a proposal.
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
25			
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
26			
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
27			
	RFA Section	Question	Answer
28			