Addendum 1 to RFA #67-58

Youth Mentoring Program

Question 1: "Section A. Information for Applicants, 2. Evidence-Based Programs and Practices: The example in the RFA is a volunteer mentoring program and our organization uses a paid mentoring model. Is this a solicitation for volunteer mentoring models only?"

Answer: No. It is up to the applicant to propose the evidence-based mentoring model that will be used. The solicitation does not require volunteer or paid mentors, however, per Part One, General Information, C.2.e., the budget must be reasonable for the work proposed and appropriate for the need within the areas to be served. Per Part One, General Information, B.4.b., applicants should recruit mentors whose skills, motivations, and backgrounds best match the goals and structure of the program and encourage mentors to assist with recruitment efforts by providing them with resources to ask individuals they know, who meet the eligibility criteria of the program, to be a mentor.

Question 2: "Section A. Information for Applicants, 3. Evidence-Based Programs and Practices: Target youth ages 8-18: Is there a specific number of youth the Department anticipates serving through the three (3) awarded grantees annually?"

Answer: No. It is up to the applicant to provide an estimate of the number of youth to be served by the mentoring program each year as per Part One, General Information, C.2.d.D.1. Also, per Part One, General Information, C.2.e. the budget must be reasonable for the work proposed and appropriate for the need within the areas to be served.

Question 3: "Will new programs based on evidence-based practices be awarded, or are you looking to expand upon current programs (ex: Big Brothers/Big Sisters) in different/underserved areas?"

Answer: Per Part One, General Information, Section B.2., Evaluation of Applications, the Department will select applicants based on multiple factors including program design and implementation, the timeline for implementation, and the capabilities and competencies of the organization.

Question 4: "Does the program need to be inclusive? Can it focus on a specific population or segment of youth?"

Answer: Per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.d.D.1. of the RFA, the applicant must describe the youth population that the program will serve. In the project abstract (Part One, General Information, Section C.1.f), the applicant shall also describe why the specified population is at increased risk for involvement in unhealthy or delinquent behavior.

Question 5: "Will you require a specific plan for measuring outcomes?"

Answer: No. Per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.d.C. of the RFA, the applicant shall explain how they will report data for the Performance Measures outlined in Attachment 1 of the RFA. The applicant should include a description of how all required information will be collected and reported.

Question 6: "Will staff/mentors require any specific training that needs to be budgeted for?"

Answer: No, there are not additional training requirements beyond what the applicant identifies as the evidence-based model training requirements.

Question 7: "Do you have specific eligibility criteria for mentors?"

Answer: No. Per Part One, General Information, Section B.4.b., the applicant should recruit mentors whose skills, motivations, and backgrounds best match the goals and structure of the program.

Question 8: "Youth with disabilities typically take longer to transition from school to employment, adulthood, etc. This can last up to age 25 and there is evidence to back up this statement. Will you make an exception for serving youth in this population after age 18?"

Answer: No. Per Part One, General Information, Section A.1., the Department selected the 8-18 year old age group in accordance with the state performance measure. As a result, this funding is intended to serve youth age 8-18.

Question 9: "Is there a match requirement?"

Answer: No, there is not a match requirement. As per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.d.D.4. of the RFA, applicants should describe details regarding any leveraged resources (cash or in-kind) from local sources used to support the program.

Question 10: "Is indirect cost rate of 10% accepted?"

Answer: Yes, if the indirect cost rate of 10% is less than or equal to the organization's Federally approved indirect rate. Per Part One, General Information, Section C.3. of the RFA, indirect rates cannot exceed the provider's Federally approved indirect cost rate schedule.

Question 11: "Will there only be 3 awards?"

Answer: Per Part One, General Information, Section A.2. of the RFA, the Department may award up to three grant agreements pending the availability of funds. There will not be more than 3 awards resulting from this RFA.

Question 12: "Can stipends/incentives be offered to mentors?"

Answer: Yes. Per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.e. of the RFA, the budget must be reasonable for the work proposed and appropriate for the need within the areas to be served.

Question 13: "Is peer mentoring within school/athletic programs allowable?"

Answer: Yes. It is up to the applicant to propose the evidence-based mentoring model that will be used. Per Part One, General Information, Section A.2., the Department considers programs and practices to be evidence-based when their effectiveness has been demonstrated by research results, evidence, usually obtained through outcomes or evaluations.

Question 14: "Are grantees expected to purchase an empirical program or can they adopt evidence based models/concepts from various sources?"

Answer: No, grantees are not expected to purchase an empirical program, however applicants shall provide mentoring services based on the definition of evidence-based practices. Per Part One, General Information, Section A.2., the Department considers programs and practices to be evidence-based when their effectiveness has been demonstrated by research results, evidence, usually obtained through outcomes or evaluations.

Question 15: "Will mentoring initiatives already in place be weighted any differently than programs in the preliminary phases of implementation during the review process?"

Answer: Part One, General Information, Section C.1.f. of the RFA, a one-page Project Abstract shall be submitted with the application and must include a description of the applicant's relevant experience. Per Part One, General Information, Section B.2., the Department will select applicants based on multiple factors including program design and implementation, the timeline for implementation, and the capabilities and competencies of the organization. Applicants will not be given any information regarding the evaluation other than the position of their application in relation to all other applications and the strengths and weaknesses in their individual application as per Part One, General Information, Section B.3. of the RFA.

Question 16: "For 2G,6, would a basic job description used to define the roles of each position be enough? Or is it preferred to be employee specific, reading more like a mini bio?"

Answer: For positions in which the staff is already identified, applicants should include employee-specific qualifications. For positions that are vacant, a job description is sufficient.

Question 17: "Is there any geographical expectation for these contracts? Has DOH targeted any region, counties or cities as high need?"

Answer: No, the Department has not identified any geographic expectations for this program. Per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.d.D.1. of the RFA, the applicant must describe the youth population the program will serve, the selection criteria for target youth, and how the program will recruit target youth.

Question 18: "Are there any age requirements or expectations for the mentors?"

Answer: No. Per Part One, General Information, Section B.4.b. of the RFA, applicants should recruit mentors whose skills, motivations, and backgrounds best match the goals and structure of the program.

Question 19: "P.2. Can we get a copy of the 2015 Needs and Capacity Assessment used for your MCH grant?"

Answer: The 2015 Needs and Capacity Assessment was submitted to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) as part of the Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant Report and Application. A summary is included in the report. This report can be found at the following web address: http://www.health.pa.gov and search for "Title V".

Question 20: "P.10, A – Statement of the Problem – How does DOH define 'at increased risk for involvement in unhealthy or delinquent behavior?' What do you consider indicators for this?"

Answer: Per Part One, General Information, Section A.1. of the RFA, indicators include juvenile delinquency, crime, truancy, interpersonal violence, and drug, alcohol, or tobacco use.

Question 21: "P.11, F, Timeline – Is there an expected or desired start date for the mentoring services to begin?"

Answer: Per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.d.F. of the RFA, the application shall include a timeline for development and implementation of the proposed program.

Question 22: "Is there a recommended number of youth to be targeted each year?"

Answer: No. It is up to the applicant to provide an estimate of the number of youth to be served by the mentoring program each year as per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.d.D.1 of the RFA. Also, per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.e. of the RFA, the budget must be reasonable for the work proposed and appropriate for the need within the areas to be served.

Question 23: "Section G, #2 – How much weight will be placed on a history of delivering mentoring services?"

Answer: Part One, General Information, Section C.1.f. of the RFA, a one-page Project Abstract shall be submitted with the application and must include a description of the applicant's relevant experience, as a requirement for scoring. Per Part One, General Information, Section B.2., the Department will select applicants based on multiple factors including program design and implementation, the timeline for implementation, and the capabilities and competencies of the organization. Applicants will not be given any information regarding the evaluation other than the position of their application in relation to all other applications and the strengths and weaknesses in their individual application as per Part One, General Information, Section B.3. of the RFA.

Question 24: "Do grantees have to identify an evidence-based mentoring program in their submission? If yes, does the program have to be used?"

Answer: Yes, applicants must identify an evidence-based mentoring model in their submission. As per Part One, General Information Section A.2., the Department is interested in funding evidence-based Youth Mentoring applications. As per Part One, General Information, Section B.4.a., selected applicants should adhere to the evidence-based practice proposed in the original application.

Question 25: "Can we develop a train the mentor curriculum (i.e. find mentors and train in specific areas of trauma)?"

Answer: Yes. As per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.d.D.3. of the RFA, the applicant must describe the type of evidence-based mentoring program/strategy that will be offered and the structure of the mentoring program. Applicants should use evidence-based screening tools and practices to identify individuals who have attitudes and beliefs that support safe and effective mentoring relationships as per Part One, General Information, Section B.4.h. of the RFA.

Question 26: "Can the mentor be a case worker/social worker and refer mentee as appropriate?"

Answer: Yes, if this type of role fits into an evidence-based mentoring model. As per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.d.D.3. of the RFA, the applicant must describe the type of evidence-based mentoring program/strategy that will be offered and the structure of the mentoring program. Applicants should use evidence-based screening tools and practices to identify individuals who have attitudes and beliefs that support safe and effective mentoring relationships as per Part One, General Information, Section B.4.h. of the RFA.

Question 27: "Can 2 programs be developed (8-13 and 13-18) as needs are different if we decide to address mental health within a specific community?"

Answer: Yes. Per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.d.D.1. of the RFA, the applicant must describe the youth population that the program will serve, the selection criteria for target youth, and how the program will target youth.

Question 28: "Could the budget include incentives like zoo tickets or aquarium tickets?"

Answer: Yes. Per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.e. of the RFA, the budget must be reasonable for the work proposed and appropriate for the need within the areas to be served.

Question 29: "Can mentoring take the form of storytelling or a theatre based program?"

Answer: Yes. As per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.d.D.3. of the RFA, the applicant must describe the type of evidence-based mentoring program/strategy that will be offered and the structure of the mentoring program. Per Part One, General Information, Section A.2., the Department considers programs and practices to be evidence-based when their effectiveness has been demonstrated by research results, evidence, usually obtained through outcomes or evaluations.

Question 30: "Can you define "protective factors" and "assets" on Page 2, A.?"

Answer: For the purposes of the background information in Part One, General Information, Section A.1. of this RFA, protective factors and assets are based on the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents Framework and the Life Course Perspective for Maternal and Child Health programming.

Question 31: "Why is the first grant segment only six months?"

Answer: The first grant segment is only six months because the resulting grants of this RFA will operate on the state fiscal year which runs from July 1 through June 30.

Question 32: "Does the school-based program (4.g.) need to target specific grades or types of schools (i.e. middle or high school)?"

Answer: No. As per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.d.D.3. of the RFA, the applicant must describe the type of evidence-based mentoring program/strategy that will be offered and the structure of the mentoring program. It is up to the applicant to determine the types of schools and ages to be served, depending on what evidence-based mentoring program/strategy is chosen.

Question 33: "Do you have a preference for a particular logic model?"

Answer: No. Part One, General Information, Section C.2.d.E. requires a logic model that illustrates how performance measures are related to the project's problems, goals, objectives, and design, but a particular format is not required.

Question 34: "Does DOH anticipate continued funding?"

Answer: Yes. As per Part One, General Information, Section A.2., at the Department's discretion and by letter notice, the Department may choose to renew the resulting Grant Agreement for two 1-year renewals.

Question 35: "What are the factors related to D.2. Recruiting mentors who are representative of the youth population to be served? Is it geography, income and/or education levels, or something else?"

Answer: Per Part One, General Information, Section B.4.b. of the RFA, applicants should recruit mentors whose skills, motivations, and backgrounds best match the goals and structure of the program. If the evidence-based model selected by the applicant includes criteria related to the qualifications of mentors, that criteria should be used.

Question 36: "How long after grant period will be needed to satisfy sustainability?"

Answer: As per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.d.D.4., applicants must describe their plans for sustainability beyond the grant period, however there are no grant requirements for sustainability.

Question 37: "Page 15 – Measures. Should program including existing matches? If so, from what baseline date? Or should program start at zero?"

Answer: Matches participating in the program should be included based on the implementation timeline described by the applicant as required in Part One, General Information, Section C.2.d.F. of the RFA.

Question 38: "What is an acceptable indirect rate if my organization does not have a Federally-approved indirect cost rate?"

Answer: If the organization does not have a federally approved indirect cost rate, they may not include indirect costs in the budget. Administrative costs or other operating costs may be included in the budget. As per Part One, General Information, Section C.3. of the RFA, indirect rates cannot exceed the provider's Federally approved indirect cost rate schedule.

Question 39: "For the specific grant for mentoring, is the state looking for something specific, innovative, working with existing programs, or maintain and grow?"

Answer: As per Part One, General Information, Section A.2. of the RFA, the Department is interested in funding evidence-based Youth Mentoring applications addressing improving health outcomes for youth, and increasing their protective factors. As per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.d.D.3. of the RFA, the applicant must describe the type of evidence-based mentoring program/strategy the applicant will offer and the structure of the mentoring program. The Department will select applicants based on multiple factors including program design and implementation, the timeline for implementation, and the capabilities and competencies of the organization as per Part One, General Information, Section B.2., Evaluation of Applications.

Question 40: "The scope is very open – very little detail beyond what we already expect in terms of evidence-based programs and 6 standards. Is it a blank canvas or are there specific expectations?"

Answer: Awarded applicants will be expected to meet the deliverables listed in Section B.4. of the RFA. Specific expectations for awarded applicants will be adapted to the program model submitted by the applicant.

Question 41: "The Evaluation of Applications section gives no specific criteria. The section under criteria has a list of what is required for application. Is there a rubric you are going to use to evaluate on each criteria section or is it based on a wide latitude of what appeals to the grant committee?"

Answer: The Evaluation Criteria listed in Part One, General Information, Section B.2. of the RFA is a summary of specific and technical criteria used by the review committee for scoring applications. The rubric used by the Review Committee assigns points to multiple factors and each application is scored independently and using the same criteria. As per Part One, General Information, Section B.3. of the RFA, applicants will not be given any information regarding the evaluation other than the position of their application in relation to all other applications and the strengths and weaknesses in their individual application.

Question 42: "What is the criteria regarding font size and line spacing in proposal?"

Answer: As per Part One, General Information, Section C.2. of the RFA, applications must be typewritten on 8 ½" by 11" paper with a font size no smaller than 10 point and margins of at least ½ inch. The RFA does not have line spacing requirements.

Question 43: "This is a Federal grant that will be operated on a state fiscal year. What is the length of the first year?"

Answer: The budget will operate on the state fiscal year period. As per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.e., the first budget period is January 1, 2018 to June 30, 2018.

Question 44: "Would you prefer an organization have the capacity to utilize the full $500,000 in the first 'year' or is it okay if an agency requests less for the first year based on shorter time?"

Answer: The applicant should propose a budget that is reasonable for the work proposed as per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.e.

Question 45: "Is there flexibility to divide the 3 year award, utilizing different amounts each year until the full $1,650,000 is spent out in the grant budget? (i.e. less money used in first year due to shorter time, and additional funds moved to year 2 and 3)"

Answer: No. Applicants may propose a budget that is less than the full amount, but as per Part One, General Information, Section C.2.e. of the RFA, the maximum funding amount for each year is $550,000.