RFA-DP-25-041: Connecting Organizations and People to Empower Diabetes Prevention and Treatment (Connections)

Questions and Answers
December 2, 2024

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Application

1. **We are exploring the possibility of applying to the CDC for the research project, CONNECTIONS. We see that there is a letter of intent due on 12/2/24 but we do not see where to send it. I have looked on grants.gov and have not found information. I have also called the help desk and they suggested I contact you about where to submit this letter. Your assistance on this matter would be appreciated.**

   ANSWER: Yes, please accept our apologies; we realized this information was omitted from the original NOFO publication. We've published a modification where this information can be found, on page 23. The letter should be emailed to: Celeste Sanders, PhD, Scientific Program Official. Email: CSanders4@cdc.gov. We recommend subscribing to this NOFO so that you can be notified of future updates. You may subscribe to this NOFO by clicking the red 'Subscribe' button in the upper right hand corner of the screen for the NOFO on grants.gov.

   NOFO SECTION: Section IV. Application and Submission Information, 3. Letter of Intent

   NOFO PAGE NUMBER(S): 23

2. **I stumbled across this grant for diabetes prevention and treatment. The post states it closes January 6th, 2025, but it does not let me apply on my end.**

   ANSWER: Problems with grants.gov can be resolved by contacting the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or by email at support@grants.gov. Please also see Section VII. Agency Contacts in the NOFO which includes contact information from Grants.gov and eRA Commons for technical support. Also please see Section IV. Application and Submission Information in the NOFO for additional information on who to contact in the event of technical difficulties.

   NOFO SECTION: Section VII. Agency Contacts

   NOFO PAGE NUMBER(S): 52

Eligibility

3. **I was hoping to get any additional information on eligibility. Please advise.**

   ANSWER: Please review Section III of the NOFO to learn more about eligibility requirements.

   NOFO SECTION: Section III. Eligibility Information

   NOFO PAGE NUMBER(S): 18-22

4. **I am writing to inquire if I would be eligible as the PI as I am not a formal researcher although I support multiple research projects, grants, etc. Please let me know before we proceed.**

   ANSWER: In Section III. Eligibility Information, 8.Eligible Individuals (Project Director/Principal Investigator) in Organizations/Institutions, the NOFO states:

   "Individuals with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research are invited to work with their institution/organization to develop an application for support. CDC does not make awards to individuals directly. Individuals from organizations that are uniquely prepared to examine research relevant to undeserved groups, including sexual orientation and gender identity minorities as well as individuals with disabilities are always encouraged to apply."

   We would also encourage you to review the entire NOFO to ensure your application is meeting the other requirements as it relates to the PI. For example, Section IV. Application and Submission Information, 5.PHS 398 Research Plan Component states that the application should:

   "Describe the experience of the principal investigator and co-investigators in undertaking complex public health-related or policy studies that (1) make use of data from diverse data sources, (2) are multi-disciplinary (including, but not limited to implementation science, health disparities, epidemiology, public policy, health communications, economics, individual and organizational behavioral science, statistics), and (3) result in peer-reviewed journal publications. Applicant's research team should include investigators with expertise in health equity and SDOH research."

   Also, the application should:

   "Describe the principal investigator's (1) expertise, (2) established leadership in designing and conducting complex studies that make use of multiple sources of data, (3) track record of publishing study findings in peer-reviewed journals and making presentations at professional and scientific conferences and policy forums, and (4) commitment to collaborate and contribute to a multi-center research network, including participating in study meetings as well as periodic teleconferences each year. Specify the percentage of time that will be committed to this research program by the PI."

   You may find it helpful to also review Section V. Application Review Information, 1.Criteria.

NOFO SECTION: Section III. Eligibility Information, 8.Eligible Individuals (Project Director/Principal Investigator) in Organizations/Institutions; Section IV. Application and Submission Information, 5.PHS 398 Research Plan Component; Section V. Application Review Information, 1.Criteria.

NOFO PAGE NUMBER(S): 22, 24-28, and 33-40

5. **Are non-profit hospitals eligible to apply?**

   ANSWER: The NOFO does not include language regarding the eligibility of non-profit hospitals specifically. So, we would encourage you to carefully review Section III. Eligibility Information to learn if your institution meets the criteria. It might also be helpful to review the Code of Federal Regulations' definitions for the various applicant types.

   NOFO SECTION: Section III. Eligibility Information

   NOFO PAGE NUMBER(S): 18-22

Scientific

6. **Does the program evaluation we propose align with this NOFO for community-clinical linkages to reduce diabetes disparities?**

   ANSWER: We are unable to provide specific guidance or information on the appropriateness of your proposal to the NOFO. The following sections of the NOFO can assist in developing your application:

   - To get a detailed description of the intent of this NOFO, please especially review the Section I. Funding Opportunity Description (particularly the Background and Purpose).
   - Please also review Section III. Eligibility Information (5. Responsiveness) for details on what constitutes a responsive application.

   NOFO SECTION: Section I. Funding Opportunity Description & Section III. Eligibility Information, 5. Responsiveness

   NOFO PAGE NUMBER(S): 4-17 and 20

7. **What kind of control or comparison data is expected for this NOFO?**

   ANSWER: In Section I. Funding Opportunity Description, the Approach sub-section explains that:

   "Studies are expected to use rigorous longitudinal research designs such as natural experiments or quasi-experimental designs with concurrent control conditions or interrupted time series designs. Investigators are particularly encouraged to identify opportunistic, natural experiments wherein accessible comparable control data can be assembled and confounders and biases can be limited through study design, sample selection, and statistical analysis. Control populations identified are expected to

reasonably match the exposed study population regarding demographic (age, sex, race, and ethnicity), socioeconomic status, and health parameters (e.g., similar prevalence of comorbidities or risk of diabetes outcomes being assessed). If interrupted time series or similar study designs are utilized without a separate control population, applicants are expected to describe how an appropriate control condition will be used to allow valid inferences regarding the effect of the program.Applicants are expected to demonstrate access to relevant data on program attributes, process measures, and diabetes-related health outcomes for the study population exposed to the program being evaluated along with comparable control populations as evidenced by signed data-use or data-sharing agreements."

NOFO SECTION: Section I. Funding Opportunity Description, 2. Approach

NOFO PAGE NUMBER(S): 14

8. **Are there expectations about how social connectedness is facilitated? Is there a requirement that awardees provide in-person opportunities to connect?**

   ANSWER: As stated on Page 7 of the NOFO:

   - "There are a variety of promising approaches (https://www.cdc.gov/social-connectedness/data-research/promising-approaches/index.html) to address Social Connectedness that may help reduce social isolation and loneliness.". Please review the link for further details.
   - "…more information is needed on the effectiveness of digital Social Connectedness interventions on various populations experiencing health disparities and the specific digital intervention activities and components that work best for each population."
   - "For more information, see the World Health Organization evidence and gap map for in-person (https://www.decadeofhealthyageing.org/find-knowledge/support/toolkits/who-evidence-and-gap-map-on-in-person-interventions-for-reducing-social-isolation-and-loneliness-(all-ages)#:~:text=gap%20map%20examines%20the%20evidence%20on%20in-person,loneliness%20across%20all%20ages%2C%20including%20older%20people.) and digital interventions (https://www.who.int/initiatives/decade-of-healthy-ageing/evidence-gap-map/sil-digital) for reducing social isolation and loneliness in older adults." Please review the links for further details.

   Please also review the Approach Section (begins on page 12), the Responsiveness Criteria (page 20), and the peer review criteria (begins on page 33) to learn more about the expectations of submission. You may find the "Social Connectedness Program Characteristics and Research Priorities" portion of the Approach section (beginning on page 13 of the NOFO) particularly helpful.

   NOFO SECTION: Section I. Funding Opportunity Description, 1.Background and Purpose & 2.Approach; Section III. Eligibility Information, 5.Responsiveness; Section V. Application Review Information, 1.Criteria

   NOFO PAGE NUMBER(S): 7; 12-16; 20; 33-36

9. **We are interested in the RFA-DP-25-041 Connecting Organizations and People to Empower Diabetes Prevention and Treatment (Connections) due Jan 2025. If you**

have a moment to discuss if our project has synergy with what your team is looking for - we would greatly appreciate it. Let me know the best dates and times to connect.

ANSWER: We are unable to provide specific guidance or information on the contents of your application or discuss your application outside of the instructions indicated in the NOFO. Please send any questions you may have related to the NOFO to researchnofo@cdc.gov, and we will provide a response as appropriate.

NOFO SECTION: N/A

NOFO PAGE NUMBER(S): N/A

10. **Our major question is does our current DM screening process and other sites 'qualify' for one year of ongoing social connectiveness?**

ANSWER: DP25-041 is an open competition announcement, therefore, CDC is not able to comment on proposed projects. Please review the language in Section I.2 Approach (pg. 12) of the NOFO:

- This NOFO is not intended to fund the initiation of new programs or interventions, cross-sectional studies, or studies assessing a program without an appropriate comparison group. (page 12)
- The existing Community-Clinical Linkage or Social Connectedness program(s) to be evaluated are expected to be identified in the application and are expected to reasonably be expected to affect behaviors relevant to diabetes risk or risk factors for diabetes complications. The program is expected to be fully enacted and in place for a minimum of 1 year to ensure the intervention is sustainable. A minimum of one year of follow-up time for outcome data after program exposure are expected to be available at the start of the period of performance for the proposed study population. (page 13)
- Applicants are expected to demonstrate access to relevant data on program attributes, process measures, and diabetes-related health outcomes for the study population exposed to the program being evaluated along with comparable control populations as evidenced by signed data-use or data-sharing agreements. Applicants are expected to demonstrate that available data provides sufficient statistical power to reasonably detect selected study outcomes. (page 14)
- For all research proposals, applicants are expected to utilize existing data on exposure and outcomes at the outset of the funding period. (page 15)

Additionally, please see Section V. Application Review Information, 1. Criteria, Approach (page 35) for the review criteria that will be assessed when an application undergoes peer review:

- Has the program selected for evaluation been in place long enough to provide evidence that the program is sustainable?
- Does the length of follow-up time of outcome data available for analysis during the period of performance allow assessment of medium (2-4 years) or long-term (≥5 years) diabetes-related outcomes?

- Does the applicant propose a study with adequate sample size to test the proposed hypotheses, and is the study adequately powered to measure changes in disparities between subgroups?
    - Does the applicant include documentation (in the form of a table) showing that the dataset for the proposed study meets a minimum sample size to detect associations with the proposed at outcomes with ≥80% statistical power?
    - To what extent does the application specify strategies to achieve the projected sample size? Are appropriate strategies proposed to assure adequate statistical power?

NOFO SECTION: Section I.2 Approach; Section V. Application Review Information, 1. Criteria

NOFO PAGE NUMBER(S): 12-15 and 33-40

Miscellaneous

11. **We recently came across the Connecting Organizations and People to Empower Diabetes Prevention and Treatment grant and while my organization is interested in applying, we will not be able to apply for this cycle. Will there be another opportunity to apply for the grant opportunity next year or in future years?**

    ANSWER: We're unable to speak to funding opportunities that may or may not be made available in the future that are not currently forecasted on the grants.gov website. Please monitor the grants.gov website to know if this RFA will be posted again. You may also view our website regarding some of our funded programs: https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/budget-funding/notice-of-funding-opportunities.html

    NOFO SECTION: N/A

    NOFO PAGE NUMBER(S): N/A

12. **Can you please send me the application package for RFA-DP-25-041?**

    ANSWER: To find the application package, please navigate to where this NOFO is located on grants.gov. Click the Package tab. Please reach out to grants.gov if you experience any issues accessing the package: https://www.grants.gov/support

    NOFO SECTION: N/A

    NOFO PAGE NUMBER(S): N/A