FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)
for
Promoting Equitable Access to Language Services in Health and Human Services
MP-CPI-22-005

A. ELIGIBILITY

1. What applicants are eligible and how will they be defined for this funding opportunity?

a. Any public or private nonprofit entity located in a State (which includes one of the 50 United States, District of Columbia, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Guam, Republic of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands) is eligible to apply for an award under this announcement. Faith-based organizations and American Indian/Alaskan Native/Native American (AI/AN/NA) organizations that are public or non-profit private entities are eligible to apply. Public or non-profit community-based organizations are eligible to apply. Examples of eligible institutions include:

Examples of eligible organizations include (NOFO pages 14-15):

- State Governments
- U.S. territories
- County Governments
- City or township governments
- Special district governments
- Independent school districts
- Public and State controlled institutions of higher education
- Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)
- Public Housing authorities/Indian housing authorities
- Native American tribal organizations (other than federally recognized tribal governments)
- Nonprofits having 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Nonprofits without 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Private nonprofit institutions of higher education

2. **Can a nonprofit that files a 501 c 3 990ez tax form apply for this grant?**
    a. Yes

3. **Are eligible communities just those with high proportions of racial and ethnic minorities? Who will decide?**
    a. All eligible entities that submit applications will advance through the screening process, and those with eligible applications, will advance to objective review. Your problem statement and the data you present to support the need of your community and other required elements (see G. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION on pages 37-41) are vital in determining how well your application does in the merit review process.
    b. The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health will provide recommendations for funding to the Grants Management Officer to conduct risk analysis. In providing these recommendations, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health will take into consideration the following additional factor:
    • Equitable geographic distribution of projects.

    Grants and Acquisitions Management (GAM) Division will evaluate, in accordance with 45 C.F.R. § 75.205, each application recommended for funding by the program official indicated in Review and Selection Process for risks before issuing an award. This evaluation may incorporate results of the evaluation of eligibility or the quality of an application. Upon completion of risk analysis and concurrence of the Grants Management Officer, OASH will issue Notices of Award. No award decision is final until a Notice of Award is issued. All award decisions, including the level of funding if an award is made, are final and you may not appeal.

4. **Are For-Profit organizations eligible to participate in this funding opportunity?**
    a. No. Only public or private nonprofit entities (see NOFO page 13-14).

5. **Can I submit an application if I previously submitted an application for another OMH NOFO but was not selected for funding?**
    a. Yes. Past unfunded applicants can apply for this NOFO if they meet the eligibility requirements outlined on pages 13 – 14 of the NOFO.

6. **Is the award amount listed for 1 year or 3 years?**
    a. The award ceiling and floor amounts are listed per budget period (12 months). The project period is for 3 years. Please note that due to timing of award issuance or other administrative factors, funding for all approved budget periods beyond the first year is generally level with the initial award amount and is contingent upon the availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the project, adequate stewardship of Federal funds, and the best interests of the

Government as outlined on page 13 of the NOFO.

7. To clarify, is the funding ceiling of $375,000 per budget period (one year) with up to three years of funding as a possibility?

a. On page 13 of the NOFO, the estimated ceiling of $375,000 and floor award amount of $300,000 (per 12-month budget period) is the total cost and should include direct and indirect costs.

8. When does the implementation start?

a. The anticipated start date for Year 1 of this award is 9/15/2022.

B. PREPARING TO APPLY

1. What is the deadline for submitting an application in response to this funding opportunity?

a. Applications are due July 15, 2022 by 6:00 PM Eastern Time. To receive consideration, you must submit your application electronically via Grants.gov no later than this due date and time (see NOFO page 6).

2. How can I stay up to date on any updates or changes to the notice of funding opportunity (NOFO), additional information and resources, and other developments?

a. The best way to stay up to date is to subscribe to this NOFO on grants.gov. Please go to www.grants.gov and click the "Search Grants" tab in the upper left of the screen.
b. On the next screen, look for the "BASIC SEARCH CRITERIA" fields under SEARCH GRANTS header in the upper left corner. Enter "MP-CPI-22-005" in the Opportunity Number field and click the SEARCH button.
c. Click on the link under the Opportunity Number header. You will see a red "Subscribe" icon in the right corner. You then be prompted to either enter your username and password or establish one, after which you'll be able to subscribe and get alerts.

3. Who should I contact if I still have questions about the NOFO? Questions about developing my application?

a. Who to contact will depend on the nature of your question? For programmatic questions, such as developing elements of your application, contact Paul Rodriguez at Paul.Rodriguez@hhs.gov. Please CC: Duane Barlow on your email
b. Contact Duane Barlow at Duane.Barlow@hhs.gov for financial and grants-related questions. Please CC: Paul Rodriguez on your email (NOFO PAGE 51-52)

4. Who should I contact if I have issues with the grants.gov portal or the electronic application process?

a. Please contact Grants.gov Applicant Support:
Email: support@grants.gov
Telephone: 1-800-518-4726
(NOFO page 52)

5. What registrations are needed to apply to this funding announcement?

a. Besides your registration at www.grants.gov, you will need a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to apply for a grant through www.grants.gov. You will also need to register your organization with the System for Award Management (SAM); please

see page 30-31 of NOFO for more information.

b. A step-by-step description of the requirements for registering your organization to be able to apply for this and other funding announcements , along with the expected time for each step, can be found here: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html

6. How do I register my organization on SAM.gov? What if my registration is expired?

a. Please refer to pages 30-31 of the NOFO. Your organization must register online in SAM (https://www.sam.gov/SAM/). Grants.gov may reject submissions from applicants with nonexistent or expired SAM Registrations. A completed registration in SAM may be required prior to receiving any award based on your application.

b. Further helpful information and helpful tips are also available through the following the following link: https://sam.gov/content/home

c. We recommend beginning your registration process immediately as delays in processing have been reported. Under normal operating conditions we recommend allowing at least up to 10 business days after you submit your registration for it to become active in SAM. This timeframe may be longer if SAM flags the information you provide for manual validation or there are delays in the required submission of a notarized letter by mail. You will receive an email alerting you when your registration is active.

7. Can you explain the page limits? What does or does not count for which limits?

a. Your project narrative is limited to **30 pages** and does not include your Project Abstract Summary. Since your project narrative plus appendices cannot exceed **50 pages**, that leaves 20 pages for your appendices. The appendices should include the items described on pages 29-30 of the NOFO and listed here:

- Supplemental Information/Supporting Documentation for Work Plan
- Project Population(s) of Focus
- Memorandums of Agreement and/or Letters of Commitment from Partners, Subrecipient Organizations, and Agencies
- Organizational Chart
- Logic Model
- Curriculum Vitae/Resume for Key Project Personnel

b. You must submit these appendices as a single electronic file uploaded to the Attachments section of your Grants.gov application.

c. The SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL, Project Abstract Summary, and Budget Narrative (including budget tables) ***do not*** **count** towards your 50 pages limit.

8. **Are applicants required to submit memoranda of agreements (MOAs) and Letters of Commitment (LOCs)?**
    a. Refer to pages 29-30 in the NOFO. If available at the time of submission, signed MOAs or signed LOCs may be submitted for each partner (or one signed MOA with all partners) and include specific roles, responsibilities, resources, and contributions of partner(s) to the project.
    b. If the applicant is unable to submit signed MOAs, the applicant may submit an unsigned MOA(s).
    c. Fully executed MOAs and finalized tribal resolutions will be required following the issuance of any award made under this announcement if not received prior to award. If you are not providing these documents with your application, please indicate the anticipated date that you will have fully executed documents available for submission.

9. **Are applicants required to submit detailed budgets for Sub-Awardees/Subrecipient as part of the application?**
    a. Yes. Refer to page 22-28 in the NOFO. Subrecipient/contract and consultant activities must be described in sufficient detail to describe accurately the project effort that each will conduct.

C. APPLICATION REVIEW

1. **How will my application be reviewed?**
    a. Refer to page 36 of the NOFO. An independent review panel will evaluate eligible applications according to criteria outlined in the notice of funding

opportunity. In addition to the independent review, Federal staff will review each application for programmatic, budgetary, and grants management compliance. The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health provides recommendations for funding to the Grants Management Officer to conduct risk analysis. Upon completion of the risk analysis and concurrence of the Grants Management Officer, HHS/OASH issues Notices of Award.

2. **Are applications from rural areas and states considered or rated equally in the competitive review process?**
   a. Refer to pages 36-41 of the NOFO. All eligible entities that advance to the independent review panel will be evaluated based on the quality of their response, the data presented, and other required elements.

3. **The salary limitations are only for staff paid for by grant, correct?**

   a. Yes. You should not budget award funds to pay the salary of an individual at a rate more than Federal Executive Pay Limitation ($203,700.00USD). This salary rate limitation also applies to subawards/subcontracts under an HHS/OASH award (page 33 of the NOFO).

4. **Are budgets scored as part of the review process?**
   a. Yes. Budgets will be scored by merit review panels. Also, Federal staff will review budgets for compliance with regulatory requirements (NOFO page 39).

5. **Can we appeal if we are not selected?**
   a. Refer to page 41 of NOFO. All award decisions, including the level of funding if an award is made, are final and you may not appeal.

D. <u>PROGRAM</u>

1. What is the population of focus for this initiative?

   a. This initiative is intended to research, develop, and test methods of

informing limited English proficiency (LEP) individuals about the availability of language access services.

b. Refer to page 1 of the NOFO. OMH expects recipients to address health disparities among racial and ethnic minority populations, and to demonstrate the impact of those efforts on outcomes and the overarching goal of advancing health equity. Project target population(s) must be based on health disparities. Project activities may not involve the selection or exclusion of participants based on race/ethnicity.

2. Is this grant considered research or program funds?

a. Refer to page 1 of the NOFO. This competitive grant is intended to research, develop, and test methods of informing limited English proficient (LEP) individuals about the availability of language access services.

3. Can we submit multiple applications?

a. Yes. If you successfully submit multiple applications from the same organization for the same project, we will only review the last application received by the deadline. Refer to page 15 of the NOFO.

4. Can you share if there is a specific framework that HHS already has in mind for this initiative to execute or are, we open to share details of our own framework and plan?

a. OMH expects recipients to utilize the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care (National CLAS Standards), 78 Fed. Reg. 58539, 58543 (HHS Office of Minority Health, 2013, https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-09-24/pdf/2013-23164.pdf , provides a practical framework for applicants to provide quality health care and services to culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including persons with limited English proficiency. For further guidance on providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services, you should review the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care at https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/. Refer to page 45 of the NOFO.

5. Are we supposed to address all the bullets related to the expectations?

a. Yes, award recipients under this announcement should meet each of the expectations in the execution of their funded projects. Refer to 9-12 pages of the NOFO.

6. What should be included in the environmental scan?

a. Refer to page 9 of the NOFO. We expect recipients to perform an environmental scan internally within their organization and externally at the State/territorial/tribal and/or local level.

b. The scan should include strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges related to policy, technology, and educational resources in language service access for LEP persons, health care providers, and

health care organizations within the target area.

c. Recipients should gather demographic and social determinants of health data on LEP individuals within the target area using a data tool, such as:
   - The Social Vulnerability Index (data at census track level) (ATSDR, 2018) https://svi.cdc.gov/prepared-county-maps.html, and/or
   - The Minority Health Social Vulnerability Index (data at county level) (HHS Office of Minority Health, n.d.), https://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/minority-health-SVI/.

7. What is the Disparity Impact Statement (DIS) expectation? What is the purpose of the DIS?

a. A Disparity Impact Statement refers to the demographic, cultural, and linguistic data that identify the population(s) in which health disparities exist and the quality improvement plan designed to address the noted disparities.
b. The DIS should identify sub-populations at highest risk for health disparities for its focus population. The DIS will provide the contextual and measurement framework for ongoing monitoring and determining the impact of the project activities on outcomes and the overarching goal of advancing health equity.
c. Refer to page 12 of the NOFO. A DIS is not a required part of your application. Only those receiving awards are expected to complete a DIS after the project has started.

8. What is CLAS?

a. Refer to page 56 of the NOFO. The National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care are a set of 15 action steps that provide guidance for providing health care and services that are responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy and other communication needs.
b. Additional information can be found here: https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas.

9. What does evidence-informed methods refer to?

a. Evidence-informed methods involve the integration of established evidenced-based practice(s) alongside practitioner expertise and the people experiencing the practice. As outlined on page 10 of the NOFO, OMH expect recipients to use evidence-informed methods to identify, develop and implement procedures, systems, and strategies to:
(1) increase knowledge of Federal protection from national origin discrimination that limits meaningful access to health care services in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance; and
(2) increase utilization of language services by LEP individuals to make informed **healthcare decisions.**

10. What collaborations and partnerships are expected in this funding opportunity?

OMH expect recipients to partner with healthcare and nonprofit community-based

organizations to expand and increase the use of language access services for LEP populations engaged in healthcare decision-making. Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) (See Section K.5) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) can facilitate exchange of resources from language experts and instructors for communities with limited access to language services and tools. OMH also expect recipients to recruit and convene community stakeholders, LEP individuals, and other partners to inform the development and implementation of internal organizational policies, programs, and processes that enhance language access services.

11. What should be included in the application's sustainability plan?

As outlined on page 12 of the NOFO, OMH expects recipients to develop a plan to sustain the project after the award ends. The plan should include the identification of:

- key individuals and/or organization(s) whose support will be required to sustain activities; and financial, staff and supervisory, and material resources.
- existing collaborative partnerships with organizations that might embed the project within their routine operations or provide other support for sustaining the project efforts.

12. Do I have to publish and disseminate my findings?

a. Recipients should communicate and disseminate project knowledge and findings to include dissemination to federal, state, territorial, and tribal public agencies; policy makers; community organizations; community members; and stakeholders. All appropriate findings and products maybe posted on an HHS/OMH sponsored website as determined by HHS/OMH (refer to page 11).

E. EVALUATION AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

1. We would like to find out what the OMH's data reporting expectations are for this project. Do we need to collect and report on data at baseline, exit, and follow-up?

a. Recipients must develop and implement a process and outcomes evaluation plan which will clearly assess the extent to which the project results will be met. For details, please refer to page 9-11 of the NOFO.

2. What is a measurable outcome?

a. As outlined on page 19 of the NOFO, a “measurable outcome” is an observable end-result that describes how a particular intervention benefits project participant. It demonstrates the “impact” of the intervention. For example, it describes a change in participants’ financial, health, and/or functional status; mental well-being; knowledge; skill; attitude; awareness; or behavior. It can also describe a change in the degree to which participants exercise choice over behavior.

3. Does OMH have a requirement for hiring an external evaluator for the project?

a. The NOFO does not require the applicant to hire an external evaluator.