Frequently Asked Questions

MP-CPI-20-005: COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES TO STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC SUPPORTS FOR WORKING FAMILIES

AUGUST 2020

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GENERAL

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS NEW FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT (FOA)?

The purpose of the Community-based Approaches to Strengthening Economic Supports for Working Families Initiative is to serve low-income working families disproportionately at risk for adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including racial and ethnic minority families. This initiative seeks to determine if implementation of earned income tax credit (EITC) outreach and education activities in communities at higher risk for ACEs can result in (1) increased EITC receipt and (2) changes in risk and/or protective factors for ACEs.

HOW DO I ACCESS THE FOA?

The FOA for the Community-based Approaches to Strengthening Economic Supports for Working Families grant, MP-CPI-20-005 is accessible on Grants.gov

IS IT POSSIBLE TO SET UP A CALL WITH SOMEONE TO DISCUSS ELIGIBILITY AND PROPOSAL IDEAS?

No. In order to ensure an open and fair competition, OMH will not host individual phone calls to discuss the FOA, including eligibility and proposal ideas. OMH encourages all eligible organizations interested in applying for this opportunity to listen to the recorded technical assistance webinar on the OMH Youtube Channel.

WHERE CAN I FIND INFORMATION DISCUSSED ON THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WEBINAR?

Watch the Community-based Approaches to Strengthening Economic Supports for Working Families technical assistance (TA) webinar recording on the OMH Youtube channel.

HOW CAN PEOPLE SUBMIT QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FOA?

Submit all programmatic questions and inquiries to Naomi.aspaas@hhs.gov

Submit all administrative and budgetary requirements questions and inquiries to Roscoe.Brunson@hhs.gov

WHEN IS THE APPLICATION DUE DATE?

Your application is due Monday, August 17, 2020 at 6:00 PM Eastern Time.

HAS THIS FOA BEEN COMPETED BEFORE?

No, this is the first time this FOA is being competed.

WILL AWARDEES BE REQUIRED TO REAPPLY FOR FUNDING EACH YEAR?

Each year, awardees will be required to submit a non-competing continuation application for consideration for subsequent year funding. Subsequent budget periods are contingent on availability of funding and satisfactory performance.

WILL FIRST-TIME AWARDEES RECEIVE GRANT TRAINING AND COACHING?

Awardees will have two designated points of contact named in their Notice of Award: the federal project officer for programmatic questions and the grants management specialist for all award related questions.

WILL THE AWARDEE BE WORKING WITH THE REGIONAL OMH REPRESENTATIVE?

Awardees should establish multi-sectorial partnerships to collaboratively provide EITC outreach and education to the community(ies) of focus as described in the FOA on page 11.

IS THE SALARY CAP PER PERSON OR FOR THE WHOLE LINE ITEM?

The salary limitation is described in the FOA on page 30. It is an annual rate limitation on individuals and should be prorated to the level of effort dedicated to the project.

WILL THE SIX AWARDEES HAVE TO COVER THE ENTIRE UNITED STATES?

As described in the review and selection process in the FOA on page 56, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health will take geographic distribution of projects into consideration.

PROGRAMMING

WHO ARE THE TARGET POPULATIONS?

The target populations are low-income families and individuals in communities at higher risk for ACEs, including racial and ethnic minority communities, as described in the FOA on page.11.

CAN COLLABORATING PARTNERS CARRY OUT PROJECT ACTIVITIES AS IT RELATES TO THE PROJECT?

Project activities may be undertaken by partners or other subrecipients. However, it is the awardee who bears primary responsibility for the conduct of the entire awarded project. Effort that is transferred to partners or other subrecipients should be described in detail in the proposal and in any memorandum of understanding (MOU).

CAN WE USE FUNDS FOR TAX PREPARATION SERVICES?

No. Award funds may not be used to provide tax preparation services to individuals or family participants.

CAN AWARD FUNDS BE USED TO PROVIDE ANY TAX PREPARATION SERVICES?

No. Recipients should work with community partners to increase awareness among at-risk and low-income individuals and families about supportive services to facilitate participation in these services as described in the section entitled Expectations (Section B.2.b) in the FOA on page 13 and Funding Restrictions (Section F.7.3) on page 46.

IS THERE A LIMIT TO THE NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES AN APPLICANT CAN PROPOSE?

No.

MAY OUR EVALUATOR BE INTERNAL?

Evaluations should reflect the independence for the evaluation team. Even the appearance of a lack of independence can taint the resulting evaluation. Some organizations select external evaluators to achieve independence in the evaluation.

WHAT IS A MEASURABLE OUTCOME?

A "measurable outcome" is an observable end-result that describes how a particular intervention benefits project participants. It demonstrates the "impact" of the intervention. For example, a measurable outcome can be the proportion of taxpayers within a community that claim the EITC.

WHAT RESEARCH/EVALUATION DESIGN MUST I USE?

Applicants should propose an evaluation design that will allow for detection of a significant increase in EITC claims and changes in at least one or more ACEs risk and/or protective factors. The evaluation design should take into account and adequately control for threats to validity.

The application should identify and provide rationale for appropriate indicators/measures to document and monitor the impact of the intervention on outcomes.

Applicant should clearly demonstrate that evaluation of the impact of the intervention will be able to detect a statistically significant difference on key project outcomes, if such impact is present.

The evaluation work plan should indicate whether the impact analysis of the intervention will be conducted within the project period

DO ALL PROPOSED ACTIVITIES NEED TO BE EVIDENCE-BASED? IF SO, WHAT TYPE OF CRITERIA SHOULD BE USED TO IDENTIFY EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES?

Yes, this project asks that applicants justify their work plan using the best evidence for addressing capacity building and infrastructure needs for their target population. Best evidence includes published literature, results from studies, applicants' knowledge of their target population, and other credible sources.

WHAT ARE THE BASELINE DATA?

Baseline data are initial measurements data collected prior to the project intervention

The purpose of the baseline information is to assess the effect of the project and to compare what happens before and after the project has been implemented. Without baseline data, it's difficult to estimate any changes or to demonstrate progress, so it's best to capture baseline whenever possible.

WHAT IS THE EXPECTED SIZE OF THE STUDY POPULATION?

The sample sizes (treatment and control) should be of sufficient number to detect significant differences that may be attributable to the intervention.

IS THERE A REQUIRED PERCENTAGE OF FUNDING THAT SHOULD BE DEDICATED TO EVALUATION COSTS?

There is no required minimum or maximum percentage of funding that should be dedicated to evaluation. The amount allocated to evaluation should be commensurate with the activities.

WHERE CAN WE FIND LOCAL DATA ON THE RECIPIENTS OF EITC?

Applicants should identify appropriate data sources.

MUST THE EVALUATION DESIGN USE A CONTROL GROUP?

Recipients should develop and propose, in coordination with community partners, an evaluation plan, to include an evaluation design that will allow for detection of a significant increase in EITC claims and changes in a least one or more ACEs risk and/or protective factors. In the project narrative, applicants should describe their approach for collecting pre- and post-intervention data for both control and intervention groups..

HOW DO WE CAPTURE INCREASE IN EITC CLAIMANTS? IS SELF REPORTING ALLOWED?

Applicants may design a protocol that captures data on EITC claims. Administrative data, survey, and self-report may provide information on EITC claims.

IS IT EXPECTED THAT THE PROJECT WILL ONLY ASSIST POPULATIONS IN OPPORTUNITY ZONES?

The target population for the funded projects to be low-income families and individuals in communities at higher risk for ACEs, including racial and ethnic minority communities. OMH strongly encourages recipients to serve communities located in designated Opportunity Zones.

WHAT TYPES OF ACTIVITIES ARE ALLOWABLE TO INCREASE PROTECTIVE FACTORS TO PREVENT ACES, BESIDES OUTREACH AND EDUCATION FOR EITC?

Applicants should identify appropriate activities as outlined by the FOA.

Funding may only be used for allowable, allocable, reasonable and necessary expenses as described in 45 CFR part 75.

HOW DO I FIND IF WE ARE IN ONE OF THE DESIGNATED OPPORTUNITY ZONES?

Applicants can find information at Opportunity Zones Frequently Asked Questions.

ELIGIBILITY

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR THIS FUNDING OPPORTUNITY?

All applicants are eligible **except for** for-profit private institutions of higher education and for-profit organizations (including small businesses). Eligible applicants include:

- State Governments,
- 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 non-profit institutions of higher education
- U.S. Territories

APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

HOW CAN AN ORGANIZATION VERIFY THAT ITS SAM REGISTRATION IS CURRENT AND ACCURATE?

SAM registration status can be viewed at www.sam.gov.

SHOULD TEAMS ADDRESS COVID-19 OPERATIONAL OR CONTINGENCY PLANS IN THE PROJECT NARRATIVE CONTENT OR APPENDICES OF THE APPLICATION?

Applicants should address in the project narrative any operational conditions that are expected at the estimated time of the project start and throughout the project.

THE FOA SAYS AN APPLICANT SHOULD INCLUDE SMART OBJECTIVES. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. SMART is a useful way of strengthening objectives and activities for evaluation.

DO APPLICANTS HAVE TO SUBMIT A MEMORANDUMS OF AGREEMENT (MOA) AND LETTERS OF COMMITMENT (LOC)?

Signed MOAs and LOCs may be submitted for each partner. MOAs signed by all partners are preferred. If the applicant is unable to submit MOAs because of COVID-19 impacts, the applicant should submit an unsigned MOA(s). MOAs may be required prior to or within a set time of the start of an awarded project.

CAN AN APPLICANT APPLY IF IT MISSED THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WEBINAR?

Yes, interested organizations are still able to apply if they missed the technical assistance webinar. Attendance at the technical assistance webinar is not an eligibility criterion.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY SUSTAINABILITY PLAN?

OMH expects the applicant to provide a description of efforts to sustain and support continued implementation of successful evidence informed interventions, demonstrate an existence of established partnerships with successful efforts to continue the project and plans for leveraging funds and resources to sustain and expand EITC and ACEs primary prevention work. OMH expects the recipient to develop a sustainability plan within one year following the award, and begin implementing the plan in year two of the award.

IS AN INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL REQUIRED FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY?

Awardees must comply with all HHS regulations, including those governing protection of human subjects. You may find more information online at http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.html

IS COST SHARING OR MATCHING FUNDING REQUIRED?

No.

SHOULD A DETAILED BUDGET WITH BUDGET NARRATIVE BE SUBMITTED FOR THE TOTAL PROJECT PERIOD (3 YEARS) OR JUST FOR THE FIRST YEAR?

Applicants need to submit only a detailed budget with a budget narrative for the first year.

WHERE DO I FIND FORMS: SF424, SF424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL?

Forms are available on Grants.gov. They are included with the application materials for the opportunity.

SHOULD THE PROJECT NARRATIVE SECTION OF THE APPLICATION INCLUDE CITATIONS AND REFERENCES?

Yes, applicants are expected to include citations and references. The references cited list may be included as part of your appendices. Applicants should use a standard citation method and be consistent throughout the application for ease of reading.

WHAT IS THE REQUIRED ORDER FOR THE PROJECT NARRATIVE?

IS THERE A PAGE LIMIT FOR THE APPLICATION?

Refer to the project narraritive description in the FOA, starting on page 19. The total application, including the Project Narrative plus Appendices, must not exceed 70 pages.

ARE RESUMES/CVS INCLUDED IN THE PROJECT NARRATIVE PAGE LIMIT?

No, additional attachments that contain resumes/CVs or organizational charts are not a part of the narrative page limit. They are counted as part of the overall application page limit.

IS THE BUDGET INCLUDED AS PART OF THE PROJECT NARRATIVE PAGE LIMIT?

No.

ARE APPLICANTS REQUIRED TO SUBMIT DETAILED BUDGETS FOR SUB-AWARDEES AS PART OF THE APPLICATION?

No.

ARE LOBBYING RESTRICTIONS APPLICABLE TO THIS ANNOUNCEMENT?

Yes, submit required certification and disclosure forms (i.e., SF-LLL).

APPLICATION REVIEWING AND SCORING

WHAT IS THE REVIEW PROCESS FOR THIS COMPETITION?

Please refer to the Application Review Information section on pages 49-56 of the FOA.

HOW WILL APPLICANTS BE SCORED?

All eligible applications will be assessed according to the criteria outlined on pages 49-55 of the FOA.

1. Problem Statement (10 points)
2. Organizational Capacity (15 points)
3. Approach (35 points)
4. Evaluation Plan (20 points)
5. Dissemination Plan (10 points)
6. Sustainability Plan (10 points)

IS PREFERENCE (OR MORE POINTS) GIVEN TO ORGANIZATIONS OR ENTITIES THAT HAVE A TRACK RECORD WITH FOAS?

Applications are scored according to the weighted criteria described above.

AWARDS AND FUNDING

HOW MANY APPLICANTS WILL OMH AWARD?

OMH anticipates awarding up to six grants for $300,000 to $450,000 each per year, for up to three years.

WHEN WILL AN ANNOUNCEMENT BE MADE ABOUT SELECTED APPLICANTS?

Award recipients should be notified between September 15 and 30, 2020.

IS THE AWARD AMOUNT LISTED FOR 1 YEAR OR 3 YEARS?

The award ceiling and floor amounts are listed per budget period (~12 months). The project period may be up to 3 years. Please note that due to timing of award issuance or other administrative factors, funding for all approved budget periods beyond the first 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.

WHEN DOES THE PROJECT START?

The anticipated start date is September 30, 2020.

CAN WE INCLUDE A PLANNING PERIOD OF 2-3 MONTHS?

The submitted project plan should include a timeline that is inclusive of any planning needed within the first year. The applicant should not expect reimbursement for a planning period that takes place prior to the project start date.

CAN FUNDING BE UTILIZED TO CONTINUE THE OUTREACH & EDUCATION TO AN INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY PAST THE POINT OF RECEIPT OF EITC?

The initiative seeks to determine if implementation of EITC outreach and education activities in communities at higher risk for ACEs can result in (1) increased EITC receipt and (2) changes in risk and/or protective factors for Adverse Childhood Childhood Experiences. See pages 2-3 in the FOA.

WOULD THE GRANT AWARD PAYMENT BE STRUCTURED AS AN ADVANCE PAYMENT, REIMBURSEMENT OR DRAWDOWN? WHAT FREQUENCY WOULD THIS PAYMENT OCCUR?

If awarded, all awarded funding is physically placed within the federal payment management system for requested drawdown on an as needed basis. Your own organization determines the frequency and quarterly reporting the amounts draw is required quarterly within the federal payment management system.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUDGET PERIOD, PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE, AND THE PROJECT PERIOD?

Budget period is the amount of time that a given authorized amount of funding may be used to support project activities. OASH typically awards budget periods of up to one year. Subsequent years of funding may be possible through the non-competing continuation application process if a grant initiative is expected to require more than a year.

Period of performance is the aggregate amount of time for the authorized budget periods in a given project.

Project period is the anticipated maximum time for which the award is anticipated to receive funding. Funding is not guaranteed for the full project period. Funding throughout the project is contingent on satisfactory performance and availability of funds. Projects may end prior to the initial project period end date for a variety of reasons described in 45 CFR part 75.

DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

WHAT ARE RISK FACTORS FOR ACES?

Risk factors for ACEs include financial hardship; parental stress; substance use and/or mental health issues, including depression, in the family; parental characteristics such as young age, low education, single parenthood and low income; intimate partner violence in the family; community violence; concentrated neighborhood disadvantage (e.g. high poverty and residential instability, high unemployment rates).

WHAT ARE PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR ACES?

Protective factors include household financial security and economic stability; parental employment; parental education; adequate housing; supportive family environment and social networks; concrete support for basic needs; and access to health care and social services.

WHAT IS THE EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT (EITC)?

The EITC is a benefit for working people with low to moderate income. To qualify, you must meet certain requirements and file a tax return, even if you do not owe any taxes or are not required to file. EITC reduces the amount of tax you owe and may give you a refund.

WHAT ARE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)?

ACEs are potentially traumatic experiences and events that occur in childhood (0-17 years) and can include: (1) physical, emotional and sexual abuse; (2) physical and emotional neglect; (3) growing up in a household with substance misuse, mental health problems, or instability due to parental separation or incarceration of a parent, sibling or other member of the household; or (4) witnessing violence.

WHAT IS AN OPPORTUNITY ZONE?

An economically-distressed community where new investments, under certain conditions, may be eligible for preferential tax treatment. Localities qualify as Opportunity Zones if they have been nominated for that designation by the state and that nomination has been certified by the Secretary of the U.S. Treasury via his delegation authority to the Internal Revenue Service.

FOR THIS FOA, HOW IS "COMMUNITY-BASED" DEFINED?

For this FOA, "community-based" is defined as follows:

Community-based activity involves members of the affected community in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of programs and strategies.

RESOURCES

Internal Revenue Service

Opportunity Zones Frequently Asked Questions

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): Leveraging the Best Available Evidence

Health Impact in 5 Years: Earned Income Tax Credits

Essentials for Childhood: Creating Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships and Environments for All Children

Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: A Technical Package for Policy, Norm, and Programmatic Activities

CDC Foundation

Public Health Action Guide: EITC

Administration for Children and Families

Protective Factors Approaches in Child Welfare