Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Resource Center (HHS-2025-ACL-CIP-MPRC-0031)

Project Narrative and Application

- Does the Budget Narrative/Justification count toward the 20-page Project Narrative limit (Page 13), or can it be submitted as a separate attachment?

    o The Budget Narrative/Justification is separate from the Project Narrative and does not count toward the 20-page limit.

- What is the specific format or template for the Project Narrative, particularly for the "Experience of Project Team" section?

    o There is no required format or template for the Project Narrative or for any section other than the 20-page limit on the Project Narrative itself. Applicants should use whatever format they feel would most clearly articulate their proposal, experience, and/or plans. Keep in mind that the Project Narrative should be able to stand on its own (without attachments or links) in describing the applicant's proposed plan for meeting the NOFO goals and objectives.

    o Please note that the Project Work Plan, Budget Narrative/Justification, Letters of Commitment, and Vitae of Key Project Personnel are not counted as part of the Project Narrative for purposes of the 20-page limit (Page 13).

- Can ACL confirm whether faxed Letters of Commitment are acceptable if electronic submission is not feasible, and are there specific formatting requirements…is one even required?

    o Faxed Letters of Commitment would be accepted as long as they are received prior to the application deadline. Alternatively, applicants may email the Letters of Commitment to the NOFO POC: Rebecca.Kinney@acl.hhs.gov.

    o There is no format required for Letters of Commitment.

    o Letters of Commitment for any organizations identified in the proposal should be included to illustrate agreement to participate in the project.

- Is there a preferred method or template for the Letter of Intent by July 10, 2025, and what level of detail is expected?

    o Please email Letters of Intent to the NOFO POC: Rebecca.Kinney@acl.hhs.gov.

- There is no required format. A simple email expressing interest and intent to apply will suffice.

- These are not required but they are used to help ACL determine how many independent reviewer panels we need to establish to ensure timely review and proper evaluation of the applications received. The Letters of Intent will not be shared with the reviewers and are only used to help ACL in the planning process.

Collaboration and Involvement

- What is the expected scope and depth of collaboration with other ACL Resource Centers, such as the State Health Insurance Assistance Program Technical Assistance Center or the National Center on Elder Abuse?

  - Collaboration with other ACL funded Centers is encouraged but not required. At a minimum ACL would like to see open communication between Centers particularly where there is overlap in function and audience.

- What is the anticipated level of ACL's involvement in day-to-day grant management activities under the cooperative agreement (e.g., weekly meetings, quarterly reviews)?

  - As a cooperative agreement ACL expects to be substantially involved with grantee activities which includes review and collaboration on the development of grantee workplans, products, and events. This also includes, at minimum, weekly meetings with the identified ACL Project Officer and other ad hoc meetings based on need.

- We understand letters of commitment are required for key collaborating organizations and agencies specifically named to have a significant role in the project and should be considered essential collaborators. Suppose the applicant organization also wanted to include letters of support from non-key collaborating organizations or agencies that are not named to have a significant role in the project, but would like to express their support. Would letters of support be allowed to be submitted? The letters of support would be in addition to the required letters of commitment, not in lieu of.

  - Letters of support are allowable and would not count toward the Project Narrative page limit. Please be sure to distinguish in the application the difference between the letters of support and the letters of commitment so that the reviews are clear on what the partner organizations are agreeing to.

Funding and Budget

- How should the additional $500,000 for testing new technologies in Year 1 be allocated in the budget narrative, and what are the allowable expenses and reporting requirements?

    o Applicants can either:

        ▪ Include this $500,000 in the Year 1 Budget Narrative along with the rest of the budget as long as the activities associated with this funding is clearly identified. Or

        ▪ Submit a separate Budget Narrative for Year 1 for this funding specifically. This can be done as an attachment to the full application or as an addendum to the broader Budget Narrative.

    o The same grant policies and restrictions apply to this $500,000 as the rest of the budget.

    o Reporting on this funding should be embedded into the other Year 1 reports submitted for this grant.

- Are there specific guidelines or restrictions on distributing the $1,500,000 (Year 1) and $1,000,000 (Years 2 and 3) across budget categories (e.g., personnel, travel, equipment)?

    o No, there are no additional restrictions or guidelines beyond the standard HHS grants policies and requirements.   However, funding will be allocated in three separate 12-month budget periods over the life of the project period. Applicants should plan to use the funding within the budget period it is received.

SMPRC Functional Themes and Responsibilities

- What are examples of "innovative communication strategies" or "new technologies" that align with improving SMP fraud prevention messaging?

    o ACL is looking for the applicants of this funding opportunity to propose suggestions for improving and enhancing the SMP fraud prevention messaging. The goal is to effectively reach more of the SMP target audience either through SMP Resource Center activities and/or through the SMP state grantee activities.

- What are the specific expectations for supporting the Volunteer Risk and Program Management (VRPM) framework, particularly regarding updates or additional elements?

    o The SMP Resource Center grantee will work with ACL to identify needed updates and/or technical assistance needs around the VRPM framework specifically.

Beyond that, ACL expects the SMP Resource Center to help support the SMP state grantees with the recruitment, retention, and management of their teams. This includes providing technical assistance and training around volunteer management.

- How should applicants prioritize the four SMP Strategic Program Themes (Team Member and Enrollee Education, Workforce Development, Operational Excellence, Innovation and Partnership) in their proposals?

    o All four themes are important in the support of the SMP network. Applicants should use their knowledge and expertise to determine how they would propose using these themes to support the network and which activities they will conduct to provide that support.

- What is the expected scope and frequency (e.g., monthly, quarterly) of the regular newsletter for the SMP network?

    o ACL does not have an established requirement for this activity. Applicants should propose their suggestions for the scope and frequency of a regular SMP newsletter/s.

Accessibility and Evaluation

- What are the specific requirements for ensuring materials are 508-compliant, and are there resources available to assist with compliance?

    o An outline on the HHS 508-compliance expectations for grantees can be found here: HHS Accessibility & Section 508 | HHS.gov. This site includes resources and tools to assist with compliance.

- What are acceptable evaluation methods or tools for measuring SMPRC activity outcomes, particularly for pilot testing of new technologies?

    o There is no established evaluation method required for this grant. The applicant should include their proposed outcomes and evaluation plans for their activities in their application including their proposal for pilot testing new technologies.

- What are the specific data elements required in the SMP Information and Reporting System (SIRS), and how will SMPRC feedback be incorporated into system updates?

    o Please review the reporting requirements for the state SMP grants as outlined in the state NOFO: https://apply07.grants.gov/apply/opportunities/instructions/PKG00278811-instructions.pdf.

- o The SIRS forms can be found on the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs website here: https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAICList?ref_nbr=202310-0985-004.

    - o The SMPRC grantee will be asked to provide insight and suggestions for SIRS enhancements as needed throughout the life of the grant.

- What are the detailed reporting requirements for semi-annual narrative progress reports, and are there templates available?

    - o ACL has information, resources, tools, and forms available to current grantees on our website here: https://acl.gov/grants/managing-grant. Within that site is a link to a suggested format for the performance report.

Eligibility and Organizational Capacity

- What constitutes "demonstrated knowledge of the SMP program" for eligibility, particularly for organizations new to the SMP network?

    - o Applicants should articulate their understanding of the SMP program in their Project Narrative which could include demonstrations of subject matter expertise in Medicare, health care fraud, volunteer team member management, community outreach, or other areas of expertise required to successfully support the SMP network. This could also include demonstration of partnerships, knowledge, and/or commitment from organizations engaged with the SMP network.

- What specific metrics or evidence demonstrate organizational capacity to support all 54 SMP project grantees?

    - o Applicants should provide information in their proposal to address the review criteria and questions as outlined on pages 24 and 25 for the NOFO.

- What types of organizations qualify as "key participating organizations" for Letters of Commitment?

    - o The NOFO lists some suggested partners/organizations for this grant on pages 9 and 10. These partners are strongly suggested but not required. In addition, this list is not all-encompassing. Applicants are encouraged to propose partners not identified in the NOFO.

- Clarification on Project Narrative section *"Experience of Project Team:"* Can you please confirm if there are specific instructions applicants should adhere to for the Experience of Project Team section? Page 16 indicates the Project Narrative includes a new requirement called Experience

of Project Team, but there are no instructions, like the other sections of the Project Narrative. We'd like to confirm if there are specific instructions for the Experience of Project Team section that may have been left out (possibly from page 18, after the Organizational Capability instructions).

- o There are no specific instructions for describing the experience of the project team beyond what is included in the organizational capability section. Include relevant information on the proposed project team in the organizational capability section, which is included in the 20-page limit for the Project Narrative. However, any key personal vitae/resumes will not count toward the Project Narrative page limit.