WH-AST-19-001 Technical Assistance Webinar Questions (4/30/19)

Technical Assistance:

A technical assistance webinar for potential applicants was held on Tuesday, April 30, 2019 at 2 pm ET. To access the archived recording, go to the URL listed below.
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21kvAc20PeY

General questions

Q: The FOA indicates the total application is not to exceed 25 pages. 50 pages were mentioned in the webinar presentation. Are appendices included in the 50 page count?

A: The FOA indicates that the Project Narrative must not exceed 25 pages. The complete application, which includes appendices, must not exceed 50 page in totals.

Q: Our organization has a standing letter of commitment with a partner. Can this standing letter be submitted to satisfy the FOA's letter of commitment requirements? Does the application need to include specific letters of commitment even if direct services will occur around the same services covered in a standing letter of commitment?

A: Standing letters of commitment are acceptable provided they address the same areas identified in the FOA as project-specific letters would.

Q: The FOA lists key personnel as "Project Director/Principal Investigator, Program Manager/Program Coordinator, and Local evaluator". I want to confirm whether the positions listed with slashes are indicating one person (a Project Director OR a Principal Investigator for a total of three minimum key personnel) or two people (a Project Director AND a Principal Investigator or a total of five minimum key personnel).

A: An Administrative Officer (AO) should be identified as well as a Principal Investigator (PI) or Project Director (PD) for the notice of award (NOA)- the AO is the organizational representative for the business/administrative aspects of the grant. For the PI/PD we would recommend having one as the primary or lead, who will be designated for the (NOA). The remaining key personnel, include a Project Manager and/or Project Coordinator, and Local Evaluator. The applicant should explain how they want to manage the award.

Q: Must the three required positions be 100% FTEs, or can they be partially allocated toward this project?

A: The FTE effort of key personnel should reflect actual effort needed to fulfill the proposed activities. They do not need to be 100% each.

Q: What documentation is expected re: IRB Approval? If an organization is not partnering with a research institution but still has internal expertise, should it still submit information re: IRB Approval?

A: The FOA requires that applicants describe their ability to receive IRB Approval or Exemption in a timely manner. This is also consistent with the most recent update to the Common Rule.

Q: Is there any distinction between partners and sub-recipients?

A: Sub-recipients are entities that receive a portion of awarded funds through a formal agreement with the primary recipient organization. Partners do not necessarily receive grant funds, but have signed letters of commitment with the recipient organization describing their role in proposed activities.

Q: Can applications list the types of service organizations that can be involved in activities and name the particular organization following the award?

A: Letters of Commitment are required for formal partnerships. Because Letters of Commitment are signed between two organizations, specific entities need to be identified prior to award. The FOA describes a variety of potential partners who could be included in multi-sectorial efforts.

Q: Can organizations apply as a lead organization if they are not a direct service organization?

A: Yes.

Q: The FOA states the suggested period of performance is 12 months, but that applications can be renewed for a maximum period of performance of 24 months. Is there any priority or preference in period of performance?

A: As a matter of standard grant administration, all grant and cooperative agreement awards are made on a yearly basis and must submit continuation applications to secure additional years of funding. The FOA indicates the program office's preference.

Community needs assessment

Q: The FOA indicates proposed programs should be grounded in the community needs assessment. Is it required that the community needs assessment be completed before submission, or is it just suggested?

A: The community needs assessment should be completed as part of the application.

Q: Does the community needs assessment need to have been developed with this specific FOA in mind? Can previously completed community needs assessments, such as Ryan White Consumer Needs Assessments be used?

A: So long as the submitted community needs assessment is current, applicable, and continues to be relevant to the population, existing community needs assessments are acceptable.

Q: How long is an existing community needs assessment considered current?

A: Community needs assessments should correspond with the most recent surveillance data available. Relevant surveillance data is generally captured every two years. Applications providing local data collected by the applicant should provide a rationale for why it is being used and when it was collected.

Target Population and Interventions

Q: Is there a minimum number or set range of individuals that must be reached by applicants?

A: A specific number of participants is not required and can vary depending on the needs identified through the community needs assessment. Significant numbers will be important for the evaluation portion of activities to ensure evaluation results can be collected. It is suggested that applicants oversample.

Q: Can adolescents be in the target population? Are individuals between the ages of 14 and 22 eligible for inclusion?

A: This FOA does not limit the target population by age. Applications should clearly identify their rationale for selecting their target population and how it stems from their community needs assessment.

Q: Is this FOA open to transgender women, or just cis women?

A: This FOA does not stipulate any limitations based on gender. Applicants should clearly define their target population regardless of their gender identity. Community needs assessments should clearly describe target populations.

Q: Would OWH allow applications to include other CDC evidence-based and effective interventions for HIV prevention to count towards project elements related to supporting survivors beyond the STOP SV technical package?

A: Applicants should clearly demonstrate how proposed activities align with the STOP SV technical package and other objectives of the FOA. Successful applications employing other evidence-based strategies to complement and/or fit within STOP SV strategy areas will clearly indicate how those activities support work towards grant objectives and fit within the context provided by their community needs assessment.

<u>Evaluation</u>

Q: May our evaluator be internal?

A: OWH requires a local evaluator, which may be internal or external to your organization. Best practices for conflict of interest and objectivity should be applied.

Q: What is the distinction between "Local Evaluators" and "Lead Evaluators?"

A: Key personnel for evaluation activities as proposed in applications are "Local Evaluators." The OWH Evaluation Lead is referred to as the "Lead Evaluator."

Q: HHS grants often require an outside evaluator with approximately 20% of budget dedicated to it. Is the same expected for this cooperative agreement?

A: This FOA requires a local evaluator who may be internal or external. Applicants are encouraged to use best practices within the field of evaluation, and to assess the capabilities of staff within their organizations when making their determinations.

Q: When should baseline and outcome measures be collected?

A: Baseline should be collected as part of the community needs assessment; data will be reported to OWH on a quarterly basis but grantees may include other data collection plans within their local evaluation that falls on a different timeline.

Q: What are process and outcome measures tied to the risk and protective factors identified in the community needs assessment?

A: **Process measures** reflect the specific steps in a **process** that contribute — either positively or negatively — to a particular outcome metric, based on a logic model linking activities to outcomes.

Outcome measures reflect a "change in the health of an individual, group of people, or population that is attributable to an intervention or series of interventions," based on a theory of change or conceptual model that identifies the relationships between risk and protective factors and outcomes.

Q: What measures must be included?

A: 1. A measure of the implementation of strategies to support victims/survivors to lessen harms after experiencing IPV
2. A measure of the implementation of strategies to promote social norms that protect against IPV

Q: How should evaluation findings be disseminated? When are they due?

A: We expect that nationwide dissemination of products and knowledge will occur through conference presentations and submissions to peer-reviewed journals. We may publish (including on a website) all appropriate findings and products. Manuscript submissions and publications are dependent on factors such as data availability. This is why we ask that you provide us with a plan describing your intentions to disseminate your findings, whether that is periodically or upon completion. A final report covering grant operations, lessons learned, evaluation results, and challenges and successes must be completed and submitted to OWH within 90 days following the end of the grant period.

Q: What research design must I use?

A: Evaluation plans must include a theory-driven process for implementing this evaluation plan and analyzing results throughout the life of the project, as well as appropriate instruments for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and data collection during the start-up phase of the program.