FY2020 FOA Technical Assistance Webinar: National Infrastructure for Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 within Racial and Ethnic Minority Communities

MP-CPI-20-006

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

National Infrastructure for Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 within Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations

Webinar Outline

I. Overview of the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)

II. Grants and Acquisition Management
   i. Competitive Application Requirements

III. Q & A

Mission of the HHS Office of Minority Health

The mission of the Office of Minority Health is to improve the health of racial and ethnic minority populations through the development of policies and programs that will help eliminate health disparities.

OMH Activities and Priorities

- Broad portfolio encompassing chronic diseases, infectious diseases, injury, environmental health, access to care
- Prioritization of OMH activities:
  - Align with HHS strategic goals and initiatives (e.g. opioid epidemic, sickle cell disease)
  - Address underlying factors (e.g. social determinants of health, workforce development, language access)
  - Leverage partnerships
    - Highlight health disparities
    - Identify solutions that are effective, scalable, and replicable

Executive Summary

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Minority Health (OMH) announces the availability of funds for a fiscal year (FY) 2020 cooperative agreement award for the National Infrastructure for Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 within Racial and Ethnic Minority Communities Initiative. The purpose of the initiative is to develop and coordinate a strategic and structured national network of national, state/territorial/tribal and local public and community-based organizations that will mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on racial and ethnic minority, rural and socially vulnerable populations through: (1) the coordinated development and dissemination of culturally and linguistically diverse information; (2) dissemination of information on available COVID-19 testing and vaccination, other healthcare, and social services, especially in geographic communities highly impacted by COVID-19 and at highest risk for adverse outcomes; and (3) dissemination of effective strategies for COVID-19 response, recovery, and resilience.

National Infrastructure for Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 within Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations Primary Outcomes (FOA pg. 3)

The initiative is expected to result in:

1) improved reach of COVID-19-related public health messaging to racial and ethnic minority, rural and socially vulnerable populations;
2) increased connection to healthcare and social services for racial and ethnic minority, rural and socially vulnerable populations;
3) decreased disparities in COVID-19 testing and vaccination rates among racial and ethnic minority populations in highly impacted geographic areas; and
4) enhanced state/territorial/tribal capacity and infrastructure to support response, recovery, and resilience for racial and ethnic minority, rural and socially vulnerable populations.

Program Description (FOA pgs. 6-27)

OMH expects the recipient to:

1) Develop and coordinate a national strategic information dissemination network of national, state/territorial/tribal and local organizations.
2) Identify state, territories and tribes with highly impacted geographic areas of racial and ethnic minority, rural and/or socially vulnerable individuals at substantially greater risk for COVID-19 infection and adverse outcomes.
3) Develop and disseminate culturally and linguistically diverse multi-media outreach and education.
4) Partner with community-based organizations (CBOs) to disseminate information and ensure CBOs link at-risk individuals to testing, vaccination, other healthcare, and social services, in particular in highly impacted geographic areas.
5) Identify and disseminate successful state, tribal, territorial and local strategies addressing immediate response, recovery and resilience; and implement risk reduction strategies for vulnerable populations in highly impacted geographic areas.
6) Develop and implement a Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Improvement plan.
7) Document and disseminate lessons learned, successes, challenges and other project knowledge and findings.

National Strategic Network Expectations (FOA pgs. 12-14)

- Implement a collaborative partnership framework within 3 months of award, including significant roles for the state offices of minority health/health equity and/or other state entity with a similar function.
- Develop a nationwide strategic and structured bi-directional information dissemination network comprised of a range of national, state, territorial, tribal and local organizations
  - Demonstrated capacity to reach and effectively communicate: (1) with racial/ethnic minority populations across the nation in general; and/or (2) with racial/ethnic minority, rural and socially vulnerable populations in highly impacted geographic areas or at risk for worse outcomes due to COVID-19.
  - Representative of and have demonstrated relationships with racial/ethnic minority, rural and socially vulnerable sub-populations at-risk for not receiving COVID-19 public health and other messages

National Strategic Network Expectations (cont'd) (FOA pgs. 12-14)

- Act as the central Network coordinating body that:
  1) ensures the Network serves as an effective infrastructure for disseminating national COVID-19 messages, with substantial involvement of OMH, from the national level to the state/territorial/tribal level and ultimately to local community level;
  2) ensures project activities are community-centered as informed by the Network; and
  3) successfully mobilizes Network members to conduct other Initiative activities.

Highly Impacted Geographic Areas Expectations (FOA pgs. 14-15)

- Apply criteria for assessing risk for COVID-19 and adverse outcomes to identify states, territories and tribes with highly impacted geographic areas of racial and ethnic minority, rural and/or socially vulnerable individuals in which project activities can be targeted.
- Monitor surveillance and data on an ongoing basis to identify new and emerging areas of need.

Information Development and Dissemination Expectations (FOA pgs. 15-18)

- Identification of populations and communities of greatest need for information
  - Focus on racial and ethnic minority, rural and socially vulnerable populations, and also consider sub-groups for which messaging requires special consideration and/or is limited
- Assessment of population-specific information needs and gaps among populations of greatest need, including in highly impacted geographic areas
- Identification of strategies to address information needs and gaps
- Development of culturally and linguistically diverse, accurate, actionable, plain language messaging and information for a variety of settings

Information Development and Dissemination Expectations (cont'd) (FOA pgs. 15-18)

- Strategic dissemination and delivery of information through the Network in a variety of formats and through communications channels
- Dissemination of information on a national scale to all state, territorial, tribal and community partners; and conduct intensive outreach and information dissemination in highly impacted geographic areas.
- Design and execution of a strategic paid media effort, with a focus on targeted geographic areas.

CBO-Supported Service Linkage Expectations (FOA pgs. 18-19)

Partner with CBOs to:

- Disseminate public health messaging and information to communities of greatest need
- Assess and document community assets and gaps for COVID-19 testing, vaccination, other healthcare (e.g., treatment, symptom management, chronic disease management, mental health and substance use treatment services, etc.) and social services
- Develop strategies to identify at-risk individuals, assess their needs and link them to COVID-19 testing, vaccination, other healthcare and social services
- Assess and track the utilization of COVID-19 testing, vaccination, other healthcare and social services among individuals linked to testing, vaccination, other healthcare, and social services

Response, Recovery and Resilience Strategy Dissemination Expectations (FOA pgs. 19-21)

- Assessment of effective strategies utilized in past public health crises and disasters for application to COVID-19 response, recovery and resilience
- Development and implementation of a protocol for the identification of best practices, promising approaches and effective strategies for COVID-19 response, recovery and resilience for racial and ethnic minority, rural and socially vulnerable populations.
- Documentation of best practices, promising approaches and effective strategies and development of appropriate materials to support dissemination
- Facilitation of the exchange of best practices, promising approaches and effective strategies across states, tribes, territories and communities

Response, Recovery and Resilience Strategy Implementation Expectations (FOA pgs. 21-22)

- Identification of up to 5 communities in highly impacted geographic areas with particularly vulnerable subpopulations at greater risk for COVID-19 and adverse outcomes.
- Support of the implementation of innovative strategies or approaches for reducing or mitigating risk of exposure to COVID-19 and adverse outcomes among vulnerable subpopulations in each community.
- Assessment of awareness and adoption of public health practices (e.g., physical distancing, COVID-19 testing, vaccination, chronic disease management, etc.) among vulnerable subgroups in the selected communities.

The budget to support the implementation of the innovative strategies or approaches in these highly impacted geographic areas should not exceed 5% of the total award.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Improvement Expectations (FOA pgs. 22-24)

- Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for monitoring, process and outcomes evaluation and quality improvement.
- OMH expects project outcomes to address the extent to which:
  - Public health messaging and information materials developed under this initiative are demonstrated to be comprehended by target populations and are culturally and linguistically appropriate
  - Population-specific information gaps among populations of greatest need were reduced through the production and dissemination of culturally and linguistically diverse materials
  - Racial and ethnic minority, rural and socially vulnerable populations are reached by culturally and linguistically appropriate public health messaging and information developed and disseminated through the Network
  - Racial and ethnic minority, rural and socially vulnerable populations are linked to healthcare and social services and receive necessary healthcare and social services

Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Improvement Expectations (cont'd) (FOA pgs. 22-24)

- OMH expects project outcomes to address the extent to which:
  - Disparities in COVID-19 testing and vaccination rates among racial and ethnic minority populations are decreased in highly impacted geographic areas
  - State/territorial/tribal capacity and infrastructure are enhanced to support response, recovery, and resilience for racial and ethnic minority, rural and socially vulnerable populations as evidenced through receipt of materials/technical support regarding promising approaches and effective strategies for COVID-19 response, recovery and resilience for racial and ethnic minority, rural and socially vulnerable populations
  - Awareness and adoption of public health practices is increased among vulnerable subgroups in the selected communities.

Project Findings Documentation and Dissemination Expectations (FOA pgs. 24-25)

- Document project knowledge and findings, to include lessons learned, successes and challenges as related to infrastructure development, information development and dissemination, partner and community engagement, connection to healthcare and social services, promising approaches and effective strategies, and sustainability.
- Communicate and disseminate project knowledge and findings in collaboration with the Network.

Award Information

- Estimated Federal Funds Available: $40,000,000 over 3 years
- Anticipated Number of Awards: 1
- Award Ceiling (Federal Funds including indirect costs): $22,000,000 in year 1
- Award Floor (Federal Funds including indirect costs): $10,000,000 in year 1
- Anticipated Start Date: 06/15/2020
- Estimated Period of Performance: Up to 3 years
- Anticipated Initial Budget Period Length: 12 months
- Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement

Application Review Criteria (FOA pgs. 67-79)

1) Reaching Racial and Ethnic Minority Communities Nationally and Highly Impacted/At-risk Populations Locally (10 points)
2) Technical Approach and Work Plan (75 points)
   a) Partnerships and Collaboration (10 out of 75 points)
   b) Information Development and Dissemination (20 out of 75 points)
   c) Effective Response, Recovery and Resilience Strategies (10 out of 75 points)
   d) Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Improvement (25 out of 75 points)
   e) Documentation and Dissemination of Project Findings (5 out of 75 points)
   f) Work Plan (5 out of 75 points)
3) Organizational Capability and Project Management (15 points)

Grants and Acquisitions Management

Submission Dates and Times

- **Your application is due by 6 p.m. Eastern Time on May 11, 2020.**
- Your submission time will be **determined by the date and time stamp provided by Grants.gov when you complete** your submission.
- Strongly encouraged to submit your application a minimum of 3-5 days ***prior*** to the application closing date.
- Grants.gov may take up to 48 hours to notify you of a successful submission.
- If you fail to submit your application by the due date and time, we will not review it, and it will receive no further consideration.

Eligible Applicants (FOA pg. 28)

All entities are eligible except for-profit institutions of higher education and for-profit organizations including small businesses. Eligible applicants includes the U.S. territories and private non-profit institutions of higher education.

Cost Sharing or Matching

You are not required to provide cost-sharing or matching in your proposed budget.

Funding Announcement

- The Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) provides information and guidance related to applications.
- Read the **entire** funding announcement.
- Follow the FOA carefully!
- The information provided in the FOA takes precedence over any conflicting information in other documents.

Address to Request Application Package

- Obtain an application package electronically by accessing Grants.gov at http://www.grants.gov/
- Find it by searching with the CFDA number provided on page 1 of the FOA
- CFDA Number is: 93.137
- Be sure to subscribe to the announcement in Grants.gov so you receive notification of any updates to the FOA or supporting documents

Application Submission

- OASH requires that all applications be submitted electronically via Grants.gov unless an exemption has been granted. If you submit an application via any other electronic communication, it will not be accepted for review.
- Access Grants.gov website portal. All funding opportunities and grant application packages are made available on www.Grants.gov.
- An application will not be considered valid until all application components are entered in Grants.gov and received by GAM according to the deadlines specified in the “DATES” section on page 1 of the FOA.
- Contact Grants.gov with any questions or concerns regarding the electronic application process 1-800-518-4726

Application Submission (cont'd)

Applications must be submitted as **three (3)** files:

- Upload #1: The ENTIRE **project** narrative
- Upload #2: The ENTIRE budget narrative, including supporting documentation described in the **Budget Narrative** content section
- Upload #3: All documents in the **appendices uploaded in the Attachments section of your Grants.gov application as a single acceptable file**

Exceptions: Required standard forms **do not** apply to the submission requirements as stated in **Disqualification Criteria**

Application Submission (cont'd)

- Any files uploaded or attached to the Grants.gov application must be of the following file formats – Microsoft Word, Excel or PowerPoint, Adobe PDF, or image formats (JPG, GIF, TIFF, or BMP only).

- HHS/OASH strongly recommends that electronic applications be uploaded as Adobe PDF. If you convert to a PDF document prior to submission, you may prevent any unintentional formatting that might occur with submission of an editable document.

Application Submission (cont'd)

- **Be complete** and do not leave blanks on forms unless the information is not applicable.
- The individual submitting the application forms must have the legal authority to act on behalf of the organization.

Application Submission (cont'd)

- To ensure successful submission of your application, carefully follow the step-by-step instructions provided at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html

- These instructions are kept up-to-date and also provide links to Frequently Asked Questions and other troubleshooting information.

Application Elements (FOA pgs. 31-58)

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- Budget Information for Non-construction Programs (SF-424A)
- Assurances for Non-construction Programs (SF-424B)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)
- Project Abstract Summary
- Project Narrative – Submit all Project Narrative content as a single acceptable file.
- Budget Narrative – Submit all Budget Narrative content as a single acceptable file.
- Appendices – Submit all appendix content **as a single acceptable file**, in the **Attachments section of your Grants.gov application**.

Application Format

- Be sure to follow Project Narrative format instructions in FOA. Your application will be disqualified if it does not conform to the format requirements.
- You *must* double-space the Project Narrative pages.
- You *must* use 12-point font.
- You should use an easily readable typeface, such as Times New Roman or Arial.
- You may single-space tables or use alternate fonts but you must ensure the tables are easy to read.
- For Appendices and Budget Narrative, you should use the same formatting specified for the Project Narrative.
- Appendix documents such as résumés may use alternate formats common to such documents.

System for Award Management (SAM)

- You are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for Federal awards through Grants.gov. If you do not currently have a DUNS number, please contact Grants.gov to create a temporary DUNS number if you are unable to complete the SAM registration process prior to submitting your application.

- Your organization must register online in the System for Award Management (SAM). Under normal operating procedures Grants.gov will reject submissions from applicants with nonexistent or expired SAM Registrations.

- Because of the public health emergency with COVID-19, the requirement for SAM registration **at the time of submission** has been waived. Grants.gov will temporarily allow submissions without a current SAM registration. **A completed registration in SAM may be required prior to receiving any award based on your application**.

System for Award Management (SAM)

- If you are registering a new entity in SAM.gov, you must mail an "Entity Administrator Notarized Letter" to the **FEDERAL SERVICE DESK,** ATTN: SAM.GOV Registration Processing. Your notarized letter with the details required must be mailed. Your registration will not be activated until the letter is submitted and reviewed.
- Minimum timeframe to complete an initial SAM registration (30min).
- Timeframe for applicant's registration to become active (up to 10 days).
- SAM registration **must** be renewed each year.
- Average timeframe for updates to take effect in Grants.gov (72hrs).

SAM (cont'd)

Recommend applicants check active registration in SAM well before application deadline.

If successful and receive award must maintain an active SAM registration w/current info at all times during the active award.

If you have not complied with these requirements, HHS/OASH

1. May determine you are not qualified to receive an award; and
2. May use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Should you successfully compete and receive an award, **all first-tier sub-award recipients must have a DUNS number at the time you, the recipient, make a sub-award.**

Funding Restrictions

- Allowability, allocability, reasonableness, and necessity of direct expenses; indirect costs may be charged on HHS/OASH grants in accordance with Department regulations and current policy effective at the time of the award

- Current requirements can be found online via 45 CFR part 75 “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards”

- Indirect costs may be included per 45 CFR 75.414. Applicants should indicate which method or rate is used for this application

- Current Salary Limitation: $197,300 effective January 2020

Funding Restrictions (Pg 62-64)

Pre-award costs are not allowed. Pre-award costs (per 45 CFR § 75.458) are those incurred prior to the effective date of the Federal award directly pursuant to the negotiation and in anticipation of the Federal award where such costs are necessary for efficient and timely performance of the scope of work.

Current Salary Limitation: $197,300 effective Jan 5, 2020

Funds awarded cannot be used to pay for COVID-19 testing or any health care services.

Also see Section B.2.e

Budget Narrative and Forms

The Project Budget Information

- SF 424A budget forms
- Budget narrative
- Detailed budget justification

- Must be consistent with the requirements of the FOA
- Budgeted costs must reflect proposed activities
- Forms, narrative and detailed justification do not count towards page limit
- Budget line item descriptions and justification requirements are explained in FOA
- Refer to suggested table formats in the FOA

Application Disqualification Criteria – 1 (FOA pgs. 29-30)

- Submitted electronically via www.grants.gov by due date and time (unless an exemption was granted two (2) business days prior to the deadline).
- If you successfully submit multiple applications for the same project, we will only review the last application received by the deadline.
- HHS/OASH/GAM deems your application eligible.
- Project Narrative must be double-spaced, on the equivalent of 8.5” X 11” page size with 1” margins on all sides and font size not less than 12 points.
- Application meets the Application Responsiveness Criteria.

Application Disqualification Criteria – 2 (FOA pg. 30)

	FOA pg. 28 & 30
Your Federal funds including indirect costs **does not exceed the maximum** indicated in Award Ceiling.	$22,000,000
Your Federal funds request including indirect costs **is not below the minimum** indicated in Award Floor.	$10,000,000
Project narrative **does not exceed**	50 pages
Total Application, including Project Narrative plus appendices **does not exceed**	75 pages

Application Review

- Applications that lack the required supporting documentation or submit additional appendix files will not be disqualified from competitive review; however, it may impact your application's scoring under the evaluation criteria.

- Be sure to follow submission instructions carefully.

Application Review (cont'd)

- Eligible applications will be reviewed and scored by a panel of independent reviewers with technical expertise in applicable fields according to the criteria listed in the Program Announcement.
- Objective Review Committee process is formal and confidential. Federal staff are available for questions and to ensure the process is consistent and fair, but do not participate in discussion and scoring.
- Applications are also reviewed by:
  - GAM staff for administrative & business compliance.
  - Program Office staff for programmatic compliance.

Funding Decisions

- Recommendations for funding will be made to the Grants Management Officer to conduct risk analyses.

Funding Process

- **We are not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of this announcement.**

- **Only the grants officer can bind the Federal government to the expenditure of funds.**

- If you receive communications to negotiate an award or request additional or clarifying information, **this does not mean you will receive an award; it only means that your application is still under consideration.**

- **All award decisions, including level of funding if an award is made, are final and you may not appeal.**

Funding Process: Review of Risk Posed by Applicant

- HHS/OASH will evaluate each application in the fundable range for risks posed by the applicant before issuing an award in accordance with 45 CFR 75.205

- OASH will use a risk-based approach and may consider any items such as the following as stated in the FOA:
  - Applicant's financial stability;
  - Quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in 45 CFR part 75;
  - History of performance – Applicants record in managing Federal awards including timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirement, conformance to the terms and conditions of previous Federal awards;
  - Reports and findings from audits performed; and
  - The applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities.

Funding Process - 1

Notice of Award (NOA)

- Notifies the successful applicant of the selection; award amount; project & budget periods

- Includes any conditions on the award (for example, requirements that must be met as a condition of receiving the grant funds)

- Includes standard terms, reporting requirements and contact information for GAM and the Program Office

Funding Process - 2

- If we do not make an award to you because we determine your organization does not meet either or both of the minimum qualification standards as described in 45 CFR §75.205(a)(2), we must report that determination to FAPIIS, if certain conditions apply.

- At a minimum, if you are a prior Federal award recipient, information in the system must indicate that your organization "*demonstrates a satisfactory record of executing programs or activities under Federal grants, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards; and integrity and business ethics."* 45 CFR § 75.205(a)(2)

- This information will then be available for other organizations to review when considering you for an award.

Funding Process - 3

- GAM is the official contact for the awardee.
- All official communication related to the grant is between GAM and the successful applicant.
- Program Office will notify unsuccessful applicants via letter.

Cooperative Agreement Terms and Conditions

- An award under this announcement will be a Cooperative Agreement with substantial involvement by OMH during the project period.
- Description of substantial involvement in Section B.3, including:
  - Review of recipient progress during the planning period and approval to move forward with full implementation. **Note funding levels for subsequent budget periods will depend on status of plan approvals and may be negotiated between HHS/OASH and the recipient.**
  - Quarterly review of priorities and work plans for award activities and approval to move forward with implementation of those activities.
  - Review and approval of the design, questions, and success measures for the project evaluations.
  - Prior approval for change of time that Key Personnel.

Questions and Answers

National Infrastructure for Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 within Racial and Ethnic Minority Communities FOA Inquiries

Programmatic Requirements
Office of Minority Health
Contact Name: Juliet Bui
Email: Juliet.Bui@hhs.gov

Administrative and Budgetary Requirements
HHS/OASH/Grants and Acquisitions Management
Grants Management Specialist
Contact Name: Robin Fuller
Email: Robin.Fuller@hhs.gov