

Questions and Answers – 9/30/2014

Funding Opportunity Announcement CDC-RFA-GH15-1538

Strengthening the Capacity of Faith-based Organizations (FBOs) and Faith-Based Health Systems to Sustain the Role of FBOs in a Coordinated Response to HIV/AIDS under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)

Questions and Answers by email

Q:

Please clarify re: this RFA--Is the United States a target PEPFAR country to which this RFA applies?

R:

No, the United States is not a PEPFAR country. The listing of PEPFAR countries can be found at www.pepfar.gov

Q:

In a number of places throughout the FOA there are bullet point lists of project objectives and expected outcomes (pgs. 2, 5, 7-8, 10, and 12). One of these lists is presented in the form of logic models for the "approach" (pgs. 5-6) and another for "evaluation/performance management" (pg. 12). We would like to create a logic model and Performance Management Plan that uses the same objectives and activities specified in the guidance but changes the specific outcomes tied to those activities from the outcomes specified in the guidance. Across all of the activities to be carried out, the same set of outcomes would still be achieved (they would simply be tied to other activities). Is this permissible?

R:

The applicant must meet the requirements of the FOA. The instructions for the Project Narrative are listed on pages 21-23 of the FOA.

"(Maximum of 18 pages, single spaced, Calibri 12 point, 1-inch margins, number all pages, content beyond 18 pages will not be reviewed).

The Project Narrative must include all of the bolded headings shown in this section. The Project Narrative must be succinct, self-explanatory, and in the order outlined in this section. It must address outcomes and activities to be conducted over the entire project period as identified in the CDC Project Description section."

The applicant must submit a project narrative that includes all of the bolded headings shown in section Part II.D.10.Project Narrative, in the order outlined in the section.

Q:

On p. 35 of the guidance (under phase II review) the following information is given: "An objective review panel will evaluate complete, eligible applications in accordance with the 'Criteria' section of the FOA." There is no "Criteria" section in the FOA. We assume that this is a reference to the scoring criteria that follows that sentence. Could you provide guidance? Are we correct in our assumption or is this a reference to something else (if so, what)?

R:

The criteria are outlined in Part II.E.1.b Phase II Review.

Q:

Does CDC expect applicants to propose particular country(ies) for this opportunity, or if it is meant to be global and we should propose illustrative countries. Also, if we are supposed to propose particular country(ies), is there a limit on the number of applications per agency?

R:

Applicants should not propose particular countries for this funding opportunity announcement. No countries have been identified at this time. The FOA will serve as an umbrella mechanism for the participation of PEPFAR countries and CDC Country offices. Participating countries will have an opportunity to opt into this funding mechanism. The Project Officer will coordinate a response in consultation with the CDC Country Office and the award recipient.

Q:

I represent a FBO in a country in Africa and would like to know if there will be one award per country or one total award per all eligible applicants regardless of the country?

R:

As stated on page 2 and page 16 of the FOA, there will be only 1 award for this FOA. There will not be 1 award per country. For more information on eligibility, please see Section C. Eligibility Information beginning on page 16.

Q:

In a number of places throughout the FOA there are bullet point lists of project objectives and expected outcomes (pgs. 2, 5, 7-8, 10, and 12). One of these lists is presented in the form of logic models for the "approach" (pgs. 5-6) and another for "evaluation/performance management" (pg. 12). We would like to create a logic model and Performance Management Plan that uses the same objectives and activities specified in the guidance but changes the specific outcomes tied to those activities from the outcomes specified in the guidance. Across all of the activities to be carried out, the same set of outcomes would still be achieved (they would simply be tied to other activities). Is this permissible?

R:

The applicant must include all of the bolded headings in this Project Narrative section. Outside of the instructions provided in that section beginning on page 21, the content of the application is at the discretion of the applicant. Applications will be evaluated against the RFA by the objective review panel.

Q:

On p. 35 of the guidance (under phase II review) the following information is given: "An objective review panel will evaluate complete, eligible applications in accordance with the 'Criteria' section of the FOA." There is no "Criteria" section in the FOA. We assume that this is a reference to the scoring criteria that follows that sentence. Could you provide guidance? Are we correct in our assumption or is this a reference to something else (if so, what)?

R:

Yes, you are correct the "Criteria" refers to the scoring criteria in the Phase II review that follows that sentence.

Q:

The solicitation mentions working with FBO institutions in Sub Saharan Africa but does not give any information on countries or regions that the project would work. In which countries or regions is the project envisioned to provide technical assistance and is there a list of FBO networks that the project will be work with to build their capacity?

R:

No countries have been identified at this time. The FOA will serve as an umbrella mechanism for the participation of PEPFAR countries and CDC Country offices. Participating countries will have an opportunity to opt into this funding mechanism. The Project Officer will coordinate a response in consultation with the CDC Country Office and the award recipient. There is no list of FBO networks that the project will work with to build their capacity. It will be the responsibility of the award recipient to identify the FBO networks in the countries which opt into this funding mechanism.

Q:

Page 21 of the FOA states the Project Narrative must include all of the bolded headings in this section. May CDC confirm the following headings for the Project Narrative are correct?

1. Background
 2. Approach
 - a. Problem Statement
 - b. Purpose
 - c. Outcomes
 - d. Strategy and Activities
 - e. Collaborations
 3. Target Populations
 4. Applicant Evaluation and Performance Measurement Plan
 5. Organizational Capacity of Awardees to Execute Approach
 6. Work Plan
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R:

This is correct; however, “collaborations and target populations” should be incorporated within the section on “Strategy and Activities”.

Q:

Page 32 of the FOA, as part of the funding restrictions section, states that the applicant is required to create and follow an environmental mitigation plan and report. May CDC confirm that this is required as part of the proposal submission? If so, may CDC confirm that this information shall be provided by the applicant in an appendix?

R:

Applicants are not required to submit an environmental mitigation plan and report as part of the application submission.

Q:

Page 33 of the FOA, as a part of the funding restrictions section, states that the applicant must provide in their proposals the dollar value by U.S. Government fiscal year of current grants and cooperative agreements financed by the Emergency Plan, which are for programs in the country/countries covered by this FOA. May CDC confirm that this information is required as part of the proposal submission? If so, since the country/countries covered by this FOA are PEPFAR supported countries, may CDC confirm that this information shall be provided by the applicant solely for the country/countries supported countries where the applicant proposes to conduct work, and not for all PEPFAR supported countries? If the dollar value by U.S. Government fiscal year of current grants and cooperative agreements financed by the Emergency Plan which are for programs in the

country/countries covered by this FOA is required as part of the proposal submission, may CDC confirm that this information shall be provided by the applicant in an appendix?

R:

As stated on page 33, Applicants must provide in their proposals the dollar value by U.S. Government fiscal year of current grants and cooperative agreements (including sub-grants and sub-agreements) financed by the Emergency Plan, which are for programs in the country(ies) covered by this FOA. This is, however, not applicable to this umbrella award. As also stated on page 33, umbrella awards are excluded from the 8% rule.

Q:

The final paragraph of the Background section on Page 3 of the FOA states,

“This funding opportunity announcement seeks to provide capacity-building and technical assistance (TA) support to FBOs and FBO networks in PEPFAR supported countries to respond to the objectives of the PEPFAR Blueprint and create an enabling environment for program implementation and services to vulnerable populations”.

May CDC confirm how many of the ‘PEPFAR supported countries’ a prime organization should target?

R:

No countries have been identified at this time. The FOA will serve as an umbrella mechanism for the participation of PEPFAR countries and CDC Country offices. Participating countries will have an opportunity to opt into this funding mechanism. The Project Officer will coordinate a response in consultation with the CDC Country Office and the award recipient.

Q:

In order to inform appropriate and feasible workplan design and approaches, may CDC share the anticipated total funding amount for the full 5 year period?

R:

CDC cannot provide a total 5 year project funding level. Applicants are required to provide a budget and budget narrative for the first 12 months and a project narrative that covers year one in detail and out years at a high level.

Q:

Please confirm that the staff listed on page 23 – Project Director, Project Coordinator and Financial Manager – are the correct titles. Page 48 lists Principal Investigator, Business Official and Project Manager.

R:

The key staff listed on page 23 are correct. As indicated on Page 48, applicants are to refer to Section D, #10, part d, “Organizational Capacity of Awardee to Execute the Approach” for specific job descriptions required in this FOA, as applicable. The functions of the Principal Investigator, Business Official and Project Manager are the same as the Project Director, Project Manager and Financial Manager.

Q:

Can CDC share its definitions of “multi-sectoral” and “interdisciplinary” (referenced on p.8 of the FOA, Objective 2)? Does CDC understand there to be any distinction between the two terms?

R:

CDC recognizes that there is a distinction between the two terms. According to the FOA, the awardee will collaborate with in-country training institutions to conduct and evaluate multi-sector team based training to address social disparities that contribute to HIV risk or disease progressions. “Multi-sector” refers to government, non-governmental organizations, private sector, civil society, foundations, multi-lateral

organizations, faith-based organizations and voluntary organizations. Please refer to PEPFAR Blueprint: "Creating an AIDS-free Generation" or www.pepfar.org for additional information.

"Interdisciplinary" involves the combining of two or more academic disciplines into one activity (e.g., a research project). It is about creating something new by crossing boundaries, and thinking across them. It is related to an interdiscipline or an interdisciplinary field, which is an organizational unit that crosses traditional boundaries between academic disciplines or schools of thought, as new needs and professions have emerged. Originally, the term interdisciplinary is applied within education and training pedagogies to describe studies that use methods and insights of several established disciplines or traditional fields of study. Interdisciplinary involves researchers, students, and teachers in the goals of connecting and integrating several academic schools of thought, professions, or technologies—along with their specific perspectives—in the pursuit of a common task.

Q:

Is it acceptable to include a cover page, in addition to the 18-page project narrative?

R:

Please refer to the section "submission requirements" on page 34 for information on the cover page. Form SF 424 includes a standard cover page.

Q:

Does CDC expect applicants to propose particular country(ies) for this opportunity, or is it meant to be more than one country? If the latter, may applicants propose illustrative countries? If we are supposed to propose particular country(ies), is there a limit on the number of applications per agency?

R:

No countries have been identified at this time. The FOA will serve as an umbrella mechanism for the participation of PEPFAR countries and CDC Country offices. Participating countries will have an opportunity to opt into this funding mechanism. The Project Officer will coordinate a response in consultation with the CDC Country Office and the award recipient. There is no list of FBO networks that the project will work with to build their capacity.

Q:

We have identified five core partners who will submit Letters of Support along with MOUs as stated in the guidance. Other organizations and individuals will also work with us as collaborators and we would like to include a letter from them to that effect. Would it be appropriate to include these as a separate appendix?

R:

As stated on page 22, a maximum of five letters of support may be submitted. As stated on page 38, to be eligible for funding preference 2, applicants must submit 1 MOU demonstrating this relationship between the applicant and preferred organization. All of these documents must be submitted as part of the appendix. Page limitations apply.

Q:

Would two-page biosketch (NIH style) meet the requirements for CVs to be included in the appendix?

R:

The format of the CVs is at the discretion of the applicant. The page limits of the appendix apply.

Q:

In the "Evaluation and Performance Measurement" section, the narrative lists five evaluation questions. On page 12, the table lists three. We would prefer to use the three questions while still addressing the activities referenced in questions four and five on page 10 to the questions and outcomes framework spelled out in the table on p. 10. Could you offer guidance?

R:

Please refer to pages 22-23 of the FOA regarding the requirements of the evaluation and performance measurement plan. Applicants must provide an overall jurisdiction or community-specific evaluation and performance measurement plan that is consistent with the CDC Evaluation and Performance Measurement Strategy section of the CDC Project Description of this FOA on pages 10-13. The approach taken by applicants to address this requirement is at the discretion of the applicant.

Q:

Does CDC require that the positions listed on page 23 (Project Director, Project Coordinator and Financial Manager) are full time?

R:

Staffing decisions are at the discretion of the applicant. CDC requires the PI/PO to work a certain percentage of time and effort on the award to ensure all activities are carried out in a timely manner.
