



PROGRAM GUIDANCE ON THE REVIEW OF HIV-RELATED EDUCATIONAL AND INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS FOR CDC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

UPDATED JUNE 2016

1. Basic Principles

Controlling the spread of HIV infection requires the promotion of behaviors that eliminate or reduce the risk of acquiring and transmitting HIV. Messages to the public should emphasize the ways by which individuals can effectively protect themselves from acquiring or transmitting HIV. These principles are intended to provide guidance for the development and use of educational materials for CDC grantees, and are implemented by the establishment of Program Review Panels to consider the appropriateness of messages designed to communicate with various groups.

- a. Written materials, audio visual materials, and pictorials, including social marketing and advertising materials, educational materials, social media communications (e.g., Facebook, twitter) and other electronic communications, such as internet/webpages should use terms, descriptors, or displays necessary for the intended audience to understand risk behaviors and explain less risky practices concerning HIV acquisition and transmission.
- b. Written materials, audio visual materials, and pictorials, including social marketing and advertising materials, educational materials, social media communications and other electronic communications, such as internet/webpages should be reviewed by Program Review Panels to ensure the content is consistent with the provisions of Section 2500 (b-d) of the Public Health Service Act, 42 U.S.C. Section 300ee(b-d), as follows:

"SEC. 2500. USE OF FUNDS.

(b) CONTENTS OF PROGRAMS - All programs of education and information receiving funds under this title shall include information about the harmful effects of promiscuous sexual activity and intravenous substance abuse, and the benefits of abstaining from such activities.

(c) LIMITATION - None of the funds appropriated to carry out this title may be used to provide education or information designed to promote or encourage, directly, homosexual or heterosexual sexual activity or intravenous substance abuse.

(d) CONSTRUCTION - Subsection (c) may not be construed to restrict the ability of an education program that includes the information required in subsection (b) to provide accurate information about various means to reduce an individual's risk of exposure to, or transmission of, the etiologic agent for acquired immune deficiency syndrome, provided that any informational materials used are not obscene.

- c. Only materials that are providing HIV-related information for educational and informational purposes are required to be reviewed by Program Review Panels. Materials that do not require review by Program Review Panels are those that serve no educational purpose, e.g., organizational notifications, surveillance data, and change to dates/times of marketing materials.
- d. Educational sessions should not include activities in which attendees participate in sexually suggestive physical contact or actual sexual practices.
- e. Social Media Information posted on social media sites should align or be consistent with approved messages.
- f. Organizations funded by CDC to provide HIV-related educational materials on their website must also post a notice on their home page informing viewers of the potentially explicit nature of HIV-related information.
- g. CDC-funded organizations with materials that include links to other websites and social media sites must include a disclaimer notifying the viewer that they are leaving the grantee's website when accessing the link(s).

2. Implementation Plan

- a. Each applicant for CDC funding will be required to include in their application a plan to establish or identify a Program Review Panel to review and approve all written materials, audio visual materials, and pictorials, including social marketing and advertising materials, educational materials, social media communications and other electronic communications, such as internet/webpages, to be used under the proposed work plan. This requirement applies to all applicants, regardless of whether the applicant plans to conduct all program activities or have certain program activities conducted by other organization(s), and whether program activities involve creating unique materials or using/distributing modified or intact materials already developed by others. Whenever feasible, CDC-funded community-based organizations are encouraged to use a Program Review Panel established by a state and/or local health department or another CDC-funded organization rather than establish their own panel. Materials developed by CDC organizations do not need to be reviewed by the panel unless such review is deemed appropriate by the recipient.
- b. Local education agencies should also use the state health department Program Review Panel rather than establishing their own.
- c. The Program Review Panel will be guided by the CDC Basic Principles (provided in the previous section) in conducting such reviews. The panel should review materials only. The panel should not evaluate the proposed work plan as a whole or to replace any other internal review panel or procedure of the recipient organization or local governmental jurisdiction.
- d. Panels must be composed of no less than five persons who represent a reasonable cross-section of the general population. Since the materials the Program Review Panel will review are for many intended audiences, no single intended audience shall predominate the composition of the panel, except as provided below. In addition:



- (1) All members of a Program Review Panel should have some knowledge of the science of HIV, current HIV prevention and treatment methods in acquisition and transmission, and understand local epidemiology.
 - (2) Panels which review materials intended for a specific audience should draw upon the expertise of individuals who can represent the cultural sensitivities and language of the intended audience either through representation on the panels or as consultants to the panels.
 - (3) The composition of Program Review Panels must include an employee of a state or local health department with appropriate expertise in the area under consideration, who is designated by the health department to represent the department on the panel. If such an employee is not available, an individual with appropriate expertise, designated by the health department to represent the agency in this matter, must serve as a member of the panel.
 - (4) Panels that review materials for use with school-based populations should include representatives of groups such as teachers, school administrators, parents, and students.
 - (5) Panels reviewing materials intended for racial and ethnic minority populations may have a membership drawn predominately from such racial and ethnic minority populations.
- e. Applicants should also include a letter or memorandum from the proposed project director, countersigned by a responsible business official, which includes:
- (1) Concurrence with this guidance and assurance that its provisions will be observed;
 - (2) The identity of proposed members of the Program Review Panel, including their names, occupations, and any organizational affiliations that were considered in their selection for the panel.

- f. When a cooperative agreement/grant is awarded, the recipient will:
- (1) Convene the Program Review Panel and present for its assessment, copies of social marketing and advertising, educational materials, social media communications, other electronic communications, including text, scripts, or detailed descriptions proposed to be used;
 - (2) Prior to expenditure of funds related to the program's use of these materials, assure that its project files contain a statement(s) signed by the Program Review Panel specifying the vote for approval or disapproval for each proposed item submitted to the panel; and
 - (3) Provide verification to CDC in the grantee's annual progress report via submission of signed documentation from the Program Review Panel.