



# Rapid ART Request for Applications (RFA) Pre-Application Webinar

March 26, 2025

Matt

Welcome to our preapplication webinar for the rapid antiretroviral therapy rfa! Please add your name, pronouns and organization to the chat.

## Host Introductions



**Matt Willis**  
He/Him/His



**Chelsea  
Carney She/  
Her/Hers**



**Jose Vega**  
He/Him/His



**Justin Garcia**  
He/Him/His

All

## Logistics



**Introduce yourself** in the chat by typing in your name, pronouns, and organization in the chat



**All participants** will be muted upon entry and throughout the duration of the webinar



**Use the chat** box for questions and/or comments

Matt

A few logistics –

- If you haven't done so already, please intro yourself in the chat with your name, pronouns and organization.
- Everyone will be muted throughout the duration of the webinar.
- We will be going over the RFA requirements in detail. Please use the chat feature for all of your questions and comments. We will address as many as we can at the end of the presentation.
- For those that we cannot address just yet, we will post the slides and Q&A on the website by COB April 8th.

# Agenda



## RFA Details



## Eligibility



## Application Submission



## Engagement

Matt

During the presentation we will:

- **Provide information about the details of the RFA, including** Purpose, Activities, Priority Population, and Awards
- **Discuss Eligibility to apply:** We will share more about the Required Approaches, and Activities
- **We will go over the Application Submission process, including any** Requirements such as submitting the Letter of Intent (LOI), Attachments, & additional tips for writing a successful application.
- Lastly, we will provide you with the opportunity to **Engage** in an open forum to ask clarifying questions.
- Hand off to Justin.

## RFA Details

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Justin

## About

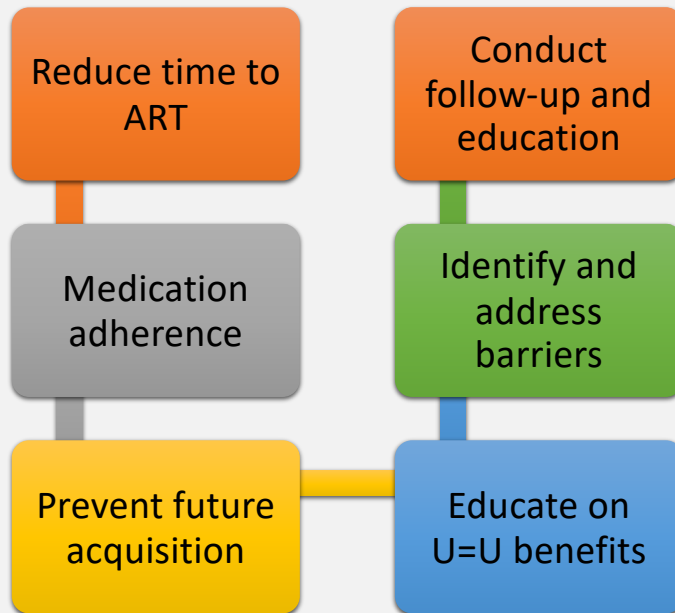


Health & Safety Code (HSC) Section [121287](#) allows CDPH/OA to establish, through a competitive award process, public health demonstration projects, which must be innovative, use evidence-based approaches to provide outreach, HIV and HCV screenings and provide linkage to and retention in care for the most vulnerable and underserved populations in the State.

Justin  
(read the slide)

CDPH/OA defines “innovative” as the application of new ideas and/or promising practices to address the needs of priority populations as demonstrated by data.

## RFA Goals



Justin

This funding aims to improve health outcomes for Black/African American (AA), Latinx or data supported underserved PLWH through several methods including but not limited to:

- reduce time to linkage and engagement in ART while prioritizing linkage for individuals with suspected acute HIV infection;
- implement the benefits of medication adherence counseling to promote and increase viral suppression among PLWH while helping them to achieve the best possible health outcomes and live happy, healthy lives;
- prevent future HIV acquisition within communities that are disproportionately affected by HIV;
- conduct follow-up and education shortly after starting ART to confirm treatment began;
- identify and address barriers to adherence and retention in care, and provide additional education as appropriate;
- educate clients, medical providers, and clinic/agency staff on the benefits of Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U) for both the client and community to promote the best possible health outcomes for PLWH and to reduce stigma.

## RFA Purpose



The purpose of this RFA is to fund the development of innovative, stigma-free, culturally and linguistically competent, evidence-based demonstration projects that will deliver rapid ART to PLWH.

Justin

– (read the slide)

For the purposes of this RFA, “rapid ART” is defined as the client starting ART within 0-7 days.

In addition:

- RFA funds projects will provide rapid ART to underserved populations disproportionately affected by HIV.
- Projects will use a combination of in-person and telehealth services to improve medication adherence, retention in care, and viral suppression rates.
- Education on U=U principles will be provided to clients, medical providers, clinic/ agency staff, and the community.
- Projects may include street outreach components to enhance community linkages and relationships.



## RFA Priority Populations

Black/AA

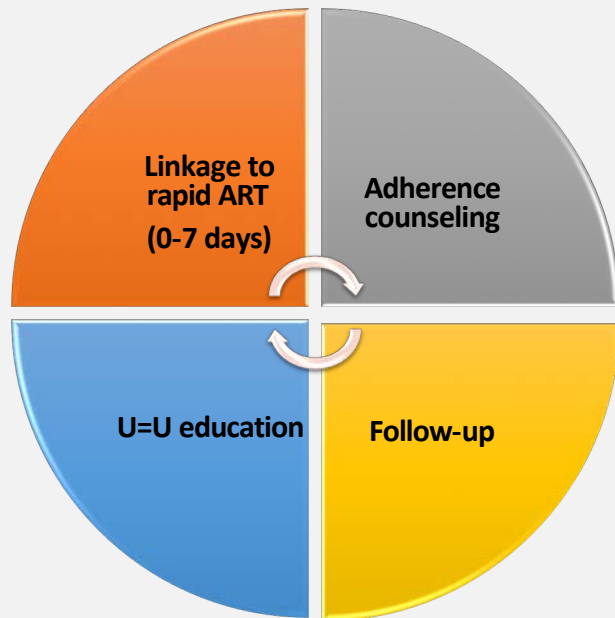
Latinx

Other subpopulations

Justin

Projects must serve individuals from the most underserved populations that are most disproportionately affected by HIV. **As indicated by 2022 [HIV surveillance data](#), the priority populations that are most vulnerable to HIV are Black/AA and Latinx individuals. Applicants may also propose to serve other subpopulations for which local and/or national data indicates a disproportionate impact by HIV, including men who have sex with men (MSM), trans women, trans MSM, cisgender women, people who inject drugs (PWID), and/or people experiencing homelessness; however, CDPH/OA will consider other populations for which local data indicates a disproportionate impact by HIV**

## Required Programmatic Objectives



Chelsea

Required programmatic objectives include:

1. For newly or previously HIV diagnosed people who are not currently on ART\* (\* Previously HIV diagnosed and off ART for 6 months) and who are among the indicated priority population(s), start them on ART within 0-7 days.
2. Provide adherence counseling and HIV education to support viral suppression and retention in care, reduce stigma, and normalize ART.
3. Conduct follow-up shortly after starting ART (preferably 2-4 days) to confirm treatment began, identify and address barriers with adherence and retention in care, and provide additional resources and/or referrals as appropriate.
4. Educate clients, the community, and medical and clinic/agency staff on the benefits of U=U.

## Recommended Programmatic Activities

- Innovative testing strategies for HIV, HCV, sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- LTC for HCV and STIs
- Mpox administration, outreach, and purchasing vaccines
- Street outreach (follow-up, counseling and navigation, linkage to care and services, RART)

### Chelsea

Recommended activities are considered additional activities and would be done in addition to the required programmatic objectives and activities. Recommended programmatic activities include:

- Innovative testing strategies for HIV, HCV, and sexually transmitted infections, including methods such as self-testing, outreach testing and/or ROOT.
- LTC for HCV and STIs
- Mpox administration, outreach, and vaccinations; and
- Street outreach (including follow-up, counseling and navigation, LTC and services, RART)

Recommended activities must be provided and/or available either via rapid ART funds by the applicant or via funded collaborations with existing agencies and services readily available within their specific geographic region. Applicants must describe how these services will be delivered either by the demonstration project itself or by already existing services located within their communities.

# Who is eligible to receive rapid ART?

People **eligible** for rapid ART include:

- Any new, confirmed HIV+ diagnosis, for whom there is no clear contraindication for ART
- Anyone who was previously diagnosed HIV+ but did not previously start ART
- Previously diagnosed HIV+ and who had taken ART in the past but have not received ART in > 6 months. These individuals should have an uncomplicated history of ART

Persons **ineligible** for rapid ART include:

- Anyone for whom immediate ART might be medically dangerous
- Anyone who states that they are not ready to start HIV treatment
- Anyone who is likely to have multiple mutations for whom resistance testing must be reviewed prior to prescribing an appropriate ART regimen

Chelsea  
(read slide)

## Required Approaches



## Chelsea

Applicants must apply the following effective programmatic approaches to the activities set forth in their proposals and describe how they will address the needs of Black/AA, Latinx or other populations as demonstrated by data:

The required approaches are... (read the slide)

## Required Approaches Continued...

Social  
networks

Syndemic  
approach

Telehealth

Trauma  
informed  
practices

Benefits  
counseling  
and navigation

Status neutral

Chelsea  
(read the slide)

## Eligible Applicants

LHJs

CBOs

County-owned or affiliated system emergency departments are also eligible to apply.

### Chelsea

Eligible applicants for this funding include: 1) any local health department (LHD) in California, and 2) any community-based organization (CBO) located within any local health jurisdiction (LHJ) in California. County-owned or affiliated system emergency departments are also eligible to apply.

Applicants that intend to partner with another agency to provide medical care or any of the other required or recommended activities must describe how services will be delivered. Client referrals should include warm handoffs and must be followed by confirmation of linkage to care and service delivery. In addition, for reporting and evaluation purposes, CBOs must have a strong working relationship with their local county health department. CDPH/OA welcomes multi-jurisdictional applications.

## RFA Awards

- Total award amount: \$2M annually
- Four demonstration projects, \$500k each
- Anticipated start date is July 1, 2025
- No advance payments

## Chelsea

- The State General Fund will award \$2 million annually for these demonstration projects, approved on a continuing basis.
- Four innovative HIV prevention demonstration projects will be awarded \$500k annually.
- The anticipated project start date is July 1, 2025, but may vary – awardees are not authorized to begin work until the grant agreement is finalized.
- No advance payments will be distributed for this funding, and work conducted outside the effective start and end date will not be eligible for reimbursement



## RFA Timeline

<b>RFA available on CDPH/OA website: Request for Application</b>	<b>Monday, 3/17/25 by 5PM PST</b>
<b>Pre-Application webinar</b>	Wednesday, <b>3/26/25</b> at 10 AM PST
<b>Deadline for submitting written questions</b>	Friday, <b>3/28/25</b> by 5 PM PST
<b>Answers to written questions available on CDPH/OA website: <a href="#">Request for Application</a></b>	Tuesday, <b>4/8/25</b> by 5 PM PST
<b>Deadline to submit mandatory Letter of Intent (LOI)</b>	Friday, <b>4/11/25</b> by 12 PM PST
<b>Application submission deadline</b>	Monday, <b>4/28/25</b> by 5 PM PST
<b>Notice of intent to award released And available on CDPH/OA website: <a href="#">Request for Application</a></b>	Wednesday, <b>6/18/25</b> by 5 PM PST
<b>Appeal deadline</b>	Wednesday, <b>6/25/25</b> by 5 PM PST
<b>Anticipated contract start date</b>	<b>Upon execution</b>

Chelsea

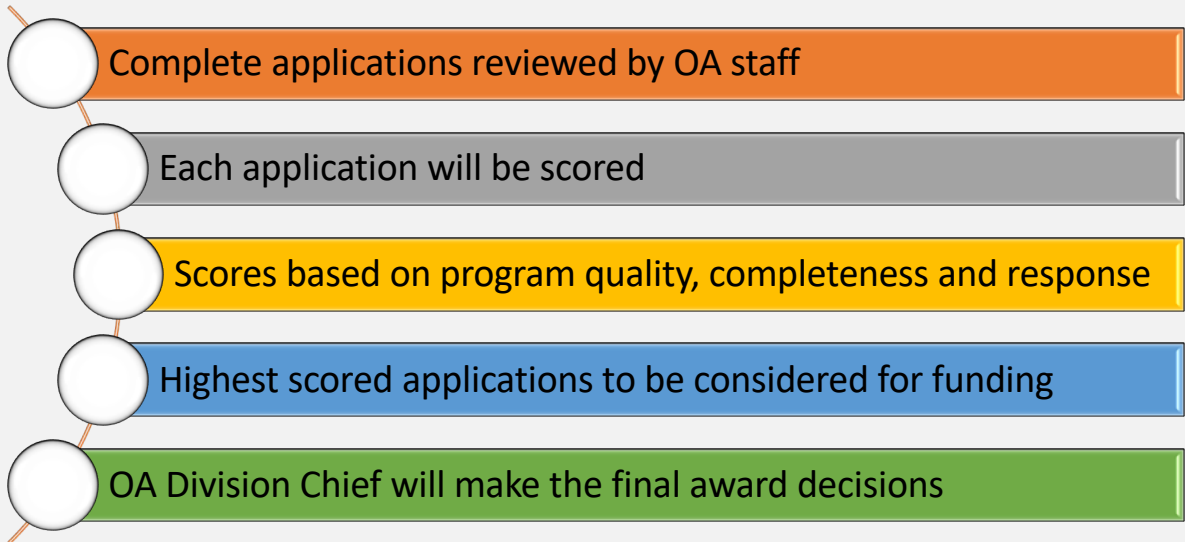
- RFA was posted on March 17th
- The deadline for submitting written questions is this Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, the deadline to submit the Letter of Intent is Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, and the application submission deadline is Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup>.
  - Please keep in mind that only applicants who submit a LOI will receive the application and attachments. Submitting a LOI does not mean, that an organization MUST apply and does not obligate you to submit an application; but again, submission of the LOI is mandatory in order to apply.
- Notice of intent to award will be release no later than June 18 and the deadline for appeals is June 25. Contracts are anticipated to start upon execution.

## Application Submission



Chelsea  
Intro

# Application Review Process



Chelsea

The application review process is as follows:

1. Complete applications will be submitted to an evaluation committee convened by CDPH/OA
2. The committee will review and assign scores to each application based on a standard set of instructions and criteria
3. Applications will be evaluated based on the quality/completeness of their responses to RFA requirements, purpose and goals
4. Highest scoring applications will be presented to CDPH/OA management for funding consideration
5. Final approval of awardees will be made by the CDPH/OA Division Chief

# Submission Requirements

- **LOI due April 11, 2025**
- **Application due on April 28, 2025**
- Use the provided application narrative template using 11-point Arial
  - 10-page limit per application, be succinct!
  - Don't PDF your application
  - Follow ALL requirements to be considered
  - No late applications
- Submit to [RapidART@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:RapidART@cdph.ca.gov)



Jose

LOI

- For those interested in applying, a letter of intent is due by noon on April 11, 2025
  - Upon submitting the LOI, OA will send the applicant all required application attachments

## Application

- Application including all attachments are due on April 28, 2025 by 5pm
  - Applicants must complete the provided application narrative template, using 11 point font
    - The application narrative has a maximum of 10 pages – responses that go beyond 10 pages will not be reviewed or scored
  - Do not send your application as one single PDF

Submit attachments in the format in which they were provided and follow all requirements outlined within the RFA

- Applications that fail to follow ALL of the requirements may not be considered
- Late applications not considered

Submit all documents to [RapidART@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:RapidART@cdph.ca.gov)

## Letter of Intent (LOI)

California Department of Public Health  
Center for Infectious Disease  
Office of AIDS, HIV Prevention  
[RapidART@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:RapidART@cdph.ca.gov)

RE: Request for Application #25-10047

To whom it may concern:

This letter confirms that [name of applying agency] intends to apply for Rapid ART funding for FYs 2025-2027.

Sincerely,  
Name Here  
Title  
Organization

**Jose**

**Here is just an example of a letter of intent**

- Prospective applicants are required to submit the LOI to CDPH/OA indicating their intent to apply in response to this RFA. The LOI must be electronically signed by an official authorized to enter into a grant agreement on behalf of the applicant. A typed signature will suffice. An example of the language for the LOI may be:
  - “This letter confirms that [name of applying agency] intends to apply for Rapid ART funding.”
  - Upon submitting the LOI, CDPH/OA will send the applicant all required application attachments.
  - The LOI must be sent via e-mail to the following address. Applicants that fail to submit the LOI by the specified deadline are precluded from applying.
- **Again, Due by 12pm on April 11!! E-mail Address:**  
[RapidART@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:RapidART@cdph.ca.gov)

# Required Attachments

- 1) Application Certification Checklist
- 2) Application Cover Sheet
- 3) Executive Summary
- 5) Budget Template
- 6) Activities List
- 7) Application Narrative Template
- 8-10) Required CDPH Forms
- 11) Funding Summary
- 12) Letter of Support

Jose

(read the list of required attachments)

- 1) Application Certification Checklist
- 2) Application Cover Sheet
- 3) Executive Summary
- 5) Budget Template
- 6) Activities List
- 7) Application Narrative Template
- 8-10) Required CDPH Forms
- 11) Funding Summary
- 12) Letter of Support (LOS)
- Note that attachment 4 isn't on this list – that's the Budget Guidance and should not be submitted with the rest of your application
- Required CDPH forms include the Government Agency Taxpayer ID Form (for LHJS only), the Payee Data Record, and payee data record supplement *if* intending to have payments mailed to an address not listed on the Payee Data Record
- All applicants must obtain a LOS. If services will be provided across multiple jurisdictions, the applicant must submit an Attachment 12 LHD LOS from each jurisdiction where services will be provided. Letters of support are also required if the applicant is proposing a collaboration(s).

Please note:

1. Again, these attachments will only be sent to those who submit an LOI
2. Complete the attachments in the format they are provided to you.
3. Do not send one large PDF file.
4. Do not send us the budget guidance. This is for your reference in completing your budget template only.



## What is the Funding Summary?

- The Funding Summary (Attachment 11) is a required document for applicants to identify and provide information on your agency's current funding sources.
- It informs CDPH/OA and the applicant's LHD of the various funding your agency currently receives.
- Funding source information is not used in award decisions.
- All applicants **MUST** complete and submit the Funding Summary; not doing so may result in disqualification.

Jose

We also wanted to provide more information about the Funding Summary, which is Attachment 11. [read the slide]

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- It informs CDPH/OA and the applicant's LHD of the various funding your agency currently receives.
- Funding source information is not used in award decisions.
- All applicants **MUST** complete and submit the Funding Summary; not doing so may result in disqualification.



## What is the Letter of Support?

- The Letter of Support (LOS, Attachment 12) is a required document confirming that the LHD is in support of the applicant's intent to apply for funding and (if awarded and applicable) may provide guidance on HIV data sharing and reporting to the agency.
- A LOS must be submitted for each jurisdiction where services will be provided.
  - Ex/ If the applicant proposes to provide services in both San Bernardino and Riverside counties, they must obtain a LOS from both counties.
- Applicants who are LHDs may submit the letter themselves.
- Applicants must submit a completed LOS with their application package or to [RapidART@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:RapidART@cdph.ca.gov) **within 30 days of submitting their application.**

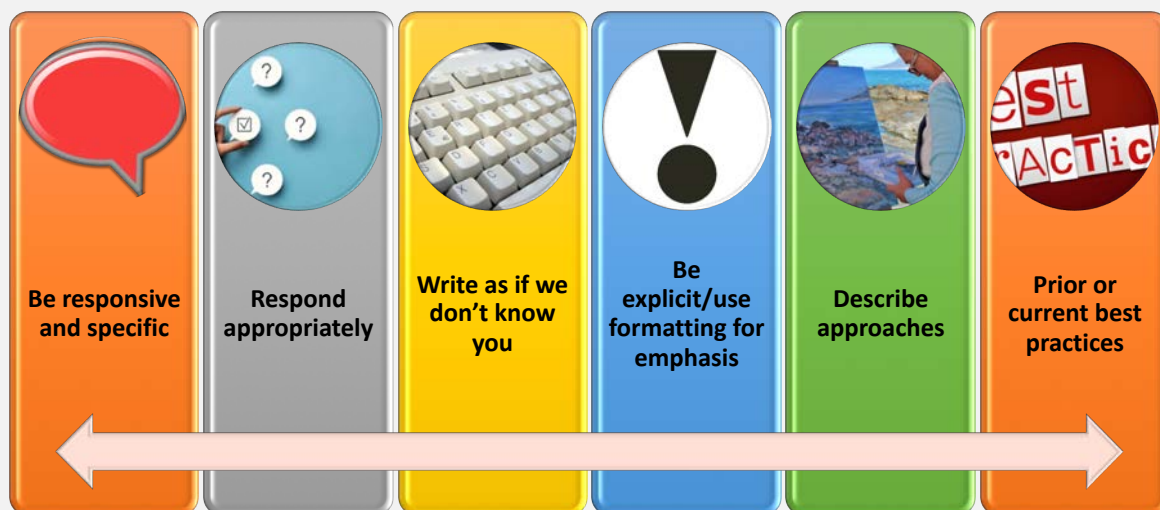
Jose

We also wanted to provide more information about the Letter of Support (or LOS), which is Attachment 12. [read the slide]

- The Letter of Support (LOS, Attachment 12) is a required document confirming that the LHD is in support of the applicant's intent to apply for funding and (if awarded and applicable) may provide guidance on HIV data sharing and reporting to the agency.
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  - Ex/ If the applicant proposes to provide services in both San Bernardino and Riverside counties, they must obtain a LOS from both counties.
- Applicants who are LHDs may submit the letter themselves.
- Applicants must submit a completed LOS with their application package or to [RapidART@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:RapidART@cdph.ca.gov) **within 30 days of submitting their application.**



# Helpful Tips



Jose

- When responding to the statements and questions, be mindful that application narrative should be specific, succinct and responsive to the statements and questions as outlined.
- New for this RFA: for each question, applicants will *only* be scored based on the narrative written within that specific response box. Include all pertinent details within the appropriate box to ensure that the response to each question can be fully evaluated.
- Don't assume that CDPH/OA knows your organization or is an expert in your field/work you do – reviewers will only score based on what is written in the application, not on what they know or assume
- Explicitly state and emphasize numbers, priority populations, and program approaches by using **bold**, underline and *italics* and other formatting techniques.
- Thoroughly describe how you will use the effective approaches in your program planning and delivery
- Inform us about prior or current successful practices you intend to use to bolster this project

## Helpful Tips Continued



**Budget appropriately**



**Use local data**



**Community involvement**



**Sell yourself**



**Jargon-free – spell out acronyms**



**Proofread and peer review**

Jose

- Ensure your proposed budgets fully utilize the award
- Utilize your **local** HIV surveillance data to make informed programmatic decisions
- Involve members of the community for which this funding will support, to weigh in on proposed activities
- Sell yourself in your application! You have a limited amount of space to write so use it wisely and make it impactful. Focus on selling your specific proposal, how will it be **innovative and responsive to the RFA**
- Keep your language jargon free and spell out your local acronyms
- Proofread and solicit peer review of your application before submitting



## One more thing...

- Write your responses to each question/prompt in that specific designated box
- Exception to this: Effective Approaches

Jose

New to this iteration of Rapid ART:

- for each scored question, applicants will only be scored based on the narrative written within that specific question box. Be sure to include all pertinent details within the appropriate box to ensure that the response to each question can be fully evaluated.

The exception to this is the **effective approaches**:

- Also new to this iteration is that there will be no questions on each of OA's 13 effective approaches. Instead, applicants will be asked to check the boxes for those they will use in their proposals.
- Applications will receive a score for *how well* the selected approaches are applied throughout the narrative; within the Application Narrative Question responses, be sure to describe how you will apply your selected approaches and how they will address the needs of your priority populations.

# Narrative Scoring Breakdown



Section	Points	
Demonstration Project Status	10	
Priority Population	20	
Required Objectives	40	
Replicability and Innovation	20	
Staffing and Staff Training	10	
Organizational Capacity	10	
Approaches	15	

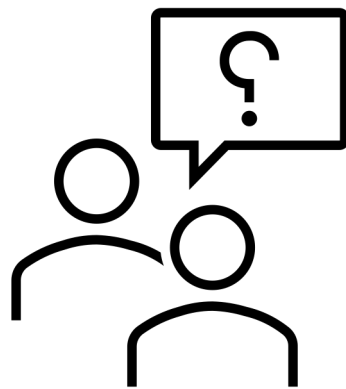
Jose

(read the slide)

Again, regarding the Approaches, note that while you will not be scored based on how many you select, applications will receive a score for how well the selected approaches are applied throughout the narrative.



Questions for  
us?



Matt

# Additional Questions?

Send questions to

[RapidART@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:RapidART@cdph.ca.gov)



All