Project Cornerstone Q & A

1. **Will the informational webinar scheduled for 3/15 be recorded?**

   Yes, the webinar was recorded and it is on the OA Website, Project Cornerstone landing page.

2. **Could you please clarify whether the Project Cornerstone Letter of Intent (LOI) is binding or non-binding? Are applicants bound to the award tier and yearly budgeted amounts stated in their LOI, or are they permitted to make changes to the award tier and/or yearly budgeted amounts, as needed, for their final submission?**

   The LOI is not binding; however only entities that submit an LOI will be sent the attachments required to submit an application. It is permissible to submit an application for a different award tier than initially indicated in your LOI. If you choose, you may change your yearly budget amounts on your budget template when you submit your application.

3. **On page 42 of the RFA document, a reference is made to the Application Narrative Template which contains specific instructions on completing the narrative portion of the application. However, we cannot seem to find a specific link to this template in either the RFA document or on the Project Cornerstone website. Could you please let us know where we can access the Application Narrative Template, or could you send us a copy?**

   The Application Narrative Template is part of the RFA attachments. These attachments will be sent to organizations who submit a LOI to apply for this award. Please reference the LOI requirement in the RFA.

4. **Can award tier and yearly budget amounts stated in the LOI be changed later as the project is developed, or do the award tier and yearly budgeted amounts stated in the LOI need to be the same as those submitted in the final application?**

   The award tier and budgeted amounts can change after you submit your LOI, however, once you submit your application, you are bound to that award tier and will not be considered for a different tier.

5. **Will agencies that apply for award tier 1 or tier 2 be considered for lower tiers if they are not funded at the higher award tier level?**

   No. Agencies will only be considered for the tier for which they apply.

6. **Is there a match requirement?**

   No. There is not a match requirement.

7. **Is there a cap on indirect cost rates ?**

   Per the budget guidance, indirect cost rates (ICR) should not surpass 25% of total personnel costs and all ICRs will be reviewed for reasonableness.

8. **Must we adhere to annual award allocations indicated in the LOI, or can it be revised with the full proposal?**

   It may be revised with the full proposal.

9. **Does the LOI need to include annual amounts for each contract year, or just the Tier that we will be applying for?**

   The LOI should include the tier for which you will apply and the yearly budget amounts., which will help OA determine the approximate number of agencies that may be applying for each of the funding tier, however, if you choose, you may change your tier selection and yearly budget amounts on your budget template when you submit your application.

10. **For the services required, may these be in-kind if an agency already offers a particular service?**

    Yes, in-kind services may be included.

11. **Can award tier and yearly budget amounts stated in the LOI be changed later as the project is developed, or do the award tier and yearly budgeted amounts stated in the LOI need to be the same as those submitted in the final application?**

    The selected tier and budgeted amounts can change after you submit your LOI; however, once you submit your application, you are bound to that award tier and will not be considered for a different tier.

12. **Will agencies that apply for award tier 1 or tier 2 be considered for lower tiers if they are not funded at the higher award tier level?**

    No, applicants will only be considered for the tier that they apply for.

13. **Does our choice of Tier relate at all to our *existing* organizational or program budget?**

    The three tiers provide applicants the choice of how much funding the applicant wants to apply for, it is not related to an organization's overall budget.

14. **Are both clinical and non-clinical activities required in the proposal or could it be just one type of activity?**

    Both clinical and non-clinical activities should be addressed and included in your proposal, in some capacity.

15. **Is there page limits for each section of the application?**

    The application narrative has a 30-page limit, including the questions.

16. **What is the turnaround time to receive the RFA documents once an LOI is submitted?**

    You will receive attachments within 24 hours of submitting your LOI.

17. **Is there an option for applicants to request a percentage of funds in advance for "startup expenses"?**

    We do not plan to advance funding for "start-up" expenses at this time.

18. **Is the 30-page limit for just the narrative portion or the entire application?**

    The 30-page limit applies to the application narrative portion of your application and does not include attachments.

19. **Can we submit prior to final submission for peer review?**
    In order to ensure parity, we are unable to complete peer reviews for applicants.

20. **Is there a page limit to the LOI?**

    No there is no page limit for the LOI.

21. **If subcontracts are part of the application, does the 10% cap on administrative costs apply to subcontractors too?**

    No, the 10% cap on administrative costs for personnel is not required for subcontractors. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) simply requires that applicants awarded through this RFA monitor consultant and/or subcontractor performance to ensure program fidelity and fiscal responsibility and compliance.

22. **Can you clarify what is required in the LOI? Is it just a one pager with this statement- This letter confirms that [name of applying agency] intends to apply for Project Cornerstone Demonstration Projects, Tier [1, 2 or 3]."?**

    The LOI should include:

    - Agency/organization name,
    - selected tier you are planning to apply for,
    - yearly amounts, and
    - signed by an authorized staff person of the agency.

The LOI is not binding. After submitting your LOI, if your organization determines that a different tier would be more appropriate, you may apply for that tier instead of the one you stated in your LOI. The yearly budget amounts may be adjusted as well.

23. How much of the RFA can be subcontracted?

There is not a prescribed percentage that can be subcontracted. Your program can subcontract for services that contribute to your overall program. Please note, the agency applying for this award is responsible for oversight and assurance that all services are delivered in accordance with agreements and overall program goals.

24. Are activities such as data entry and evaluation considered administrative?

At least 10% of your agency’s budget must be allocated to evaluation activities, which include stakeholder engagement, data collection and entry, management, monitoring, and quality control. Applicants must demonstrate capacity to actively participate in CDPH evaluation activities throughout the project period. CDPH will provide the necessary data collection forms and training regarding data system use.

25. Can the proposed budget include percentage of efforts for staff positions?

Yes, the proposed budget can include the percentage of effort for staff positions.

26. Can the proposed budget include food? I'm thinking as incentives for caregiver support activities/education.

Budgets may include nutritional meals and supplements.

27. The RFP says LOI must include the award Tier and chosen yearly budgeted amounts. (page 41) Please clarify.

Please provide an estimate of how you will budget the total award amount over the three years. For example, some may plan their program using one-third of the budget each year, others may plan for less funding in year one and more funding in the subsequent years. Remember, the LOI is not binding and in developing your program, you may choose a different tier or distribute the total amount differently than you estimated in the LOI.

28. Is the narrative single-spaced?

The narrative should use 11 pt. Arial font, single-spaced.

29. At least 10% of your agency's budget must be allocated to evaluation activities...." This refers to 10% of the proposed budget for THIS project, correct? Not the agency's overall budget?

Yes, this is only pertaining to the budget for this project.

30. **Just wondering if an elaborated definition of the non-clinical activities is available?**

    In an effort to support maximum flexibility of services provided we are not providing elaborated definitions. Examples of non-clinical services are listed on page 17 and 18 of the RFA. This list is not meant to be exhaustive or exclusionary, but to provide some examples. Applicants are not restricted to these service listings and can propose services and scale services based on their specific circumstances. Note that some services may be delivered within either clinical and/or non-clinical settings.

31. **Can budget be applied for purchasing or creating media for education, awareness campaigns, etc.?**

    Preauthorization is required by CDPH prior to the development of new media campaigns. Approved new media must be fully developed and implemented before the end of the project period. Any materials created must be approved by a community review panel, and available to CDPH for distribution throughout the State of California or as needed outside of the state. Media developed and available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) “Let’s Stop HIV Together Campaign” is a good source for free, pre-approved media.

32. **Can you confirm that there are no attachments in the LOI, but just a one-page letter stating the tier and desired annual award amount?**

    Correct, there are no attachments required to be submitted with the LOI.

33. **Someone asked about food for caregivers -- what about food for participants? PLWH50+ tend to experience food insecurity, we have a robust food program we'd like to keep available to clients.**

    Your budget may include nutritional meals and supplements.

34. **Is the list of services the type of services that are required as a minimum?**

    No, the list of services in the RFA are not a required as a minimum. Programs must select the set of services that create a comprehensive program addressing clinical and non-clinical needs for this project.

35. **Can you provide patient incentives or transportation reimbursement to attend social groups or fitness classes to encourage participation?**

    Providing transportation assistance and non-cash incentives are allowable budget expenses.

36. **Page 20 includes required approaches, can you please clarify when you create the FAQ's?**

Successful applicants will apply the ten programmatic service delivery approaches described in the RFA in developing their program. Applicants must describe project goals and proposed activities to implement projects designed to provide innovative approaches and direct services to all PLWH50+ as identified in the priority populations section. Use the Application Narrative template (Attachment 6) to address all program requirements.

37. This grant is applied for PLWH50+, but can social events be held to include individuals under 50?

All activities should be designed for and provided to PLWH50+. Including family, friends, caregivers in some activities may be appropriate and is allowed.

38. Who should we address the LOI to?

You may address your LOI to Team Project Cornerstone, Office of AIDS or simply "To whom it may concern". Send LOIs to projectcornerstone@cdph.ca.gov.

39. How are you defining a difference between activity and approach? For example, Caregiver support is a required approach but seems like an example of an activity.

Project Cornerstone requires applicants to describe how they will use 10 programmatic approaches to administering clinical and non-clinical services to PLWH50+. In this sense, the term "approach" refers to *how* your organization will go about providing services in a manner that is in alignment with the described approach. "Activities" are listed clinical and non-clinical activities that are on page 17 and 18 of the RFA. This is a non-exhaustive list. Some approaches may also be listed as an activity (i.e. caregiver support or benefits navigation). Approaches are required ways of administering your programs, while you can pick and choose which activities you will do, as long as both clinical and non-clinical activities are addressed in some capacity within your proposal.

40. Can funding be applied to paying for therapy sessions outside of county?

Collaborations and cooperative agreements for services do not need to be restricted to one county; however, applicants should consider proximity of service locations to clients as they design their programs. Services can utilize internet and telehealth options when appropriate and accessible to their priority populations.

41. Can agencies funded by Ryan White apply?

Yes, agencies who receive Ryan White funding may apply.

42. How will this grant opportunity ensure there is no replication or duplication of services for those agencies already providing services to PLWH 50 and above.

You can describe services already provided in the Demonstration of Need section.

43. How do the goals of this grant align with the new Ending the HIV Epidemic plan for CA?

Project Cornerstone is a demonstration project that fits within the "Treat" pillar of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy as well as responding to the epidemiologic data that shows the population of PLWH50+ to be increasing each year. The California HIV, STI, and HCV Strategic Plan being developed is recognizing that social determinants of health must be addressed to more effectively reduce new infections and optimize the health of people living with HIV. Project Cornerstone's requirements to address clinical and non-clinical services is responding to social determinants of health identified as impacting PLWH50+.

44. Is there an opportunity for applicants to demonstrate health and racial equity experience?

Yes, applicants are encouraged to describe health and racial equity experience.

45. Is Attachment 7 – Taxpayer ID Form relevant to FQHCs and other nonprofit applicants? Attachment 7 only seems to apply to government agency applicants. If Attachment 7 is not relevant to nonprofit organizations, should nonprofit applicants indicate N/A on the form and include it in the final submission?

The Taxpayer ID Form is only for Local Health Jurisdictions like County of Sacramento or County of Los Angeles. The Payee Data Record (Std 204/205) is for Community Based Organizations. The Std 205 only needs to be submitted if the mailing address and the business address is different. Applicants may indicate N/A for attachments that are not required for their organization.

46. If an applicant only has one remittance address, should they complete Attachment 8 – Payee Data Record, and <u>not</u> Attachment 9 – Payee Data Record Supplement, or would you prefer that <u>all</u> applicants submit <u>both</u> Attachment 8 and Attachment 9 with their final submission, indicating N/A on Attachment 9 if the applicant only has one remittance address?

To clarify- The address used on the Payee Data Record (STD 204) and Taxpayer ID Form (STD 9083) need to match the remittance address listed on the Scope of Work.

Attachment 9- Payee Data Record Supplement is only required if the mailing address and business address is different. Applicants may indicate N/A for attachments that are not required for their organization.