

Strategic Rapid ART Questions and Answers (Q&A)

The California Department of Public Health, Office of AIDS (CDPH-OA) Prevention Branch held a Community Zoom webinar on the Strategic Rapid Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) request for applications (RFA) on Friday, February 12. A recording of this presentation can be accessed here:

https://zoom.us/rec/share/j1YsjwkiEBH2a5u4OeRDT41SQ65km5AmojLkH2SqUbOAWVohkkqCJdDJH36ywbtt.3_XqFoKxb26XMgy- Passcode: #gaQG2&6

1. Will the Community Zoom webinar be recorded?

Yes. The webinar was recorded, linked above and will be posted to the website.

2. Is there a particular format that you prefer that we choose with the letter of intent (LOI)?

There is no required format. Please submit a letter explaining your intent to apply for this RFA. The LOI must be digitally signed or have a typed signature by an official authorized to enter into a contractual agreement on behalf of the eligible entity (EE). The letter of intent must be sent via email to StrategicRapidART@cdph.ca.gov by 12PM PDT, February 17, 2021. EEs that fail to submit a LOI by the specified deadline are precluded from submitting an application for consideration.

3. Is the award \$500,000 per year for two years, or \$500,000 over two years?

Each award is \$500,000 per year for two years.

4. People who are unhoused are not specifically called out as a priority population. Is this an area of interest to fund?

Yes. Please use your local data as much as possible to support the population(s) you choose to serve.

5. Can we have a list of currently funded agencies?

Yes: AIDS Services Foundation in Orange County, Asian Health Services in Alameda County, County of Kern and San Francisco AIDS Foundation are currently funded for Rapid ART.

6. Do we need to receive an invitation to submit the application, or will all entities that submit LOIs will be allowed to submit the full applications?

You do not need to receive an invitation to submit an application. EEs who submit the mandatory LOI by the deadline on February 17, 2021 at 12PM PDT will receive the required attachments to submit the RFA. Those who do not meet this deadline will not be able to apply for this RFA.

7. What exactly needs to be decided by next week to include in the LOI?

There is no required format. Please submit a letter explaining your intent to apply for this RFA. Submission of an LOI is required for you to receive the RFA attachments and to be able to apply for this RFA. The LOI must be digitally signed or have a typed signature by an official authorized to enter into a contractual agreement on behalf of the EE. The LOI must be sent via email to StrategicRapidART@cdph.ca.gov by 12PM PDT, February 17, 2021. EEs that fail to submit a LOI by the specified deadline are precluded from submitting an application for consideration.

8. To what extent are you looking for innovative approaches to Rapid ART, as opposed to implementation of straightforward, standardized approaches?

CDPH-OA seeks applications for innovative demonstration projects to implement strategic rapid ART to be offered to all people living with HIV (PLWH) who are deemed eligible for rapid ART. OA defines “innovative demonstration projects” as newly developed, novel, original or new to your agency/and or community. Applicants are encouraged to replicate existing, evidence-based programs and modify them for integration into their agency. Existing Rapid ART programs may apply for this funding provided their proposal demonstrates that funds will be used to develop a new component, focus on a currently unserved priority population (e.g. trans women, recently incarcerated or recently released, homeless, etc.), and/or serve a new geographic location in their community where there are gaps in service for linkage to care for PLWH.

9. How important is it that we include partnerships?

While not required, CDPH-OA welcomes partnerships and both multi-jurisdictional applications and applications with subcontractors. Partnerships may also maximize an EE’s ability to effectively and efficiently use the \$500,000 award amount while also partnering with smaller community based organizations (CBOs) that may not be able to take on the administration of a \$500,000 award by themselves.

10. Can we apply for less than \$500,000 or does everybody have to apply with \$500,000?

No. Each award is \$500,000 per year. EEs must budget to appropriately and efficiently use this award amount.

11. Is rental assistance/support an allowable cost?

Rental assistance in the form of rent vouchers will be considered on a case by case basis according to cost and the scope of the overall proposed budget.

12. So, no actual data is required in the LOI?

Data is not required in the LOI.

13. There is little HIV data on unhoused individuals especially by race. Reaching these populations would help to gather this data. Would you still support reaching unhoused priority populations even though we cannot give you data that is as robust as other populations?

Yes, CDPH-OA supports reaching these populations. However, please use your local data as much as possible as your application will be scored on the level of support your local data provides for your chosen priority population(s).

14. Will awarding take geographic disbursement across CA into account?

Awards are based on the strength of the application, program quality, completeness and responsiveness to the questions in the Application Narrative Template. Award decisions will not be made based on geography.

15. Is the purchase and distribution of mobile phones an allowable cost if it supports telehealth? How about data plans?

No, this will not be allowed. There is a free program in California for eligible residents. You can access that information here:
<https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/lifeline/>.

16. Since telehealth is a big component of this project, what IT equipment or systems are restricted?

Such purchases will be considered on a case by case basis.

17. How will the recording of this webinar be made accessible?

A recording of this webinar will be posted to the RFA landing page and is linked at the beginning of this Q&A document.

18. Were there any appendices missing from the posted RFA?

No. Please submit your LOI in order to receive the attachments necessary to apply for this RFA. The LOI must be sent via email to StrategicRapidART@cdph.ca.gov by 12PM PDT, February 17, 2021. EEs that fail to submit a LOI by the specified deadline are precluded from submitting an application for consideration.

19. Can starter packs be purchased using these funds?

Yes.

20. Can incentives be purchased with this grant?

Yes. If the EE provides incentives to clients, they must be individually documented in the tracking sheet which is provided at the end of the budget guidance document. Should you be awarded, the tracking sheet must be submitted to CDPH-OA either monthly or quarterly, to be agreed upon by CDPH-OA and the awardee.

21. Can grant funding be used for refreshments for participant focus groups/meetings?

No.

22. Our organization found the RFA package on your website but we cannot find the attachments anywhere that we would need to complete in order to submit the application package. Would you please share how we can access that?

EEs who submit the mandatory LOI by the deadline on February 17 at 12PM PDT will receive the required attachments to submit the RFA. The LOI must be sent via email to StrategicRapidART@cdph.ca.gov by 12PM PDT, February 17, 2021. EEs that fail to submit a LOI by the specified deadline are precluded from submitting an application for consideration.

23. What all needs to be included in the LOI?

A LOI is a letter explaining your intent to apply for this RFA. The LOI must be digitally signed or have a typed signature by an official authorized to enter into a contractual agreement on behalf of the EE. The LOI must be sent via email to StrategicRapidART@cdph.ca.gov by 12PM PDT, February 17, 2021. EEs that fail to submit a LOI by the specified deadline are precluded from submitting an application for consideration.

24. Will letters of support be required with LOI?

No. However, they should be included with your final application package should you be partnering with other jurisdictions and/or agencies.

25. When will the application attachments be provided?

EEs who submit the mandatory LOI by the deadline on February 17 at 12PM PDT will receive the required attachments to submit the RFA. The LOI must be sent via email to StrategicRapidART@cdph.ca.gov by 12PM PDT, February 17, 2021. EEs that fail to submit a LOI by the specified deadline are precluded from submitting an application for consideration.

26. Why is funding only for two years? Is this required by legislation or is this something that was determined by OA?

The two year funding period is determined by legislation, not CDPH-OA.

27. How important is collaboration with local agencies for this project?

The importance of collaborations depends on the EEs proposal and how they intend to work with agencies with whom they choose to collaborate. While not required, OA welcomes partnerships and both multi-jurisdictional applications and applications with subcontractors. Partnerships may also maximize an EE's ability to effectively and efficiently use the \$500,000 award amount while also partnering with smaller CBOs that may not be able to take on the administration of a \$500,000 award by themselves.

28. Is it possible for an agency to not collaborate externally all?

Yes. External collaboration is not required.

29. Are homeless communities considered a priority sub-population if data proves this locally?

Yes.

30. What information (aside from indication of intent to apply and signature of an official authorized to enter into a contractual agreement on behalf of the EE) is required to be included in the Mandatory Letter of Intent?

No additional information is required. The signature can be digitally signed or typed. The LOI must be sent via email to StrategicRapidART@cdph.ca.gov by 12PM PDT, February 17, 2021. EEs that fail to submit a LOI by the specified deadline are precluded from submitting an application for consideration.

31. On page 5 of the RFA, it states "OA defines 'rapid ART' as intake, first care appointment, and ART initiation within 0-5 days of diagnosis." Is day of diagnosis defined as the day the clinic receives the confirmatory result from the lab or day of diagnosis disclosure to the patient?

Diagnosis is defined as the day the positive test result is disclosed to the patient. Please note that CDPH-OA defines “initiation” as giving a written prescription for ART to the client, calling the client’s ART prescription into a pharmacy or providing a same-day starter pack of ART (e.g. Biktarvy) until the client can receive prescribed ART.