California Department of PublicHealth | CALIFORNIA TOBACCO PREVENTION PROGRAM UNDO

3 November 2023

Questions & Answers

Request for Applications (RFA) Competitive Grant (CG): #24-10002, The Statewide End to California's Tobacco Epidemic

OTIS Account Set-Up

1. **Q: As a prime agency in charge of the OTIS account, can we give access to multiple subcontractors Project Directors?**

   A: No. Prime agencies can request OTIS access for multiple Applicants; however, there can only be one OTIS user account designated as the Project Director.

2. **Q: Is the prime agency required to grant access to subcontractors in OTIS if they are tasked with a major portion of the scope of work and the prime agency is focused on compliance and reporting/evaluation?**

   A: No. The Project Director of the prime agency determines who receives access to OTIS. However, it is recommended the prime agency share all relevant information with subcontracts and work collaboratively to ensure grant compliance. The prime agency is ultimately responsible for all scope of work activities, progress reporting, evaluation, invoicing and staying up to date with all grant requirements, regardless of whether some scope of work activities is sub-granted.

3. **Q: Are there instructions on how to set up an OTIS account?**

   A: Yes. Please refer to **Appendix 9:** *TCFOR User Instructions* for the process to start and complete an application in OTIS.

Letters of Recommendation and Work Product

4. **Q: Can the Letter of Recommendation that verifies the applicant's ability to fulfill fiduciary and grants management requirements also be the letter from a state, and/or federal government agency, other than CTPP that has provided the applicant with funding within the last two years?**

   A: Yes. Any one of the three required letters should include a description of the Applicant's ability to fulfill fiduciary and grants management requirements. This can come from a government agency.

5. **Q: Can Letters of Recommendations be written by prospective subcontractors?**

   A: No. Letters of Recommendations cannot be from any person or organization within the Applicant's application, including proposed co-applicant/consortium partners, subcontractors, or consultants. Please view instructions on Appendix 11: *Application Scoring Criteria* for the Letter of Recommendation requirements.

6. **Q: The scoring criteria says, "Do not include letters of recommendation from any person or organization within the Applicant's Application, including the Applicant's proposed co-applicant/consortium partners, subcontractors, or consultants." Does this mean we cannot recruit organizations to participate in the coalition or coalition subcommittees if we obtain letters of recommendation from those entities?**

   A: No. Community organizations that write Letters of Recommendation may be involved in the coalition and/or coalition subcommittes. Please view instructions on **Appendix 11:** *Application Scoring Criteria* for the Letter of Recommendation requirements.

7. **Q: We receive federal funding, but in our experience, federal funders will not write letters of recommendation. In lieu of agency recommendations, could we provide a Letters of Recommendation from a state department or a large national foundation?**

   A: Yes. If the Applicant is currently receiving or has received funding from a local, state, and/or federal government agency, other than CDPH/CTPP, within the last two years, one of the recommendations must be from any one of these agencies. Please view instructions on **Appendix 11:** *Application Scoring Criteria* for the Letter of Recommendation requirements.

Key Dates

8. **Q: Because the date of the webinar was changed to October 24, from October 17, will CTPP consider extending the due date for questions by an additional week. Otherwise, we only have one business day to submit questions after this webinar which is a tight turnaround time to be able to ask appropriate questions that may come up throughout our team's review.**

   A: Yes. CDPH/CTPP revised the dates for ***Written Questions Due:*** from October 25, 2023, 5:00 p.m., to October 27, 2023, 5:00 p.m. and ***Responses to Written Questions Posted:*** from November 1, 2023, to November 3, 2023. An RFA addendum was released on October 25, 2023 incorporating these date changes. Please review the Key Dates on www.tcfor.catcp.org and **Table 2.** *Tentative RFA Timeline and Award Schedule* in the RFA.

Required Staffing

9. **Q: Must the staffing requirements be met by the prime and each of the subcontractors?**

   A: No. Applicants must include the required positions listed in **Table 3.** *Required Staffing and Minimum Duties*, which can be a combination of prime agency budgeted staff and/or subcontracted staff.

10. **Q: Do we have to have current Program Directors and Evaluators in order to complete the application on OTIS, or can they be hired after the grant award?**

    A: No. Program staff and subcontracts can be hired after the grant award. However, the qualifications of proposed project staff and key sub-grantee staff should be described in the Agency Capability section of the application. Please refer to **Appendix 11:** *Application Scoring Criteria* for additional details.

11. **Q: Is there an External Evaluator requirement?**

    A: No. Please see **Table 3.** *Required Staffing and Minimum Duties*. The Evaluator may be one internal staff or a subcontract/consultant. An individual budgeted staff may not act as more than one of the required staffing positions outlined in **Table 3.** *Required Staffing and Minimum Duties* for this project.

12. **Q: Are there specific recommendations for how long interns should work through the year?**

    A: No. Each Applicant can determine the duration of a Paid Internship based on project needs. See page 15 for more information on Paid Internships.

13. **Q: On page 14 of the RFA, it states that one staff or subcontract/consultant must be listed at 5-10% FTE in the budget. It also states that "The Evaluator must not exceed 10% FTE in the budget." Can you clarify that this means the Evaluator must be listed at least 5% but not more than 10% for evaluation tasks? And if we intend to subcontract with our Evaluator for other tasks besides those directly related to evaluation, do we need to write separate equations in the budget to show the different roles?**

    A: Yes. The Evaluator must be budgeted as one staff or subcontact/consultant at a minimum of 5% FTE and must not exceed 10% FTE as outlined in Table 3. Required Staffing and Minimum Duties. If the Applicant plans on subcontracting for additional services beyond evaluation, then those must be clearly described in the budget justification. If overall duties would not exceed 10% FTE, this could be done in the Evaluator budget justification line item with sufficient detail. If additional duties exceed 10% FTE, it is recommended to differentiate duties in a separate budget justification position line item that does not include evaluation.

14. **Q: Can 5% FTE for evaluation be allocated to a staff member working on evaluation and 5% FTE be allocated to an external evaluator?**

    A: No. This project requires only one 5-10% FTE staff or subcontract/consultant for the required Evaluator position. Other staff may also participate in completing evaluation activities such as data collection, focus groups or key informant interviews without a formal evaluation FTE allocated to that position. However, the Project Director/Coordinator is responsible for the oversight of project evaluation activities at a minimum of 10 percent of a full-time position (equivalent to four hours per week). Please review the Evaluator role and responsibility as outlined in **Table 3.** *Required Staffing and Minimum Duties*.

15. **Q: In the RFA on pages 14-15, it states that the Evaluator, whether staff or subcontractor, must be paid at a range of 5%-10% FTE minimum. However, on page 15, it also states, "The Evaluator must not exceed 10% FTE in the budget." Because evaluation can flux year-to-year in the proposal, specifically with Year 5 requirements for brief evaluation reports often leading to higher evaluation costs, can you confirm the intention is for the FTE to be a minimum of 5% and a maximum of 10% FTE for the evaluator through the duration of the contract?**

    A: Yes. The Evaluator must be budgeted as one staff or subcontact/consultant at a minimum of 5% FTE and must not exceed 10% FTE within each fiscal year as outlined in Table 3. Required Staffing and Minimum Duties through the duration of the contract.

16. **Q: Can evaluation requirements be split up between staff with one staff taking on most of responsibilities? Such as 5% of each staff dedicated to evaluation, and one staff member having 25% of time dedicated to evaluation. Adding up to at least $55,000 (5% of annual budget).**

    A: No. This project requires only one staff or subcontract/consultant for the Evaluator position. The Evaluator must not exceed 10% FTE in the budget. An individual budgeted staff may not act as more than one of the required staffing positions outlined in Table 3. Required Staffing and Minimum Duties for this project.

Scope of Work

17. **Q: The Youth and Young Adults Statewide Provider Scope of Work, Appendix 4, includes C-8-ID, C-2-ID and C-5-ID that are all similar. Should we only include C-2-ID that seems most appropriate for the youth and young adult grant?**

    A: Yes. Activity C-8-ID on Page 20 and Activity C-5-ID on Page 22 text have been deleted and are displayed as text strike through within Appendix 4: *Prescribed Scope of Work Youth and Youth Adult Advocacy*. An RFA addendum was released on October 25, 2023 incorporating these changes.

18. **In Appendix 3: Prescribed Scope of Work: Policy Development and Implementation, listservs and electronic newsletters are mentioned in two places: Under Objective 1 on p. 3 and under Objective 2 on p. 12. While the second listserv and newsletter would focus on endgame initiatives, there is significant overlap between the listservs and both general and endgame-focused information might be included in one newsletter. Is the intent for Policy Development and Implementation Statewide Provider to send two separate newsletters?**

    A: Yes. Each newsletter focuses on a different audience. For example, the newsletter distributed for Objective 1 may focus on promoting model policies, feature upcoming trainings, and/or highlight success stories regarding local California policy wins. The newsletter distributed for Objective 2 would include national partners and key stakeholders who are a part of the Endgame Advisory Committee (EAC) and who are working on a larger scale to advance tobacco prevention efforts nationally.

Budget

19. **Q: If we propose additional activities to those in the prescribed scoope of work, should our budget reflect the potential costs of those activities?**

    A: No. Since Applicants are asked to propose additional activities in the Applicant Capability section (and not in the actual Scope of Work), they do not need to reflect these potential costs in the Budget. If the Application is awarded funding, the funded project can work with CDPH/CTPP to modify their scope of work and Budget as appropriate.

20. **Q: Can you define what line items are included in "Total Allowable Direct Costs"?**

    A: Yes. Total Allowable Direct Costs, exclude indirect costs, provide measurable, direct benefits to specific scope of work activities and adhere to the instructions, formulas, and requirements in the RFA and **Appendix 12:** *Budget Justification Instructions* for each budget category including: Personnel; Fringe Benefits; Operating Expenses; Equipment Expenses; Travel/Per Diem and Training; Subcontracts and Consultants; and Other Costs. Examples of unallowable costs may be found on page 7, E. *Funding Restrictions*. Total Allowable Direct Costs may be used to calculate an applicant's indirect cost rate as described on page 18,

number 11. *Indirect Expenses*, whereas the total amount of dollars budgeted to indirect costs may not exceed 15% of Total Allowable Direct Costs.

21. **Q: Due to the nature of our intention to keep project staff exclusively remote, we are considering offering a one-time start-up stipend to cover needed equipment costs (e.g. office furniture, computers, accessibility technology, mobility aids, etc.), in lieu of buying specific equipment each staff member must use and return-- so each employee can decide how to use their stipend equitably to support the development of their home office and meet their personal needs. Would this be allowed under the terms of the grant?**

    A: No. A stipend to cover equipment costs is not allowed. A detailed description(s) is required for each equipment expense/purchase requested. Details are to include but are not limited to an itemized list of all equipment, quantification of each item of equipment and/or software, the estimated purchase price, the estimated budget amount needed for each fiscal year, justification of the need for the equipment, and identification of which budgeted personnel/staff will utilize the equipment on the project. CTPP reserves the right to request the return of any equipment purchased with grant funds at the end of the project period.

22. **Q: Is the list of additional tobacco control funding related to the project applying (as opposed to their fiscal agency)?**

    A: Yes. The requested detail pertains to the project rather than the fiscal agency.

23. **Q: In equipment inventory, when it says "purchased under the respective contract" does that mean a current contract with CDPH/CTPP and any equipment still in use but purchased with past CDPH/CTPP funds?**

    A: Yes. Any equipment still in use which was purchased with CDPH/CTPP funds from a previously or currently funded grant or contract must be reported in the equipment inventory section of the Application.

Travel/Per Diem and Training

24. **Q: If travel is listed as required, should we assume all travel is to Sacramento?**

    A: Yes. Applicants should assume all required travel is to Sacramento, CA.