



Developing Competitive SAMHSA Grant Applications

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
www.samhsa.gov



Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
Introduction.....	i
Module 1: Know SAMHSA and Its Centers.....	M1-1 – M1-10
Module 2: Preplan and Organize	M2-1 – M2-20
Module 3: Link Your Project to SAMHSA Grant Announcements	M3-1 – M3-10
Module 4: Understand Grant Announcements.....	M4-1 – M4-22
Module 5: Write Your Grant Application	M5-1 – M5-52
Module 6: Study the Grant Application Review Process.....	M6-1 – M6-6

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Introduction

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), was established by an act of Congress in 1992 under Public Law 102-321. SAMHSA was created to focus attention, programs, and funding on improving the lives of people with or at risk for mental and substance abuse disorders. SAMHSA supports numerous activities that focus on substance abuse prevention, addiction treatment and mental health services through its discretionary grant programs.

To build national prevention and treatment capabilities for mental and substance abuse disorders, the challenge for SAMHSA is to reach community projects with funding information. SAMHSA recognizes that grassroots operations often are in the best position to make healthy changes in their communities.

The “Developing Competitive SAMHSA Grant Applications” manual is designed to reach potential community-based grantees and prepare them with the knowledge and practice to prepare competitive, well-developed, Federal grant applications.

Purpose of This Manual

“Developing Competitive SAMHSA Grant Applications” was created to help you acquire the skills and resources needed to plan, write, and prepare a competitive grant application for SAMHSA funding.

Learning Objectives

This manual will help you to:

- Decide whether or not a particular grant opportunity is appropriate for your organization;
- Assemble and maintain current project and community data for planning ideas;
- Review SAMHSA grant announcements, and plan an application strategy;
- Examine eligibility and screening criteria to meet organizational and formatting requirements;
- Assemble your resources and your writing team;
- Write grant applications that respond to the required outline and the grant evaluation criteria; and
- Anticipate peer-review response.

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Module 1

Purpose of Module 1

The purpose of Module 1 is to help you understand SAMHSA's mission, priorities, and organization and then connect your project and community needs with funding opportunities within each of SAMHSA's three Centers: the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), and the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT).

Module 1 Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module, you will know:

- The funding priorities of SAMHSA and its Centers;
- SAMHSA's grant technical assistance and information resources; and
- How to connect your community and project needs with the priorities and grant announcements of SAMHSA and its Centers.

Module 1 Underlying Assumptions

- To respond successfully to a SAMHSA grant announcement, your project plans and ideas must match what SAMHSA intends to fund.
- Many resources are available to help you prepare your grant application.

Module 1 Agenda

Topics to be discussed:

- SAMHSA's mission statement;
- SAMHSA's Centers;
- SAMHSA's funding priorities; and
- Grant application technical assistance.

SAMHSA's Mission Statement

To build resilience and facilitate recovery for people with or at risk for substance abuse and mental illness.

SAMHSA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), one of 15 Federal Government departments. Handout 1-1 provides SAMHSA's organization chart, and Handout 1-2 provides SAMHSA's strategic goals. More information on SAMHSA is available on the SAMHSA Web site at www.samhsa.gov and other HHS Web sites at www.hhs.gov.

SAMHSA's Centers

Grant funds are made available and awarded by the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), and the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) in accordance with the mission and purpose of SAMHSA. SAMHSA's Centers collaborate to help the agency accomplish its mission. SAMHSA's grant programs are focused on improving the quality and availability of substance abuse prevention, addiction treatment, and mental health services nationwide. Some SAMHSA grant programs enable States to build or enhance substance abuse and mental health services. Other grants give States and local communities the resources to better identify and address emerging substance abuse and mental health service needs at their earliest possible stages. Across the country, SAMHSA grant-supported projects are implementing evidence-based approaches to prevention and treatment activities in the community.

The Center for Mental Health Services

The Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) leads Federal efforts in expanding the availability and accessibility of high-quality, community-based services for adults with serious mental illnesses and children with serious emotional disturbances. CMHS administers the Mental Health Services Block Grant Program—the single largest Federal contribution to improving mental health service systems across the country—as well as a portfolio of discretionary grant programs that include efforts to help prevent mental health problems. The Center collects, analyzes, and disseminates national data on mental health services.



Module 1

SAMHSA's National Mental Health Information Center (NMHIC) provides information about mental health via a toll-free number, Web site, and more than 600 publications.

NMHIC Contact Information

1-877-SAMHSA7 (English and Español)

1-866-889-2647 (TDD)

www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov

The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention

The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) works to improve the quality of substance abuse prevention practices in every community nationwide. Through its discretionary grant programs, the Center provides States, communities, organizations, and families with tools to promote protective factors and to reduce risk factors for substance abuse.

The Center for Substance Abuse Treatment

The Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) promotes the quality and availability of community-based substance abuse treatment services for individuals and families who need them. CSAT works with States and community-based groups to improve and expand existing substance abuse treatment services through its discretionary grant programs and the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant Program. CSAT also supports SAMHSA's free treatment referral service to link people with the community-based substance abuse services they need.

SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) is the Nation's one-stop resource for information about substance abuse prevention and addiction treatment. Information specialists are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to take your calls.

NCADI Contact Information

1-877-SAMHSA7 (English and Español)

1-800-487-4889 (TDD)

www.ncadi.samhsa.gov

SAMHSA has recently established an Information Line that is an excellent source for getting information and resources about SAMHSA programs, initiatives and grants. The telephone number for the Information Line is 1-877-SAMHSA7. The line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

SAMHSA's Priorities

With input from a variety of SAMHSA's stakeholders, including Advisory Councils, national associations, and consumer and community-based organizations, SAMHSA developed a **matrix**—the *Programs and Principles Matrix*—that is a visual summary of the issues and cross-cutting principles that drive SAMHSA's key initiatives.

SAMHSA has identified ways to improve effectiveness, to increase capacity to serve, and to provide accountability for its programs, policies, and budget. Key priorities for the agency and for the field have been set and identified in the matrix of program priorities and cross-cutting principles. The "SAMHSA Matrix of Priorities" guides management decisions by focusing on these priority areas. SAMHSA can help provide people with the services they need to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities. With the continued support of its many partners, SAMHSA will continue to bring the message of hope, courage, and recovery and the promise of a life in the community to every individual it touches through its work.

<h1 style="color: red;">SAMHSA Matrix of Priorities</h1>		Cross-Cutting Principles									
		Science to Services/ Evidence-Based Practices	Data for Performance Measurement & Management	Collaboration with Public, Private & International Partners	Reducing Stigma & Discrimination & Other Barriers to Services	Cultural Competency/ Eliminating Disparities	Community & Faith-Based Approaches	Trauma & Violence (e.g. Physical & Sexual Abuse)	Financing Strategies & Cost-Effectiveness	Rural & Other Specific Settings	Disaster Readiness & Response
Programs/Issues	Co-Occurring Disorders	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Substance Abuse Treatment Capacity	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Seclusion & Restraint	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Strategic Prevention Framework	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Children & Families	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Mental Health System Transformation	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Suicide Prevention	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Homelessness	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Older Adults	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	HIV/AIDS & Hepatitis	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Criminal & Juvenile Justice	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Workforce Development	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

A Life In The Community For Everyone

Building Resilience & Facilitating Recovery



Module 1

It is important for you to know the program areas and topics that SAMHSA is most likely to fund. Topics that relate to SAMHSA's cross-cutting principles should be incorporated as often as possible in each of the SAMHSA program and issue areas. Depending on the grant announcement, you should incorporate as many of these areas and issues as possible into your project planning.

SAMHSA Grant Application Technical Assistance

- You can determine your eligibility to compete for a grant award by reading the grant announcement.
- You must pay special attention to the “screening requirements” to make sure you meet all of them.
- You can apply for a grant funded by SAMHSA in substance abuse and/or mental health areas.
- You can access many valuable data and literature resources from the SAMHSA Web site.
- You can receive technical assistance by attending SAMHSA workshops and by contacting the Government Project Officer (GPO) and Grants Management Officer (GMO) noted in the funding announcement.

SAMHSA provides millions of dollars each year in grants to organizations submitting complete and comprehensive grant applications. Because grant funding is a competitive process, it is essential to develop a high-quality, responsive application.

It is a good idea to visit SAMHSA's Web site regularly to keep current. The GPO (sometimes referred to as the program contact) and GMO involved in the work in which you are interested are a terrific resource to call upon to learn more about the grant application process and available resources. Every grant announcement includes contact information for program and grants management staff. There are many ways to access relevant information, data, documents, application forms, and reports, including the following:

Visit the SAMHSA Web site www.samhsa.gov/grant/apply.aspx for application forms and other grant application documents that are referenced throughout this document.

- Call the SAMHSA Clearinghouses, 1-800-877-SAMHSA7, and request resources. The National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI), www.ncadi.samhsa.gov, provides information on substance abuse prevention and treatment, and the National Mental Health Information Center (NMHIC), www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov, provides information on mental disorders and treatment. Both offer materials and information on specific topics of interest.

You can also access public use files that detail national, state and sub-state data compiled by SAMHSA. The data files can be found at SAMHSA's Office of Applied Studies (OAS) Web site at <http://oas.samhsa.gov/>.

- Talk to your contacts at the State level to discuss plans for grant application development. State Point of Contact (SPOC) and Single State Agency (SSA) lists are found on the SAMHSA Web site at www.samhsa.gov/grants/apply.aspx.
- Attend technical assistance workshops. These workshops are usually announced on the SAMHSA Web site.
- The technical assistance workshops and the GPOs, SPOCs, SSAs, and local government program contacts are valuable resources. These agencies and individuals know about Federal funding opportunities and can help you identify appropriate grant announcements for your project.

Not every project will find a grant announcement that fits. Therefore, it is important to gather information on what is being funded and to identify a variety of funding sources to find resources that can best support your ideas (or help you develop ideas that do fit). Ways in which you can find grant announcements will be discussed in Module 3. Web sites referred to throughout this manual will provide more detailed and current information to help with the preparation of your grant applications.

Summary Points to Remember...

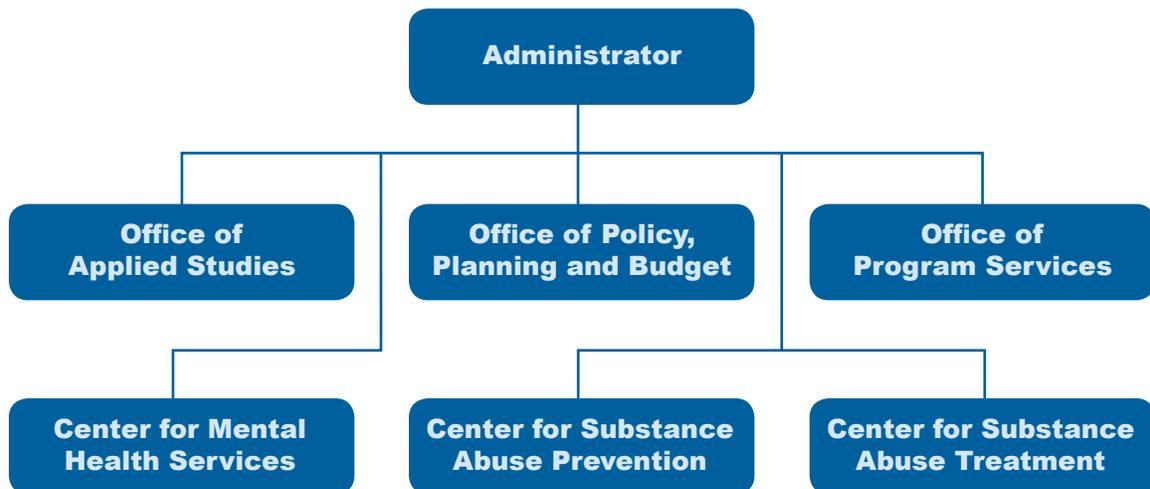
- Connect your project and community needs with SAMHSA's mission and priorities.
- Locate and benefit from SAMHSA resources.
- Locate and benefit from SAMHSA's information clearinghouses, NCADI and NMHIC and use the SAMHSA information line **1-877-SAMHSA7**.
- Attend technical assistance workshops.
- Communicate with GPOs, SPOCs, and SSAs.
- Ask for help!



Module 1: Handout 1-1

SAMHSA Organization Chart

Department of Health and Human Services
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



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Module 1: Handout 1-2

SAMHSA Strategic Plan

VISION

A Life in the Community
for Everyone

MISSION

Building Resilience
and Facilitating Recover

ACCOUNTABILITY

Measure and report
performance

- Track national trends
- Establish measurement and reporting systems
- Achieve excellence in management practices

CAPACITY

Increase service
availability

- Support needs assessment, planning, and system improvements
- Promote appropriate outreach assessment, and referral
- Support service expansion
- Promote consumer choice

EFFECTIVENESS

Improve service
quality

- Improve client outcomes in SAMHSA programs
- Identify and promote evidence-based approaches
- Support recruitment, education, and retention of workforce

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Module 2

Overview

Module 2 leads you through the planning and organizing you need to do in preparation for writing your grant application. We do this step by exploring some essential and basic questions you must address before you decide to apply for funding:

- Do you have the right personnel to write a competitive grant application?
- Do you have the time to organize and write a competitive grant application?
- Do you have the experience and expertise to make your proposed project work?

Planning and organizing can help you by putting many of the required resources and materials at your fingertips. This step is important because the timeframe for grant application development is limited, usually between 45 and 60 days. With planning and organizing, the process of writing your application will be a great deal easier.

Purpose of Module 2

Module 2 discusses the steps to identify, organize, and update needed project and community information in preparation for deciding whether or not to submit a SAMHSA grant application.

Module 2 Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Identify the core elements needed to develop your Mission Statement;
- Organize and revise existing resources to clarify the decision-making and grant-writing processes and keep them in a notebook;
- Update and revise current project information;
- Identify and describe existing community partnerships, and determine how you can expand your professional networks and incorporate new partners in the application process;
- Identify and use a local advisory committee to provide project guidance and resources; and
- Identify resources for conducting a literature review and needs assessment.

Module 2 Underlying Assumptions

- You already have many of the resources and capabilities you need to write a competitive grant application.
- By assessing your resources, you can decide whether or not now is the time to apply for grant funding or if more planning time is needed.

- Linking with other community groups may help give your project greater credibility.
- Planning will save you time, effort, and energy. This step also can help support a systematic and efficient grant-writing process.

Module 2 Agenda

Topics to be discussed:

- Know your project.
- Create your project notebook.
- Update and revise your project materials.
- Understand the reasons for partnerships and networks.
- Know the importance of building coalitions.
- Work with a local advisory committee.
- Conduct a literature search.
- Plan a community needs assessment.

Know Your Project

Mission Statement:

- Who are we?
- What do we do?
- Who do we do it for?
- How do we do it?
- Where do we do it?
- Why do we do it?

Your project has a reason for existing called the “mission.” Developing a clear way to describe your mission is essential for your project abstract and narrative, both of which are critical components of your grant application. Before submitting a grant application, you should first develop a Mission Statement for your project to use to explore funding sources and to describe your project to SAMHSA.



Module 2

If you already have a Mission Statement, make sure the core elements of your Mission Statement reflect the following:

- The type of organization you are now;
- The types of services you provide;
- The description of your target audience(s);
- Your method for providing these services;
- The location of your organization and where services are provided; and
- Why you are providing these services.

The following are the core parts of a Mission Statement:

- **“Who we are”** is your name and type of organization, such as the ABC Agency for Women, a nonprofit, community-based organization in Chicago.
- **“What we do”** means the services you provide, such as smoking cessation support groups.
- **“Who we do it for”** is your target audience—the people you serve—such as women older than age 21 and their teenage children.
- **“How we do it”** discusses the activities you use, such as workshops, support groups, and public service announcements.
- **“Where we do it”** is the specific geographic area in which you provide services, such as neighborhoods on the Southside of Chicago.
- **“Why we do it”** is the community problem you want to change—your measurable goals and desired outcomes—such as reducing smoking and tobacco use among women older than age 21 and their teenage children.

Sample Mission Statement

Arlington Youth Against Violence, Inc. (AYAVI), is a nonprofit organization that provides youth violence prevention and intervention services for youth, ages 14 to 20, who are economically disadvantaged. AYAVI’s prevention and intervention services include training, education, and community collaboration activities. AYAVI serves the youth of Falls Church, Arlington, Fairfax, and Rosslyn, Virginia, suburban communities.

The project’s goals and desired outcomes include:

- Reduction of violence among youth;
- Training and education on alternatives to violence; and
- Partnering to enhance violence prevention.

In the sample Mission Statement provided above:

- **“Who they are”** is Arlington Youth Against Violence, Inc. (AYAVI), nonprofit organization.
- **“What do they do”** is provide youth violence prevention and intervention services.
- **“Who they do it for”** is youth, ages 14 to 20, who are economically disadvantaged.
- **“How they do it”** is through AYAVI’s prevention and intervention services, including training, education, and community collaboration.
- **“Where they do it”** is in Falls Church, Arlington, Fairfax, and Rosslyn, Virginia, suburban communities.
- **“Why they do it”** is answered by the project’s goals and desired outcomes, which include:
 - Reduction of violence among youth;
 - Training and education on alternatives to violence; and
 - Partnering to enhance violence prevention.

Handout 2-1 provides more information on developing your Mission Statement.

Create Your Project Notebook

- Statement of Need
- Proposed Evidence-Based Service/Practice
- Proposed Implementation Approach
- Staff and Organizational Experience
- Performance Assessment and Data

To organize and revise your existing resources to help you clarify the decision-making and grant-writing processes, create a notebook (using a large three-ring binder and tab dividers) that identifies your project, describes your approach to the project, outlines your management and implementation plan for the project, and describes your methodology for evaluating the impact and success of your project.

When putting together your project notebook, begin by thinking about a problem or need in the community that your project could try to change. These problems or needs should be SAMHSA concerns that the agency is interested in funding. SAMHSA grant announcements for prevention or treatment services usually include the sections mentioned



Module 2

above, although they sometimes are titled differently. Your notebook sections should contain the following information:

- **Statement of Need**—Your description of the proposed target group and supporting data about why this group needs services from your proposed project.
- **Proposed Evidence-Based Service/Practice**—The data and information to support your project ideas and activities based on past experience of effective services or practices.
- **Proposed Implementation Approach**—The goals, objectives, and activities you propose for your project.
- **Staff and Organizational Experience**—An explanation of how you will manage the activities, funds, and staff for your proposed project; the past experiences of your organization and proposed staff.
- **Performance Assessment and Data**—An explanation of how you will measure whether or not your project is achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes you intended to achieve.

Module 5 provides very specific guidance on how to develop each of these sections. Handout 2-2 also provides a list of suggested information to include under each tabbed section.

Update and Revise Your Project Materials

- The information provided in your grant application must be current.
- Before you begin to write your grant application, stay up to date on the topics and on current ways to address them to make sure the information in your application is “state of the art.”
- Use the “Checklist” (Handout 2-3) to remind you of the types of information in your project notebook that need to be updated.
- By using the “Checklist” (Handout 2-3), you can help ensure the information in your grant application is current. By keeping this information current throughout the year, you can reduce the time it takes to prepare the application. Read the questions on the handout.

Consider:

- Does your project go through some kind of site inspection or review? Who inspects or reviews your project? Examples could include funding sources, your State, the Board of Directors, a parent organization, or school representatives.

- Does your project have open houses or invite the community in for special events? If so, what do you do to prepare for this public viewing?

You may have learned from these inspection types of experiences that it is not a good idea to procrastinate or be unprepared. It is the same for writing your grant application.

Remember:

- Grant applications require up-to-date information.
- Updating project materials regularly will help you review your eligibility and preparedness when funding opportunities are announced.
- Once your project materials are updated and revised, you are a step ahead in preparing for the application process.

Understand the Reasons for Partnerships and Networks

While preparing your Mission Statement, organizing the project notebook, and updating your project information, you should devote time and energy to developing and nurturing partnerships and networks. Partnerships are composed of community organizations or groups that associate and collaborate to provide services. Grant announcements often ask you to discuss these relationships to show community understanding and involvement. In addition, you will always have to show cultural competence and responsiveness in all areas of your project. By bonding with diverse groups in your community, you open the door to learning more about all the backgrounds, experiences, and cultures that make up your neighborhoods. Cultural competence is discussed in more detail in Module 5.

Demonstrating working relationships with a variety of groups in your community and the specific project target group greatly enhances your credibility. If you are well known and respected in the community, it may help assure funders that good consumer recruitment and retention for your project will be likely.

Grant applications often require projects to include a sustainability plan. A sustainability plan explains how you expect to keep the project going when Federal funding ends. Partnerships can allow for increased opportunities for alternative funding. Sharing information, resources, and data will give you much-needed background and support for your project ideas—and save you time! Partnerships and networks can serve as forums to share and receive information. Buy-in and validation show that groups in the community respect your project and will support your work.



Module 2

Some reasons for building partnerships and networks can include:

- Building project support and sustainability (longer life!);
- Sharing information about your community;
- Sharing resources and data;
- Obtaining buy-in and validation;
- Developing solid public relations;
- Enhancing cultural competence; and
- Encouraging community dialogue at all levels for project design and service delivery.

Respectful public relations are a result of open communication with partners to ensure you are meeting the needs of the target population and establishing a positive reputation as a contributor to the community.

Partnerships and networks can provide staff, stories, data, lessons learned, and feedback to your project to help you design effective services. You need more than a good plan for a community project to work. You need good partners, good listening skills, and investment in the community and in the people you hope to serve.

Know the Importance of Building Coalitions

Building coalitions is important because they provide an organization of relationships with people, programs, and processes that strengthen community resources and move the whole community toward positive social change.

Your project is designed to provide specific services to a specific target group within your community. SAMHSA knows that one project cannot solve all the problems in a community. Individual projects should not try to do everything, but you should connect with many groups, projects, and people in your community to form a larger resource for constructive change.

Coalition building helps bring together all the programs in your community—health, religious, school, social services, housing, and arts, to name a few—to identify how to work together to meet community goals. Your project should contribute to, if not lead, coalition building in your area. Your relationships with other organizations can also demonstrate a “continuum of care,” which is often required in grant announcements.

Work With a Local Advisory Committee

Does your project have an advisory committee? Is it a local committee? If your agency has a *national* advisory committee, it is definitely a useful tool; however, a *local* advisory committee can greatly assist your project with specific tasks that match community needs. It is important that advisory committee members be local residents and familiar with the community. So, put one together now for your project.

A local advisory committee may help with:

- Increasing project status in the community;
- Including assessment expertise;
- Planning project ideas;
- Providing past experience and input in a variety of fields, such as accounting, medicine, research, fundraising and marketing; and
- Recruiting focus group participants and soliciting consumer involvement.

As you describe your organizational structure in your grant application, members of an effective local advisory committee should be listed. If no committee exists right now, you should begin to think about potential members who represent the essential components and needs of your project. Remember to include consumers and consumer family members of the target group who can provide service ideas.

When working with an advisory committee, ask the following questions to assess your committee:

- Does the committee represent the diversity that exists within my community?
- Does the committee have representation from the target population?
- Do committee members have access to resources, expertise, information, or funding sources?
- Does the committee meet on a regular basis?
- Do we take advantage of and learn from committee members' expertise?

Conduct a Literature Search

A literature search helps you find current thinking about the most effective ways to address the needs of your target population. This search is important for sections in your application such as the Proposed Implementation Approach and Proposed Evidence-Based Service/Practice. A literature review entails reading and analyzing the information to tailor it to your project design plans.



Module 2

It is an important planning step to take time to become familiar with the current and relevant literature and what various Web sites have to offer. In addition to the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI), 1-877-SAMHSA7 or www.ncadi.samhsa.gov, and the National Mental Health Information Center (NMHIC), 1-877-SAMHSA7 or www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov, you may access the Substance Abuse Librarians and Information Specialists (SALIS) at www.salis.org and the National Library of Medicine's MEDLINE/PubMed at www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov. Also, the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP) is a voluntary rating and classification system designed to provide the public with reliable information on the scientific basis and practicality of interventions that prevent and/or treat mental and substance use disorders. Descriptive information and quantitative ratings are provided across several key areas for all interventions reviewed by NREPP. This information is available to the public through a new NREPP Web site launched in March 2007, www.nrepp.samhsa.gov.

The size of a literature search can be overwhelming, so begin with existing resources. The trick to conducting a good literature search is to be as specific as possible. Try to list words or phrases that best focus on your project service, target groups, methodology, evaluation plan, or other terms. The literature search will help you demonstrate that your project idea is based on proven practices.

Review Handout 2-4 “Tips for Conducting a Literature Search.”

Plan a Community Needs Assessment

A Community Needs Assessment is an important element in the process of planning your proposed project. Information gathered from conducting a Community Needs Assessment will help you develop sections of the application such as the Statement of Need. The Statement of Need should include a clearly established baseline for the project; that is, it must provide an accurate appraisal of the current situation that you seek to change.

Documentation of need may come from a variety of qualitative and quantitative sources. The following four assessment techniques provide both qualitative and quantitative data: (1) existing data approach, where you would gather and compare national, State, and local information and/or data already collected by individual agencies, State and county public agencies, school systems, health systems, and court systems (e.g., alcohol, tobacco, drug abuse, and mental health data from SAMHSA, <http://oas.samhsa.gov/>, SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health, www.oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh.htm and the National Center for Health Statistics/Centers for Disease Control reports, www.cdc.gov/nchs/express.htm); (2) surveys that gather information from a representative sample of your target population (e.g., personal interviews, telephone

surveys, and face-to-face or mail-in questionnaires); (3) key informant approach, where you identify the community leaders and decision makers who are knowledgeable about the community and can accurately identify priority needs and concerns; and (4) community forum approach, where a public meeting(s) is held during which time the stakeholders discuss the needs facing the community, identify the priority needs, and propose plans for these priority needs. Any technique(s) you choose must reflect an understanding and competence of the cultural aspects that make up your community and target population.

Reading and reviewing current materials written by leaders in the field can help you determine the best strategy for carrying out your project in your area. Community assessments focus on local assets, resources, and activities as well as gaps, barriers, or emerging needs. Understanding your community will help you tailor the selected strategies and activities for your specific project and target group.

Review Handout 2-5 “Tips for Conducting a Community Assessment.”

Summary Points to Remember...

- Planning can help your grant-writing process be more efficient and productive.
- Developing your Mission Statement is essential.
- Your project notebook will be your roadmap to writing a clear grant application.
- The amount of planning, organizing, and preparing you do now will pay dividends when your writing begins later.



Module 2: Handout 2-1

Develop Your Mission Statement

Answer the following questions about your project:

Who are we?

What do we do?

Who do we do it for?

How do we do it?

Where do we do it?

Why do we do it?

SAMPLE Mission Statement

Arlington Youth Against Violence, Inc. (AYAVI), is a nonprofit organization that provides youth violence prevention and intervention services for economically disadvantaged youth, ages 14 to 20. AYAVI's prevention and intervention services include training, education, and community collaboration. AYAVI is based near the Washington, D.C., area, and serves the youth of the Falls Church, Arlington, Fairfax, and Rosslyn, Virginia, communities.

The project's outcomes include:

- Reducing violence among youth
- Providing training and education on alternatives to violence; and
- Partnering to enhance violence prevention.

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Module 2: Handout 2-2

Create Your Project Notebook

Develop a Project Notebook before you begin writing your grant application. The notebook should be updated constantly with new information and resources. Suggested notebook tabs are described below. The suggested tabs are based on the Services template. Basic suggestions for the type of information to include in the tabbed sections are provided.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mission ● Values ● Organizational chart ● Board of Directors/Advisory Board information ● Board of Directors/Advisory Board meeting minutes ● Committee lists ● Meeting minutes ● Certifications ● Facility location/information ● Recent contact information (telephone, fax, and e-mail) ● Outreach process and methods ● Newspaper articles ● Flyers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Client contact information ● Agency presentations and materials ● Community contacts ● Partnerships ● Stakeholder information ● Service agencies ● Community groups ● Key community liaisons ● Community meeting minutes ● Key community partners ● Local statistics and census data ● Noted gaps in services ● Data specific to your target group ● Letters from partnering groups ● Testimonial letters from clients served
Notebook Tab: Evidence-Based Service/Practice Suggested Information to Include	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Purpose ● Goals ● Objectives ● SAMHSA Web site resources explored ● Literature search findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Noted expert information ● Target population ● Service and activity information section justified ● Modification justification, from evidence-based information for project

Create Your Project Notebook (Continued)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample consent forms • Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-limited objectives • Outcome objectives • Process objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product objectives • Consumer focus group reports • Cultural competence materials • Consumer recruitment and retention plans • Literature Review Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational structure • Job descriptions • Resumes of key management personnel • Resumes of key staff relevant to the project • Staff-to-client ratio information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of program • Monthly accounts • Recent audits • Facility licensing and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) • Accounting processes and procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background articles and data on accomplishments • Relevant articles about the population you serve • Articles that describe your assessment methods and performance measures • Articles that mirror the type of services you provide • Newspaper articles • Statistical information on numbers served 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection instruments • Data to support the need for project services • Statistical information on outcomes • GPRA reporting plan* • Contact information for potential assessors in your community (e.g., at the community college) if you do not have program assessment expertise in your agency <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 10px;">*The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) data are an essential component of Federal grant programs. GPRA is more fully described in Section V of the Manual, <i>Meeting GPRA Requirements</i>.</p>



Module 2: Handout 2-3

Project Materials Checklist

Use this checklist to ensure that your project materials are updated and revised.

- Are my job descriptions updated and relevant to the proposed project idea?
- Are my marketing materials (e.g., brochures, posters, logo, giveaways, and public service announcements) current?
- Do my committee lists (e.g., volunteer training, fundraising, community liaison, and staff development) have the correct information on them?
- Are my project and client files complete and standardized? Do they meet compliance standards? Are consent forms in order for current services?
- Are my meeting minutes (board and staff) updated?
- Are my certifications, licenses, and inspections updated?
- Are my facility improvement documents filed and accessible?
- Is my organizational chart current?
- Is my budgeting information organized?
- Do I have possible assessment information tools for performance measurement and indicators for project success?

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Module 2: Handout 2-4

Tips for Conducting a Literature Search

- Do not wait until the last minute. Start the search now, as part of your planning activities.
- Find authors whose work is cited most frequently. (These are the leaders in the field.)
- Review literature that has been published in the past five years that is considered to be major work.
- Make sure you include literature on the cultural dimensions of the problem(s).
- Use SAMHSA clearinghouses, the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI), 1-877-SAMHSA7 or www.ncadi.samhsa.gov, and the National Mental Health Information Center (NMHIC), 1-877-SAMHSA7 or www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov. Both offer materials and information on specific topics of interest to help you start and conduct your search. Ask the information specialists for ideas and how best to find what you need. You also can request, for a fee, the use of overnight delivery services such as FedEx, UPS, or U.S. Postal Service, rather than waiting for regular mail.
- Access libraries at local universities or colleges; also access literature online, such as the Substance Abuse Librarians and Information Specialists (SALIS) at www.salis.org and the National Library of Medicine's MEDLINE/PubMed at www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.
- Access the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP), www.nrepp.samhsa.gov.
- Assign a staff member or student the task of an ongoing literature search and collection of relevant materials for review.

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Module 2: Handout 2-5

Tips for Conducting a Community Assessment

- Meet with State and local health, mental health, and substance abuse offices to obtain State and local data collection reports.
- Go to your local university or college. Ask for free help, and solicit assistance from master's and doctoral degree candidates who are looking for course projects.
- Use existing national, State, and local data.
- On the basis of existing data, develop a strategy for filling in information gaps. Consider representative sample surveys, key informant approaches, and a community forum approach.
- Include both qualitative and quantitative sources in your community assessment.

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Module 3

Overview

This module provides basic information about SAMHSA grant announcements and grant application documents. You will see how SAMHSA uses standard “templates” to develop most agency grant announcements. You will see that there are templates for Services, Infrastructure, Best Practices Planning and Implementation, and Service to Science program types. Prospective applicants are encouraged to become familiar with the basic format and requirements of the templates prior to the announcement of the funding opportunity. You will explore how to use SAMHSA’s Web site to find the templates, search for funding opportunities, determine basic grant eligibility requirements, locate and review specific Request for Applications (RFAs) and Program Announcements (PAs), retrieve grant application kits, and identify people who can provide advice before you submit an application. You will learn about www.grants.gov, a critical resource for prospective applicants.

Purpose of Module 3

Module 3 is designed to help you understand the SAMHSA grant announcement process to better enable you to organize and prepare for submitting a grant application. First, you will explore the language of the SAMHSA grant announcement process. Then, you will consider how your project funding needs relate to current SAMHSA funding opportunities and how to determine your eligibility for specific grant opportunities. Next, you will be introduced to information resources to help you locate, review, understand, and download information about SAMHSA’s grant announcements. Finally, you will discuss how contacting Government Project Officers and connecting with your State and local systems and community partnerships will help you organize and eventually write your grant application.

Module 3 Learning Objectives

After completing this module, you will know:

- How SAMHSA organizes and publishes information about grant programs using RFAs and PAs;
- How to access complete grant application kits including the grant announcement and other essential information and application documents;
- How to determine whether or not your organization meets grant eligibility requirements;
- How to understand and satisfy grant application format requirements;
- How to search the Web for essential information and grant application resources; and

- How to gather support and how to receive technical assistance from key Federal, State, and local partners and resource people.

Module 3 Underlying Assumptions

- SAMHSA provides all the necessary information on funding opportunities on the agency's Web site **www.samhsa.gov**. Another critical source of information is **www.grants.gov**. Grants.gov is an electronic storefront for interactions between grant applicants and the Federal agencies that manage grant funds.
- SAMHSA has developed standard “templates” to describe the basic program purpose and application requirements for grant opportunities within four program types: Services, Infrastructure, Best Practices Planning and Implementation, and Service to Science. Staff use these templates to develop the RFAs and PAs that announce funding opportunities.
- SAMHSA funds grant programs using RFAs and PAs. The RFA/PA will be posted on the SAMHSA Web site and at **www.Grants.gov**.
- To write a grant application that successfully clears the preliminary screening, pay special attention to the eligibility criteria for applicant organizations and to the application formatting requirements and screenout requirements (e.g., special program requirements, page limits, outline and section titles, attachments, and appendices).
- To write a competitive grant application that will score well during the review process, write well-thought-out, comprehensive responses to the evaluation criteria.
- Formal and informal technical assistance is available to potential applicants. Communication with SAMHSA program and grant specialists and other professionals and organizations with successful application experience will help you identify resources and information as well as develop a test for your proposed project idea.

Module 3 Agenda

Topics to be discussed:

- Methods for announcing available grant funds;
- Request for Applications and Programs Announcements;
- Assessing what you need to apply;



Module 3

- Requesting and reviewing the grant documents;
- Reviewing project eligibility requirements, screenout criteria, and evaluation criteria; and
- Communicating with resource people and potential partners.

Methods for Announcing Available Grant Funds

Government agencies use a variety of terms to announce that grant funding is available and to solicit grant applications. As you consider what government grant-funding opportunities are right for your organization, it is important that you become familiar with the grant announcement language and methods used by the government agency from which you are considering seeking funds. SAMHSA uses two methods to announce the availability of grant-funding opportunities—RFAs and PAs. In addition, most SAMHSA announcements are developed from a standard template for one of the following program types: Services, Infrastructure, Best Practices Planning and Implementation, or Service to Science. You can review the templates on the SAMHSA Web site www.samhsa.gov/grants/apply.aspx.

Requirements specific to each grant program will be added to the standard template. In preparation for developing a grant application, prospective applicants are encouraged to become familiar with the basic format and requirements of the templates prior to the announcement of the funding opportunity.

Request for Applications and Program Announcements

To announce the availability of grant funds, SAMHSA releases Request for Applications (RFAs) and Program Announcements (PAs), described as follows:

- RFAs and PAs contain all the necessary program and application information for responding to the funding opportunity.
- PAs are unique in that they are “standing” announcements with application due dates several times during a year. This process allows the agency to fund new grantee organizations on an ongoing basis.

SAMHSA releases an RFA or PA when grant opportunities become available. These announcements are located at www.samhsa.gov and www.grants.gov. The information in an RFA or PA provides the program description, application directions, and requirements.

The www.grants.gov Web site serves many purposes:

- A single source for finding Federal grant opportunities;

- A way to register for e-mail notification of Federal grant opportunities;
- A standardized manner of locating and learning more about funding opportunities;
- A single, secure, and reliable source for applying for Federal grants online;
- A simplified grant application process with reduction of paperwork; and
- A unified interface for all agencies to announce their grant opportunities, and for all grant applicants to find and apply for those opportunities.

Accessing What You Need to Apply

- Visit www.samhsa.gov and www.grants.gov. Review the overview of the RFA or PA to determine if the funding opportunity is appropriate for your project.
- Check due dates for applications.
- Request the grant application kit for the RFA or PA of interest from the clearinghouses or download it from www.samhsa.gov/grants/apply.aspx.

Check the RFA or PA to decide whether or not your organization is eligible to apply and prepared to meet the application requirements by the application deadline.

Requesting and Reviewing the Grant Documents

SAMHSA grant application kits consist of the following documents:

- RFA or PA;
- Grant Application Forms (the Public Health Service (PHS) Form 5161-1 including Standard Form (SF) 424 v2 and SF 424A); and
- Grant Application Forms, Certifications, and Assurances all available from SAMHSA at www.samhsa.gov/grants/apply.aspx.

When you are interested in a specific RFA or PA, you can either download the necessary forms from the Web site, or request the appropriate grant application kit that includes all the forms and instructions you need. You can receive the kit by calling one of the SAMHSA clearinghouses at 1-877-SAMHSA7. For CMHS, visit the National Mental Health Information Center (NMHIC) at www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov; for CSAP and CSAT, visit the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) at www.ncadi.samhsa.gov. You can also download the kit from the SAMHSA Web site at www.samhsa.gov/grants/apply.aspx.

The kit includes the RFA or PA and all the forms for your narrative and budget information. The PHS 5161-1 includes SF 424 v2 (face page) and the SF 424A (budget pages), plus certifications and assurances that are required with grant applications. The kit may contain other handouts, tips, resources, or required information. **Carefully** read



Module 3

all instructions and information. If you need assistance, contact the relevant SAMHSA staff people listed in the announcement. Note, two different names often are listed, one for program information and the other for grants management.

Review Project Eligibility, Screening Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

- Every grant RFA and PA has eligibility requirements that must be met.
- Every grant RFA and PA has formatting, screening, and application requirements that can bring your application into the review—or screen it out.
- Make a list of all eligibility, screening, and application requirements, and make staff assignments to meet the need.
- Every grant RFA and PA has evaluation criteria that are used by reviewers to assess and score your application.
- Give yourself enough time to address the evaluation criteria.

One of the first things you should do is to verify that your project meets the eligibility requirements stated in the RFA or PA you are considering. Then, study the requirements for your application in terms of page length, font size, and organization. To ensure fairness, all applications will be assessed against the same application requirements and criteria. Applications not meeting the eligibility, screening, or other application requirements may be returned to the applicant without review. After all the hard work, exceeding allowable space requirements or missing other details can exclude you from competition, so pay close attention! Handout 3-1 provides a checklist that outlines formatting and screening requirements for grant applications.

In addition to the eligibility and screening requirements, the evaluation criteria drive your written response. The evaluation criteria are somewhat different for each grant announcement. The evaluation criteria section of the grant announcement provides instructions for completing the Project Narrative of your application, as well as criteria against which the application is reviewed and scored. The review committee will weigh the quality of your application against the evaluation criteria and points published in the grant announcement. While you stay within the page limits, font size, and other specified requirements, it is critical that you provide complete, well-thought-out responses to the evaluation criteria.

Communicate With Resource People and Potential Partners

You increase your understanding of how the project can meet specific needs and how best to organize and deliver proposed services and not duplicate them by communicating with resource people at the local and State levels:

- **State Point of Contact (SPOC)**—You are required to notify your State that you are requesting Federal dollars. Many States have a designated SPOC who receives this information. Be sure to let your SPOC know that you are applying for a Federal grant. Remember to ask about free training and technical assistance that may be available to you from other sources.
- **Single State Agency (SSA)**—The SSA for drug and alcohol abuse and for mental health often provides technical assistance and is a contact for you to develop a strong relationship for identifying funding opportunities, training, and networking.
- **Government Project Officer (GPO) and Grants Management Officer (GMO)**—Every RFA or PA includes program contacts that you can call about specific SAMHSA programs.
- **Project Partnerships and Community Groups**—Relationships developed with coalition groups and advocates will be helpful with your project design and evaluation ideas. Organize a meeting to present ideas or set up a focus group to test your project plans and gather feedback.
- **Consumers and Families**—Those who access your services are excellent sources of information on how improvements can be made. Set up meetings and focus groups with these people to obtain needs assessment information. An anonymous suggestion box also can be a great tool for input; just remember to review it frequently.

Summary Points to Remember...

- Specific project and community needs identified in the planning stage will focus and drive your search for funding opportunities.
- SAMHSA provides access to extensive information and resources to help you identify funding opportunities.
- Reading the standard templates for grant announcements in advance will help you become familiar with the types of programs SAMHSA funds and the requirements for each announcement.
- To apply for a SAMHSA grant, you will need to have all the pieces of the application kit (e.g., the RFA or PA and the application forms).



Module 3

- The **Web site www.grants.gov** is an important source of information for potential grant applicants.
- Paying careful attention to the eligibility requirements will help you identify an appropriate funding opportunity for your organization.
- Paying attention to the formatting requirements will help you assemble an application that gets accepted for review.
- Providing thorough, well-thought-out responses to the evaluation criteria results in a more competitive application submission.
- Contacting SAMHSA program staff can help you understand SAMHSA's initiatives and help you prepare your application to address SAMHSA's priorities and requirements.
- Working closely with State and local agencies and with current relevant Federal grantees may increase the credibility of your application.

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Module 3: Handout 3-1

Checklist for Formatting and Screening Requirements for SAMHSA Grant Applications

*SAMHSA's goal is to review all applications submitted for grant funding. However, this goal must be balanced against SAMHSA's obligation to ensure equitable treatment of applications. For this reason, SAMHSA has established certain formatting requirements for its applications. **Failure to adhere to these requirements may affect the ability of your application to be funded.***

- Use the PHS 5161-1 application.
- Applications must be received by the application deadline or have a proof of timely submission, as detailed in Section IV-3 of this announcement.
- Information provided must be sufficient for review.
- Text must be legible. (For Project Narratives submitted electronically in Microsoft Word, see separate requirements in Section IV-2.3 of this announcement under "Guidance for Electronic Submission of Applications.")
 - Type size in the Project Narrative cannot exceed an average of 15 characters per inch, as measured on the physical page. (Type size in charts, tables, graphs, and footnotes will not be considered in determining compliance.)
 - Text in the Project Narrative cannot exceed 6 lines per vertical inch.
- Paper must be white paper and 8.5 inches by 11.0 inches in size.
- To ensure equity among applications, the amount of space allowed for the Project Narrative cannot be exceeded. (For Project Narratives submitted electronically in Microsoft Word, see separate requirements in Section IV-2.3 of this announcement under "Guidance for Electronic Submission of Applications.")
 - Applications would meet this requirement by using all margins (left, right, top, bottom) of at least one inch each, and adhering to the page limit for the Project Narrative stated in the specific funding announcement.
 - Should an application not conform to these margin or page limits, SAMHSA will use the following method to determine compliance: The total area of the Project Narrative (excluding margins, but including charts, tables, graphs and footnotes) cannot exceed 58.5 square inches multiplied by the total number of allowed pages. This number represents the full page less margins, multiplied by the total number of allowed pages.
 - Space will be measured on the physical page. Space left blank within the Project Narrative (excluding margins) is considered part of the Project Narrative, in determining compliance.



To facilitate review of your application, follow these additional guidelines. Failure to adhere to the following guidelines will not, in itself, result in your application being screened out and returned without review. However, the information provided in your application must be sufficient for review. Following these guidelines will help ensure your application is complete and will help reviewers to consider your application.

- The 10 application components required for SAMHSA applications should be included. These are:
 - Face Page (Standard Form 424 v2, which is in PHS 5161-1)
 - Abstract
 - Table of Contents
 - Budget Form (Standard Form 424A, which is in PHS 5161-1)
 - Project Narrative and Supporting Documentation
 - Appendices
 - Assurances (Standard Form 424B, which is in PHS 5161-1)
 - Certifications (a form in PHS 5161-1)
 - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (Standard Form LLL, which is in PHS 5161-1)
 - Checklist (a form in PHS 5161-1)
- Applications should comply with the following requirements:
 - Provisions relating to confidentiality and participant protection specified in Section IV-2.4 of the specific funding announcement.
 - Budgetary limitations as specified in Sections I, II, and IV-5 of the specific funding announcement.
 - Documentation of nonprofit status as required in the PHS 5161-1.
- Pages should be typed single-spaced in black ink, with one column per page. Pages should not have printing on both sides.
- Please number pages consecutively from beginning to end so that information can be located easily during review of the application. The cover page should be page 1, the abstract page should be page 2, and the Table of Contents page should be page 3. Appendices should be labeled and separated from the Project Narrative and budget section, and the pages should be numbered to continue the sequence.
- The page limits for Appendices stated in this announcement should not be exceeded.
- Send the original application and two copies to the mailing address in the funding announcement. Please do not use staples, paper clips, and fasteners. Nothing should be attached, stapled, folded, or pasted. Do not use heavy or lightweight paper or any material that cannot be copied using automatic copying machines. Odd-sized and oversized attachments such as posters will not be copied or sent to reviewers. Do not include videotapes, audiotapes, or CD-ROMs.



Module 4

Overview

Module 4 describes how to review and analyze the standard templates and the RFA or PA to clearly understand the types of projects that SAMHSA supports. We will also review the PHS 5161-1, the “official” application form that includes the SF 424 v2 and SF 424A, which are the face page and budget pages. A thorough understanding of all grant announcement documents will help you make a final decision about applying for a particular grant-funding opportunity. You will be able to determine whether or not your project needs and the funding opportunities truly match.

Purpose of Module 4

Module 4 analyzes the standard templates, the RFA or PA, and the PHS 5161-1 application form with the budget pages to clarify specific SAMHSA requirements. This module will help you understand each document of a grant announcement and teach you to prepare both the application Project Narrative and all essential forms, including the budget.

Module 4 Learning Objectives

When you complete the module, you will be able to:

- Study the specific eligibility and screening requirements of all grant announcements;
- Review the RFA or PA evaluation criteria to determine your project strengths and weaknesses for application scoring;
- Respond to grant announcements, and outline a comprehensive technical response;
- Anticipate and address standard SAMHSA policies, procedures, and priorities; and
- Complete all necessary forms, including the budget.

Module 4 Underlying Assumptions

- The standard templates help you understand SAMHSA’s program mission, goals, objectives, eligibility, and other requirements to assess whether or not your project is compatible with the funding program.
- Analyzing the general requirements, policies, and procedures in the RFA or PA helps you determine whether or not your project has the resources to comply with the requirements.
- Assessing each section of the grant announcement guides your application outline and helps organize the writing team assignments.

Module 4 Agenda

Topics to be discussed:

- Components of a grant application kit;
- Standard grant templates;
- Standard services grant templates;
- Project Narrative;
- What works in preparing grant applications; and
- What does not work in preparing grant applications.

Components of a Grant Application Kit

To apply for a SAMHSA grant, you will need the RFA or PA and the application form (PHS 5161-1). All materials can be downloaded in electronic form from the SAMHSA Web site www.samhsa.gov/grants/apply.aspx:

- The **RFA and PA** contain instructions and information to help you complete a grant application. The components required in the application are the face page, Abstract, Table of Contents, Budget Form, Project Narrative, Supporting Documentation, Appendices, Assurances, Certifications, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, and the SAMHSA Grant Application Checklist.
- The **PHS 5161-1** is the official application form that includes both the SF 424v2 (face page) and SF 424A (budget pages). Applications *must* be submitted on the PHS 5161-1 form. This form is available for downloading in several formats from the SAMHSA Web site and the HHS/Program Support Center site at www.hhs.gov/forms/PHS-5161-1.pdf.
- Another important form submitted with applications is the **Assurance of Compliance Form**, which can be found on SAMHSA's Web site. The form is intended to ensure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. It must be included in the grant application.
- Also, applicants applying for grants that fund substance abuse treatment or prevention services must complete the SMA-170, **Assurance of Compliance** with SAMHSA Charitable Choice Statutes and Regulations. The form can be downloaded from the SAMHSA Web site www.samhsa.gov/grants/apply.aspx.



Module 4

A grant represents legally binding obligations between grantees and SAMHSA. All applicants must agree to comply with the rules of operation to receive grant funds.

Although the grant application forms include standard policies and procedures, some language may be changed for specific grant programs. If changes are made, these modifications will appear in the RFA or PA.

Standard Grant Templates

These documents help you understand the areas that SAMHSA supports to see where there is a match with your project. They include general SAMHSA grant policies and procedures so you can determine whether or not your project can comply with all requirements. You should become familiar with these standards for the Services grants or any other area in which you have interest and experience. When the right funding opportunity is announced in an RFA or PA, outline your response and complete all the tasks required to submit a comprehensive application package that will meet the requirements for evaluation points and funding.

We encourage you to look at the standard grant templates to understand the four different types of grants that SAMHSA supports. You can find the standard templates on SAMHSA's Web site. For purposes of this TA Manual, we will use the "Services" template as an illustration.

Standard Services Grant Template

Although each grant program has unique goals, every grant announcement uses the same broad outline to provide information to applicants. The specific content may not be identical across grant programs, but these sections usually provide similar information. The RFA or PA provides a detailed roadmap for application development, specifying everything from page limits for each section to how the evaluation criteria will be applied.

This module uses the Services template as an example. The Services template includes the following information:

- **Funding Opportunity Description**—This section helps you understand whether or not your project activities fit compatibly with the intent of the grant program. This section will also assist you in determining whether or not your organization can design new activities to meet community needs that match SAMHSA grant program interests. Typically, the Funding Opportunity Description includes a discussion of expectations or allowable activities. The expectations and allowable activities subsections specify how grant funds are to be used. The Funding Opportunity Description also includes information about performance data that must be collected and reported to SAMHSA.

- **Award Information**—This section tells you the pool of funds that is available and how much is planned for each award.
- **Eligibility Information**—This section identifies **who** can apply for the grant. Congress often establishes eligibility requirements.
- **Application and Submission Information**—This section provides explicit instructions about application format, submission deadlines, number of copies, and delivery addresses. All applications must be submitted by the deadline to be considered and *will be returned without review* if received after the deadline. This section also describes any funding limitations or restrictions and any additional submission requirements. For each grant program, SAMHSA determines the amount of time that applicants have to submit an application. The RFA or PA specifies the deadline date.
- **Application Review Information**—This section includes the evaluation criteria (also referred to as the Project Narrative) that reviewers will use to assess and score your application and to comment on the technical merit of your proposed project. Points are assigned to each section of the Project Narrative based on the quality of your response to the specific requirements. Use the evaluation criteria to design your Table of Contents to help grant application reviewers find and score each section.
- **Award Administration Information**—This section provides information about the award notices, administrative and national policy requirements, and reporting requirements for grantees.
- **Agency Contacts**—This section includes names and other information for SAMHSA program and grants management contacts.

Project Narrative

The Project Narrative is found in Section V-1 of the RFA. The Project Narrative describes what you intend to do with your project and includes the Evaluation Criteria for the required sections. The following elements are generally required in SAMHSA's Services grant announcements:

- The **Statement of Need** is expected to describe the unmet need or emerging problem to be addressed by the project. It seeks identification and description of the target population to be served, including geographic area, demographics, and cultural and racial/ethnic considerations. The Statement of Need also describes how the project currently provides services and why they are insufficient or inappropriate for the need. Handout 4-1 presents "Questions to Consider When Preparing to Write Your Statement of Need."



Module 4

- **Proposed Evidence-Based Service/Practice.** This section generally requires substantial data documentation and/or a literature review. Handout 4-2 presents “Questions to Consider When Preparing to Write Your Proposed Evidence-Based Service/Practice.”
- The **Proposed Implementation Approach** is expected to describe the goals and objectives of the proposed project, including appropriate client service projections. This section demonstrates how the proposed project will have a significant impact on the described need during the grant-funding period. The Proposed Implementation Approach specifically demonstrates how the project will be carried out. It also demonstrates that the anticipated outcomes of the proposed services represent an effective use of funds. Handout 4-3 presents “Questions to Consider When Preparing to Write Your Implementation Approach.”
- **Staff and Organizational Experience** is expected to describe the capability of the applicant organization, its history of serving the target population, and its experience with similar projects. This section describes the resources available to implement the project. It also presents a management plan for the project, including plans for fiscal and administrative monitoring, a staffing plan highlighting key personnel, letters of support and commitment from other agencies, and a timeline for implementing the project. Handout 4-4 presents “Questions to Consider When Preparing to Write Your Organizational and Staff Experience.”
- The **Performance Assessment and Data** section is expected to document the ability to collect and report on the required performance measures as required in the RFA or PA. A plan for data collection, management, analysis and reporting should be described. Handout 4-5 presents “Questions to Consider When Preparing to Write Your Performance Assessment and Data Section.”

SAMHSA also expects to see the following elements in the Project Narrative:

- Comprehensive evidence of cultural competence within the applicant organization in each section. SAMHSA’s guidelines for assessing cultural competence are available at www.samhsa.gov/grants/apply.aspx.
- Appropriate citations for literature referenced in the development of any and all sections.

Tips on developing each of these areas are covered in Module 5.

Twelve Basic Principles for What Works in Preparing Grant Applications

Before discussing the specific writing information, let's look at SAMHSA's "Twelve Basic Principles for What Works in Preparing Grant Applications." The planning items for Principles 1–3 were addressed in previous modules. Principles 4–12 specifically support grant writing that we will discuss in the next module.

Principle 1—Match your ideas to the funding source and thoroughly understand the goals of the SAMHSA grant program.

Ensure that the proposed project in your application meets the grant program's needs. Refer to the SAMHSA priorities and Web pages discussed in Module 1. Even if you have a worthy project, it will not be considered for funding unless it fits the RFA or PA. Read the grant program goals, program descriptions, and evaluation criteria to ensure that your proposed project approach can fulfill the actual program requirements.

Principle 2—Use the designated SAMHSA resources for technical assistance and advice.

Program Contacts: For some reason, few applicants seek SAMHSA assistance in developing their applications. The program's contacts are identified in each RFA or PA. These people are available to consult with all applicants requesting assistance, and not using them is a waste of a great resource. Committed to ensuring the receipt of many good applications, SAMHSA wants to assist potential applicants as much as possible. Applicants can seek advice about grants management from SAMHSA's Division of Grants Management, receive information about grant review from SAMHSA's Office of Program Services (Grant Review Office), and contact GPOs for specifics about grant programs. Review the RFA or PA for the names of designated program contacts.

Use e-mail to reach any SAMHSA contact. All SAMHSA e-mail addresses use the first name followed by a period, then the last name, followed by @samhsa.hhs.gov. (Note: Get in touch with the program contact *before* you officially submit your application. SAMHSA staff, including the program contact, cannot comment on your application once it has been submitted.)

Technical Assistance Workshops: Information about SAMHSA workshops is posted on SAMHSA's Web site (www.samhsa.gov) as soon as it becomes available. This information is especially helpful if you are a first-time SAMHSA applicant.



Module 4

Principle 3—Begin the necessary groundwork *before* the grant announcement documents are published.

As a potential applicant, give yourself as much lead time as possible to write your application. Keep your project notebook up to date, and be aware of current and emerging SAMHSA programs that match your interests and needs. Pay attention to funding information at www.grants.gov and the SAMHSA Web site.

In addition, many professional organizations and national associations highlight Federal grant programs in their newsletters to constituents well in advance of the official notice. Take advantage of lead time to develop ideas and to begin the necessary groundwork before the grant program is officially announced.

Develop a network of contacts that can help, such as State and local government entities, university staff, and individuals and other organizations that may provide support to the project. Develop a committee, and get key participants in place to assist with application development.

Principle 4—Establish a timetable to develop your grant application; organize the necessary personnel as soon as funding availability is announced.

Do not waste energy fretting about the short timeframe or seemingly complicated grant opportunity instructions. These parameters cannot be changed; an applicant must be willing to accept these requirements. With planning activities in place, move forward quickly.

The production of a successful grant application cannot always be worked around everyone's routine schedule. Establish a plan for what needs to be accomplished, by whom and by when. Developing a grant application requires the same diligent planning and scheduling as does any other labor-intensive, priority project. For example, identify individuals (called your grant-writing team) who can complete certain necessary tasks:

- **A person responsible for writing the application**—Although several individuals may write particular pieces, one person should pull the entire application together to make sure it flows and that nothing is omitted or repeated.
- **A person or small committee removed from the process to critique the first draft and identify questions or gaps**—This critique will be most effective if it is based on evaluation criteria that the grant peer reviewers will use in evaluating applications. (The evaluation criteria are specified in the RFA or PA.)
- **A person to request and coordinate receipt of letters of support**—This person also might help the organization providing the letter of support to draft an individualized letter describing how the organization can contribute to the efforts of the applicant organization. Many persons are willing to be supportive but may

lack time to draft a letter. Do not use boilerplate letters of support. The letters must be recent and specific about the kind of support being committed. These letters of support are different from a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). An MOA is a formal and contracted partnership that allows sharing of services between organizations according to agreed-upon terms.

Principle 5—Follow instructions about formatting your submission.

The application format is not the place to be creative! Take advantage of the fact that someone else has designed the form. Use creativity for the technical idea. Even if you believe your own format is better, do NOT stray from the prescribed format of the application. An application that fails to follow the required format and table of contents may be found to be non-responsive to the grant announcement and may not be forwarded for evaluation. Moreover, deviation from the required format increases the likelihood that you will leave out necessary information. It also makes it difficult for peer reviewers to find information in the application, which can affect your evaluation negatively.

Pay attention to every detail of the format and instructions, including directions about page limits, font size, and number of copies required for submission. If you have ideas to improve the format for next year, program officials would welcome suggestions *after* the grant cycle is completed.

Principle 6—Lay out a master plan.

A good application should provide a master plan, a vision of where the project is going and the expected results. Although this may be difficult because some ideas have not been fully developed, every effort should be made to think through reasonable approaches.

The master plan should cover key questions of who, what, where, when, and why. The application should include specific goals, objectives, tasks required to accomplish the objectives, target population, resources, timeframes, and a methodology to evaluate accomplishments. It also should list other funding sources, if any, and what those funds would cover.

Principle 7—Be reasonable and realistic.

Successful applicants find the safe middle ground between too much and too little. Within the required page limits, describe the project and how it is to be carried out. Do not provide unnecessary detail. It may result in reviewers missing important information.



Module 4

Be sure to provide evidence-based justification for your goals and a convincing description of how and why you think you will be able to accomplish them. An unexplained ambitious goal may lead reviewers to question your credibility and may adversely affect your score for the specific evaluation criterion.

Principle 8—Provide information on *all* the evaluation criteria.

This point cannot be emphasized enough! An applicant must provide information in support of each evaluation criterion. The reviewers will assess the merits of the application specific to *all* the evaluation criteria. Be thorough and concise. Be sure to put information under the appropriate criteria. Know exactly what SAMHSA wants for each of the criteria, and explain how each criterion will be met. If you aren't sure or don't understand a criterion, call the program contact listed in the RFA or PA.

Carefully address the cultural competence components of the evaluation criteria. Cultural competence is a priority at SAMHSA and should not be addressed as an afterthought.

Principle 9—Explain omissions, rather than hope that no one will notice.

What is *not* said in an application can hurt as much as or more than what *is* said. Very often, an application loses points because an omission from the application was not explained. For example, if a segment of the population is not included in the project, this absence should be explained. If something is not included in the application, it simply does not exist for the purposes of the review. Reviewers are instructed neither to “read between the lines” nor to consider their own personal knowledge of a particular program.

Principle 10—Make a reasonable funding request, and match the budget to the scope of work. Do not go over budget!

It is important that the budget request clearly reflect the project scope. The justification for funds must match the amount requested. Be specific: justify each item for all years of support requested. Appropriately defend staff hours. Specify the need for consultants and travel. Explain the use of consultants instead of internal staff. Be mindful of the funds available, and do not exceed the dollar limit found in the RFA! Handout 4-6 offers a “Budget Preparation Worksheet.”

Principle 11—Address items regarding participant protection.

Address each item individually. If any do not apply, state “not applicable” and indicate why. Provide for parental consent as applicable. Provide details for debriefing children as well as parents or guardians. Address confidentiality of client/subject information within the project team (e.g., clinicians, evaluators, and support staff).

Principle 12—Keep the application simple, reasonable, businesslike, and professional.

The application should be error-free, and all the forms should be completed correctly. Pay attention to detail. The application should look as if it is ready for publication. Have someone check every page of every copy of the application to be sure that all pieces are included. **Read and follow all directions outlined in the grant announcement documents.** Make sure a staff team member reads and “scores” your application according to the evaluation criteria to ensure no parts are vague or incomplete.

What Does Not Work in Preparing Grant Applications

1. Missing pieces or inadequate responses to the components of the application;
2. Inadequate understanding of the intent of the RFA or PA;
3. Outdated or poorly cited literature;
4. Insufficient staff experience to carry out the proposed project;
5. No discussion of how cultural issues will be addressed;
6. No discussion of the evaluation tools; and
7. Failure to address the elements related to participant protection and human subjects.

Summary Points to Remember...

- Your project’s mission should match SAMHSA’s priorities, needs, and funding opportunities.
- You should understand how to use the complete grant application kit.
- Following the required steps, processes, timelines, and requirements will help your grant achieve the highest possible score.
- You should use SAMHSA resources and contacts to get help.



Module 4: Handout 4-1

Questions to Consider When Preparing to Write Your Statement of Need

1. What is the problem to be addressed?
2. What is the extent of the need?
3. Have we discussed the community demographics and problems?
4. Have we documented our rationale for using this population?
5. Is our target population defined?
6. Have we documented the need in this population for the service we provide?
7. What geographic area do we hope to cover?
8. What resources are available for our project?
9. Does our project address any of these gaps?
10. Have we expressed our solution to the problem in terms of goals, objectives, and methods?
11. Have we included sources of local data, such as:
 - State and county public agencies?
 - School systems?
 - Court systems?
 - HIV/AIDS planning councils?
 - Community health assessments?
 - United Way organizations?
 - U.S. Census Bureau, SAMHSA, and other Federal Agencies?
 - Hospitals?

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Module 4: Handout 4-2

Questions to Consider When Preparing to Write Your Proposed Evidence-Based Service/Practice

1. Do we have evidence-based sources for our proposed service(s)/practice(s), if required?
2. Have we referenced literature published within the last five years?
3. Have we used authors whose work is cited the most often (leaders in the field)?
4. Do we include literature on the cultural dimensions of the problem?
5. Have we provided evidence that the proposed approach is appropriate for our target population?
6. Have we justified any adaptations that we are proposing to the evidence-based service or practice?
7. Have we paid attention to any specific requirements for epidemiological data?

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Module 4: Handout 4-3

Questions to Consider When Preparing to Write Your Implementation Approach

1. Are the objectives Specific?
2. Are the objectives Measurable?
3. Are the objectives Achievable?
4. Are the objectives Realistic?
5. Are the objectives Time-limited?

THINK SMART!

6. Have we listed each objective in one or two sentences?
7. Have we listed the objectives in order of importance?
8. Have we adequately addressed how the objectives will be carried out?
9. Have we clearly stated the reasons for selecting our methods and demonstrated that they can be accomplished?
10. Have we involved the target population to give feedback on the methods?
11. Have we taken steps to ensure cultural competence?
12. Have we addressed how participants will be recruited and retained?

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Module 4: Handout 4-4

Questions to Consider When Preparing to Write Your Organizational and Staff Experience

1. Can we sell the organization's capacity, uniqueness, and niche?
2. Can we detail roles and responsibilities of key staff?
3. Can we show the expertise of the staff?
4. Do we know the amount of time each person will work on the project?
5. Have we developed a timetable?
6. Do we know how the staff are reflective of the target population or culturally competent to work with the target population(s)?
7. Have we indicated why consultants are necessary?

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Module 4: Handout 4-5

Questions to Consider When Preparing to Write Your Performance Assessment and Data Section

1. Do we understand what “performance assessment” means for this RFA or PA?
2. Do we know the specific performance measures that are required in this RFA or PA?
3. Do we know what data collection instruments will be needed?
4. Do we know how the data will be collected?
5. Do we have experienced individuals to help us plan our performance assessment? Have we brought them into the design phase? Have they reviewed the program plan to help us determine how to measure/monitor progress towards our program objectives?
6. Have we involved the target population in the design and implementation of our performance assessment?
7. Have we taken steps to ensure cultural competence in the performance assessment?
8. Do we have plans for using the results of the performance assessment to improve project management?
9. Have we included GPRA data in our plan?

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Module 4: Handout 4-6

Budget Preparation Worksheet

Directions: Read the question and ask yourself if you can answer “yes” to that section. If you cannot answer “yes,” develop a plan to complete this worksheet before the application is written.

Budget Section	Yes	No Plan To Do
Did we check to see that the budget is directly linked to the project?		
Did we adhere to SAMHSA budget guidelines in allocating resources for different functions and activities?		
Have we reviewed all the budget forms and gathered the appropriate budget information needed to complete the forms?		
Do we use basic accounting concepts and terminology?		
Did we recruit someone to our team with solid accounting experience related to grants and projects?		
Did we involve the accountant in the planning to ensure proper integration of resources with project objectives?		
Did we estimate our expenses as accurately as possible?		
Did we provide a well-written budget justification that supports our proposed project?		

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Module 5

Overview

Module 5 explores the skills and tools to develop a successful grant application. You will acquire a clear understanding of how to write a SAMHSA grant application. In this module, you will have an opportunity to review the SAMHSA application components and the essential forms used for application submission, including the budget forms. This module will also expose you to the www.grants.gov Web site where you can electronically find and apply for competitive grants from all agencies.

Purpose of Module 5

The module provides a roadmap to grant application writing, explores the value of a carefully outlined response, and provides specific writing tips and techniques.

Module 5 Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module, you will be able to:

- Organize and manage a writing team;
- Develop a comprehensive grant application outline;
- Assemble and write a thorough Project Narrative based on the evaluation criteria;
- Clarify budget requirements and complete budget forms;
- Learn basic performance assessment concepts and how to develop a performance assessment plan; and
- Manage the production of an application.

Module 5 Underlying Assumptions

- Before you start writing, you need to study the SAMHSA grant announcement to help you develop a firm foundation for your written response.
- Completing the application thoroughly—including the provision of a comprehensive Project Narrative that addresses all requirements—puts you in the best position for success.
- Managing your grant application to include all forms, certifications, and requirements while ensuring your budget is within stated limits will keep you from being “screened out.”
- Understanding the evaluation criteria helps you develop your outline and helps you monitor the quality of your application development.
- A comprehensive project proposal integrates cultural competence. Including members of the project target population in all aspects of project design and implementation helps ensure that your proposed activities respond to the real needs of the community you wish to serve.

- Successful applicants assess document quality throughout the application development process and get help when necessary.

Module 5 Agenda

Topics to be discussed:

- Develop and manage your writing team.
- Use the writing tips.
- Build your application outline.
- Sample Services Grant Announcement application outline.
- Develop your Statement of Need.
- Justify your Proposed Evidence-Based Service/Practice.
- Present your Proposed Implementation Approach.
- Develop your Staff and Organizational Experience Plan.
- Develop your Performance Assessment and Data Plan.
- Meet GPRA requirements.
- Adhere to SAMHSA Participant Protection requirements.
- Develop a Budget: Costs and Narrative.
- Develop the Project Abstract.
- Review, edit, complete, and submit your application on time.
- Know how to do an electronic application submission.



Module 5

Develop and Manage Your Writing Team

- If possible, assign each section of the Project Narrative to a member of your writing team. Components of the sample Services Project Narrative are discussed below.
- Choose and assign team members according to their strengths.
- Conduct an initial team meeting to clarify expectations and to establish processes and responsibilities, timeframes for deliverables, quality control methods, production procedures, and norms for working together to develop the application.

Create a team to help prepare the entire grant application, including the Project Narrative. Choose an individual who will be responsible for the forms required for the application. A separate team member should be responsible for reviewing all eligibility and screening requirements and for setting up the formatting according to mandates. Yet another separate team member should be responsible for assembling the grant (putting it all together in the right order, following ALL INSTRUCTIONS, and ensuring that ALL REQUIRED APPLICATION COMPONENTS are complete). Remember to use your project notebook as a source for much of the required information.

As you put your team members together, some questions you may ask are:

- Who has expertise in this area? Do they have the time to commit to this project?
- Who has the organizational and “attention-to-detail” skills to ensure that instructions, requirements, and formatting needs are met?
- Are potential team members committed to contributing to the application?
- What resources does the team have? What additional resources are needed?
- Do we need additional team members from outside our organization to help prepare the application?
- Given current organizational demands and resources, can the team realistically meet the published application deadline?

Use the Writing Tips

- Stick with your strong outline.
- Pay attention to the details.
- Use concise and persuasive language.
- Make sure you follow SAMHSA’s organizational requirements for content and format.

- Relate all sentences in a paragraph to the topic sentence.
- Keep in mind that you are writing to the evaluation criteria.
- Make your application easy to read. Leave open white space and use bold headings and subheadings as needed.
- Make sure you provide a direct, clearly explained link between your project and SAMHSA's purpose and goals.
- Make sure your supporting letters endorse the current project activities and the proposed project. Add information about the project personnel and consultants, and provide specifics about what type of support will be made available.
- Prepare a realistic budget with a strong justification and a requested amount at or under the funding limit.
- Make sure your application includes the appropriate authorized signature(s).
- Ensure that your grant application is neat, complete, and submitted on time.

Quality control helps ensure that the application meets the requirements and addresses all the details. Specific quality control steps require that you do the following:

- Conduct internal reviews during the development process. For example, after the first or second draft is complete, seek out neutral third parties to review the application for continuity, clarity, and reasoning.
- Ask for constructive criticism at this point, rather than wait to hear from SAMHSA after the review cycle. For example, even though several people may have written different sections of the application, do they fit together as a single well-written document? Has the writer made unsupported assumptions or used jargon or excessive language in the application?

If you don't use quality control to ensure details are addressed before submitting your application, the SAMHSA review committee members will do it for you. You will no longer have the option to make corrections. The review committees assess and score your application based on the responses to each of the elements in the Project Narrative.

Build Your Application Outline

Create the application outline building on the:

- Project Narrative; and
- Supporting Documentation.



Module 5

The outline for your application will be based on the Project Narrative and Supporting Documentation sections of the grant announcement. Remember you must check the requirements in the RFA or PA because the title of each section may vary from one announcement to another. Combine all the requirements of the Project Narrative and Supporting Documentation to develop your outline.

We will now discuss a sample outline based on the requirements of the Services Grant Announcement.

Sample Services Grant Announcement Application Outline

Your Services Grant outline will include:

I. Project Narrative

- A. Statement of Need
- B. Proposed Evidence-Based Service/Practice
- C. Proposed Implementation Approach
- D. Staff and Organizational Experience
- E. Performance Assessment and Data

II. Supporting Documentation

- F. Literature Citations
- G. Budget Justification, Existing Resources, and Other Support
- H. Biographical Sketches and Job Descriptions
- I. Confidentiality/SAMHSA Participant Protection/Human Subjects

The sample outline above reflects the specific elements required if you were writing an application in response to a SAMHSA Services RFA or PA. Remember, the Project Narrative in each grant announcement may have different evaluation criteria based on the needs of the SAMHSA grant program.

Develop Your Statement of Need

Make sure your application clearly describes your proposed service area and the target population. You must support your understanding of the need for your project with background data. Use quantitative data to describe your target population and community and to justify the need for the proposed project. Use qualitative data to describe the language, beliefs, norms, values, cultural, economic, and resource factors relevant to your target population. Make sure you cite all your data sources and how the data were collected. This information helps support the sources as valid and reliable. Documentation of need may come from a variety of sources including data from local,

State, and national sources, as well as other public and private sources. Be sure to provide complete citations that include author, date, title, and publication information. (Handout 5-1 provides several examples of an acceptable format for literature citations.)

Your Statement of Need will become the baseline to measure changes resulting from your project services, so be thorough. Local colleges or universities that have a department related to the application topic may have an interest in developing a student or faculty project to conduct your needs assessment. It may be helpful to include examples of the findings to highlight in the application. Conduct focus groups and/or community forums with stakeholders, consumers, families, and other service providers to gather information and support.

The Statement of Need description must provide a clear, concise, and well-supported discussion of the problem to be addressed. The best way to do this is to collect information about the problem and to conduct both formal and informal needs assessments in the target service area. Provide information that is both factual and directly related to the problem addressed by your application. (Handout 5-2 provides questions to answer in the Statement of Need.)

Areas to document include:

- The purpose or intent of the project;
- The reason for developing the application;
- The target population—who they are and how they will benefit;
- The social and economic conditions to be affected;
- The nature of the problem (provide as much quantitative evidence as possible);
- How your organization came to realize the problem exists, and
- What is currently being done about the problem in the community.

Remember: Any local, regional, or State government planning office or local university that offers coursework in planning and evaluation techniques may be able to provide excellent reference materials.

Justify Your Proposed Evidence-Based Service/Practice

The **Proposed Evidence-Based Service/Practice** section of the grant application describes the evidence base for the service or practice you plan to implement. An evidence-based service/practice is an intervention that has undergone some type of evaluation that demonstrates and documents that the intervention has achieved one or more positive outcomes. You should select an evidence-based practice that addresses



Module 5

the goals of the project and the needs of the target population, and be able to describe how this service or practice is expected to work and address the stated problem in your community.

Services/practices that have already been determined by SAMHSA to be effective can be found in the following sources, which will be included in the grant announcement:

- SAMHSA’s National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP);
- Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) Evidence-based Practice Toolkits; and
- List of Effective Substance Abuse Treatment Practices

If you plan to implement services or practices that are not listed in the sources above, you must show that the services/practices you plan to implement are effective. We prefer that you provide information from research studies. This information is usually published in research journals, such as the *American Journal of Public Health*, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, and *Psychiatric Services*. If this type of information is unavailable, you may provide information from other sources, such as unpublished studies or documents describing formal consensus among recognized experts.

It may be that you want to provide services that you can show have been successful, but you want to try with another target population or in a different community. This plan is acceptable as long as you explain what you are trying to do, what you are expecting to happen, why you believe it will happen, what you will do to modify the project if needed, and why you believe these modifications will improve the project. You will develop a specific purpose and then goals, objectives, and tasks to describe and support your proposed project. ***This supporting material must be based on evidence from the field and included as part of your documentation.***

Explain how this proposed service is appropriate for this target population and what kind of impact you expect based on the objective information and data you have collected. If you are making changes or modifications to what has shown to be a promising practice, explain why those changes are needed. Refer to Handout 5-3, “Justify Your Proposed Evidence-Based Service or Practice,” and review the questions and considerations that support development of this section. Identify the exact services proposed.

In this section of the grant application, you must clearly state the purpose, goals and objectives of your proposed project. You must describe how achievement of the goals will produce meaningful and relevant results. Handout 5-4 provides guidelines for developing goals, objectives, and tasks. A logic model that links need, the service or

practice to be implemented, and outcomes also should be included in this section. Refer to Handout 5-5 for a sample logic model.

Present Your Proposed Implementation Approach

Once you have identified your goal, objectives, and tasks, your Proposed Implementation Approach becomes your plan for how to solve the issues addressed in your grant application. The way your activities are implemented defines your project.

Your Proposed Implementation Approach should:

- Describe the specific activities, tasks, and timelines you will use to fulfill your goals and objectives;
- Describe the resources and staff needed to accomplish the project activities. Explain why these methods were chosen;
- State the unduplicated numbers of individuals you propose to serve and number and type of services you will provide;
- Explain how members of the target community have been involved in the design of the project. Describe how the methods chosen meet the culturally relevant needs of the community;
- Describe how you have integrated successes from similar projects and SAMHSA priorities into your proposed project. Refer to current literature, and explain how it has shaped your proposed project;
- Describe how the parts of the project interrelate, and how the new project components will be embedded within the existing service delivery system; and
- Assure the application review committee that you will address issues of age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, language, sexual orientation, disability, literacy, and gender. Make no exceptions to any of these categories.

Handout 5-6 provides a definition and some guidelines for addressing cultural competence as part of your grant application.

Develop Your Staff and Organizational Experience Plan

The **Staff and Organizational Experience** section of your grant application assures SAMHSA that you have the capacity to carry out all the activities in your application on



Module 5

time and within budget. The bullets below show information that should be conveyed in this section of your application:

- Sell your organization’s capability, its uniqueness, and its niche.
- Show how your organization’s wealth of experience supports the requirements of the RFA or PA.
- Detail the roles and responsibilities of key staff members, and show their qualifications for their specific role in the project.
- Detail the amount of time each person will work on the project.
- Develop a chart or timeline, organized in a way that shows realistic utilization of staff resources.
- Indicate how your staff are reflective of the target population.
- Explain how the staff are competent in the culture of the target population(s).
- Provide evidence of capability, experience, and commitment of proposed consultants and subcontractors.
- Describe resources available to the proposed project, and provide evidence that services will be provided in a location that is adequate and accessible.

Handout 5-7, “Develop Your Staff and Organizational Experience Plan,” provides critical questions you will need to answer as you put your plan together.

Develop Your Performance Assessment and Data Plan

All Federal programs require that performance data be collected. In addition, most Federal grant programs require that grantees assess or evaluate the performance/ progress of their program activities and provide a plan for such an assessment in the grant application. Further, some programs ask that grantees participate in a cross-site evaluation.

Performance assessment is an important factor in the success of your application, as it helps you ensure that you are achieving the goals you have set out to achieve. It also helps SAMHSA demonstrate the impact that its programs have in terms of improving substance abuse and mental health services. Data collection and performance assessment help to improve your project and can enable you to negotiate better with other funding sources, now and in the future. A sound assessment plan is an important part of your grant application.

Your application's performance assessment plan should include plans for data collection and reporting, monitoring the project implementation (i.e., process) and outcomes of the project, as well as plans for improvement of the project based on data collection. The grant announcement will list any additional requirements for this section of your application.

Some helpful hints:

- Pay attention to the performance data collection and reporting requirements. What tools must be used? How frequently—and through what mechanism—are data to be reported?
- SAMHSA grant announcements typically require that you plan to monitor both project process and client/participant outcomes. The *process components* generally document what services were provided, who delivered them, how they were delivered, and to whom they were provided *as it happens*. The *outcome components* generally examine the effect of your project on those receiving services as well as documenting the factors that may contribute to those outcomes. The grant announcement will specify which performance measures and data you will be expected to collect and report.
- Develop clear assessment questions which are linked to the goals and objectives of the project. Your project assessor may be able to help you with this.
- Remember that SAMHSA is committed to cultural competence and community involvement in all elements of project design and implementation. As appropriate, members of the target population should be involved in designing and carrying out project performance assessment activities.
- Do not forget that assessment needs (including data collection, regular reporting, and final assessment) should be factored into your project budget.

Handout 5-8 provides information on writing assessment questions; identifying assessment tools and techniques; and analyzing and reporting findings.

Grantees should also be aware that, from time to time, SAMHSA conducts cross-site evaluations for grant programs as a whole. These cross-site evaluations typically involve all grantees in a particular grant program and may require additional data collection by the grantees, using standard data collection instruments. These data, if requested, will be pooled across the grantees and will give SAMHSA an assessment of grant program outcomes and efficiencies across sites. While this does not happen with all grant programs in all years, it should be something that is kept in mind as it is a possibility for all grant programs.



Module 5

Meeting GPRA Requirements

- Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) data are an essential component of Federal grant programs.
- Identify the GPRA data collection requirements early in the application process.
- Integrate GPRA requirements into the performance assessment plan.

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) was passed in 1993 as a data reporting mechanism for holding government programs accountable for the outcomes of their programs. GPRA requires regular reporting of performance data to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in order to monitor effectiveness of government programs.

As a part of the GPRA mandate, all SAMHSA grants are required to collect and report performance data. The GPRA measures for your program will typically be included in the grant announcement and cannot be altered by grantees. The announcement will usually also include instructions on how the data are to be collected and reported, what instruments are to be used, and how the data are to be submitted.

It may be helpful to review required GPRA measures as early in the planning process as possible. Materials should be included in the grant announcement you received, but your government grant program contact identified in the grant announcement will be able to clarify the GPRA requirements appropriate to the program.

Adhere to SAMHSA Participant Protection Requirements

The grant announcements describe SAMHSA requirements and Federal regulations regarding participant protection. Applicants and grantees are expected to develop and implement appropriate procedures to address confidentiality and other ethical issues pertinent to the protection of human participants in proposed projects. This activity is not optional. Read the information and directions in the grant announcement carefully.

Confidentiality is particularly important in SAMHSA grant projects because the use of some drugs is illegal and because of the potential for stigmatization of participants receiving treatment or counseling for drug abuse, mental illness, HIV/AIDS, and related problems. If participants in the proposed project could be exposed to any risk of problems through any failure of the project to keep information about them confidential, the applicant must develop procedures to prevent these risks and describe them in the application.

It is important to note the following regarding confidentiality:

- Grantees who provide substance abuse diagnosis, treatment, or referral for treatment must maintain the confidentiality of any patient or client records for alcohol or drug abuse treatment. All grantees must act in accordance with Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2 (42 CFR Part 2), Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records.
- Confidentiality regulations are applicable to any information obtained by a federally assisted project, as defined in regulations, about patients who abuse alcohol and other drugs.
- Projects that offer treatment for mental illness must maintain confidentiality in accordance with professional standards of practice and applicable law.

Standards for SAMHSA Participant Protection:

1. Protection of clients and staff from foreseeable risks
2. Fair selection of participants
3. Absence of coercion
4. Data collection
5. Privacy and confidentiality
6. Adequate consent procedures
7. Discussion of risks and benefit

The standards that define acceptable protections are varied and complex. Every effort must be made to ensure that all participants in SAMHSA-funded programs are appropriately and adequately protected. SAMHSA grant programs must comply with SAMHSA Participant Protection (SPP) requirements. Review the seven standards above. Depending on the performance assessment and data collection requirements of the particular funding opportunity or the performance assessment/evaluation design you propose in your application, you may have to comply with the human subjects provisions of Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46 (45 CFR 46), Protection of Human Subjects (HS). The only difference between the two (SPP and HS) is that when HS is required, an additional element (Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval) must be obtained. Let's look at this eighth standard.

8. IRB Approval

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

Applicants must be aware that even if the HS provisions do not apply to all projects funded under a given funding opportunity, the specific evaluation design proposed



Module 5

by the applicant may require compliance with these regulations. The RFA or PA will indicate whether or not all applicants for a particular funding opportunity must obtain IRB approval.

Although IRB approval is not required at the time of grant award, applicants whose projects must comply with HS must describe the process for obtaining IRB approval fully in their applications.

You should immediately take steps to identify an IRB that will work with your organization. The Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) is the HHS entity that maintains Federal responsibility for overseeing compliance with these requirements. OHRP is a good first contact for identifying an IRB. As a condition of award, you will be required to provide to SAMHSA documentation that an Assurance of Compliance is on file with OHRP and that IRB approval has been received prior to enrolling any clients in the project.

General information about HS provisions can be obtained on the OHRP Web site at www.hhs.gov/ohrp. You may also contact OHRP by e-mail at ohrp@osophs.dhhs.gov or toll-free by telephone at 1-866-447-4777. SAMHSA-specific questions should be directed to the program contact named in the RFA or PA.

See Handout 5-9, “Participant Protection Standards,” for a description of the participant protection standards.

Develop a Budget: Costs and Narrative

- The budget provides your projection of all costs for all years of the grant.
- Read and understand the budget forms.
- The Budget Narrative describes how your organization will use the funds that you are requesting.
- Your plan must demonstrate that grant money will be spent in compliance with grant provisions and Federal regulations.
- Do not go over budget!
- Call the GPO and grants management contact for help as needed.

In developing your project budget:

- Describe how your costs are derived;
- Discuss the necessity and reasonableness of proposed costs;

- Describe the specific functions of personnel, consultants, and collaborators; and
- Target the available funds, and do not exceed the stated limit.

Although the budget is not scored in the evaluation process, the reviewers will look at the feasibility and realism of the budget in terms of the grant project's objectives and tasks and will make comments on this basis.

Complete SF-424A (Budget Form)

- Carefully read the instructions for the SF 424A.
- Total cost equals indirect plus direct costs.
- Call the grants management contact if you do not have an approved Federal indirect cost rate.

The SF-424A (Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs) must be completed using the exact form provided.

Match Activities, Resources, and Staff to Costs

- Make sure you realistically describe and justify the activities, resources, staff, and other items that cost money as part of your budget plan.
- Your Budget Narrative and your Project Narrative should match, referencing the same activities, resources, staff, and other items.
- Double-check your arithmetic.

Handout 5-10, "Sample Budget and Justification," provides an illustration of a budget and narrative justification.

Justify Costs

- You must be able to justify why resources, staff, and supplies are requested.
- Your Budget Narrative should provide an explanation of the costs.

Again, review Handout 5-10, and note how items are justified and contain more information on costs.

Budget Preparation

- Be sure your narrative addresses each line item for each year of funding.
- Supply budget information for every year for which funding is requested.



Module 5

- Ask for guidance from the grants management contact named in the RFA or PA.

Handout 5-11, “Prepare Your Budget,” is a good checklist to follow when developing the budget for your project.

Develop the Project Abstract

The Project Abstract summarizes the key elements of your proposed project.

The Abstract may include:

- The name and type of the applicant organization;
- The title of the project;
- The mission and goals of the project;
- The target audience of the project;
- The expected number of participants in the project; and
- The intended outcome of the project.

Although the Project Abstract is the first item after the face page of the grant application, it may be easier to develop the Abstract last, after the other sections are completed. The Abstract is an overview of your project.

Helpful hints:

- Your Mission Statement will be a great resource in writing your Abstract.
- The first five lines of your Abstract should summarize your project.
- The Abstract must be limited to 35 lines.

SAMHSA uses the Abstract summaries of funded projects for reporting and publication purposes, such as reports to Congress.

Review, Edit, Complete, and Submit Your Application

- Due dates for each section;
- Due dates for the first draft;
- Due dates for completing forms;
- Due dates for the second review;
- Final edit;

- Production;
- Submission;
- Application due date; and
- A double-check using the format checklist to be sure you have met all requirements!

Think about the application due date and work backwards to develop a timeline for internal editing and review cycles. Handout 5-12 “Application Timeline” provides a template for tracking the application development process. Incorrect or incomplete applications will not make it through the review process. People often underestimate the time needed for production and review, so be realistic when developing your timeline. Use the checklists provided in the grant announcement to ensure you meet all requirements.

Know How to Do an Electronic Application Submission

You may submit your application to SAMHSA either in electronic or paper format. To submit an application electronically, you must use the **www.grants.gov** apply site. You will be able to download a copy of the application package from **www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp**, complete it offline, and then upload and submit the application via the **www.grants.gov** site.

You must follow the instructions in the User Guide available at **www.grants.gov/resources/doc/UserGuide_Applicant.doc**. In addition to the User Guide, you may wish to use the following sources for help: by e-mail at **support@grants.gov** or by telephone at (800) 518-GRANTS, or (800) 518-472687. The Customer Support Center is open from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday.

The first time you submit an application through Grants.gov, you must complete four separate registration processes before you can submit your application. Allow at least two weeks for these registration processes, prior to submitting your application. The processes are: DUNS Number registration, Central Contractor Registry (CCR) registration, Credential Provider registration, and Grants.gov registration.

Be sure to follow the SAMHSA formatting requirements and any other requirements in the announcement and in the guidelines on the Web site when submitting an application. Submit your application early to avoid any unforeseen problems.



Module 5

Summary Points to Remember...

- All the guidelines for completing a grant application are included in each SAMHSA grant application kit.
- To write a successful application, address each requirement outlined in the RFA or PA.
- Develop a comprehensive application outline, assign tasks to your writing team, establish a development plan, and conduct ongoing quality reviews to keep the team focused on the requirements.
- Include the community and members of your target audience in the development of project ideas and implementation plans.
- Address cultural competence throughout your application.
- Apply all necessary resources to performance assessment planning and budget development to ensure compliance with requirements.
- Make sure all participant protection standards are addressed.
- Make sure your application complies with all PHS 5161-1 requirements. Use checklists to make sure all requirements have been addressed.
- You have the option to submit applications in paper or electronic format.

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Module 5: Handout 5-1

Examples of Literature Citations

Bartels, S.J., Drake, R.E., & Wallach, M.A. (1995). Long-term course of substance use disorders among patients with severe mental illness. *Psychiatric Services, 46*(3), 248-251.

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. (2005). *Substance abuse treatment for persons with co-occurring disorders: A treatment improvement protocol (TIP)42*, Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Drake, R.E., Mueser, K.T., Brunette, M.F., & McHugo, G.J. (2004). A review of treatments for people with severe mental illness and co-occurring substance use disorders. *Psychiatry Rehabilitation Journal, 27*, 360.

Mangrum, L.F., Spence, R.T., & Lopez, M. (2006). Integrated versus parallel treatment of co-occurring psychiatric and substance use disorders. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment, 30*, 79.

Miller, W.R. (1994). Motivational interviewing: II. The ethics of motivational intervention. *Behavioral and Cognitive Psychotherapy, 22*, 111-123.

National Estimates of Expenditures for Substance Abuse Treatment, 1997, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment Services, Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, February 2001.

U. S. Bureau of the Census (n.d.). *1990 census of population and housing, summary tape file 3A* [CD]. Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census.

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Module 5: Handout 5-2

Develop Your Statement of Need

1. What is the problem to be addressed?
2. What is the extent of the need?
3. Have we discussed the community demographics and problems?
4. Have we documented our rationale for using this population?
5. Is our target population defined?
6. Have we documented the need in this population for the service we provide?
7. What geographic area do we hope to cover?
8. What resources are available for our project?
9. Does our project address any of the resource gaps?
10. Have we provided comparison data?
11. Have we expressed our solution to the problem in terms of goals, objectives, and methods?

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Module 5: Handout 5-3

Justify Your Proposed Evidence-Based Service/Practice

1. Do we have evidence-based sources for our project development?
2. Have we referenced literature published within the last five years?
3. Have we used authors whose work is cited the most (leaders in the field)?
4. Does the literature reference gaps in knowledge that SAMHSA would want filled?
5. Do we include literature on the cultural dimensions of the problem?
6. Have we paid attention to any specific requirements for epidemiological data?
7. Have we included sources of local data, such as:
 - State and county public agencies?
 - School systems?
 - Court systems?
 - HIV/AIDS planning councils?
 - Community health assessments?
 - United Way organizations?
 - U.S. Census Bureau, SAMHSA, and other Federal Agencies?
 - Hospitals?

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Module 5: Handout 5-4

Develop Goals, Objectives and Tasks

Develop Goals

To delineate a goal, ask yourself:

- What major milestone do we need to meet to make our project's mission a reality?
- If we succeed, what specific changes will occur in our community? For example: "We will decrease the gang violence by 10 percent among youth, ages 14 to 20, who are economically disadvantaged in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area."

The project purpose is supported by project goals. Being able to write a meaningful and measurable goal is an essential skill.

The characteristics of effective goals include:

- Goals state the intended results of your project's success in broad terms.
- Goals address outcomes, *not* how the outcomes will be achieved.
- Goals describe the behavior or condition in the community expected to change.
- Goals describe exactly who will be affected by the project.
- Goals lead clearly to one or more measurable results.
- Because goals are customized, application review committees expect no specific number of goals. Depending on the complexity of the work, often two to four goals are expected and should be **listed in the order of priority or importance**.

As you develop your program goals, be aware that your goals should relate to SAMHSA's goals for the overall program as described in the RFA or PA. For example, if SAMHSA notes that a grant program is intended to reduce the health and social costs of substance abuse and dependence to the public and to increase the safety of America's citizens by reducing substance abuse-related crime and violence, then applicants should develop goals that also address increasing treatment capacity, reducing costs and social consequences, and reducing substance abuse-related crime and violence.

Develop Goals, Objectives and Tasks (Continued)

Develop Objectives

- Make SMART—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-limited—objectives.
- Example: In the summer of 2007, we will hold three training sessions in cooperation with five partnering agencies that focus on violence prevention techniques for service providers and youth.

Your project may have several objectives, each of which identifies a step toward reaching your goals. Application review committee members pay close attention to well-written objectives.

The SMART model reminds us to develop objectives that are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-limited.

- **Specific:** Objectives should clearly describe the action to be taken. For example, “Outreach workers will administer the HIV risk assessment tool to at least 100 injection drug users in the target community” is a better objective than “Outreach workers will use their skills to reach out to drug users on the street.”
- **Measurable:** Objectives must be measurable to determine whether or not specific targets have been reached. For example, “The drop-in health center will serve five more homeless patients every day by the end of the first quarter of the second funding year” is a better objective than “Numbers of homeless patients will increase.”
- **Achievable:** Given current resources and the new resources added by the grant, objectives must be feasible. For example, “The new 10-hour part-time nutritionist will have the capacity to see seven teenage mothers each week to design a complete dietary plan” is a better objective than “Teenage mothers will learn about proper nutrition.”
- **Realistic:** Objectives must consider real barriers, recognize appropriate limitations, and anticipate potential problems that need to be addressed by the project. For example, “Two ex-gang members will make one school presentation each week for two months to raise community awareness about the presence of gangs” is a better objective than “Gang-related violence in the community will be halted.”



Develop Goals, Objectives and Tasks (Continued)

- **Time-limited:** Objectives should establish parameters to measure project accomplishments within a specified period related to the grant-funding cycle. For example, “We will recruit five new peer educators by the second quarter of the first funding year” is a better objective than “New peer educators will be hired.”

Remember, if your application is funded, your stated objectives will be used to evaluate project progress.

Develop Tasks

Tasks are the precise steps you will follow to carry out each objective.

Tasks help you identify:

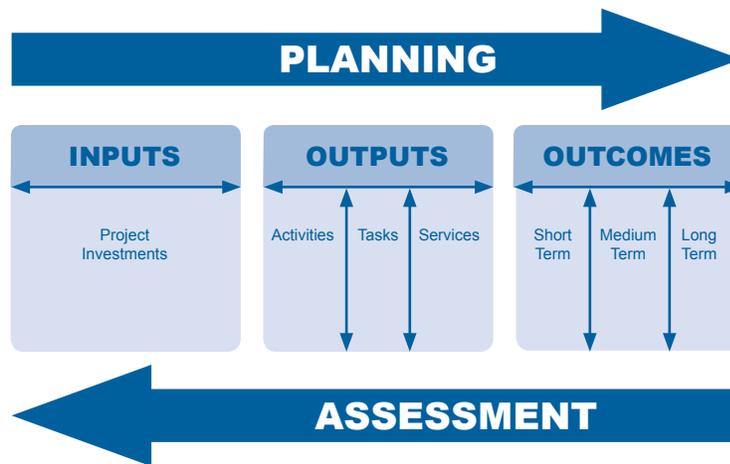
- What tasks need to be done under each objective;
- Who will do the tasks;
- When they will be done;
- Where they will be done;
- What resources you need for each task; and
- What purpose the task has (i.e., what outcome is expected as a result of doing each task).

While objectives are more specific than goals, tasks provide the most detail for the steps you will follow to carry out each objective.

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Module 5: Handout 5-5 Develop a Logic Model



A Logic Model is a tool to show how your proposed project links the purpose, goals, objectives, and tasks stated with the activities and expected outcomes or “change” and can help to plan, implement, and assess your project. The model also links the purpose, goals, objectives, and activities back into planning and evaluation. A Logic Model is the *picture* of your project. It graphically shows the activities and progression of the project. It should also describe the relationships among what resources you put in (inputs), what you do (outputs), and what happens or results (outcomes). On the basis of both your planning and evaluating activities, you can then make a “logical” chain of “if-then” relationships. Look at the graphic above to see the chain of events that link the inputs to outputs, outputs to short-term outcomes (objectives), short-term outcomes to medium-term outcomes (also objectives), and medium-term outcomes to long-term outcomes (goals).

The framework you set up to build your model is based on a review of the Statement of Need, in which you state the conditions that gave rise to the project with your target group. Then, you look at the **Inputs**, which are the resources, contributions, time, staff, materials, and equipment you will invest to change these conditions. These inputs then are organized into the **Outputs**, which are the activities, services, interventions, and tasks that will reach the target population. These outputs then are intended to create **Outcomes** such as changes or benefits for the consumer, families, groups, communities, organizations, and SAMHSA. The understanding and further evidence of what works and what does not work will be shown in the **Impact**, which includes achievements that occur along the path of project operation.

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Module 5: Handout 5-6

Demonstrate Cultural Competence

- Cultural competence consists of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable administrators and practitioners to care and provide for diverse populations.
- Cultural competence includes an understanding of the language, beliefs, norms, values, and socioeconomic and political factors that have a significant impact on well-being, assessment, and treatment.

Cultural competence is a critical component of SAMHSA grant programs and is addressed in the grant announcements. Application review committees assess this concept carefully in all applications, *even if the RFA or PA does not include a specific evaluation criterion for cultural competence*. To address cultural competence in your application, remember that people support what they help create. Therefore, bring the target population into the design, implementation, and evaluation process. SAMHSA wants to see a demonstration of your planning and experience in working with cultural competence.

Cultural Competence Guidelines

- Demonstrate your history of serving the target population.
- Ensure that project staff reflect the composition of the target population and that all staff members are culturally competent to provide services and conduct evaluation with the target population.
- Ensure that the target population is involved actively throughout the project design, application, implementation, and evaluation.
- Ensure that your communication is appropriate for their language and education levels.
- Ensure that project evaluation reflects specific cultural practices or characteristics of the target population.
- Ensure that evaluation tools are appropriate for the target population.
- Describe how your evaluation demonstrates culturally appropriate analyses.
- State how you will provide feedback and disseminate information to the community in which the data were collected.

Demonstrate Cultural Competence (Continued)

Applications should demonstrate cultural competence *throughout* the project plan, rather than treating it as an add-on to be addressed in a specific section of the grant application. The following guidelines may help ensure appropriate attention to cultural competence in your application:

- **Experience With the Target Population**—Your organization (including affiliated service sites) should have a documented history of positive project involvement with the population to be served by the project. Resources and organizational structures must be adequate to conduct the proposed project within the context of the cultural needs of the target population.
- **Staff Qualifications**—Ideally, staff will reflect the composition of the target population. In any case, staff (including administrators, advisors, and board members) must be gender-, age-, and culturally appropriate and must be qualified to provide services to the target population.
- **Community Representation**—The population targeted by your application should be involved actively as participants throughout the project design. Mechanisms should be established to provide community members with an opportunity to influence and help shape the project’s proposed activities and interventions.
- **Statement of Need and Implementation Approach**—Your proposed Statement of Need and Implementation Approach must demonstrate cultural competence by identifying specific needs, cultural practices, or characteristics of the target population and by describing how these needs will be met by the proposed project.
- **Language and Communication**—Communication must be appropriate for the target population. You should use multilingual resources, including the use of skilled bilingual and bicultural individuals and/or sign language specialists, whenever a significant percentage of the target population is not proficient in English or verbal communication. Your application must demonstrate that audiovisual materials, public service announcements, training guides, and print materials to be used in the project are culturally, linguistically, and educationally appropriate for the target population.
- **Evaluation Methods, Screening or Assessment Tools, and Other Survey Instruments**—The proposed project evaluation methods and instrument(s) should be appropriate to the population being served. Many screening or assessment tools and survey instruments have not been validated for racial and



Demonstrate Cultural Competence (Continued)

ethnic groups, even though they are used widely. Every effort should be made to use tools validated *for the target population*. Your application should provide a rationale for the use of proposed evaluation instruments, including a discussion of whether the proposed instruments have been validated for the target population. The application also should specify how the tool will be adapted if it has not been validated for the target population. Also, show how the results of the project will be validated.

- **Culturally Sensitive Interpretation of Analyses**—Your application should demonstrate clearly how your proposed evaluation includes culturally appropriate analyses of the data. Plans to enhance the usefulness of the data may include analysis teams that consist not only of the proper mix of disciplines, but also of persons who are familiar with and sensitive to the cultural factors and issues that may influence outcomes in your target population.
- **Feedback and Dissemination of Information**—Be sure to describe how relevant findings will be disseminated to the communities in which the data were collected. Your application should demonstrate how community members, providers, policymakers, and others will be informed about the data and how the data can be used to improve services to the community.

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Module 5: Handout 5-7

Develop Your Staff and Organizational Experience Plan

1. Can we sell the organization's capacity, uniqueness, and niche?
2. Can we detail roles and responsibilities of key staff?
3. Can we show the expertise of the staff?
4. Do we know the amount of time each person will work on the project?
5. Have we developed a timetable?
6. Have we demonstrated that the staff reflect and are culturally competent to work with the target group(s)?
7. Have we indicated why consultants are necessary?
8. Have we described the organization's experience, capacity, and uniqueness?
9. Have we detailed the roles and responsibilities of key staff?
10. Have we described the expertise and experience of the staff?
11. Do we know the amount of time each person will work on the project? Is this amount of time reasonable?
12. Have we developed a timetable for starting and completing project activities?
13. Have we indicated the role and reason for using consultants or other external resources?
14. Have we described and documented any cooperative or collaborative agreements made with other organizations included in the application?

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Module 5: Handout 5-8

Write Performance Assessment Questions; Identify Performance Assessment Tools and Techniques; and Analyze and Report Your Findings

Write Questions to Assess Performance

- Make sure the scope of your assessment matches the requirements of the grant announcement.
- The answers you get are only as good as the questions you ask!
- Trained assessors know how to frame questions to get reliable and valid answers. Consider using an outside assessor to conduct or oversee the performance assessment to avoid the perception of conflict of interest.
- Look carefully at the performance assessment section of the RFA or PA to analyze the scope of the assessment SAMHSA is expecting.
- If your assessment is minimal, you may be able to conduct it yourself; a large, multi-site, rigorous performance assessment may require additional tools and resources, but typically is not expected with SAMHSA's grant programs.

SAMHSA emphasizes practical, ongoing performance assessments that involve project staff, community members, and other stakeholders, *not* just assessment experts. This type of assessment has many advantages for both the community and the organization.

You can involve the target population in designing your assessment questions by conducting focus groups and community meetings in which you describe your proposed project and ask the community members to help identify the right questions to ask in order to measure change.

Identify Performance Assessment Tools and Techniques

- Your local university may offer help in providing experts in the performance assessment field.
- Your assessor should be with you from the start to help you identify the tools and techniques you will need.
- The model programs you visit may offer valuable suggestions on performance assessment processes and experts.

Write Performance Assessment Questions; Identify Performance Assessment Tools and Techniques; and Analyze and Report Your Findings (Continued)

Your assessor should be credible to the field, experienced in *your* type of project and *your* type of population, able to collaborate with you, and available to you. Make contacts to find an assessor as soon as possible—even if you are just beginning to think about applying for a grant.

Analyze and Report Your Findings

- Few individuals have all the skills a good assessment requires. Consider multiple individuals or a team.
- Work closely with your assessor or assessment team to benefit as much as possible from your performance assessment.
- Ensure all components are integrated (grant objectives, assessment questions, methodology, instruments, cultural competence, analysis, and GPRA requirements).
- Include community members in developing the performance assessment plan, analysis, and report.
- Make project results available and accessible to the community.
- Be clear about the expectations of the audiences that will receive your findings.
- Pay attention to the appearance of the report (e.g., layout, clarity of graphics, and fonts). Make the document reader-friendly.

Sound performance assessment results can have a positive and growth-enhancing function for projects, clients, other professionals, and the surrounding community.

Analysis and synthesis are ways to understand and summarize performance assessment findings. How you interpret the meaning and importance of the data is influenced by the questions being asked, the types of data available, and the input received from members of the target community.

On the basis of your analysis and synthesis, you can develop recommendations, which are possible actions to consider as a result of the performance assessment. Forming recommendations means looking at the big picture and asking, “How can this project be



Write Performance Assessment Questions; Identify Performance Assessment Tools and Techniques; and Analyze and Report Your Findings (Continued)

more successful as a result of what we have observed?” How can we improve the benefit to the community? Performance assessment can be strengthened by recommendations that anticipate and react to what staff, clients, other professionals, and the community at large want to know.

Several things can help ensure the recommendations will be relevant and well received:

- Inviting input from stakeholders to help develop draft recommendations;
- Sharing draft recommendations with multiple stakeholders;
- Presenting options instead of directive advice; and
- Citing the benefits to be gained by incorporating lessons learned.
- Agree on techniques to analyze, synthesize, and interpret findings before data collection begins.

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Module 5: Handout 5-9

Participant Protection Standards

1. Protection of Clients and Staff From Potential Risks

- Identify and describe any foreseeable physical, medical, psychological, social, and legal risks or potential adverse effects as a result of the project itself or any data collection activity.
- Describe the procedures you will follow to minimize or protect participants against potential risks, **including risks to confidentiality**.
- Identify plans to provide guidance and assistance in the event there are adverse effects to participants.
- Where appropriate, describe alternative treatments and procedures that may be beneficial to participants. If you choose not to use these other beneficial treatments, provide the reasons for not using them.

2. Fair Selection of Participants

- Describe the target population(s) for the proposed project. Include age, gender, and racial/ethnic background and note whether the population includes youth who are homeless, children in foster care, children of substance abusers, pregnant women, or other targeted groups.
- Explain the reasons for including groups of pregnant women, children, people with mental disabilities, people in institutions, prisoners, and individuals who are likely to be particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.
- Explain the reasons for including or excluding participants.
- Explain how you will recruit and select participants. Identify who will select participants.

3. Absence of Coercion

- Explain whether or not participation in the project is voluntary or required. Identify possible reasons why participation is required, for example, court orders requiring people to participate in a program.

Participant Protection Standards (Continued)

- If you plan to compensate participants, state how participants will be awarded incentives (e.g., money and gifts).
- State how volunteer participants will be told that they may receive the intervention services even if they do not participate in or complete the data collection component of the project.

4. Data Collection

- Identify from whom you will collect data (e.g., from participants themselves, family members, teachers, and others). Describe the data collection procedures, and specify the sources for obtaining data (e.g., school records, interviews, psychological assessments, questionnaires, observation, or other sources). Where data are to be collected through observational techniques, questionnaires, interviews, or other direct means, describe the data collection setting.
- Identify what type of specimens (e.g., urine or blood) will be used, if any. State if the material will be used for evaluation or if other use(s) will be made. Also, if needed, describe how the material will be monitored to ensure the safety of participants.

5. Privacy and Confidentiality

- Explain how you will ensure privacy and confidentiality. Include who will collect data and how it will be collected.
- Describe:
 - How you will use data collection instruments;
 - Where data will be stored;
 - Who will or will not have access to information; and
 - How the identity of participants will be kept private, for example, through the use of a coding system on data records, limiting access to records, or storing identifiers separately from data.

NOTE: If applicable, grantees must agree to maintain the confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse client records according to the provisions of **Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part II**.



Participant Protection Standards (Continued)

6. Adequate Consent Procedures

- List what information will be given to people who participate in the project. Include the type and purpose of their participation. Identify the data that will be collected, how the data will be used, and how you will keep the data private.
- State:
 - Whether or not their participation is voluntary;
 - Their right to leave the project at any time without any problems;
 - Possible risks from participation in the project; and
 - Plans to protect clients from these risks.
- Explain how you will get consent for youth, older adults, people with limited reading skills, and people who do not use English as their first language.

NOTE: If the project poses potential physical, medical, psychological, legal, social, or other risks, you must obtain written informed consent.

- Indicate whether you will obtain informed consent from participants or assent from minors along with consent from their parents or legal guardians. Describe how the consent will be documented. For example: Will you read the consent forms? Will you ask prospective participants questions to be sure they understand the forms? Will you give them copies of what they sign?
- Include, as appropriate, sample consent forms that provide for the following: (1) informed consent for participation in service intervention; (2) informed consent for participation in the data collection component of the project; and (3) informed consent for the exchange (releasing or requesting) of confidential information.

NOTE: Never imply that the participant waives or appears to waive any legal rights, may not end involvement with the project, or releases your project or its agents from liability for negligence.

- Describe whether separate consents will be obtained for different stages or parts of the project. For example, will they be needed for both participant protection in treatment intervention and for the collection and use of data?

Participant Protection Standards (Continued)

- Additionally, if other consents (e.g., consents to release information to others or gather information from others) will be used in your project, provide a description of the consents. Will individuals who do not consent to having individually identifiable data collected for evaluation purposes be allowed to participate in the project?

7. Risk/Benefit Discussion

- Discuss why the risks are reasonable compared to expected benefits and importance of the knowledge from the project.

Protection of Human Subjects Regulations

SAMHSA expects that most grantees funded under Services Grant programs will not be required to comply with the Protection of Human Subjects Regulations (45 CFR 46). However, in some instances, special evaluation and data collection requirements for a particular funding opportunity may necessitate that all grantees comply with these regulations. In such instances, the RFA or PA will explicitly state that grantees must comply with the regulations.

If the RFA or PA does not explicitly state that grantees must comply with the Protection of Human Subjects Regulations (45 CFR 46), grantees will be required to comply with the regulations only if the project-specific evaluation design proposed by the grantee requires compliance with the regulations.



Module 5: Handout 5-10

Sample Budget and Justification

ILLUSTRATION OF A SAMPLE DETAILED BUDGET AND NARRATIVE JUSTIFICATION FOR COMPLETING SF 424A: SECTION B FOR 01 BUDGET PERIOD

OBJECT CLASS CATEGORIES

Personnel

Job Title	Name	Annual Salary	Level of Effort	Salary Being Requested
Project Director	J. Doe	\$30,000	1.0	\$30,000
Secretary	Unnamed	\$18,000	0.5	\$ 9,000
Counselor	R. Down	\$25,000	1.0	\$25,000
Enter Personnel subtotal on 424A, Section B, 6.a.				\$64,000

Fringe Benefits (24%) \$15,360

Enter Fringe Benefits subtotal on 424A, Section B, 6.b. **\$15,360**

Travel

2 trips for SAMHSA Meetings for 2 Attendees
 (Airfare @ \$600 x 4 = \$2,400) + (per diem @ \$120 x 4 x 6 days = \$2,880) \$5,280
 Local Travel (500 miles x .24 per mile) 120

Enter Travel subtotal on 424A, Section B, 6.c. **\$ 5,400**

Equipment (List Individually)

“Equipment” means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost that equals the lesser of (a) the capitalization level established by the governmental unit or nongovernmental applicant for financial statement purposes, or (b) \$5000.

Enter Equipment subtotal on 424A, Section B, 6.d.

Supplies

Office Supplies	\$500
Computer Software (Microsoft Word)	500

Enter Supplies subtotal on 424A, Section B, 6.e. \$1,000

Contractual Costs**Assessment**

Job Title	Name	Annual Salary	Level of Effort	Salary Being Requested
Assessor	J. Wilson	\$48,000	0.5	\$24,000
Other Staff		\$18,000	0.1	\$18,000
Fringe Benefits (25%)		\$10,500		

Travel

2 trips x 1 Assessor (\$600 x 2)	\$ 1,200
per diem @ \$120 x 6	720
Supplies (General Office)	500

Assessment Direct Costs	\$54,920
Assessment Indirect Costs (19%)	\$10,435

Assessment Subtotal \$65,355

Training

Job Title	Name	Annual Salary	Level of Effort	Salary Being Requested
Coordinator	M. Smith		0.5	\$ 12,000
Admin. Asst.	N. Jones		0.5	\$ 9,000
Fringe Benefits (25%)				\$ 5,250

Travel

2 Trips for Training Airfare @ \$600 x 2	\$ 1,200
Per Diem \$120 x 2 x 2 days	480
Local (500 miles x .24/mile)	120

Supplies

Office Supplies	\$ 500
Software (Microsoft Word)	500



Other

Rent (500 Sq. Ft. x \$9.95)	\$ 4,975
Telephone	500
Maintenance (e.g., van)	\$ 2,500
Audit	\$ 3,000

Training Direct	\$ 40,025
Training Indirect	\$ -0-

Enter Contractual subtotal on 424A, Section B, 6.f. \$105,380

Other

Consultants = Expert @ \$250/day x 6 day (If expert is known, should list by name)	\$ 1,500
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Enter Other subtotal on 424A, Section B, 6.h. \$ 1,500

Total Direct Charges (sum of 6.a-6.h)

Enter Total Direct on 424A, Section B, 6.i. \$192,640

Indirect Costs

15% of Salary and Wages (copy of negotiated indirect cost rate agreement attached)

Enter Indirect subtotal of 424A, Section B, 6.j. \$ 9,600

TOTALS

Enter TOTAL on 424A, Section B, 6.k. \$202,240

JUSTIFICATION

PERSONNEL - Describe the role and responsibilities of each position.

FRINGE BENEFITS - List all components of the fringe benefit rate.

EQUIPMENT - List equipment and describe the need and the purpose of the equipment in relation to the proposed project.

SUPPLIES - Generally self-explanatory; however, if not, describe need. Include explanation of how the cost has been estimated.

TRAVEL - Explain need for all travel other than that required by SAMHSA.

CONTRACTUAL COSTS - Explain the need for each contractual arrangement and how these components relate to the overall project.

OTHER - Generally self-explanatory. If consultants are included in this category, explain the need and how the consultant's rate has been determined.

INDIRECT COST RATE - If your organization has no indirect cost rate, please indicate whether your organization plans to a) waive indirect costs if an award is issued, or b) negotiate and establish an indirect cost rate with HHS within 90 days of award issuance.

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Module 5: Handout 5-11

Prepare Your Budget

Use this chart as a checklist to help you complete the Budget and Budget Narrative of your grant application.

Budget Section	Yes	No Plan To Do
Did we check to see whether the budget includes all the staffing, activities, and resource needs outlined in the Project Narrative not exceeding the total funds available?		
Did we adhere to the agency budget guidelines in planning and allocating resources for various objectives and tasks?		
Have we established and documented our approved Federal indirect cost rate?		
Have we reviewed all the budget forms and gathered the appropriate budget information and documentation needed to complete the forms?		
Did we use basic accounting concepts and terminology?		
Have we assembled and explained all required cost justification documents?		
Did we recruit someone with solid accounting experience related to grants and projects to assist our writing team?		
Did we involve the accountant in the program planning to ensure proper integration of resources with project objectives?		
Did we project our expenses as accurately as possible and double-check our projections and totals?		
Did we project budget requirements and narrative for each year of the grant?		

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Module 5: Handout 5-12

Application Timeline

Application Component	Individual Responsible	First Draft Due	Second Draft Due	Review Dates	Incorporate Comments	Final	Application Submission

Handout

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Module 6

Overview

Now that you have learned how to put your grant application together, it is helpful to understand how your application will be reviewed and evaluated. This module describes what happens to your grant application once you submit it to SAMHSA.

Purpose of Module 6

This module will give you an understanding of the grant application review process and how your grant application is processed through the steps of review.

Module 6 Learning Objectives

During this module, you will be able to:

- Review the importance of SAMHSA's screening and eligibility requirements;
- Become acquainted with the initial reviewers and the scoring process;
- Learn about the SAMHSA National Advisory Councils; and
- Learn about the funding decision and notification process.

Module 6 Underlying Assumptions

- SAMHSA's ability to accomplish specific grant program objectives depends on the quality of its grant projects.
- Applications are subject to a dual review process to ensure that the program requirements are met and that the most meritorious projects receive funding.

Module 6 Agenda

Topics to be discussed:

- Importance of SAMHSA's Eligibility and Screening Requirements;
- Initial Peer Review (first-level review);
- National Advisory Councils (second-level review); and
- Funding decision and notification process.

SAMHSA's Screening and Eligibility Requirements

- The maintenance of equity for all applicants and fairness in application review are primary principles of the review process.
- One way to achieve equity is through the objective screening of published application requirements.
- Fairness is achieved by applications being strictly screened for compliance to format requirements.

Eligibility criteria and screening requirements cannot be ignored and must be met. When your application is received, it is reviewed for compliance to make sure it meets the basic requirements in the RFA or PA. Refer to Module 3, Handout 3-1, for a list of formatting and screening requirements.

SAMHSA will return an application without it going through the review process if any of the following occur:

- The applicant organization is ineligible for funding.
- The application is received after the due date.
- The application is incomplete.
- The application is not legible.
- The application exceeds the page limits.
- The application does not conform to the format instructions.
- The material presented is not complete enough to permit an adequate review.

Initial Review Group: Scientific and Technical Merit Scoring Process

- SAMHSA's Office of Program Services manages the first level of the review process.
- This level of technical merit review is conducted by qualified experts and consumers, referred to as the peer reviewers.
- These reviewers are primarily non-Federal experts who work in the substance abuse or mental health field, in universities or hospitals, with community-based and faith-based organizations or advocacy groups, or who have been consumers of substance abuse or mental health services.



Module 6

What you should know about the initial review includes:

- The reviewers are your peers.
- Applications that meet all the basic format and eligibility requirements are assigned to peer reviewers.
- The reviewers thoroughly review each application that is assigned to them.
- If a reviewer has a conflict of interest (COI) with any project application, the reviewer must excuse himself or herself from the process.
- The peer reviewers individually assign points to each application based on the quality of the responses to meet the evaluation criteria. The reviewers are instructed to assess an application based only on the information that is included in the application. They do not make assumptions about the application, nor do they provide other information that they may know if it is not included in the application.
- Upon completion of a thorough review of an application, the reviewers independently and individually give a numerical score to each criterion. These individual scores are combined to form a priority score using a mathematical formula. Starting in FY 2007, SAMHSA will move to a scoring system using a scale of 1.0 to 5.0, with 1.0 being the best.
- Each application stands alone and is never compared with another application during the review process.
- A report that summarizes the reviewers' comments is developed for every application that is reviewed. This "summary statement" becomes part of the official grants record, and a copy is sent to you.

Applications often receive comments about both strengths and weaknesses in their summary statement. An application may have weaknesses in some areas but still receive a good score if all other areas are covered. Your goal is to submit an application that receives favorable comments from the reviewers.

Summary Statement

Your report card!

A final summary statement is developed for each application. The summary statement reflects the peer reviewers' evaluation of the application. It also serves as the official record of the review. After the summary statements are prepared, they are sent to the National Advisory Council.

The summary statement also serves as technical assistance for you and helps prepare you for future grant-writing efforts by letting you know where your application is strong and where it needs more work.

National Advisory Council (NAC)

- The second level of review involves the NAC.
- SAMHSA and each individual Center (CMHS, CSAT, and CSAP) have separate NACs.
- The NAC comprises professionals from relevant scientific and health fields, as well as individuals representing important interests in the public sector.
- The NAC provides policy advice on the Center's programs and expenditure of Federal funding.
- The NAC may consider policy issues and budget mandates when reviewing summary statements.

SAMHSA's NAC must concur with the first-level peer reviewers' recommendation before an award can be made. Appropriate Federal staff make actual award decisions. The NAC wants to ensure that applications also support the mission, goals, objectives, and priorities defined by SAMHSA or the specific Center. Therefore, it is important to understand the funding agency priorities that we discussed in Module 1 and then write the application according to the requirements of the RFA or PA. Grant program budgets are limited, which means that awards are usually limited to the best-scoring applications. This factor makes the application process extremely competitive.

The Funding Decision and Notification Process

- Following the NAC review process, all applicants receive a letter from SAMHSA that includes the summary statement.
- Applicants whose applications are funded receive additional notification from the Grants Management Office in a Notification of Grant Award (NOGA).
- Applicants whose applications are not funded receive a letter indicating that they will not be receiving a grant award.

Remember, just as in any competition, if you "played," you can learn from your experience. Whether you win or lose, if you review your lessons learned, next time you will be even more successful!



Module 6

Summary Points to Remember...

- Understanding the evaluation criteria is the first step in developing an application outline that conforms to the RFA or PA requirements.
- Knowing how your application will be screened and evaluated gives you the opportunity to conduct your own review before submitting your application.
- The review process is rigorous and very competitive in order to help SAMHSA implement its priorities effectively, use tax dollars efficiently, and support community service development.
- Because the process is competitive, often only a small proportion of the applications receive funding.
- Successful SAMHSA grantees contribute to the national body of knowledge and understanding of effective approaches to critical substance abuse and mental health concerns.

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Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
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