

Bureau of Justice Assistance's
Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program

Rural Responses to the Opioid Epidemic Grant

Frequently Asked Questions

Below are the questions and answers submitted related to the solicitation. As noted in the solicitation, if you have further questions, please contact the Institute for Intergovernmental Research at COAP@iir.com.

The solicitation and additional information are accessible at: <https://coapresources.org/ItemsOfInterest/FundingOpportunities>.

Q: Can a land-grant university be the lead agency?

A: Land-grant universities and non-land-grant universities are eligible to apply. Applicants should focus on their capacities to convene stakeholders and document their histories serving rural America.

Q: Are indirect costs included in the \$750,000 award amount?

A: Indirect costs must be included in the threshold of the \$750,000 request amount, not in addition to that amount.

Q: We are an RCORP-P grantee—and we are a public institution of higher education. Can we apply on behalf of our consortium?

A: RCORP-Planning award recipients are given priority consideration, and institutions of higher education are eligible to apply.

Q: Can the grant be used to sustain a program that is currently running?

A: If there is an item in one of the categories that is already in process, and you are not supplanting, it may be used as a piece of your strategy. This grant opportunity is not meant to fund only a single activity, but one from each category.

Q: If the RCORP-P grantee has applied to the RCORP-I, can the grantee apply to this opportunity as well?

A: Yes, you may apply for both. You should explain in your application how the proposed project complements the RCORP-I project.

Q: Is the population to be served a determining factor for selection (i.e., larger is better)?

A: Being in a larger region is not necessarily an advantage, although it may demonstrate effective use of federal dollars. The primary focus of this project is the quality of partnerships and the activities undertaken.

Q: Does “picking from the menu” happen with the application or during planning?

A: Applicants are required to provide in the application a preliminary indication of the activities they anticipate implementing. Modifications to selected activities may occur after the Planning Phase is complete.

Q: Can two RCORP-Planning grantees combine efforts and apply jointly?

A: Yes, that is allowable.

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Q: Will the grant allow for paying for syringe exchange programs?

A: There is no specific restriction on using funding for syringe exchange programs generally. Applicants should provide details about how their programs would be implemented and anticipate further discussions during the Planning Phase to ensure reimbursement.

Q: Can 20 percent be used for naloxone and an additional 20 percent for drug takeback?

A: Yes, that is possible; however, you must select activities from more than one category, and your budget should reflect that.

Q: Is each application required to have one or more components from each category?

A: At least one activity from Categories 1, 2, and 3 must be selected. You do not have to pick from the fourth, optional category; however, no more than 25 percent of the budget may be allocated to the optional category.

Q: Can food be included in the budget?

A: No. You may not purchase food for planning meetings, community meetings, etc.

Q: Will specific process and outcome indicators be defined by BJA or other partners?

A: Yes. Total numbers served and similar information will be requested but not individual-level data.

Q: Is a national evaluation planned, and will standardized evaluation protocols be provided?

A: Currently, a national evaluation is not planned, but it is always a possibility. Your project plan does not need to reflect a national evaluation.

Q: At the top of page 13 of the application, there is space list four counties for our proposed projects. How should we address this section if we plan to look at a region larger than four counties/cities?

A: If the application limits the data you would like to provide, you may submit additional information in a separate attachment. This can be emailed to COAP@iir.com. Please identify the applicant's name with the submission.

Q: Can we subcontract some of the activities (example: behavioral health activities)?

A: Yes, activities may be contracted, as appropriate.

Q: Does the project coordinator need to be 1.0 FTE?

A: This is the common approach. Contracted positions of an equivalent nature are also acceptable.

Q: Is the second set of two meetings going to occur in planning or implementation?

A: These meetings will be budgeted in the Implementation Phase. Only the first convening must be budgeted during the Planning Phase.

Q: Who should the letters of support come from?

A: You should submit letters of support from your lead agency and from any partner agencies. Interagency agreements and MOUs may be submitted as well in lieu of letters. We expect letters from public health, public safety, and behavioral health at a minimum.

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Q: Can you clarify the definition of judicial officials who must attend face-to-face meetings (mentioned in the written grant guidelines)?

A: A judicial official could be a judge, a magistrate, a court administrator, or, in some cases, a clerk. We are flexible, knowing that different communities have unique arrangements.

Q: Can we have one letter with multiple agency signatures, especially if it is an existing committee?

A: Yes. However, make sure to outline the commitment of each agency in the letter.

Q: If the lead for this application is part of a consortium with other agencies that have applied for the RCORP implementation and MAT expansion grants, do you need their applications as well?

A: The projects will be coordinated with HRSA. Please explain the situation in your application, specifically how the lead agency has the capacity to be a part of multiple opportunities and be successful.

Q: Is there an evaluation requirement, and can you write into the budget an evaluation consultant?

A: There is no requirement for an evaluation; however, you may propose evaluation activities and include them in your budget after addressing the mandatory project activities.

Q: Is there a funding floor amount?

A: There is no minimum request but we have given a great deal of thought to what is required in the menu. This is how we arrived at the \$750,000 funding amount.

Q: Are the project director AND project coordinator salaries included?

A: The terms "project director" and "project coordinator" are used interchangeably. The project coordinator salary can be included in the budget.

Q: Can the same people attend all of the meetings?

A: We envision that you will provide diverse attendance. We are looking for members of each partner to attend, and the same people can attend all meetings.

Q: Can one organization send more than one person to the meeting?

A: While this is possible, please explain your reasoning. We are not looking for all five or six attendees to come from the same organization.

Q: Are there any preferences, bonus points, etc., attached to selecting one or more of the activities under the optional funding category?

A: There is no preference given for items selected from the optional funding category.

Q: On the online application form, is the primary contact for matters related to this application the project director/primary investigator?

A: Yes, this should be the person who has the ability to answer substantive questions about the application quickly.

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Q: Should all of the supporting documents, including our funded HRSA RCORP-Planning grant application packet and our pending HRSA RCORP-Implementation packet, be included in one email? Is there a size limit for the email file, for instance, 10 mb?

A: You may send multiple emails or include all of the files in a zip folder. Make sure to clearly indicate which application the files are associated with for each email.

Q: Should we include any special information/ identifiers on the supporting documentation email in order to match our documents to our online application?

A: Yes, please include identifiers on supporting documents. For example, put the application agency in the header/footer of all supporting documents.

Q: Are you saying that new agencies cannot apply until next year, or, will we still be able to make the deadline for the project beginning November 1, 2019?

A: The application deadline is in July. You do not have to be an RCORP award recipient or have applied to be eligible, as long as you submit all required documents by July 26.

Q: Is there a funding opportunity number for this grant?

A: There is no federal funding opportunity number for this grant. Submit the application electronically, and email all supporting documents as detailed in the solicitation.

Q: Are there page limits to the application?

A: There are no page limits; however, items not specifically requested may not be considered in the review process.

Q: Once we have identified a judicial official, can a proxy or designee be sent to a face-to-face meeting in the event of a conflict on a meeting date?

A: We will consider proxies as the need arises, but a proxy should have decision-making authority similar to that of the member he or she is representing.

Q: I did not see the options for making improvements to prescription drug monitoring programs. Would that be an acceptable activity under Category 1 or 2?

A: PDMP system improvements are not explicitly listed under Category 1 or 2. You may include a detailed description of how improvements would be directly linked to an activity listed in one of the categories to be considered for funding.

Q: If local foundations/philanthropists are also interested in supporting this effort, perhaps with additional grant dollars, would that be good to include in the application?

A: You may include a description of how your project is leveraging multiple funding sources in your community.

Q: Can any employee of the consortium attend the in-person and national meetings? Our hospital is in the consortium and the CEO signed the consortium, but the CEO would like to delegate a staff member to attend the meetings.

A: A proxy may be sent on behalf of the person who signed on; however, we ask that the proxy have the same decision-making capacity as the member he or she is representing.

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Q: Can all members at one meeting be from the same consortium member? For example, at one in-person meeting, could the project coordinator and five members from the State Attorney's Office attend?

A: Meeting attendees should not all be from the same agency. We are looking for diversity in attendance and representation.

Q: Can the same people attend the in-person meetings and the national meetings, or do they need to be different people? While we have several organizations in our established consortium, trying to identify different people for each meeting may be difficult.

A: The same people can attend all meetings, but we do seek diverse representation from the partners involved.

Q: I am trying to figure out whether the rural areas of our county qualify as "rural" for purposes of the Rural Responses to the Opioid Epidemic grant. When I input addresses for not only my county's rural municipalities but also neighboring counties that are undoubtedly rural, according to our layperson's definition, the Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer indicates that they are NOT rural. The grant application seems to indicate that there is some leeway in the definition of "rural." However, if the Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer defines the community(ies) we seek to help as ineligible for rural grants, does this mean that we cannot apply for this grant?

A: For the purposes of this project, the term "rural" is strictly defined based on HRSA's Rural Health Grants Eligibility Analyzer. If the analyzer response was "No location in this county is eligible for rural health grants," then you are not eligible to apply.

Q: Can the funds be used towards computer software that would allow us to print patient education information as well as have education opportunities for our staff and providers?

A: This may be allowable if you can explain how this is related to one of the activities identified in your application.

Q: Can the funds be used towards construction/renovation of rooms to create an inpatient detox unit within a hospital or an outpatient MAT clinic (the building is already ours; we just need to remodel some space for the MAT clinic)?

A: In certain circumstances, funds may be used for light renovations, but not for property acquisition or large remodels. Please consult the DOJ Grants Financial Guide at <https://ojp.gov/financialguide/DOJ/index.htm> for more information about allowable expenses.

Q: If a provider is providing services during the grant period, are we able to bill for those services?

A: This is possible within your project during the implementation period, assuming that the services are tied to your project and the funds are not used to supplant existing allocations.

Q: Do BJA grants have any impact on HRSA funding opportunities? In other words, if we are awarded a BJA grant, will we still qualify for HRSA grants on opioids?

A: Being a BJA grantee does not preclude an applicant from eligibility for HRSA funding.

Q: Will this grant allow for a hospitalist that focuses on detox patients, training staff on how to handle detox patients appropriately

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and possibly seeing patients in an outpatient clinic if they need care specific to opioids?

A: For this to be allowable, you will need to describe in detail how this approach is directly associated with activities listed in the solicitation.

Q: Are we required to report all related-project funding if we are a subgrantee of federal funding from the CDC? Our state public health agency is a direct grantee with the CDC, and we are a subgrantee of our state public health agency. Are we required to list this funding on the grant application?

A: You should list those funds if they will support the broader project you are proposing in your application.

Q: What percentage of the budget can be used for renovations for program space? Would we be able to use any of the \$100,000 during the Planning Phase for renovations, office supplies, and equipment to outfit program space for use during the Implementation Phase?

A: While you are required to select activities from within the grant categories, applicants should not predetermine what interventions will be employed prior to engaging in the Planning Phase of the project, since the Planning Phase is designed to utilize the expertise of the identified workgroup to determine the areas of focus and specific interventions. Therefore, renovations are only potentially allowable in the Implementation Phase.

Q: May we regrant any of the award money from the Rural Responses to the Opioid Epidemic grant?

A: You may make contracts with or subawards to other entities; however, they also must comply with all federal regulations related to your award.

Q: How many meetings should we budget for? It appears that, in some portions of the guidance, there are three and in other sections, five.

A: Your budget should include support for the project coordinator and five workgroup members to attend three face-to-face meetings of the selected demonstration sites over the course of the project. In addition to these three meetings, you should budget for the project director and two workgroup members to attend two national meetings over the course of the project. There is a total of five meetings, with varying numbers of people attending each.

Q: Our proposal involves three regions, and we would like to have a full-time project coordinator working in each, for a total of three coordinators, and a part-time overarching project coordinator facilitating their work. Does this plan meet the criteria for project coordination?

A: You must submit a project plan and a budget/budget narrative that is cost-effective and justifiable, keeping in mind that a substantial portion of your project should include the funds for implementing interventions identified in the categories.

Q: Can salaries besides that of the project coordinator be included in this grant?

A: You may include salary and benefits for additional personnel in your proposed project.

Q: Throughout the information webinar, it was mentioned that a detailed budget should be submitted after the planning stage. However, the solicitation states that the detailed budget and budget summary have to be submitted with the application, and the

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example posted online does not break down two budgets—it is just broken out by year.

A: Your initial budget also should include expenses to complete all of the activities required in the planning phase up to \$100,000, all of which should be in Year 1. The balance of the budget may be noted in the “travel” (required meetings) and “other” (reserved for rapid response activities) categories of the budget and spread across Years 1 and 2.

Q: Throughout the information webinar, it was mentioned that we do not have to be specific on the application or the work plan about what we are implementing because that will be finalized during the Planning Phase. However, the application states that the work plan has to be submitted with activities in the Planning and Implementation Phases.

A: The work plan should include details for both the Planning and the Implementation Phases, realizing that much of the Implementation Phase is dependent on outcomes of the Planning Phase. The Implementation Phase has fewer specific details than the Planning Phase. See the sample work plan at <http://s.iir.com/RRsamplewkplan> for additional guidance.

Q: Do the 12 questions at the end of the solicitation make up the entire application? Do we need to include any supporting documents in more detail, other than the budget, work plan, applicant certification, indirect cost rate agreement accounting systems/financial capability questionnaire and letters of support/MOUs?

A: You are not required to submit any documents other than those listed in the application.

Q: Question 11 on the application asks applicants to identify each of the strategies from the three mandatory categories and any optional strategies. If we know what we want to

implement from each of the categories, do we just list the topic, or should we go into detail about what we are going to do on the application?

A: You should indicate the activities from each category that you intend to pursue.

Q: Is the judicial officer required to attend all three face-to-face meetings, or can the workgroup of five consist of different members of the executive leadership group for each trip?

A: You should plan to have the same people attend unless there is a compelling reason not to. A judicial officer must be one of the five workgroup members attending the face-to-face meetings.

Q: Our application covers two counties, and the lead organization is located in one of those counties. What should we include on the application for “applicant jurisdiction (local or tribal government name)”?

A: Please include the names of the jurisdictions that the project would serve.

Q: Can we include in the initial budget funds to employ additional staff members besides the project coordinator?

A: You may; however, their duties should be linked to Planning Phase activities and not Implementation Phase activities.

Q: Are we allowed to contract with a planning consultant?

A: You may include this in your budget, but make sure to explain why this is not a function that your project coordinator could fill.

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Q: Does the first six-month budget have to be \$100,000, or is it OK to submit a six-month planning budget that is less than \$100,000 and put the balance into the Implementation Phase budget?

A: While up to \$100,000 will be available to support the Planning Phase, applicants are not required to use funds in the Planning Phase if they are not needed. The balance may be included in the Implementation Phase budget.

Q: Is there a set amount in the form of salary for staff members?

A: There is not a particular limit for salary related to this solicitation; however, you must comply with all federal requirements related to compensation. For questions pertaining to budget and examples of allowable and unallowable costs, see the DOJ Grants Financial Guide at <https://ojp.gov/financialguide/DOJ/index.htm>.

Q: Is it possible to submit the application as a separate PDF file so we can include graphics?

A: You may submit graphics that you reference in the application form in a separate document, along with the required attachments.

Visit the COAP Resource Center at www.coapresources.org.

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