Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): Request for Proposals for Community Defined Practices

The questions below are questions which have been asked to date about the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Community Defined Practices. This document will be updated throughout the duration of the open application period.

Should the answer to your question not be in the RFP or listed here, please email: MHSA@cchealth.org

Remember to include the following in the email:

- Subject Line of Email: RFP CDP Project
- Body of Email: Applicant name (individual or organization), email address, complete phone number including area code. Provide a brief description or question. If referring to specific section in the RFP, please identify section title and page number.

Someone will get back to you. Please review the RFP carefully as your question(s) may be answered there.

FAQs – Updated 10/13/2023

1. What age groups will these funds be used to serve?  
   **Answer:** Ages 0 and up

2. May individuals who are not currently providing services, but will provide services to support mental health and wellness apply?  
   **Answer:** Yes, but applicants need to demonstrate that they have experience working with the populations defined under *Populations to be Served* of the RFP AND demonstrate credible ability to serve between 50 - 75 individuals during the first contract period, if awarded.

3. Do applicants need to have experience in serving the target populations, or could they apply and START serving the target populations?  
   **Answer:** Applicants must demonstrate PRIOR experience serving at least one of the communities defined under *Populations to be Served* of the RFP. Interested applicants which do not have any prior experience in serving any of the communities defined under *Populations to be Served* would not be eligible to apply. Some experience in providing services is necessary to be eligible to apply. An applicant may propose to serve a new population defined under *Populations to be Served* that has not been previously served by the applicant if they have provided services to another population under *Populations to be Served*. 
4. Where is the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Community Defined Practices (CDP) Project on the website?

**Answer:** The RFP is posted on the Contra Costa Behavioral Health Services Home Page under the *Latest Information* section. Look for *Request for Proposals for Community Defined Practices Project*. The RFP, as well as the required *Cover Page* and *Appendix A and Appendix B* are linked under the RFP. It should be noted that as new items are posted the RFP may shift down and it may be necessary to scroll down to find the posting under *Latest Information*.

You will also find the links to register for the Technical Assistance (TA) Workshops. See the image below. The red arrow is provided to assist with identifying where to find the posting. This FAQ document will be posted under the RFP documents.

![Contra Costa Behavioral Health Services Home Page](image)

5. Would an individual, for example a Marriage and Family Therapist or other clinician with a private practice, be excluded?

**Answer:** No, they will not be excluded, but they will need to be representative of the population they intend to serve and would need to demonstrate experience providing some form of community defined practice.

6. Will assistance be offered to better understand if I/my agency is eligible?

**Answer:** Yes, A Bidders Conference was held on September 11, 2023, for questions to be asked. Additionally, CCBHS has partnered with the Indigo Project to hold TA Workshops to better support individuals in understanding application and eligibility criteria and gain tips on creating a strong application. The Bidders Conference and TA workshops are optional and not required to attend by any applicant; however it is highly encouraged that applicants attend. Individuals may register for these sessions on the CCBHS Homepage. The links to register are posted underneath the RFP documents. County representatives may attend some TA
Workshops to provide further clarification. This FAQ document has also been developed, based on questions received to date through the Bidders Conference, Technical Assistance (TA) Workshops, and via email. Questions can continue to be submitted to the MHSA@CCHealth.org email and someone will follow up to answer your question.

7. Is the County only going to prioritize the populations mentioned or will applicants which provide services to other groups such as; Middle Eastern, multi-racial, Brazilian, Guyana, and French Guyana be able to apply?
   **Answer:** Any applicant serving Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) within Contra Costa and which are residents of Contra Costa may apply. However, based on analyzed data from previous needs assessments and identified disparities, the County will prioritize some of funding for the target populations.

8. Is there a specific percentage of funding going to each target population?
   **Answer:** No, there is not a specific percentage of funding allocated for any target population, but there is a priority to fund applicants serving Asian and Pacific Islanders (API), Black/African American/African ancestry, Latina/ Latino/ LatinX/ Latine/ Hispanic, and BIPOC Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning/Queer, Intersex (LGBTQI+) communities.

9. Can agencies which are currently receiving Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) funding apply?
   **Answer:** Yes, assuming they meet all eligibility requirements.

10. Does race/ethnicity or other demographic information need to be estimated for everyone in the organization?
    **Answer:** In the Cover Page, it is necessary to provide estimates to your best knowledge for all agency program participants, staff, and board (if applicable) that at least 50% of the staff and/or existing board represent the target population you intend to serve. If 50% is not met by your staff and/or board, you/your agency should not apply. CCBHS understands that this information cannot be required to be collected/reported by any individual, however it is based on the agency’s discretion to report the best of knowledge. The intent of this question is to support the goal of services being provided by the community for the community. This question should be answered as estimates to the best of knowledge by the applicant.

    In regard to providing a response to questions on page 11 of the RFP, under Qualifications - questions #7, #8, #9; or any other demographic data; it is only necessary to provide estimates of racial/ethnic, lived experience, preferred language, and other demographic characteristics of the person/people who would be providing the direct services or are key staff supporting this project. Not all staff and board members (if applicable) need to be reported for questions #7, #8, and #9 or any other sections in the body of the RFP if they are not connected to this project.

11. Who can apply for this funding?
    **Answer:** This project is intended for:
    • Community based organizations or Non-profit organizations
    • Early learning and care providers (e.g., childcare, and preschool settings not connected to a school district)
    • Family resource centers
    • Faith-based organizations
    • Tribal entities
• Grassroots organizations
• Organized groups or individuals – although a group may apply for funding, any resulting award and contract may only be established with one agency/individual. This must be decided by the applicant group.

Government agencies or hospital systems may NOT apply for funding through this RFP. The intent is for services to be provided by the community for the community being served.

12. Can an applicant be under a fiscal sponsor?
   Answer: Yes, applicants which have a fiscal sponsor are eligible to apply, assuming all eligibility criteria is met. If an applicant which has a fiscal sponsor is identified as an awardee; the awardee would be requested to provide the following fiscal sponsor information:
   • The joint agreement or contract outlining the relationship, terms, and expectations including; legal name of fiscal sponsor, fiscal sponsor’s federal Employment Identification Number (EIN), fiscal sponsor’s executive leader’s name, fiscal sponsor’s phone number and email, fiscal sponsor’s mailing address, the number of years the fiscal sponsor has been providing fiscal sponsorship services, and a brief description of the history of the fiscal sponsor
   • The applicant must also provide the fiscal sponsor’s IRS 990, 990-EZ or 990-PF form

13. Can a fiscal sponsor apply for their own organization as well as be fiscal sponsor for another proposal?
   Answer: Yes, a fiscal sponsor may apply for their own organization, as well as be a fiscal sponsor for another proposal.

14. Please clarify whether we are being asked to request 1 fiscal year of funding or longer? Should the proposal be for 18 months or three years?
   Answer: Please provide a budget which reflects an 18-month period. The intent of the funding is to provide up to $125,000 of funding per fiscal year. In this system, a fiscal year runs from (July 1st of one year through June 30th of the next). This project technically runs over three fiscal years, however since the contract is slated to be established in the latter half of the first fiscal year it has been decided to only establish two contracts. The first contract is anticipated to be for an 18-month period (estimated to be January 2024 through June 30th, 2025) for an amount of up to $250,000. Assuming the awardee meets all contracting requirements in the first contract period, the awardee would be renewed for a second contract in the amount up to $125,000 for a 12-month period (anticipated as July 1, 2025, through 30th, June 2026). Awardees should aim to serve between 50 to 75 individuals during the first contract period and at least 50 in the second contract period.

15. Will funding be available beginning January 2024?
   Answer: Funding would be available once the contract is established, and billing is submitted and paid. The contract may be established in January; however this may be later and is dependent on gathering all necessary contracting documents and going through the contracting process. Payment is for incurred expenses and is reimbursed.

16. Would the project need to serve 50 people from January to June 2024, and then another 50 people from July to June 2025?
   Answer: Understanding that the contract is starting in the latter half of the first fiscal year, Contra Costa Behavioral Health Services may revise the number of people to be served depending on when the contract is
established. Applicants should aim to serve between 50 to 75 people during the first 18-month contract and at least 50 people during the second contract.

17. In the RFP there is a question asking if the applicant has received County funding. If an applicant is currently receiving Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) or other County funding through another program, could that organization submit a proposal for this funding?  
   **Answer:** Yes, assuming they meet all eligibility criteria. While applicants that don’t currently receive funding are highly encouraged to apply, other applicants which meet eligibility criteria and are receiving MHSA or other County funding may also apply.

18. Who will the RFP Review Panel be composed of?  
   **Answer:** The RFP Review Panel will be composed of both community members and Contra Costa County staff. Some community members hold appointed seats on the Contra Costa Mental Health Commission or on the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Advisory Council. Other RFP Review Panel members are individuals which are passionate about supporting this project and may be donating their time. The members of the RFP Review Panel are not connected to any applicant.

19. If an individual is applying, would a board need to be formed to meet the requirements?  
   **Answer:** No, if an individual is applying, they do not need to have a board, but still need to demonstrate meeting the applicable *Funding Parameters* of the RFP as an individual or organized group.

20. Are churches or other faith-based agencies allowed to apply?  
   **Answer:** Yes, assuming the faith-based agency meets eligibility criteria. It should be noted that funds may not be used for the purposes of religious worship, however the faith-based agency may provide a Community Defined Practice (CDP).

21. How is the Innovation framework, which in the past has required “new” ideas, or the application of proven ideas to a new population/context, overlays with the nature of a Community Defined Evidence Practice (CDEP) - something that has been in practice for a while? If an organization has been implementing a CDEP for a period and collecting data to prove its efficacy to impact mental health outcomes, does it fit the Innovation requirements? Are established, culturally sensitive mental health interventions eligible for funding, or are you looking for new ideas and approaches?  
   **Answer:** Although CDEPs have been established and practiced throughout many cultures for generations, Innovation in this context refers to regulations around the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Innovation component. This refers to new practices within the public mental health system of a county. In this county, Contra Costa Behavioral Health Services (CCBHS) and its contracted providers are part of the public mental health system. It is considered innovative because the implementation of CDPs is new to this system. An applicant could have a longstanding history of providing CDEPs, however under this Innovation Project the CDPs provided by the applicant may be considered new within the CCBHS public mental health system.

22. I have helped organizations apply for Innovation funding in other counties and am wondering if Contra Costa will follow the same procedures? In other instances, community partners apply to the County to meet the local Innovation priorities. The County then selects the project(s) they are interested in funding, and then these projects have had to go up for a 30-day review for approval. If they make it through approval, they must
then be vetted by the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) to ensure they meet Innovation criteria. MHSOAC staff may ask for further clarification, rewrites, etc., or may reject the project altogether. If MHSOAC approves the proposed project, then the County contract is drawn up. Is this how the process will flow for this opportunity?

**Answer:** No, each county has a different process in how Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Innovation Projects are approached. Contra Costa Behavioral Health Services (CCBHS) developed this Innovation project based on input and needs identified through the Community Program Planning Process. CCBHS submitted a proposal outlining its intent to implement Community Defined Practices (CDPs) with a focus on underserved and inappropriately served groups identified in Contra Costa County to the MHSOAC and the project was approved. CCBHS will be moving forward with establishing contracts with identified awardees which will provide CDPs.

23. Are there specific learning questions identified for this Innovation Project?

**Answer:** Yes, the learning questions which have been identified are listed under the Research Questions and Project Goals in the RFP on page 7. Selected awardees shall work with CCBHS and the Indigo Project, as indicated in the RFP to ensure data is collected and reported throughout the duration of this project. There will be a template provided to awardees of what types of information shall need to be collected and support will be provided by CCBHS and the Indigo Project to ensure annual reporting requirements are met.

24. Is there a maximum amount of funding an applicant can apply for?

**Answer:** No, a program may apply to serve multiple target populations and may submit multiple applications. Contra Costa Behavioral Health Services will consider all qualified applications. Total number of awards will vary depending on multiple factors, such as number of applications received, the populations to be served, the region services will be provided, the type of CDPs provided, etc. and will be scored competitively against all qualified applicants.

25. In the question referring to “At least half of your existing board and staff (including leadership) must represent the target population you propose to serve”. If we are considering a proposal to serve LGBTQIA+ groups and do not ask about the sexual and/or gender identity of people in our organization; how would this be evaluated?

**Answer:** Contra Costa Behavioral Health Services (CCBHS) understands racial/ethnic, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc. cannot be mandated to be reported for the staff, board (if applicable), or program participants of any applicant. However, CCBHS is asking for applicants to provide estimates to the best of their knowledge and asking that at least 50% of the staff and/or existing board (if applicable) represent the target population which is intended to be served. If through your estimates, 50% is not met, you/your agency should not apply. The intent of this question is to support the goal of services being provided by the community for the community. This question should be answered as estimates to the best of the applicant’s knowledge.

26. Once funds are issued, is there a reporting requirement or progress report that will need to be provided by an awardee? Will this be an ongoing relationship?

**Answer:** Yes, any awardee which enters into contract MUST provide reporting, which is referred to as an Annual Report. The Annual Report is usually due within two months of the end of the contract. A template shall be provided to all contractors at the beginning of the contract period so they are aware of what data will need to be collected from program participants. The Indigo Project will also work with Contra Costa Behavioral
Health Services (CCBHS) and contractors to support data reporting requirements specific to the contractor and the Community Defined Practices Project.

27. What are specific limits on the insurance requirements?
   Answer: The insurance limits and requirements are decided and established based on the type of services a contractor would be providing and the contract amount and would not be requested unless you are identified as an awardee. The insurance requirements must be met and will be requested during the contract process. If you have questions about the requested insurance, please connect with your contract monitor.

28. Is there someone within the County that would be able to support awardees/contractors with questions they may have in relation to insurance or other requirements?
   Answer: Yes, all contractors are assigned a contract monitor and that is the primary contact, should a contractor have specific questions. You would be provided the contact information for your contract monitor; should you be selected as an awardee.

29. Would a multi-racial, Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) - majority organization (board and staff) with no single community comprising a majority be eligible to apply for this funding for an African American specific CDP or any other group?
   Answer: Yes, the request is to provide estimates of staff, board (if applicable), and program participants. An agency comprised of at least 50% BIPOC would be eligible to apply, even if there is no single community comprising of majority and the applicant intends to apply to serve one specific population.

30. If monthly billing is being submitted on a Demand 15 (D-15) Form, and a Cost Report is due at the end of the contract period; shouldn’t those match up?
   Answer: Yes, ideally if accurate D-15 Forms are being submitted for monthly billing, the aggregate or total amounts in each month could be used to create the Cost Report. The D-15 Form and Cost Report templates would be provided to selected awardees.

31. What is the payment schedule, if awarded?
   Answer: Payment is provided for cost incurred for the month. Billing may be submitted as soon as billing for the current month’s service is in order and/or the current month ends. Billing should be submitted no later than the end of the following month. The billing should reflect all cost incurred for one month. For example, all expenses are accounted for January; billing should be submitted for the month of January no later than February 28th. Payment is processed and provided via check usually within 1-2 months following the submission of billing.

32. Will awardees be required to apply for the second contract period?
   Answer: No, it is the intent of Contra Costa Behavioral Health Services (CCBHS) to renew the contracts with the awardees identified in 2023 in the initial application period for the second contract period. However, should significant issues be discovered, CCBHS reserves the right to cancel the agreement with contractor and consider other applicants. In most cases, if CCBHS identified minor issues which may be remedied, there would be a discussion with the contractor and an opportunity would be provided to remedy the situation.
33. Can an applicant doing stigma reduction which receives other types of mental health funding apply to support its stigma reduction through this funding?

**Answer:** Yes, an applicant would be eligible to apply, however it would need to demonstrate how it is providing a Community Defined Practice (CDP).

34. Can an applicant apply that is located outside of Contra Costa County?

**Answer:** Yes, an applicant which has an office or has its headquarters located outside of Contra Costa County may apply, however the applicant must demonstrate how it will provide services to Contra Costa County residents. Services need to be accessible in Contra Costa County.

35. When it comes to reporting demographic data, will we be using the federally defined racial/ethnic groups, or will there be an opportunity to use more community defined groups for reporting purposes? For example, would Latino/Hispanics be forced to choose White/Caucasian or Indigenous, such as some of the federal reporting.

**Answer:** The demographic data that is collected through the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funding is a bit more flexible in terms of race/ethnicity reporting. It would provide more options to indicate ethnicity, such as Latino/Hispanic and allows for individuals to provide further information such as identifying as Central American, Mexican, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, or Other. This information is surveyed anonymously, and all questions have a Decline to State option.

36. Should we include the questions of the RFP in the proposal response, or just our response?

**Answer:** Applicants should not include the questions detailed in the RFP, but instead craft their responses to answer the questions asked and label the proposal as described in the RFP section Application Overview (i.e. Population to be Served, Qualifications, and Approach to Community Defined Practice).

37. If the County doesn’t receive the number of responses anticipated, would the RFP be re-released?

**Answer:** Not necessarily. The funding is time limited funding. Contra Costa Behavioral Health Services (CCBHS) would move forward with scoring applications received and identifying awardees; as intended during this application period. CCBHS would need to evaluate viable methods to move forward and any changes would need to be approved by the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) as this funding is approved by this State commission and any changes would need to be requested and approved by the MHSOAC. CCBHS would follow up with the public of any updates.

38. We are an agency based outside of the County but do projects throughout California and across the country. It is unclear if applicants need to be based in Contra Costa County or just able to provide services there. Our agency intends to provide virtual CDPs. Are we eligible to apply?

**Answer:** The applicant is eligible to apply, however the applicant must demonstrate how they intend to provide services to Contra Costa County residents.

39. In the RFP, non-profits are listed as on type of organization that can apply for funding, as well as community-based organizations. We are a community-based organization with staff in Contra Costa County. We are a for-profit C corporation. Are we eligible to apply for funding?

**Answer:** A for-profit C corporation is eligible to apply for this funding.
40. If I am an individual and I haven’t registered as a LLC or sole proprietor, do I have to register with the California Secretary of State at the link here: http://bizfileonline.sos.ca.gov?

Answer: Individuals/Sole Proprietors do not need to register with the California Secretary of State. However, any applicant which is an agency has to be registered with the California Secretary of State, if selected as an awardee prior to any contract being established.

41. If I am a community-based organization with staff reflective of the community being served, can I have a spot that is vacant in our budget to hire an additional Community Health Worker?

Answer: If your agency currently meets all criteria, including staffing reflective of the community served and experience providing community defined practices, you are able to use these funds to hire an additional position.

42. What should be kept in mind about the invoicing process to the County when listing staff in the budget? How will applicants be required to account for staff time when submitting an invoice for reimbursement?

Answer: If you are selected as an awardee, you would need to keep track of employee hours worked and/or percentage of time billed under this project. For example, if 100% of staff time is allocated to work under this project, then 100% or Full Time Employment (FTE) would be reflected in the billing. If only 25% of a staff member’s time is spent on this project, then only 25% of the FTE should be listed.

43. Would the County contract be 100% reimbursable or is it a cost-reimbursement? Are there any upfront funds available, if awarded? This can make a huge difference if small organizations have to pay everything up front to start the program.

Answer: Contracts are cost-reimbursed and generally do not include up-front payments. If awarded, billing would be submitted for expenses incurred for the month.

44. Is food an eligible expenditure? In the RFP on page 8 there is no mention of food.

Answer: Yes, food may be an eligible expenditure; as long as there is description and demonstration as to how its connected to the Community Defined Practice (CDP). The items listed on page 8 of the RFP are examples of what may be included, but is the list is not an exhaustive list. There may be other expenses, as long as the expenses are not listed under section 3.2 of page 8 which describes the types of expenses that are not eligible to be funded. Please see the image below as reference.

Expenses below are not eligible expenditures through this RFP:
- Equipment or capital improvement, such as modifications to a physical space or capital facility
- Fundraising expenses
- Tax/debt payments
- Contingency funds
- Political campaigns or lobbying activities

45. On the Service Plan and Timeline do we have to document activities for every month of the 18-months, or do we provide the specifics for the first 6 months and then state how these components repeat over the 18-months?

Answer: The Service Plan and Timeline should be used to describe key milestones in the services provided that would take place over the 18-month contract period. It is not necessary to list something for every month. It should reflect key milestones for the programming during the 18-month period. This may vary based on how programming is structured.