

Connector Entity FY27 Q&A #2 -BPM-054975

Question 2: Do we need two proposals for both regions?

Answer: Yes. If an organization intends to apply to serve more than one region, a separate proposal is required for each region. Each proposal should be fully responsive to the needs, scope, and expectations of the specific region identified in the RFA.

Question #3: Do we need two budgets?

Answers: Yes. Each regional proposal must include its own standalone budget that clearly reflects the costs associated with serving that specific region. Budgets should align with the proposed staffing model, outreach plan, and regional scope of work.

Question:#4 Do you have a budget template in Excel, or should we recreate the budget template pages? 30 in Excel

Answer: At this time, applicants should recreate the budget template pages in Excel, ensuring all required line items and categories from the RFA are included. The Excel format is acceptable as long as it mirrors the structure and content of the budget pages provided in the application.

Question:#5 Are stipends allowed for student interns who participate in outreach activities to extend the reach (they are valued as CHWs)?

Answer: No. Stipends for student interns are not allowable costs under this grant. Outreach activities must be conducted by staff or personnel whose compensation is otherwise permitted and fully compliant with the RFA's allowable cost guidelines.

Question:#6 In the "Key Information Summary Sheet," **Grant duration:** One-year base period with one 1-year option renewal period. Does that mean applicants should anticipate that option and include a budget, or will the initial budget operationalize the renewal period?

Answer: No. Applicants should submit a budget for the initial one-year base period only. The option renewal period, if exercised, will be operationalized at a later time and does not require a separate or anticipatory budget submission with the initial application.

Question:#7 How often does this grant come out?

Answer: This RFA is typically released on an annual basis, with a base year and one (1) year option, subject to funding availability, program needs, and state approval processes. Issuance in future years is likely not guaranteed.

Question:#8 Can we cross-utilize the same staff across regions, or would you recommend having staff per region?

Answer: Staff may be cross-utilized across regions as long as roles, level of effort, and cost allocations are clearly defined and reasonable. However, applicants should ensure there is adequate regional coverage and accountability. Dedicated regional staff may strengthen proposals where regional needs or workload warrant

Question:#9 I am sorry, I forgot to ask if there is a page limit for the entire proposal.

Answer: NO

Question:#10 Clarification regarding “New Enrollment” definition under Section B: Enrollment Targets (Page 18): The enrollment target specified is for “New QHP Enrollments” for FY27. However, the narrative language immediately below the table defines “new enrollment” as enrollment in any affordability program, which includes Medicaid, MCHP, in addition to QHPs. Can MHBE please confirm whether the FY27 enrollment targets are intended to count only new Qualified Health Plan (QHP) enrollments, or whether new Medicaid enrollments are also included in meeting the stated targets?

Answer: For FY27, the enrollment targets outlined under Section B apply only to new Qualified Health Plan (QHP) enrollments. While the narrative language references “enrollment in any affordability program” more broadly, the stated FY27 targets are specific to QHPs and should not include renewal Medicaid or MCHP enrollments when calculating performance toward the enrollment targets. New Medicaid and MCHP enrollments may continue to be reported for informational or operational purposes but will not count toward meeting the FY27 QHP enrollment targets.

Question:#11 The RFA references salary caps for MHBE-funded positions (Page 12) and also states (Page 33) that fringe benefits are allowable in proportion to the salary charged to the grant. Can MHBE clarify whether the established salary caps apply to base salary only, or total compensation, including fringe benefits?

Answer: The established salary caps referenced in the RFA apply to base salary only for MHBE-funded positions. Fringe benefits are allowable costs and may be charged to the grant in proportion to the salary amount charged, in accordance with standard cost allocation practices. Fringe benefits are not included when determining compliance with the MHBE salary cap.

Question:# 12 Would you recommend that VAS apply independently as a Prime Entity, or is partnership with Montgomery County encouraged or preferred under this solicitation?

Answer: Prime Entity vs. partnership with Montgomery County

The RFA does not require or prefer partnership with a local jurisdiction. Eligible organizations may apply independently as a Prime Entity or propose partnerships if they determine that doing so will strengthen their application and capacity to meet the requirements outlined in the solicitation. Applicants should select the approach that best aligns with their organizational structure, experience, and ability to meet performance expectations.

Question:#13 The RFA identifies Gaithersburg (ZIP 20877) as a priority area. VAS recently acquired a new 11,000 sq. ft. facility in Burtonsville and serves across the whole county. However, if **strictly required**, VAS could establish a branch presence in Gaithersburg.

Answer: Facility location and priority ZIP code (20877)

The identification of Gaithersburg (ZIP Code 20877) reflects a priority service area due to enrollment need. Applicants are not required to be physically headquartered within the priority ZIP code; however, proposals should clearly demonstrate the applicant's ability to provide meaningful, consistent, and accessible enrollment assistance to consumers residing in that area. This may include, but is not limited to, outreach activities, satellite locations, mobile services, or established community partnerships.

Question:#14 The RFA references a target of **13,347** new enrollments for Montgomery County. Is this target intended countywide or specific to the priority ZIP code?

Answer: Montgomery County enrollment target (13,347)

The enrollment target of 13,347 new enrollments is intended to reflect the countywide goal for Montgomery County. While priority ZIP codes are identified to guide targeted outreach efforts, the enrollment target is not limited solely to those ZIP codes.

Question:#15 If VAS applies as both the Prime Entity and Connector Entity, is a separate Letter of Intent required?

Answer: Letter of Intent requirements for Prime and Connector Entity applications

If an organization intends to apply as both a Prime Entity and a Connector Entity, a separate Letter of Intent is required for each application, consistent with the RFA submission requirements.

Question:#16 Are Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) eligible to apply for the RFA?

Answer: Yes. Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) are eligible to apply for the RFA, provided they meet all eligibility requirements outlined in the RFA and are able to fulfill the scope of work, program expectations, and reporting requirements associated with serving as a Connector Entity.

Question:#17 Since we are applying to cover two jurisdictions, do we need to create two budgets, or can we use one since our counselors live in both counties?

Answer: Montgomery and Prince George's County or two different regions. Because you are applying for two jurisdictions/regions, separate budgets are required for each jurisdiction, even if staff reside or work across both counties. This allows for accurate tracking of funding, staff, and expenditures by jurisdiction in accordance with RFA and reporting requirements.

Staff time and shared costs may be allocated across jurisdictions as appropriate, but they should be clearly documented and reflected within each jurisdiction-specific budget.