



Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development



**Workforce Education and Training (WET)
Peer Personnel Training and Placement
Q and A's from Mandatory Bidders' Conference
RFA #14-5543 March 13, 2015**

The following is a summary of the questions asked at the Mandatory Bidders' Conference held on March 13, 2015 and their respective answers.

Question 1: *Once this call is over, will we be able to send in questions?*

Answer: No, this is the last opportunity for potential applicants to ask questions. We did have two questions prior to the March 5 written question submission deadline that are posted on our web site and on BidSync.

Question 2: *Is any placement in the Mental Health field good enough?*

Answer: Placement and Peer Personnel are defined on page 29, items 10 and 11. "Peer Personnel" means individuals with experience as a mental/behavioral health services consumer, family member, and/or parent/caregiver placed in designated peer positions within the Public Mental Health System. "Placement" means assignment in a Peer Personnel position as an employee or volunteer that can be paid or unpaid in the Public Mental Health System.

Question 3: *Is there a limit or time frame for placement of someone to consider being successfully placed?*

Answer: The only time limit is the length of the contract. As it is a performance based contract, contractors do not get paid until the individual is placed in the Public Mental Health System for this particular deliverable. There is also a "support" deliverable which requires the grantee to provide individuals support during the 6 months after placement. As funding for support will not be provided until participants have received the support after 6 months of their placement, applicants should also consider this when developing their placement timeframe.

Question 4: *If after initial placement, an individual is placed with another agency or replaced; is that still the responsibility of the contractor?*

Answer: Yes, the contractor would need to identify any updates in the progress report. There is a "placement" deliverable followed by a "support" deliverable. If the individual is placed and stays in a position for 6 months or more regardless if it is a different position from the initial placement, as long as they are in a peer position in the Public Mental Health System that would be appropriate for the "support" Deliverable.



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Question 5: *Does the definition of the Public Mental Health System include contractors within the PMHS that are private or for profit?*

Answer: Yes, the definition is on page 29, item 12. "Public Mental Health System (PMHS)" means publicly-funded mental health programs/services and entities that are administered, in whole or in part, by the State Departments or county. It does not include programs and/or services administered, in whole or in part by federal, state, county or private correctional entities.

Question 6: *For training can we include emerging and community practices or just evidence-based?*

Answer: On page 5 OSHPD identifies that all activities, including training, have to be consistent with MHS values and priorities including wellness, recovery and resiliency principles. It also states that grantees shall "ensure focus on innovative, evidence-based and community-identified strategies to achieve the goal of training and placing Peer Personnel in the PMHS. Therefore you can propose training other than evidenced-based.

Question 7: *Does OSHPD provide a list of evidence base practices?*

Answer: No, OSHPD does not outline a list of evidence based practices.

Question 8: *If someone is not in a Peer designated role, but they provide Peer services would they be counted?*

Answer: Participants must be placed in a position, regardless of the position title, that is designated to provide Peer Personnel type services. In order to be counted, the peer should not be subject to mainly administrative duties, as providing Peer Personnel type services should be a critical component to their job duties whether paid or not.

Question 9: *On the evaluation tool on page 13 under references, do you evaluate an applicant's ability to work in partnership with a set of counties and CBOs? Do you place a priority on this to be a collaborative process? And will that put us at a disadvantage, because we have an agency that can handle all 6 components of this RFA?*

Answer: It will depend on who the applicant is and how they support the training and placement of participants. We want collaboration between the training entity and the county or CBO whichever in your application you are proposing will be the eventual employers of the Peer Personnel. Page 5, bullet point 2 states that grantees must "Ensure there is continued engagement and coordination with other County, CBO (Community Based Organizations), and education institutions/entities partners included in the application". This can be considered in the evaluation of proposals.



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Question 10: *The \$500,000 total funding is that per year or total for all the years?*

Answer: The \$500,000 is for all years. The total bid for the contract will not be more than \$500,000. We are not breaking the funding out by year in this contract. Grantee will have two years to complete the deliverables and must follow the budget limitations as identified in the Cost Detail Format and Requirements.

Question 11: *Is there any flexibility on the training topics?*

Answer: The RFA outlines the main training elements that are included in the training section on page 4. The fifth bullet identifies "Other related peer training and support functions necessary to facilitate the deployment of Peer Personnel as an effective and necessary service to clients and family members, and as triage and targeted case management personnel". So there is flexibility on the different type of trainings, but there should be a focus on crisis management, suicide prevention, recovery planning and targeted case management assistance as identified in the training component description.

Question 12: *What is the total number of participants that OSHPD wants contractors to serve each year?*

Answer: OSHPD has not identified a total number. It is up to the applicants to determine how much their program can accomplish with the funding requested. There is a section on the evaluation tool on page 13, titled "Budget Rates". OSHPD will score the cost effectiveness to successfully implement and administer the Peer Personnel program in relation to how many individuals are proposed to be trained, placed and supported and activities that are proposed to engage them.

Question 13: *Is there a minimum length for the training program?*

Answer: No, there is not a minimum length for the training program. However we do ask applicants to identify the length of training in the application and it is part of the evaluation process and therefore will be considered. The peer personnel training program shall be no longer than one academic year or nine consecutive months in length.

Question 14: *As part of the placement component, is there any problem with using a subsidy employment process?*

Answer: No, as long as they go through the training and then are placed either in paid or volunteer Peer Personnel positions within the Public Mental Health System.

Question 15: *What is the geographic range needed or required in the application?*

Answer: There is no set range needed or required. You can propose one county or multiple counties. Page 13, item c of the evaluation process states "the final awards will



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be to the highest scored applications. OSHPD intends for this RFA to support multiple Counties in California by providing a distribution of awards throughout the State. Applications seeking to support underserved geographic regions, which are not addressed by other similarly scored applications, may receive preference.” As such, geographical factors will be considered to ensure that the RFA promotes a distribution of awards across California if possible.

Question 16: *What happens if a student drops out of the program?*

Answer: It would be up to the applicant to decide to either add another student or not. As contractors will get paid for students’ completion of the training program, payment will not be received for a student that drops out unless the contractors adds another student. The contractor will be tied to the number of individuals they indicated will be trained, supported, and placed in the application.

Question 17: *Who determines what completion of the training program is?*

Answer: Applicants will need to identify mechanism to determine successful completion of the training program. Page 7, item h of the RFA states “the applicant shall identify the mechanism that will be used to determine successful completion of courses and entire curricula”.

Question 18: *With respect to the 9 months maximum training period. Our semesters run 17.5 weeks and there is a winter break, which makes the training period 8.75 months. Would that be alright?*

Answer: Yes that would be appropriate, as long as it is identified and explained that the program is no longer than one academic year or nine consecutive months in length.

Question 19: *On page 20 the RFA identifies the need to partner with Counties and CBOs. Is there is a minimum or maximum number for partnering with Counties and/or CBOs? Is there different weight for have 1 or 10?*

Answer: No, there is no minimum or maximum number required. That being said, OSHPD is looking at geographic distribution of awards to support Counties and CBOs across the state so it can be considered when evaluating proposals.

Question 20: *Can there be changes to the training curricula, if awarded, after the start of the contract?*

Answer: There is some flexibility to make changes, but you should meet the training curricula you outlined in your application. If after further communication with the employer it is determined that they want some training in other components there is flexibility to make changes. In the progress report we have a section where we allow updates to the training plan. That being said, it is up to OSHPD to approve the change.



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Question 21: *Can you add Peer positions, if awarded, after the start of the contract?*

Answer: Yes, but OSHPD will hold grantees to the number outlined that will be trained and placed in the application. If applicants indicated 20 and then place 25, you still only get paid for the 20 and not 25. The payment is made on a prorated basis per the number you outline in the application.

Question 22: *Looking at the Public Mental Health System, can it be a substance abuse facility that has county Behavioral/Mental Health funding?*

Answer: Yes, as long as it is using County behavioral/mental health funds, it doesn't matter if it's County or CBO.

Question 23: *In terms of financial assistance provided on page 47, table C, is that for financial assistance directly to the person for something like child care, unpaid work time, etc.?*

Answer: Page 9 section IV of the RFA defines financial assistance. It states "Financial Assistance Costs" is defined as financial assistance for program participants to attend training which shall only be provided for costs, other than tuition or admission fees, incurred by participants to enable their participation in the activities sponsored by the proposing organization and may include, but not be limited to: transportation costs, uncompensated time-off and child care. Financial Assistance costs shall be no more than 10 percent of total proposed budget. This not a mandatory part of the budget, you can have it in your budget or not, but if you don't it will always be zero because it is not budgeted.