

# Frequently Asked Questions: Reducing Overdose through Community Approaches Mentorship Program

**\*Application deadline has been extended to Monday, January 9, 2023, at 11:59PM ET.**

## Contractual Agreement

### **Q: What type of contract will this be?**

A: This is a firm-fixed price, deliverables-based contract in which payment is disbursed based NACCHO's receipt of the satisfactory deliverables, not cost reimbursement for expenses incurred. It will be a consultant contract rather than a subaward. Please refer to Appendix B of the RFP for the anticipated schedule of deliverables. The scope of work will be finalized after notice of award as part of the contracting process.

### **Q: Does a signed contract need to be submitted with the application or after selection as a mentee/mentor?**

A: A signed contract will be required after selection; submission of a signed contract is not required with the application. As part of the application process, NACCHO recommends that interested applicants review the standard contract and provide a copy to the individual with signing authority for the LHD, including any relevant financial or legal offices. NACCHO encourages review of the contract in advance to facilitate the contract execution process after award.

After notice of award and final review and approval of all the materials required for the contract package, NACCHO will draft a consultant contract using the standard language and specific details of this award. NACCHO will send out this contract to the point of contact listed on the vendor form for signature. At that time, selected applicants will be expected to sign and return the contract within 30 days of receipt.

### **Q: What is the period of performance of this project?**

A: NACCHO anticipates sending selected mentors and mentees notice of award the week of January 13<sup>th</sup> 2023. The initial period of performance will be from contract execution (approximately) February 2023 through July 31, 2023. Contingent on CDC approving a no-cost extension, the project will continue to run through January 31, 2024, for a total of a 12-month project period.

## Eligibility

**Q: Can agencies (i.e., fire department, police department, etc.) or community-based organizations besides local health departments apply to be a mentor or mentee?**

A: No, only local health departments are eligible to apply as mentoring program participants at this time. However, while the mentor or mentee contract must be with the local health department/agency, they may involve other partners as subcontractors to help support the work.

**Q: Can we apply for two communities as one project in the same application? We have a large jurisdiction.**

A: Yes, health departments that cover multi-county or regional jurisdictions are eligible to apply.

**Q: Can one or more health departments partner together to complete one application as a mentee, so the can be mentored together? For example, if they are working on a steering committee under one Community Health Needs Assessment for their region or if they are part of a local public health coalitions of small local health departments.**

A: If one or more health departments are working closely together towards shared goals, they may apply to serve as a single mentee team. However, NACCHO would only contract with one agency, which would in turn need to subcontract with the other organization(s). For the purposes of the application and contracting, they would need to designate a primary local health department and partnering local health department(s). In the statement of need, they can describe the needs and overdose burden of the region as a whole, encompassing all participating agencies' jurisdictions. Then, in the staffing plan, the applicant should be very clear about who will serve on the mentee team and be involved in the mentorship activities from the different agencies, as well as their roles/responsibilities. It is important to note that, even if applying as more than one LHD coordinating together (as a coalition or under a regional steering committee), the selected mentor will only be funded to support one "mentee," so while there can be a blended mentee team in terms of participants there could only be one unified needs assessment, work plan, set of mentor/mentee meetings, etc. The mentor cannot be expected to provide additional, customized support to each of the participating local health departments.

**Q: Can we apply to this grant if already applying to another NACCHO grant?**

A: Yes, applicants currently applying to or awarded another one of NACCHO's funding opportunities are not excluded from applying to this one. However, should the LHD be awarded both, acceptance of the award would represent an affirmation they have the capacity to support this project in addition to the other work they are currently undertaking. Further, it is critically important that specific work plan activities or budgetary line items are not duplicated across the two projects.

## Funding & Budget

**Q: What is the purpose of the budget justification?**

A: This is a firm fixed-price agreement, meaning the awardee will be paid a firm price for the agreed-upon work. The itemized budget and budget narrative submitted with the application are meant to demonstrate that the applicant has considered the resources needed to accomplish the work in the schedule of deliverables and to explain or justify the total funds requested.

**Q: Can you provide examples as to what types of expenses should be included in the mentor or mentee budgets?**

A: The funding should be used to cover the direct and indirect costs that are necessary to complete the program activities and associated deliverables. For mentees, this may include costs necessary to implement the work plan developed in conjunction with their mentor to achieve the goals stated in their application. For mentors, this may also include expenses to strengthen their capacity as a mentor with additional experience and knowledge of overdose, substance use disorder, and/or ACEs prevention strategies. Items that may be requested for funds include but are not limited to:

- *Staff salary and fringe benefits* to cover time spent on project and associated deliverables, including implementation of the work plan and technical assistance plan during the project period
- *Supplies* to support hosting or participating in the site visit, other field supplies to support activities in select key strategy areas
- *Travel* to relevant conferences to strengthen mentor's or mentee's capacity, travel expenses for mentors to attend site visit at mentee agency
- *Contractual costs* such as training or education to strengthen the mentor's or mentee's capacity, consultants/subcontractors to support implementation of the work plan or technical assistance plan during the project period
- *Other costs* such as virtual meeting platforms, postage, printing fees, marketing/promotional materials, etc.

Please refer to Appendix A in the RFP for a list of unallowable costs.

**Q: How will payment be determined if it is not cost-reimbursement?**

A: Upon completion of each deliverable, awardees will be reimbursed for the amount specified in the applicable deliverables schedule. The price associated with these deliverables is fixed after contract execution, and therefore not subject to adjustment.

**Q: Can I revise my budget after contract execution?**

A: While the total funds awarded cannot change, mentor/mentee LHDs may revise their budget during the project period if necessary. We understand that funds may need to be reallocated to support project activities, particularly for mentees to support the implementation of their work plan developed with their mentor. Any revisions may not include unallowable costs and may be subject to further approval by NACCHO. However, as a reminder, payment will be disbursed based on receipt of satisfactory deliverables not directly for expenses incurred.

**Q: Why are mentees eligible to receive more funding than mentors?**

A: Selected recipients will receive awards based on the total funds requested in the budget justification—up to \$150,000 for mentees and up to \$70,000 for mentors (or up to \$125,000 for mentors supporting two mentees). The total award amounts reflect that mentees and mentors will have different schedules of deliverables, which necessitate different pricing. In particular, mentees need additional funds to implement their work plan in order to provide work plan updates and a final report.

**Q: Why aren't mentors supporting two mentees eligible to receive double the funding than those supporting one?**

A: While those mentors supporting one mentee may apply for up to \$70,000, mentors supporting two mentees may apply for up to \$125,000. While some activities require double the level of effort to support an additional mentee (e.g., two 1:1 monthly meetings, needs assessments, work plans, TA plans, site visits, etc.), other activities (e.g., attendance at the kick-off meeting or leadership coaching sessions) will be the same regardless of the number of mentees supported. Please refer to Appendix B in the RFP to see the differences in the payment schedule for the anticipated schedule of deliverables.

**Q: Where should contractual staff members, as opposed to regular employees, be included in the budget narrative?**

A: Applicants may choose to include contractual staff members in their budgets. All contractual costs, including contracted staff, should be included in the "Contractual" section of the budget not "Personnel."

**Q: Are personnel and operating expenses included in the award or separately funded?**

A: All expected costs, including personnel and operating expenses, required to complete the program and produce the associated deliverables should be included in the budget. The budget narrative may include aggregate costs. Selected recipients will only be awarded funding based on the budgeted amount. As this is a firm-fixed price contract, there is no allowance for adjustment after execution and no additional fee associated with this award.

**Q: Is there a limit to the number of staff personnel or the amount budgeted to salary and fringe benefits?**

A: There are no limits to the number or cost of staff personnel in the proposed budget. The budgeted amounts should reflect the applicant's anticipated resources needed to complete the program's deliverables.

**Q: Are indirect and fringe rates allowable?**

A: Yes, indirect and fringe benefit rates are allowable expenses under this award. Should they be selected, applicants including fringe/indirect rates will be asked to submit a copy of their federally-approved rate agreement during the contract process.

**Q: Can funds be used for equipment? The budget template includes a section for "supplies."**

A: Funds cannot be used for the purchase or upkeep of equipment, which is considered an item with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more.

**Q: The program expectations require participation in at least one site visit as well as the mentorship symposium. Are those travel expenses reimbursed by NACCHO separately or should they be included in the budget?**

A: The site visit should be hosted by the mentee, with the lead mentor (and mentor team, if applicable) traveling to the mentee agency. The estimated costs for this travel should be included in the mentor budget. If mentees, with agreement from their mentors, would like to plan an additional reverse site visit in which they travel to the mentor agency, that is up to their discretion and those travel costs may be included in their budget. Travel costs, in accordance with NACCHO's travel policy, for at least two participants from each participating LHD to attend the mentorship symposium in the spring 2023 will be reimbursed separately from the awarded amount and do not need to be included in the budget. Program participants that choose to send additional attendees to the mentorship symposium may include additional travel in their proposed budgets.

**Q: Can we hire additional personnel to support these project activities?**

A: While there are no restrictions on hiring additional personnel to support project activities, we would strongly consider that applicants take into consideration their current staff capacity when applying given the challenges and often long timelines associated with hiring. If you plan to hire additional personnel, we'd recommend you explain within the staffing plan how you will accomplish this within a reasonable timeframe, as well as their anticipated roles and responsibilities on the project.

## Application Requirements

**Q: In the online application, you are instructed to select checkboxes for the types of activities you have experience/interest in under each key strategy area you choose. What if there are other activities not included in this list?**

A: The list of activities within each key strategy area are meant to serve as examples and may not be all-encompassing. Primarily, these selections are meant to facilitate the matching process. As a mentor, if there are other activities in which you have experience and would like to highlight, please be sure to do so in your "Our Work" section of the application narrative. As a mentee, if there are other activities in which you have interest in planning or implementing programs/services, please be sure to note these in the "Goals & Interest" section of the application narrative.

**Q: How will the applications be scored?**

A: Please refer to the RFP for specific criteria that should be included within each section of the application narrative. Mentee applications will be scored based on Statement of Need (40%), Our Work (20%), Goals & Interest (20%), & Staffing Plan (20%). Mentor applications will be scored based on Our Work (50%) and Capacity to Mentor (50%). The budget justification will not be included in the scoring criteria, but it is required for complete application submissions. NACCHO will not review incomplete applications.

**Q: How specific should the mentee's proposal be in the application given they will be developing a work plan in conjunction with their mentor during the project?**

A: We understand that it is challenging to balance the level of specificity in the application, given some of this may change or evolve after you begin work with your mentor. However, the intent of the "Goals & Interest" section is to demonstrate that you've thought about *what* you'd like to do (competencies,

capacities, programs, services) with this program and its anticipated *impact* on substance use and overdose prevention in your community. Figuring out *how* you achieve these goals, will be a critical component of your work with your mentor. Not only will clarity within this section help us better match your goals/interests with a mentor with appropriate expertise to support them, but given the short project period it is also important to demonstrate that you have thought about what you'd like to accomplish.

## Matching Mentees and Mentors

### **Q: How will mentors and mentees be matched?**

A: Primarily, mentors and mentees will be matched based on their areas of expertise and interest, respectively, as indicated by the selected key strategy areas as well as the description of their work. However, we will also take additional factors into consideration, including their LHD structure, jurisdictional characteristics, and geographic location.

### **Q: Can we choose which mentee or mentor with whom we are matched?**

A: Selected participants will not be able to choose with whom they are matched; however, mentors may be given the opportunity to review their assigned mentee's application narrative prior to notification of award to confirm that they have the appropriate expertise to support the mentee's needs.

### **Q: We're applying as a mentee and one of the local health departments in our state is also interested in applying as a mentor. Can we ask to be matched together?**

A: If another LHD with whom they have a relationship is applying, applicants may indicate a preference for their mentor/mentee. Mentees should explicitly state this in the "Goals & Interest" section of the application. Mentors should explicitly state this in the "Capacity to Mentor" section of the application. However, indicating preferences for mentors or mentees does not guarantee selection and matching. Because this is a competitive process, all applications will be reviewed individually according to the criteria listed in the RFA. NACCHO will do its best to honor requests to be matched with certain mentees/mentors, but the matching process will take place following the selection process, so both LHDs would need to receive high enough scores on their applications to be awarded.

### **Q: With the application requirement of a letter of support from the Health Director or Administrator of the local health department, would a letter from an Executive Director suffice?**

A: Yes. The intent of the letter of support is to indicate that the applicant has the support from their agency's administration or leadership team to participate. The specific position of who is appropriate to prepare that letter of support may be determined by the applicant.

## Miscellaneous

### **Q: Is it possible to apply to one track as a mentee and the other track as a mentor?**

A: Yes, applicants may apply as both a mentee of one track and a mentor for another track dependent on their interest and areas of expertise. However, should both applications meet the threshold for award after scoring, there may need to be additional conversations with the applicant prior to an official notice of award about staff capacity to ensure that they could fulfill both scopes of work within the timeframe.

**Q: Due to the short timeline for this grant, is it possible to add this grant (if awarded) to an existing contract with NACCHO doing similar work?**

A: No. As this project is under a separate award, it will need a dedicated contract with the specified scope of work and schedule of deliverables. Applicants with NACCHO funding for similar work may use this opportunity to deepen or expand their prevention and response efforts to reduce overdose and substance use in their community, but it would be critically important not to duplicate either work plan activities or budgetary line items across the two projects.

**Q: Can NACCHO provide examples of previously funded projects?**

A: Activities of former mentorship participants included but were not limited to:

- Provide virtual trainings for providers and EMS to reduce stigma around substance use disorders and improve the referral system and linkages to care within the community
- Build a regional coalition to address priority areas related to substance use disorders and overdose
- Foster relationships with public safety to build champions to support developing a local syringe service program
- Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of the community to identify gaps in programs and services needed to support those with SUD and their families
- Present to local taskforce to gain support for comprehensive harm reduction services within the community
- Establish partnerships with the County Department of Mental Health and form a substance use disorder task force
- Coordinate with the Medical Examiner's office to collect additional data on overdose-related deaths
- Improve linkages to MOUD treatment from the local jail
- Develop an internal surveillance, monitoring, and reporting protocol for overdose-related data within the county, including addition and management of new data sources and creation of data indicators
- Coordinate with local agencies to start a Quick Response Team
- Increase community engagement with harm reduction services
- Collect feedback data from syringe service program participants to improve programs and services
- Enhance surveillance system through partner engagement and data sharing
- Build dynamic dashboards to visually display data
- Implement an electronic referral system to link individuals to care