The Center at Sierra Health Foundation is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization bringing people, ideas and infrastructure together to create a collective impact that reduces health disparities and improves community health for the underserved living in California. For information about The Center, visit www.shfcenter.org.

Asthma Mitigation Project Evaluation

Request for Proposals
March 2020

This opportunity is provided by The Center at Sierra Health Foundation in partnership with the State of California’s Department of Health Care Services.
Program Background

The Asthma Mitigation Project (AMP) is funded by the California Department of Health Care Services as one-time funding to support local health departments, medical providers and community-based organizations to offer asthma home visiting services, including education and environmental trigger mitigation. Awarded funds will support environmental mitigation, education and disease-management services to individuals with poorly controlled asthma. Asthma is the most common chronic childhood disease with 6.8 million children affected nationwide. In California, one in six children (1.5 million children) has been diagnosed with asthma, and it is one of the leading causes of hospitalization. Although asthma affects Americans of all ages, races and ethnic groups, low-income communities and communities of color suffer substantially higher fatality rates, hospital admissions and emergency department visits due to asthma.

AMP is managed by Sierra Health Foundation: Center for Health Program Management (The Center). The Center was founded by Sierra Health Foundation in 2012 as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. With offices in Sacramento and Fresno, The Center pursues the promise of health and racial equity in communities across California. Leveraging leadership, operational and funding support from Sierra Health Foundation and its partners, The Center establishes investment partnerships with public and private funders; community members; community organizations; national, state, and local government agencies; nonprofits and businesses to advance health equity.

Evaluation Overview

The Center is seeking an experienced team to conduct an evaluation of AMP. The duration of this contract is three years from September 2020 through June 2023. The evaluation is not of the specific projects carried out by the funded nonprofit organizations and their partners. Instead, the evaluation is intended to:

- Inform planning and implementation of the AMP to improve effectiveness and efficiency
- Inform future asthma preventive services funding and sustainability opportunities

A. Evaluation Questions

The overarching evaluation questions are:

- To what extent are the intended populations being served and receiving high-quality care?
- To what extent did the home visiting services lead to the anticipated outcomes, including the longer-term outcomes of reduced asthma-related emergency department visits and hospitalizations, and the...
intermediate outcomes of improved self-management practices/behaviors, improved asthma control, and decreased presence of common household asthma triggers including environmental tobacco smoke? See the logic model.

• What implementation variables are associated with successful and unsuccessful outcomes for participants?
• To what extent and in what ways (if any) did the AMP affect health care-related costs for payors (e.g., California’s Medi-Cal program, Medi-Cal managed care organizations, etc.)?

B. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Evaluators who apply to this opportunity are asked to present their best thinking about design and methodology, including any further elaboration of the evaluation questions, within the constraints of funding and the evaluation guidelines. Given the focus on costs and specific quantitative outcomes, a design that is solely qualitative is unlikely to be competitive. However, The Center welcomes designs that include mixed methods.

The selected evaluation team will have a role in providing technical assistance on data collection to the funded organizations in order to ensure data quality.

The selected evaluation team will have one to two months to finalize plans in consultation with The Center and technical assistance partners.

C. BUDGET AND TIMEFRAME

The duration of this contract is from September 2020 through June 2023. The total budget should not exceed $750,000, inclusive of travel and expenses. See below for guidance on how to present the budget and budget narrative.

D. WORKING WITH THE CENTER

The Center will provide support in obtaining service tracking data from the funded partners.

The Center has a collaborative approach to working with external evaluation consultants. This involves regular communications to coordinate interactions with the funded partners, discuss evaluation activities, solve challenges encountered during the course of the evaluation, and generally work together so that the evaluation is useful and credible.

The Center uses the professional standards for evaluation articulated in documents such as the American Evaluation Association’s Statement on the Importance of Cultural Competency in Evaluation and Guiding Principles for Evaluators and the Joint Committee’s Standards for Program Evaluation.

ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION PROCESS

Eligible applicants are research institutions, universities, colleges, policy centers, private and nonprofit consulting firms, and other entities qualified to propose.

A. SELECTION CRITERIA

The most competitive applications (inclusive of responses to narrative questions, evaluation plan, staff resumes and other materials) will demonstrate:

• Commitment to racial and health equity
• Understanding of the social determinants of health
• Knowledge of the evidence base for and common outcome measures for asthma prevention and mitigation programs
• Expertise in and experience with high quality evaluations of complex, multi-site initiatives, including working with local organizations with a
range of capacities to strengthen their data collection and data management activities to align with overall AMP goals

• Experience conducting studies and presenting findings in formats that inform state policy decisions
• Experience with Medi-Cal and/or Medicaid records
• Experience presenting findings in multiple formats that appeal to a variety of audiences

Strongly preferred: experience evaluating home visiting addressing asthma and/or other chronic health conditions; experience with evaluating programs using a range of licensed and non-licensed professionals, including community health workers; knowledge of California’s state policymaking process.

B. Selection Process

Applications submitted by the deadline and meeting the application guidelines will be evaluated by the degree to which the criteria above are met, as well as the qualifications of the staff, completeness with regard to the required elements and feasibility of the proposed plans. Applicants who submit the proposals that are most highly ranked based on the selection criteria will be invited for an interview with the review team, which will include representatives of AMP technical assistance providers as well as The Center staff.

The final selection will be based on the results of the interviews and approval of The Center.

Proposed Narrative Guidelines

The proposal narrative should detail your proposed plan for responding to the overall questions provided in the Evaluation Overview section. The evaluator who is selected will work with The Center to finalize a detailed plan, schedule and budget during the first two months of the contract.

The proposal narrative should be no longer than 15 pages and should include the following elements.

A. Evaluation Questions

Identify the specific evaluation questions that the evaluation will address. Indicate the priority you will assign to different questions at different points in time. Feel free to propose additional questions that you think will make the evaluation more useful or will increase its equity focus.

B. Evaluation Design

Describe the proposed design, including:

• Data collection sources and methods, and (1) the alignment of data collection plans with evaluation questions, (2) potential limitations of the data (for example, data quality, completeness and standardization), and (3) methods for storing and securing data. If individual-level data are being proposed, identify the procedures for protecting confidentiality.

• Sampling plans
• Analysis plans
• Rationale for methodological decisions
• Reporting plans (purpose, nature of the content, potential format(s)), including reports to policymakers, staff of The Center responsible for managing AMP, and other audiences

• Proposed staff and their roles

C. Quality Control Strategies

Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the design with reference to the five categories of standards described in The Program Evaluation Standards: Utility, Feasibility, Propriety, Accuracy, and Evaluation Accountability (https://evaluationstandards.org/program/).4

D. Schedule and Deliverables
Provide an overall schedule of key evaluation activities and deliverables.

Budget and Budget Narrative
The budget and budget narrative are not included in the 15-page limit for the proposal narrative.

A. Itemized Budget
The total budget should not exceed $750,000, inclusive of travel and expenses. Submit the budget using the template provided in the portal.

B. Budget Narrative
In no more than two pages, please describe the bases for the estimated costs for the design and the implementation phases. Include the hourly rates of each of the members of the evaluation team and their respective time requirements to this project, estimated travel expenses, and other operational expenses required to complete the proposed design and the implementation plan for the evaluation project.

Other Required Application Attachments
In addition to (1) the proposal narrative, (2) the proposed budget completed in The Center's Proposed Budget Template (template available in the online portal), and (3) justification for the proposed budget, applicants must include the following attachments:

- 2-3 page resumes for proposed evaluation team members
- 2-3 work products that demonstrate qualifications – links to products may be provided instead of the work products themselves

Application Timeline and Guidelines
At The Center’s discretion, the timeline below is subject to change to best meet programmatic needs and funder requirements.

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
May 7, 2020, at 1 p.m. (Pacific Time)

REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS:
May – June 2020

INTERVIEWS WITH FINALIST CANDIDATES:
July 2020

CONTRACT FINALIZED:
August 2020

CONTRACT START DATE:
September 2020

To be considered, proposals must be submitted by 1 p.m. (Pacific Time) on the deadline date of May 7, 2020.

Proposals received after the due date/time will not be reviewed. Submission before the deadline date is advised in case you experience technical difficulties with submitting your application through the portal. We may not be able to respond to your requests for help on the deadline date.

Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Applications received after the above deadline may not be considered.

For technical assistance in submitting a grant application or using the online portal, please e-mail centergrants@shfcenter.org.
Important Application Guidelines

To help us process your application, please follow these submission guidelines:

• We encourage you to submit your application before the deadline date in case you need help with any of the RFP components.

• Applications are due no later than 1 p.m. (Pacific Time) on May 7, 2020.

• Submit the application via our online portal through this link. New users of the portal will need to create an account as the first step in the application process. You will only use this link one time to initiate your application, after you have started working on your application, use the link below or received via e-mail to continue working on your saved application.

• In the portal, for optimal functionality, use Internet Explorer as the browser when working on a PC and Safari as the browser when working on a Mac. Do not use Google Chrome.

• Respond to all required fields (marked with an *).

• Upload all attachments listed under “Application Checklist” below.

• On the portal, you may click “Save & Finish Later.” You will receive an e-mail with a link to return to your in-progress application. You may also use this link to return to your in-progress application.

• Click “Save & Finish Later” any time you will not be working in your application for a few minutes.

• You may submit your application only once. Be sure your application is complete and accurate, including required documents, before submitting it. Revised applications will not be accepted.

• If you are unable to submit your application online or need help, please contact us at centergrants@shfcenter.org with the subject line: Application Online Help.

Send questions related to the Asthma Mitigation Project Evaluation opportunity to Asthma@shfcenter.org with the subject line:
AMP Eval RFP Question

Application Checklist

☐ Initiate the funding application online. The link also is posted on the Asthma Mitigation Project web page.

☐ Required Application Attachments

  • Proposal narrative
  
  • Brief resumes of proposed staff
  
  • Proposed budget completed in The Center’s Proposed Budget Template (template available in the online portal)
  
  • Proposed budget justification
  
  • Sample work products (can be submitted as links with brief descriptions in an attachment to the proposal, not included in the 15-page limit)

Incomplete applications and/or proposals will not be reviewed. Applications/proposals received after the above deadline will not be considered.

If you are unable to submit your application online or need help, please contact us at centergrants@shfcenter.org with the subject line: Application Online Help.