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GIFA 24-03 D&A Call Center
Questions and Answers 2024.06.14

All questions must be emailed to the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) Grants Management Account at
RA-DAGrantsMgmt@PA.GOV.

ID	GIFA 24-03 D&A Call Center Question and Answer
1	Under Project Description, "t. Employing qualified and trained personnel to receive calls in person", does this mean that call line staff need to be located in-person at the call center or can the call line staff just be answering calls from a landline or in extreme cases (i.e. power outage etc.) a cell phone? Is a hybrid work opportunity acceptable (maintaining a physical office space with the option for staff to work from home part-time with appropriate software, equipment, and redundancies)? Call line staff must answer all calls directly. "In-person" means the call answer is live 'in-person answering with no automation.
2	Regarding "v. Ensuring that drug and alcohol support staff have at least an Associate's Degree in Human Services or an equivalent degree and one year of experience in drug and alcohol crisis management", what would an equivalent degree be? Is a high school diploma or extensive call line experience sufficient? An equivalent degree for an Associate's Degree in Human Services has equal credit hours and is accompanied by one year of experience in drug and alcohol crisis management. An Associate's Degree in Human Services or an equivalent is the minimum education requirement for all personnel.
3	Referencing "w. An outline of a transition plan that will begin at least 90 days prior to the expiration of the grant period", are there any specific requirements for a transition plan? Applicants should prepare a transition plan that begins at least 90 days prior to the grant period expiration that is specific to the program described in their proposal.
4	Referring to letter B under "Project Description," "In addition to live answer, automated services must include chat feature, email connectivity, and texting", is the expectation that we will integrate with and utilize the chat feature that currently lives on the DDAP website, or that we will create/utilize our own chat feature? Yes, the chat feature provided on the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) website will be part of the services provided by the awarded GIFA 24-03 D&A Call Centers applicant.
5	Referring to letter I under "Project Description," "An active, real time live data base that includes all services resources, options, and system capacity to maintain an updated directory of regional and local service options for referrals", Is the expectation that we will create and maintain a new database of regional and local service options, or that we will utilize and work to update the tool that is already featured on the DDAP website, or another preexisting tool?

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	Yes, it is the expectation that the awarded GIFA 24-03 D&A Call Centers applicant will utilize and maintain the tool on the DDAP website.
6	What will be the anticipated volume of calls for this opportunity? During 2019-2023, the Get Help Now call center fielded over 60,000 calls from individuals seeking help for drug and alcohol related concerns.
7	SECTION 6. ELIGIBLE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND EXPENSES, PAGE 8" Does the budget summary for each year need to be within the amounts outlined at the top of page 8 or is that just an example for the $6.788 million total? When budgeting over the 5-year period, annual increases would be necessary for cost-of-living adjustments as long as the total stays within the 6.788 million budget limit. Yes, the amounts provided on page 8 for each summary year should be observed on submitted project budgets.
8	LENGTH OF PROJECT PERIOD Will the start date of October 1, 2024, override the current extension for the current provider that runs through December 29, 2024? No.
9	BUDGET TEMPLATE- BUDGET DETAILS YEAR 3 AND BUDGET DETAILS YEAR 4 Who should be contacted regarding technical questions for the budget template? It appears that the certain cells requiring information are protected and can only be unlocked with a password. Locked areas of the budget templated exist to indicate that the grantee should not utilize them. Enter into cells that permit entry and many locked cells will autofill via formulas.
10	As the call center is currently operational, who is the current provider? The current provider is First Choice Services, Inc.
11	When does DDAP anticipate applicants will be notified of the award?

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	The selected applicant will be notified of award as soon as possible following evaluation by the review committee.
12	Will DDAP provide technical assistance to the selected vendor during start-up? The awarded grantee will have an assigned Project Officer who will be available to provide technical assistance.
13	Page 3- Eligibility: Are existing non-profit substance use disorder treatment providers eligible to apply, and if so, are they permitted to refer clinically appropriate individuals to their own programs? Existing non-profit substance use disorder treatment providers are eligible to apply and refer clinically appropriate individuals to their own programs. If awarded, internal referrals by a treatment provider would be monitored by the Project Officer.
14	Can DDAP please explain what start-up costs are ineligible? This is a very broad category. On page 8, number 7, ineligible expenses are described: The following are expenses are not eligible under this grant: a. Expenses related to the provision of SUD treatment services; b. Capital expenditures for purchases and/or improvements to land, building or equipment which materially increase their value or useful life, i.e., "Bricks and Mortar"; c. Construction upgrades and remodeling; d. Fixed Assets of $5,000 or above (fixed assets include furniture, equipment, computers, etc. which have a life of more than one year); e. Cash payments directly to the intended recipients of the services; f. Expenses related to any start-up costs; and g. DDAP is not liable for costs incurred prior to the official start date of the award.
15	Can call center personnel be full-time remote? Yes.
16	Are call center personnel required to be Pennsylvania residents? No.

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17	If the applicant already operates a call center, can select staff positions be leveraged for this opportunity? Please see t., u. and v. under Project Description of the funding announcement.
18	Under Reporting Requirements, "The application must describe the Applicant's plan to collect information and submit reports in a timely manner to DDAP and include samples of the following reports" Do the sample reports count towards the page limit? Can the sample reports be outlines of a report draft or do they need to be actual reports? No, the reports do not count toward the application page limit. The applicant should submit a sample report.
19	Regarding the Project Evaluation Plan Template, can we have more than 3 SMART Goals? Does each bullet point under sections A-D under the Reporting Requirements need to be included as a desired outcome in the evaluation template? If so, can we have more than four desired outcomes under each SMART Goal? Yes, applicants can have more than 3 SMART goals. The applicant can include bullet points A-D in Reporting Requirements as desired outcomes in the evaluation template. The applicant can have more than four desired outcomes per SMART goal.
20	From our understanding, the call center must be fully operational by October 1. This means that we would need to have all staff trained and all equipment ready prior to the start date. However, in section 7.g. it mentions DDAP is not liable for all costs incurred prior to the start date of the award. How are we to include staff trainings and equipment in the budget if these costs won't be covered by the award prior to the start of services? DDAP is not liable for costs incurred prior to the official start date of the award. The grant agreement is projected to start on October 1, 2024.
21	About degree requirements under Project Description, Section v. This provision states support staff should have an associate degree or equivalent and one year experience. Could you define equivalent? Our organization has had tremendous success with Certified Recovery Specialists (CRS) certified by the PCB, who do not always have formal education beyond high school. Would this certification suffice with a year's experience? See question 2 above.

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22	We have a question regarding DDAP material Project Description, Section p. Would DDAP or another commonwealth entity provide materials, or would the awardee be given templates to print for distribution? DDAP will approve new materials and direct the grantee to any existing DDAP approved materials.
23	We have a question about funding over the course of a five-year period as it relates to compensating staff. Currently, state legislators are discussing a significant raise of the minimum wage, making it easy to imagine a noticeable difference in overall cost-of-living for employees in the next few years. Is there be a provision to account for this as the grant period moves forward to ensure the required positions remain attractive to the best talent? Please see question 7 above. The required wage will increase to $16.74/hour, effective July 1, 2024. Beginning 2023 and thereafter, the minimum wage rate will be increased by an annual cost-of-living adjustment using the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland. The application amount shall be published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin by March 1 of each year to be effective the following July 1.
24	It seems that the only requirement to apply for this grant is the capacity to perform the duties. Are we correct in assuming this means that large privately and independently owned treatment facilities are eligible to apply? Eligible applicants must be able to serve the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
25	Text and chat will require legal review due to the sensitivity of the information shared. Is there any flexibility in the start date of those features? The D&A Call Center is expected to be fully operational by October 1, 2024.
26	What are the data retention requirements for voice, SMS, and Chat communications with the caller? As per the General Audit Provisions, the contractor/grantee is required to maintain records of state funds and federal awards. The contractor/grantee shall preserve all books, records and documents related to this contract /grant for a minimum of four years from the date of final payment under this contract / grant; or until all findings, questioned costs or activities have been resolved to the satisfaction of the commonwealth; or as required by

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	applicable federal laws and regulations, whichever is longer, unless this contract/grant elsewhere provides for a shorter period; or unless the Department otherwise separately agrees in writing to a shorter period. The contractor/grantee shall provide federal and state agencies or their designees access to such books, records and documents for inspection, audit, or reproduction.
27	Are chat/text features meant to be both incoming (including an initial contact) and outgoing? Will Protected Health Information (PHI) need to be included in these messages? Yes, chat/text features should include both incoming and outgoing. PHI would not be required in these messages.
28	Are Commonwealth of Pennsylvania staff expecting reports delivered by secure file transfer or will a reporting web portal be required? Secure file via email.
29	If a reporting web portal is required will the grantee be responsible for Identity Access Management by issuing user accounts or can Single Sign On (SSO) be configured with an appropriate Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Identity Provider (IdP)? This does not apply.
30	Is there an existing list of resources by county or will the grantee be responsible for curating that list? DDAP will provide procedures by each county SCA and how their system operates and available treatment options through their funding mechanisms.
31	How frequently do the reports mentioned in 9a have to be sent? The application indicates "timely." Weekly and monthly reports.