

B. Initial Screening

Each application submitted under this program announcement will undergo a pre-review to determine that (1) the application was received by the closing date and submitted in accordance with the instructions in this announcement; (2) the applicant is eligible for funding; (3) the applicant has included assurances that they and other relevant participating organizations will be willing to field test strategies, based on their initial planning phase, and will participate in a process evaluation to document the steps taken from planning to implementation [this must be indicated on the page with the project abstract—see part IV, section E, 8(a)]; and (4) is within the page limit (see part IV, section A). Note that applications exceeding the page limit will not be reviewed further and will be ineligible for funding.

C. Competitive Review and Evaluation Criteria

Applications that pass the initial ASPE pre-review screening will be evaluated and rated by an independent review panel on the basis of specific evaluation criteria. The evaluation criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed project and to determine the likelihood of its success. The evaluation criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application. Points are awarded only to applications that are responsive to the evaluation criteria as provided in this program announcement.

In order to ensure that the interests of the Federal Government are met, in making the final selections, ASPE may consider additional factors, in addition to the review criteria identified below. These additional factors may include such things as the applicants' readiness to transition from a planning to an implementation phase; capacity for continued and sustainable innovation; the potential impact of the innovation on the target population; the potential for building upon funding activities; the extent of partnerships with local entities; and the overall diversity of program activities within the applicant pool.

Proposed projects will be reviewed using the following evaluation criteria:

(1) Approach: (40 points)

The application will be judged on the extent to which the proposed approaches to project activities are adequate and appropriate to meet the objectives for projects in this program as set out in this announcement. As a part

of the proposed approach, the application should identify the key, relevant organizations that will be involved in project activity and describe operational relationships that exist or will be put into place among the state, local public, private and non-profit agencies, and any other entities. Plans for cross-agency collaboration should be clearly explained.

Applicants should include a discussion of the proposed approach for implementing and operating the innovative strategies identifying specific steps to be undertaken. The approach should include a discussion of the time frame and action steps necessary before the implementation/demonstration phase of the project becomes operational (e.g., staff must be trained over the next six months; partnerships with local agencies, non-profits, employers, etc. must be established, etc.). Applicants should provide a detailed description of the steps necessary to transition from a planning grant to a larger demonstration grant. Applicants should also describe how the transition to a demonstration grant will affect goals and objectives. In particular, applicants should address whether or not goals and objectives identified for the planning phase will need to be modified for the transition to a demonstration phase. The application will be judged based on the extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a firm commitment of State, and/or local, and/or private funding and/or in-kind contributions dedicated to sustainability of the project, on the extent to which it is innovative, and on its potential for improving outcomes either in target populations or management of state programs.

The application should include a brief discussion of the location of the proposed project to be implemented. Maps or other graphic aids may be attached. Applications should include appropriate information about the size of the target population in the proposed site/area and other data or information available that relate to the project activity.

It may be necessary for agencies to provide data to Lewin or to HHS. The types of data possibly requested under this project may include administrative data, including data on program attendance, or other participation data. Data may also be collected from program managers and staff and from individuals participating in the demonstration program to be implemented. The proposed approach should indicate the availability of such data, the source of the data, the extent

to which it can be obtained or accessed by the applicant organization, the existence of data exchange agreements with other agencies that are the source of needed data, and the willingness of the applicant agency to obtain data needed for the evaluation. Any limitations regarding data availability or access should be discussed, including any fees for data.

Any application for a project involving the use of personally-identifiable information about patients or clients that grantees collect should describe how the project intends to address the privacy and confidentiality issues presented by the data collection. The description should not include details of collection, consent, security and the like. It should describe the organizational and planning approaches that will ensure that the project addresses these issues in a thoughtful way, respectful of the patients' and clients' privacy and dignity, in accord with all applicable law, and, if appropriate, taking particular account of the special privacy issues created by systems that integrate or link administrative data across several programs that serve the same population.

(2) Objectives and Need for Assistance: (15 points)

The applications should describe (1) issues and challenges which the applicant has considered and dealt with to date in designing and/or implementing strategies for system improvements, including an assessment of the current delivery system and the most urgent needs of the project's target population or system, and (2) the proposed strategy for the transition from a planning to a demonstration phase and ways in which it will significantly enhance innovative services for the target population. (3) A description of existing resources and programs for the target population, barriers in the current delivery system, and gaps in service delivery should also be included. The applicant should include any supporting data or available information gained during the planning phase that further demonstrates why the innovation is needed, and how the planning phase contributed to the development of innovative ways to serve the target populations. Applications will be judged on the relevance of the discussion to the program objectives set out within this announcement. The application will also be judged on the extent to which the innovation proposed will help to address the target population's needs, build the knowledge base, and have