

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Proposed Changes in Announcement of SAMHSA Discretionary Grant Funding Opportunities

Authority: Sections 509, 516, and 520A of the Public Health Service Act.

AGENCY: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, HHS.

ACTION: Notice of proposed changes in announcement of SAMHSA discretionary grant funding opportunities.

SUMMARY: Beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2004, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) plans to change its approach to announcing and soliciting applications for its discretionary grant programs. This notice describes the proposed changes and invites public comment on those changes. This notice will be followed by proposed text for four standard grant announcements (Services Grants, Infrastructure Grants, Best Practices Planning and Implementation Grants, and Service to Science Grants). Comments are invited on the proposed standard grant announcements, as well.

DATES: Submit written comments on this proposal by October 20, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments regarding SAMHSA's proposed changes in the announcement of discretionary grant funding opportunities to: Office of Policy, Planning and Budget, SAMHSA, Attn: Jennifer Fiedelholz by fax (301-594-6159) or e-mail (samhsa_standard_grants@samhsa.gov). Please include a phone number in your e-mail, so that SAMHSA staff may contact you if there are questions about your comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Fiedelholz of the Office of Policy, Planning and Budget, SAMHSA, by fax (301-594-6159) or e-mail (samhsa_standard_grants@samhsa.gov). If you would like a SAMHSA staff person to call you about your questions, please state this in an e-mail or fax request and provide a telephone number where you can be reached between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., Eastern Standard Time.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

In recent years, SAMHSA has announced funding opportunities for 30-40 discretionary grant programs each year. Despite similarities among these programs, the program requirements

described in each grant announcement varied significantly. Some of this variation was necessary due to differences in program goals and objectives. However, much of the variation was unnecessary and significantly limited the ability of potential applicants to anticipate, plan, and lay the essential groundwork for proposed grant projects. The large number of unique grant announcements published each year also required the allocation of substantial staff resources to development of grant announcements. SAMHSA believes that these staff resources could be better used for post-award project management and monitoring.

Starting in FY 2004, SAMHSA plans to change its approach to announcing and soliciting applications for its discretionary grants. SAMHSA plans to issue four standard grant announcements that will describe the general program design and provide application instructions for four types of grants—Services Grants, Infrastructure Grants, Best Practices Planning and Implementation Grants, and Service-to-Science Grants. These standard grant announcements will be posted on SAMHSA's web page and will be available from SAMHSA's clearinghouses on an ongoing basis. The standard announcements will be used in conjunction with brief Notices of Funding Availability (NOFAs) that will announce the availability of funds for specific grant funding opportunities within each of the standard grant programs (e.g., Homeless Treatment grants, Statewide Family Network grants, or HIV/AIDS and Substance Abuse Prevention Planning Grants).

SAMHSA expects that use of these four standard grant announcements will result in the following benefits:

- The field of potential applicants will be able to more effectively anticipate the program requirements for SAMHSA's grant funding opportunities and will be better able to anticipate and plan their proposed grant projects. As a result, applicants will be able to prepare more thorough grant applications, and grantees will be better prepared to begin their grant projects in a timely manner after awards are made.

- SAMHSA's funding opportunities will be published in a more timely manner, with funding opportunities, application deadlines and awards distributed more evenly throughout the fiscal year.

- SAMHSA will be able to more clearly and consistently articulate its mission to external stakeholders.

- SAMHSA will be able to use its staff resources more efficiently and effectively.

The four grant announcements address the following core aspects of SAMHSA's mission:

1. *Services Grants* provide funding to implement substance abuse and mental health services.

2. *Infrastructure Grants* support identification and implementation of systems changes but are not designed to fund services.

3. *Best Practices Planning and Implementation Grants* help communities and providers identify practices to effectively meet local needs, develop strategic plans for implementing/adapting those practices and pilot-test practices prior to full-scale implementation.

4. *Service to Science Grants* document and evaluate innovative practices that address critical substance abuse and mental health service gaps but that have not yet been formally evaluated.

These four grant announcements were designed around several of SAMHSA's core grant programs, including Targeted Capacity Expansion Grants, State Incentive Grants, and Community Action Grants.

The Notices of Funding Availability (NOFAs) announcing the availability of funds for specific grant funding opportunities will be published separately in the **Federal Register**, on the Federal grants Web site (<http://www.grants.gov>) and on the SAMHSA Web site. The NOFAs will:

- Identify any specific target population or issue for the specific grant funding opportunity,
- Identify which of the four standard announcements applicants must use to prepare their applications,
- Specify total funding available for the first year of the grants and the expected size and number of awards,
- Specify the application deadline,
- Note any specific program requirements for each funding opportunity, and
- Include any limitations or exceptions to the general provisions in the standard announcement.

SAMHSA expects that the NOFAs will be brief. Because a primary goal of this effort is to increase the field's ability to anticipate funding opportunities and program requirements, special program requirements and deviations from the standard announcements should be few in number and limited to only those that are necessary, given the nature of the specific funding opportunity. For example, Homeless Treatment grants would likely require applicants not only