

E. Evaluation Criteria

There are three categories of criteria used to score applications: Capability; relevance/adequacy of project research design; and resources and management. The total points possible for an application is 100, and sections are weighted. The score for each application is the sum of its parts. Although the results from the independent panel reviews are the primary factor used in making funding decisions, they are not the sole basis for making awards. The Commissioner will consider other factors as well when making funding decisions. For instance, the need to assure a proper geographic distribution of projects, or the need to target geographic regions with high rates of chronic homelessness may influence award decisions.

The following are the evaluation criteria that SSA will use in reviewing all applications (relative weights are shown in parentheses). The application narrative should include the following sections in this order.

1. Capability (30 points total)

These criteria will be used to assess the applicant's capability to develop and manage a project. SSA will consider the following:

- Evidence of successful previous experience related to services to individuals who experience chronic homelessness. (5 points)
- Evidence that the applicant will be able to provide or assist SSA in finding medical evidence to allow SSA to evaluate disability claims of project participants. (10 points)
- Documentation of experience of the Project Director and key staff. (5 points)
- Description of the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel, and the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors, if built into project design. (5 points)
- In determining the quality of project personnel, the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, age, or disability. (5 points)

2. Project Design (30 points total)

The adequacy of project design will be judged by:

- A description of the project, including:
 - How the project will be managed;
 - The target population;
 - Specific methods to be used, and

- A description of problems that may arise and specific measures that will be taken to mitigate them (e.g., how dropouts and inadequate numbers of participants will be handled). (10 points)

• The extent to which the project design reflects careful consideration of the potential for achieving successful outcomes and for project replication. This includes evidence of:

- An approach to potential SSDI/SSI claimants that can reasonably be expected to be successful, given the characteristics and needs of the target population;
- Measurable methods for recruiting and serving the target population;
- Service delivery to populations with special cultural or language requirements;
- Consideration of the desired outcomes identified by SSA; and
- Accessibility of facilities and service delivery methods that eliminate or reduce barriers to participation by individuals with disabilities. (10 points)
- The extent to which goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable as indicated by a description of:

- Project goals and objectives;
- Outcome measures;
- Time frames for accomplishing project milestones; and
- The relationship of proposed activities to the stated project goals. (5 points)
- A description of how the applicant will organize to effectively work with SSA in the new electronic disability application environment. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - Completing on-line forms;
 - Using technology in outreach efforts; and
 - Sending electronic medical evidence (files created in an electronic format compatible with SSA systems, or scanned files). (5 points)

3. Resources and Management (40 points total)

Resources and management will be judged by:

- A description of how the applicant will ensure that the perspectives of homeless individuals and persons with disabilities influence the operation of the project (e.g. representation on a project or organizational advisory board) (5 points)
- Evidence that the applicant has a working knowledge of Federal, State, and local programs that serve homeless or other under-served individuals (5 points)
- Evidence of facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the

applicant organization that are adequate to achieve project goals (5 points)

- Evidence that the applicant works cooperatively with other community-based service providers, as well as local and state funders/regulators (5 points)
- Evidence that the applicant directly provides, or assists clients through referral and advocacy, to obtain a wide variety of services that lead to stabilization, recovery, and full independence, including, but not limited to:
 - Primary health care services;
 - Substance abuse and mental health treatment;
 - Referrals for housing and supports to maintain housing;
 - Employment and rehabilitation services;
 - Job placement;
 - Benefit planning assistance and outreach;
 - Translation and/or interpreter services; and
 - Services to parolees and those in work-release programs, when appropriate (10 points)
- The extent to which the budget is adequate to support the proposed project (5 points)
- The extent to which the applicant has included plans for sustaining project activities after cooperative agreement funding ends (5 points).

Section VI. Instructions for Obtaining and Submitting an Application

A. Availability of Forms

The Internet is the primary means recommended for obtaining an application kit under this program announcement. An application kit containing all of the prescribed forms and instructions needed to apply for a cooperative agreement under this announcement may be obtained at the following Internet address: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/oag/grants>.

However, in the rare instances when an organization may not have access to the Internet, an application kit may be obtained by writing to: Grants Management Team, Office of Operations Contracts and Grants, OAG, Social Security Administration, 1-E-4 Gwynn Oak Building, 1710 Gwynn Oak Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21207-5279.

Requests submitted by mail should include two return address labels. Also, please provide the name, title and telephone number of the individual to contact; and the organization's name, street address, city, state and ZIP code.

To ensure receipt of the proper kit, please include program announcement number (OPDR-03-02) and the date of this announcement in the request.