

adaptations/modifications to the practice.

—Commentors requested that SAMHSA clarify what, precisely, applicants had to say to justify the evidence-base for a practice selected from among those SAMHSA has already determined to have met the evidence standard. This has been clarified in the revised announcements. Some commentors requested that SAMHSA limit evidence-based practices to only those documented in the peer-reviewed literature. SAMHSA had considered this standard in early (*i.e.*, pre-publication) drafts of the announcements and decided not to do so, because there are relatively few practices that have been well-researched and documented for a wide variety of target populations and in a wide-variety of settings.

—Many commentors requested that SAMHSA provide a definition of the “recognized experts” whose opinions (in the form of consensus documents) may be considered acceptable evidence of effectiveness in situations where there is little/no research-based evidence of effectiveness. Some commentors wanted to see a very broad definition, while others wanted SAMHSA to delete consensus documents as acceptable evidence of effectiveness. SAMHSA has retained consensus documents as acceptable evidence of effectiveness, but has clarified that “local recognition of an individual as a respected or influential person at the community level is not considered a ‘recognized expert’ for this purpose.”

• *Clarify Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) and Performance Measurement Requirements*—The draft announcements included preliminary GPRA/performance indicators, and many comments were received requesting clarification of the data collection requirements that would accompany these preliminary GPRA/performance indicators. This work is still under development. Therefore, SAMHSA has deleted reference to the draft indicators in the standard grant announcements. The data collection and performance measurement requirements for each funding opportunity will be specified in the NOFA. SAMHSA expects to issue modified standard grant announcements once the performance indicators and related data collection requirements are finalized.

• *Award Criteria*—Some commentors expressed concern about the award criterion limiting awards to no more than two per States. SAMHSA has

revised the award criteria to be more flexible and indicate that SAMHSA will consider a “balance of awards in terms of geography (including urban, rural and remote settings), target populations, and program size.”

• *Ensure adequate application period*—Commentors requested that SAMHSA distribute publication of NOFAs and receipt dates throughout the Fiscal Year in order to minimize the burden on applicants. While this is not an issue that is directly addressed in the standard grant announcements, SAMHSA does intend to distribute publication of NOFAs and receipt dates throughout the Fiscal Year. SAMHSA expects that one benefit of publishing brief NOFAs for each funding opportunity (rather than full Requests for Application) is that SAMHSA will be able to provide applicants with more time to prepare their applications.

• *Submission of Documentation that Projects are Consistent with State Priorities*—Reaction to this requirement was mixed among commentors. While many commentors felt that it was a positive requirement, others were concerned about the feasibility of meeting the requirement and/or the burden on the State. SAMHSA has modified the requirement to include documentation that projects are consistent with State or county priorities.

• *Tribal Comments*—SAMHSA received comments from several tribal organizations towards the end of the comment period. Many of them requested additional time to prepare their comments. However, because the timely publication of the FY 2004 NOFAs depends on timely finalization and publication of the standard grant announcements by the end of November 2003, SAMHSA was not able to extend the comment period. SAMHSA has attempted to incorporate the comments received into the standard grant announcements and will work with tribal organizations to address other comments in future versions of the standard grant announcements. While SAMHSA intends the grants to be available on an on-going basis, it is likely that SAMHSA will need to make some adjustments for FY 2005, based on the first year of experience in FY 2004. SAMHSA therefore declined to extend the comment period.

• *Minor Technical Edits*—SAMHSA received numerous comments regarding minor technical edits on the standard grant announcements. SAMHSA has incorporated those comments where possible.

SAMHSA greatly appreciates the interest and support expressed by the

field in the comments on the standard grant announcements. The comments received were very helpful in clarifying and finalizing the announcements, and SAMHSA is hopeful that the final standard grant announcements will help potential applicants prepare applications for SAMHSA's FY 2004 grant funding opportunities.

Dated: November 13, 2003.

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Notice of Final Standard Services Grants Announcement

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

ACTION: Notice of final Services Grants announcement.

SUMMARY: On August 21, 2003, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announced plans to change its approach to announcing and soliciting applications for its discretionary grant programs in Fiscal Year (FY) 2004. These changes involved the publication of four standard grant announcements that would provide the basic program design and application instructions for four types of grants—Services Grants, Infrastructure Grants, Best Practices Planning and Implementation Grants, and Service-to-Science Grants. The four announcements were made available for public review and comment for 60 days. The comments received and changes made to the standard grant announcements are described in a separate **Federal Register** notice. This notice provides the final text for SAMHSA's standard Services Grants announcement.

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

DATES: Use of the standard Services Grants announcement will be effective November 21, 2003. The standard Services Grants announcement must be used in conjunction with separate Notices of Funding Availability (NOFAs) that will provide application due dates and other key dates for specific SAMHSA grant funding opportunities.