

COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE TO HELP END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

1. When will the grants be awarded and when will the grant term begin?

Awarding grants and beginning the grant term will depend largely on how many applications are received, since there is a considerable review process. Our hope is to get through that process as quickly as possible and to make the awards this summer so that awarded projects can be up and running as soon as possible.

2. In terms of this comprehensive approach, what are the agencies looking for? Can you provide any additional information?

The Comprehensive Approach section will be reviewed by all participating agencies, and they will score this section on the rating criteria listed in the NOFA and in the application. Please refer to the webcast (archived on www.ich.gov) to review these criteria.

3. Looking ahead to 2004, will there be a similar NOFA?

A new program identified as "Samaritan Initiative" is proposed in the President's FY 2004 budget proposal. The requirements of that program, if enacted, have not yet been finalized.

4. Has there been any particular difference or instruction on preparing applications from rural or small cities versus a larger urban area with more "visible" street homeless populations?

No distinction has been made between urban and rural areas.

5. Does the lead applicant need to be the applicant for all 5 sections of the application or can/should there be a different applicant for each of the five sections?

The lead applicant does not have to be the applicant for each section, nor is there a requirement for a different applicant for each section of the application.

6. Will applications which request funding from all 4 agencies be favored over applications requesting funding from only 1 agency?

The number of agencies from which funds are sought is not a review or award criteria and will have no effect on preference. Great weight will be placed on the extent to which all the required areas are addressed comprehensively, regardless of funding source.

7. Does chronic substance abuse qualify as a disability?

For the purposes of this NOFA, chronic substance abuse is listed as a disabling condition.

8. VA will be managing the data of the assisted population but who will administer the grants?

Each agency awarding funds to any of the awarded initiative projects will be required to execute a grant agreement with the applicant and to monitor (in HUD's case, through our Field Offices) the progress/compliance of the grantee. VA's role will be limited to "evaluation". The good news here is that we are only likely to award 10-15 grants nationally.

9. Are there funds available for coordinating the consortium of partners working together on this initiative?

No HUD funds may be used for the coordination efforts of the consortium. SAMHSA funds do not prohibit this activity.

POPULATION QUESTIONS:

1. Can persons who are chronically homeless and episodically homeless persons share housing in "mixed occupancy" if funding is separated?

Yes. Our definition of chronic includes both long term homelessness and episodically homeless people that meet the criteria specified. If all persons being assisted are chronically homeless there is no need to separate the persons being served.

2. Can my agency serve "street homeless" and if so, how can we document the length of homelessness?

Yes, as long as they meet the conditions of the definition of chronically homeless as stated in the NOFA. Such persons either reside on the street or in homeless emergency shelters (but not transitional housing) for the

periods of time specified to be considered chronically homeless. Documentation that individuals being housed were chronically homeless will be required of grantees and can be based on the certification of the individual being assisted that they meet the standard verified by an outreach worker, case worker, ACT team member, police officer or other appropriate person that the individual's certification is accurate.

3. Are people coming out of long-term residential substance abuse treatment (more than 1 year) eligible?

The only persons eligible for this initiative are those who meet the definition of chronically homeless, as set forth in the NOFA. Persons coming out of year(s) of treatment do not appear to meet this definition.

4. Are victims of domestic violence eligible under this initiative?

If the clients meet the definition of chronically homeless as set forth in the NOFA, they are eligible. This does mean that they have to have a disabling condition in addition to being either continuously homeless for a year or more, or that they have experienced at least 4 episodes of homelessness in the past 3 years.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

1. How could a local university play a role in this evaluation as a partner or primary evaluator? Who determines what the evaluation team consists of?

The only way a university could participate would be if a local lead agency asked them to help with the local evaluation or if, for example, no VA was available and a decision was made to contract with an outside agency such as a university.

2. Can you please speak to the confidentiality requirements within and between agencies that will protect clients? What will happen if a client refuses to participate in evaluation activities? In other words, is an informed consent necessary and "upfront" criterion for participation in the programs funded by this initiative?

Yes, we will ask clients to provide informed consent to participate in the evaluation. They cannot be kept from participating if they refuse to participate. They will be paid for their time, however, and we will work with the sites to make participation as comfortable as possible.

3. Will the evaluation being coordinated through the VA use existing HMIS systems, or will this evaluation require another system?

The National evaluation of this initiative will not place an extra burden on the grantee, as VA will do the work of collecting and analyzing data from the projects. Grantees will use HMIS and other reporting systems as required by their grant agreements (i.e. APR system for HUD), but will not have to do extra work for the national evaluation.