

Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services
Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency (SAPTA)¹
Funding Process

February 2009

The Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency (SAPTA) competitive funding protocols are designed to focus on input received from an independent Objective Review Committee made up of experts in the field with input from state staff. The final decisions are made by the Administrator of the Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services.² The process is essentially the same regardless of funding type or source. It begins with the release of a three-year Request for Applications (RFA); please refer to the flow chart on page 3 of this document.

SAPTA uses the RFA to announce the availability of funding, specify the funding requirements and purposes of the funding, and provide instructions to guide in the preparation of an application. Since project periods are for up to three years, in the intervening period non-competitive continuations are granted to programs based upon availability of state and federal funding and successful progress of negotiated scopes of work.

Along with explicit instructions on how to complete the RFA, the Agency schedules Bidders Conferences to provide technical assistance on responding to the RFA. The Conferences are conducted in both Northern and Southern Nevada and are held for two days. The first day is open to new or previously unsuccessful applicants and the second day is for returning applicants. The first day is a much more in depth review of the RFA; however, both days include time for questions and answers and in-depth assistance to potential applicants. Questions are handled by staff as they come in to SAPTA with a commitment to respond to each inquiry within two days of the request. Additionally, once a week all questions and answers are sent to all applicants who have filed a Letter of Intent.

A Letter of Intent (LOI) is required for all programs interested in applying for funding. This is done in order to identify the organizations that need the entire RFA packet which includes among other things numerous application forms and technical information. Additionally as noted above, this ensures that SAPTA knows who needs the questions and answers sent out weekly.

Prior to sending applications on to staff technical reviews and Objective Reviews, they are reviewed for completeness. This review identifies those applications that have not met the requirement of the RFA or were received late. Applications that do not pass the completeness review are returned to the applicant along with a letter of explanation.

¹ The Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services (MHDS), Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency (SAPTA), was previously known as the Health Division, Agency of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (BADA).

² This is the same process used in previous years when BADA was housed in the State Health Division.

The RFA includes information such as the prevention or treatment Program Operating and Access Standards (POAS), Nevada Health Information Provider Performance System (NHIPPS) data reporting requirements, and funding priorities. Base federal and state funding requirements are addressed as well as suggestions to ensure the submitted applications are complete and deadlines met. Each subsequent RFA issued by SAPTA incorporates changes from prior RFA processes and reflect the Agency's commitment to continuous quality improvement. These changes and additions ensure that SAPTA continues to meet state and federal requirements and is able to report on the required federal National Outcome Measures.

Concurrent to releasing the RFA, the Agency invites community members with no conflicts of interest to participate in the enormous task of reviewing and scoring each application. For prevention applications, the Agency invites the Community Coalition partners to participate in the process. Once applications have been deemed to be complete they are forwarded to the Objective Review Committee and Agency staff. The Review Committee receives instructions and forms necessary to rate the applications as well as information on the performance of applicants that were funded in the past. The scoring sheets repeat the RFA instructions and allow for comments. The Objective Reviewers review the applications on their own, SAPTA facilitates a meeting with the Reviewers wherein the scores are compiled, merits of each application are discussed, recommended funding conditions are reviewed, and each application is scored and rank ordered. Scoring is based on a consensus process among the members of the Objective Review Committee; staff does not participate in the scoring process. For treatment applications the Agency solicits clinical input from the Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technologies (CASAT) at the University of Nevada Reno. CASAT helps review the treatment applications to determine the applicants' clinical effectiveness and use of Evidence-Based Practices.

For the applications that are complete, the Agency staff conducts a separate technical review and also scores the applications. These reviews are completed by the fiscal team and by either the prevention or treatment team, depending upon the type of funding available. Once both sets of scores are complete the staff meets to compare and arrive at recommendations for the Administrator. These recommendations are presented to the Administrator along with background information on all the scores, application strengths and weakness, past performance information, if available, and suggested conditions of award. The Administrator then directs the Agency Director to contact successful applicants and begin scope of work and budget negotiations. Once these negotiations have been successfully concluded and it has been determined that all available resources have been obligated, the unsuccessful applicants are notified. The notifications include information on the problems identified in the applications by the Objective Review Committee and the staff. An explanation of how to appeal the decision is included in the correspondence.

Request for Application (RFA) Process Funding Decisions

