FY 2013 NCA NCC Frequently Asked Questions

FY 2013 National Training and Technical Assistance (NCA) Non-Competing Continuation (NCC) instructions are available at the NCA technical assistance (TA) web site, http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply/assistance/nca. Below are common questions and corresponding answers for the FY 2013 NCA NCC. New FAQs will be added as necessary, so please check http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply/assistance/nca frequently for updates. The FAQs are organized under the following topics:

Submission Development and Attachments

1. **When are the NCC submissions due in the HRSA Electronic Handbook (EHB)?**

   Submissions are due in EHB by 5:00 PM ET on April 24, 2013.

2. **Is there a page limit for the NCC submission?**

   Yes, there is a 40-page limit on the length of the total submission when printed by HRSA. Refer to Table 1 on pages 5-6 of the NCA NCC instructions for more information on what is counted in the page limit.

3. **Does HRSA have formatting guidelines (e.g., font type, font size) for the attachments such as the Program Narrative Update and the Budget Narrative?**

   Yes, attachments should be single-spaced narrative documents with 12-point, easily readable font (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial, Courier) and 1-inch margins. Smaller font (no less than 10-point) may be used for tables, charts, and footnotes.

   All attachments should be uploaded in a computer-readable format (i.e., do not upload text as images). To the extent possible, HRSA recommends PDF files but will accept Microsoft Word or Excel files. Limit file names to 100 characters and do not use spaces or special characters when naming files. Avoid Excel documents with multiple spreadsheets as individual worksheets may not print out in their entirety. Upload the attachments in the appropriate fields in EHB.

4. **When should Attachments 2-6, noted *as applicable* on page 6 of the NCA NCC instructions, be uploaded with the NCC submission?**

   A revised Staffing Plan, Position Descriptions for Key Personnel, Biographical Sketches for Key Personnel, and Summary of Contracts/Agreements should be submitted if any referenced information has been added or revised since the FY 2012 NCA NCC submission. Upload other documents to support the progress report in Attachment 6: Other Relevant Documents, as desired.

5. **How is the Staffing Plan (Attachment 2) different from the Position Descriptions (Attachment 3) and Biographical Sketches (Attachment 4)?**

   The staffing plan is a presentation and justification of all staff required to execute the project as opposed to the other attachments that are limited to key personnel. A staffing plan template is provided on the NCA TA web site, http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply/assistance/nca.

6. **Who in the organization is considered key personnel for Attachment 3 (Position Descriptions) and Attachment 4 (Biographical Sketches)?**

   Key personnel includes any individual who will be directly involved in the activities proposed under the cooperative agreement. Key personnel may include the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Project Director, and Quality Improvement Coordinator, among others as determined by the organization.

7. **What is the difference between a Position Description (Attachment 3) and a Biographical Sketch (Attachment 4)?**

   A position description outlines the key aspects of a position (e.g., position title; description of duties and responsibilities; position qualifications; supervisory relationships; skills, knowledge, and experience requirements; travel requirements; salary range; work hours). A biographical sketch describes the key qualifications of an individual that make him/her qualified for a position (e.g., past work experience, education/training, language fluency, experience working with the cultural and linguistically diverse populations to be served).

Program Narrative Update

8. **What is the purpose of the Program Narrative Update when progress will be reported in the Progress Report field of the Project Work Plan?**

   The purpose of the Program Narrative Update is to discuss broad issues and changes that have impacted the target audience(s) served and the NCA organization, as well as progress on the Project Work Plan since the last NCC award (July 1, 2012 – March 31, 2013). This section should be used to provide updates on progress that expand on the updates provided in the structured Project Work Plan and Performance Measures forms in EHB to streamline progress reporting and avoid duplication.

9. What are the differences in items 1 through 5 of the Program Narrative Update?

Item 1 provides an opportunity to describe overarching progress beyond what is captured in the individual objective progress updates in the Project Work Plan. This item provides NCAs with the opportunity to describe big-picture progress and proposed changes.

Item 2 is similar to Item 1, but it focuses on big-picture outcomes as a result of TA objectives, including highlighting how challenges have been overcome beyond what is captured in the individual objective progress updates in the Project Work Plan.

Item 3 provides an opportunity to describe changes in linkages and/or partnerships. This is the only place in the NCC where this information is requested.

Item 4 provides an opportunity to describe changes and updates to the staffing plan beyond what is captured in Attachment 2. Challenges experienced in recruiting and retaining key management/project staff should be discussed in this section.

Item 5 provides the only opportunity in the NCC to describe plans beyond the FY 2013 budget period (July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014).

Budget

10. What are the dates of the upcoming budget period?

The budget period for Year 3 will be July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014.

11. How much can be requested in the budget?

The budget request must not exceed the recommended level of support found on Line 13 of the Notice of Award. The allowable budget value will be pre-populated in your NCC.

12. Is the Budget Narrative the same as a budget justification?

Yes, for the purpose of the NCA NCC submission, they are the same. The sample Budget Narrative provided at the NCA TA web site, http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply/assistance/nca, includes a box for providing any narrative explanation of costs necessary beyond what is provided in the line-item descriptions.

13. What should be included in the Budget Narrative?

The Budget Narrative must detail the costs of each line item within each object class category from the Budget Details form. It is important to ensure that the Budget Narrative contains detailed calculations explaining how each line-item expense is derived. The narrative explanation should highlight the changes from the last NCC submission or clearly indicate that there are no substantive budget changes since the FY 2012 budget period.

14. Should the Budget Information: Budget Details form or the Budget Narrative include non-federal funding (e.g., grant funding, program income)?

No, budget requests should only identify federal section 330 funding. Do not identify other program income.

15. Does HRSA require organizations to have an indirect cost rate?

No, organizations are only required to have an indirect cost rate agreement if indirect costs are budgeted. If an organization does not have an indirect cost rate agreement, costs that would fall into such a rate (e.g., administrative salaries) may be charged as direct line-item costs. If an organization wishes to apply for an indirect cost rate agreement, more information is available at http://rates.psc.gov.

16. If an organization has an indirect cost rate, what needs to be included in the submission?

Organizations must include a copy of the indirect cost agreement in Attachment 6: Other Relevant Documents.

17. Where can an organization find more information about costs pertaining to conferences and publications?

The following resource is recommended to facilitate development of an appropriate budget.

- The HHS Policy on Promoting Efficient Spending: Use of Appropriated Funds for Conferences and Meetings, Food, Promotional Items, and Printing and Publications, available at http://www.hhs.gov/asfr/ogapa/acquisition/effspendpol_memo.html.

Project Work Plan

18. What are the requirements of the Project Work Plan?

Table 2 in Appendix A, beginning on page 11 of the NCA NCC instructions, summarizes the key components for each section of the Project Work Plan.

19. **Should the Project Work Plan cover 1 year or all years of the project period?**

    The Project Work Plan should cover the upcoming budget period (1 year) and address ONLY activities to be supported under the HRSA NCA cooperative agreement.

20. **What is the minimum and maximum number of objectives that can be proposed for each goal?**

    Identify 1 to 10 objectives for each goal. For each objective, identify at least 1 activity, 1 data evaluation measurement, 1 person/area responsible, and 1 expected outcome. Only 1 time frame can be presented for each objective.

21. **How should expected outcomes be developed?**

    Identify at least one quantifiable outcome that will result directly from the objective. Since this is a 12-month Project Work Plan, short-term expected outcomes must be measurable by the end of the budget period (e.g., number of health centers to receive training by the end of the third year of the cooperative agreement).

22. **What are the differences between the Comments, Progress Report, and Narrative for Deletions fields?**

    The Comments field is an optional field and can be left blank for new objectives proposed in this NCC or if no changes were made in the Project Work Plan. Comments are required for edits or deletions made to any goal, objective, activity, data evaluation measurement, person/area responsible, time frame, or expected outcome.

    The Progress Report field is a required field. Use it to report progress toward each objective. If no progress has been made, indicate this within the field and provide a brief explanation. Progress must be reported for new objectives proposed in this NCC (e.g., No progress to report for this new Year 3 objective).

    The Narrative for Deletions field is required when pre-populated objectives are deleted. Use it to provide progress to date and explain why the objective will not be carried into Year 3. New objectives proposed in this NCC that are later deleted will not require a justification for deletion.

23. **Will the Project Officer (PO) be involved in the development of the Project Work Plan?**

    Changes to the Project Work Plan and other aspects of the submission should be discussed in advance with the PO. Please note that the PO will review the entire NCC submission (including the Project Work Plan) and, if necessary, negotiate with the NCA on required revisions and/or place conditions on the Notice of Award to address areas of non-compliance, as appropriate.

24. How can the Project Work Plan be utilized to both report progress on the FY 2012 objectives and list the proposed FY 2013 objectives?

There are two options for reporting progress for every objective.

- If the pre-populated objective will be retained, use the Progress Report field to report progress made since July 1, 2012 and edit the Objective Description field as needed to indicate plans for FY 2013.
- If the pre-populated objective will be significantly changed or replaced with something completely new for FY 2013, delete the objective and use the narrative box that appears to both report progress and justify the deletion. A new objective can then be added to replace the deleted objective.

25. How will the Project Officer understand what the Progress Report column means if it links back to the FY 2012 objectives and the Objective Description column has already been changed to reflect proposed FY 2013 objectives?

The Project Officer will be able to access the FY 2012 Project Work Plan when reviewing the FY 2013 NCC submission. However, if more context for the Progress Report notes is needed, provide a very brief summary of the FY 2012 objective in the Progress Report field (e.g., completed planning and development for 2 of the planned 5 webinars; held 1 of the planned 5 webinars), copy and paste the FY 2012 objective into the Comments field with an “FY 2012” header, or include information in Item 1 of the Program Narrative Update.

Performance Measures

26. What should the NCAs base quantitative progress on since the HRSA BPHC 2012 Grantee Satisfaction Survey did not address the four required Performance Measures?

NCAs should base progress on other available data sources (e.g., Uniform Data System, organizational surveys). If such data sources are not available, use the HRSA BPHC 2011 Grantee Satisfaction Survey data for the Quantitative Progress Toward Goal subfield and use anecdotal evidence for the Qualitative Progress Toward Goal subfield.

27. Where can results from the 2011 Grantee Satisfaction Survey be obtained?

If you no longer have a copy of the 2011 Grantee Satisfaction Survey data, contact the Project Officer identified on your last Notice of Award for assistance.

28. What are the required Performance Measures?

- **Performance Measure 1:** National Grantee Satisfaction. On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means Poor and 10 means Excellent, please rate the overall T/TA services provided by the NCA.

- **Performance Measure 2:** Program Requirements T/TA. On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means Not Very Helpful and 10 means Very Helpful, how helpful are the NCA T/TA services in assisting Health Centers to successfully meet Health Center Program requirements?
- **Performance Measure 3:** Performance Improvement T/TA. On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means Not Very Helpful and 10 means Very Helpful, how helpful are the NCA T/TA services in enhancing the performance and operations of Health Centers?
- **Performance Measure 4:** Program Development/Analysis T/TA. On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means Not Very Helpful and 10 means Very Helpful, how helpful are the NCA T/TA services in supporting the program development/analysis of Health Centers?

29. Can organizations propose additional Performance Measures?

Yes, NCAs may identify other measures relevant to their target audience(s). Additional measures must be defined by a numerator and a denominator, and progress must be tracked over time.

30. How do organizations report on a self-defined "Other" goal that is no longer tracked?

If a self-defined "Other" performance goal is no longer tracked, include a justification in the Comments field as to why reporting is no longer possible and/or relevant.

31. How should organizations report updates to Performance Measures within EHB?

The performance measures proposed in your last NCC submission will pre-populate in the form. Provide quantitative and qualitative details on your progress toward each measure in the Progress Towards Goal field. The Qualitative Progress Toward Goal field is the only pre-populated field that should be edited for the four required performance measures.

Note: Do not edit information pre-populated for the four required performance measures. For these measures, complete the Progress Towards Goal field and Comments field, as applicable.

Funding Restrictions

32. Are there activities that are ineligible for NCA funding?

Yes, NCA funding may not be used for the following purposes:

- Construction/renovation of facilities.
- Reserve requirements for state insurance licensure.
- Support for lobbying/advocacy efforts.

33. **Can section 330 funding be used to provide education on health centers and health care needs within the area served?**

    Yes, organizations may propose activities (e.g., issue briefs) to analyze issues impacting health centers and underserved populations. Such analysis on issues may be made available to the general public and other stakeholders such as policy makers, health centers, other safety net providers, community leaders, and potential partners. However, educational documents related to pending or existing legislation cannot be created utilizing federal funding.

Technical Assistance

34. **Who should be contacted if the organization is unable to access the NCC module in EHB or has difficulty submitting?**

    If you are experiencing any problems in EHB, please contact the BPHC Help Line at bphchelpline@hrsa.gov or 1-877-974-2742.

35. **How will organizations be notified that the NCC was successfully submitted in EHB?**

    EHB will generate a confirmation page upon successful submission. Organizations are encouraged to print this confirmation page, since no email confirmation will be sent.

36. **Who should be contacted with programmatic questions concerning the NCC submission requirements and process?**

    Refer to the NCA TA web site at http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/apply/assistance/nca for TA slides, a replay of the TA call, FAQs, and samples, among other resources. Organizations may contact their PO or Beth Levitz in the Bureau of Primary Health Care's Office of Policy and Program Development at BPHCNCA@hrsa.gov or 301-594-4300.

37. **Who should be contacted for specific questions about budget preparation, including eligible costs?**

    Contact the Grants Management Specialist (GMS) listed at the bottom of your Notice of Award. If your GMS is unable to assist, contact Brian Feldman in the Office of Federal Assistance Management's Division of Grants Management Operations at bfeldman@hrsa.gov or 301-443-3190.