

**PARAPROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE PROGRAM** – requires a certificate from the community and technical college (including tribal colleges and universities) upon completion of the program. (A behavioral health-related paraprofessional field includes but is not limited to: community health worker; outreach worker; social services aide; mental health worker; substance abuse/addictions worker; promotora; and youth workers.)

**PEER PARAPROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE PROGRAM** - must be recognized by the state government(s) within the proposed geographic coverage of the training program, and must offer a state licensure or certification to the trainee upon completion.

### **FUNDING**

- 1) Is the funding limited to organizations that already have a "certificate" program?

*RESPONSE: Yes. Eligible applicants for the paraprofessional training must offer a certificate program(s) in a behavioral health-related paraprofessional field (i.e., community health worker, outreach worker, social services aide, mental health worker, substance abuse/addictions worker, youth worker, promotora). Eligible applicants for peer paraprofessional certificate training programs include organizations recognized by their state government to offer peer paraprofessional training programs, and these programs must offer a state licensure or certification to the trainee upon completion.*

- 2) How much of the overall budget amount can be used for development?

*RESPONSE: There is a maximum of \$300,000 per budget year (a maximum of \$900,000 over the three year project period depending on available funding). As stated on page 2 of the FOA, 85 percent of total award amount must be applied to the student's tuition, fees and supplies with a range of \$1,700 to \$2,000 per student. A portion of the remaining 15 percent can be used to expand an existing certificate program to include more behavioral health related content; with the understanding that the same 15 percent will need to be used for other aspects of the grant program, including: recruiting students, developing relationships with field placement host sites, etc. See page 1 of the FOA for the program requirements.*

- 3) Would outreach activities fall under the 85 percent Tuition Support portion of the grant or under the 15 percent Administrative and Management Activities?

*RESPONSE: Outreach activities fall under the Administrative and Management Activities, which are listed on page 1 of the FOA. The 15 percent includes recruitment, which consists of outreach activities.*

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- 4) Are grant funds allowed for external evaluations?

*RESPONSE: Page 1 of HRSA-14-126 FOA states that the Administrative and Management Activities include: "Evaluate the program, collect needed program and performance information, and disseminate findings to appropriate audiences." Therefore, an external evaluation may be conducted using the 15 percent portion of funding,*

- 5) We have a question in terms of how the funds can be used. Does it always have to be directly to students for assistance in the program?

*RESPONSE: On page 2 of the FOA, no less than 85 percent of an applicant's overall requested budget (direct costs only) must be used to support the tuition, fees, and supplies for the enrolled students. Applicants may request a maximum of \$2,000 and a minimum of \$1,700 per student to cover student support and administrative and management activities for each 12-month period. No more than 12 consecutive months of student support is allowed per student.*

- 6) Can any of the 85 percent be used to cover costs of trainers?

*RESPONSE: No, that is part of the 15 percent portion.*

- 7) Can we provide \$2,000 times XX number of certificates each students receives? For example, \$2,000 times 4 certificates equals \$8,000 for student Y?

*RESPONSE: No. Each student is limited to \$1,700 to \$2,000 during the 12 month period.*

- 8) How can a relatively small paraprofessional training program at a community college increase the number of students trained?

*RESPONSE: As stated on page 2 and 5 of the FOA, in order to train greater numbers of students while ensuring appropriate economies of scale, institutions are encouraged to include multiple relevant certification programs in a single application. Multiple applications from an organization are not allowed.*

- 9) Are students required to graduate from the certificate program within the 12 month budget period?

*RESPONSE: Yes. Applicants may request a maximum of \$2,000 and a minimum of \$1,700 per student to cover all student support and administrative and management*

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*activities for each 12-month period. No more than 12 consecutive months of student support is allowed per student.*

- 10) Should the 8 percent indirect be taken from the 15 percent Administrative and Management Activities or is it in addition to the 15 percent?

*RESPONSE: For the Administrative and Management Activities, the 15 percent includes the 8 percent indirect.*

**Q and A that Applies for Both Paraprofessional Certificate Programs and Peer Paraprofessional Certificate Programs**

- 1) Are Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) eligible to apply?

*RESPONSE: Eligible applicants for paraprofessional certificate programs are accredited community and technical colleges, including tribal colleges and universities. Eligible applicants for peer paraprofessional certificate programs also include organizations recognized by their state government to offer peer paraprofessional training programs, and these programs must offer a state licensure or certification to the trainee upon completion. There are several AHEC Centers that are housed within a community and/or technical college, and these may apply if all other criteria can be met. AHEC is one example within a multitude of organization/institution types in the community that may be able to provide support and resources to recruit, train and place students.*

- 2) We are working on a prescription drug addiction and abuse education campaign. Can that project work within this RFP?

*RESPONSE: The campaign is an allowable activity as long it is under the 15 percent portion of the award and is part of the paraprofessional certificate program.*

- 3) Students will be trained on a "paraprofessional" level; thus, they will enter the field as a paraprofessional with a related scope of practice. Should this be taken into consideration when focusing on post-academic employment?

*RESPONSE: Yes. As indicated under the "NEEDS ASSESSMENT", you will need to provide an assessment of the labor market information related to the behavioral health paraprofessional job market in your geographic area, as well as the number of students graduating from your certificate program(s) and the job placement history of your program for graduates over the last five years.*

- 4) Is recruiting students from the existing workforce allowable as eligible student enrollees?

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*RESPONSE: Yes, the purpose of this program is to expand the behavioral health workforce by supporting education and training for behavioral health-related paraprofessionals at community and technical colleges, as well as providing training for peer professionals in other settings as appropriate.*

- 5) Is there a matching requirement for HRSA-14-126?

*RESPONSE: No, there is not a cost sharing or matching requirement for HRSA-14-126.*

- 6) Can current students be considered with the grant or is this focused primarily on recruiting new students? The current students are enrolled in a mental health certificate program.

*RESPONSE: The purpose of this program is to develop and expand the paraprofessional mental health and substance abuse workforce who will focus on children, adolescents, and transitional-age youth. The focus is on recruiting new students and not existing students.*

- 7) Is there a specified timeframe for recruitment and other developmental efforts?

*RESPONSE: Each budget year, the development, recruitment, training and field placement must take place within the 12 month budget period of performance for the grant. These activities can then continue into the following 2 budget years pending the availability of funding.*

- 8) We have several programs - are those stackable or is it better to merge if I have another certificate? Each of the certificates takes about 2 semesters.

*RESPONSE: Develop an approach that best serves the behavioral health needs of the community and employment needs of the trainees. Multiple certificate programs within a single application are appropriate. Multiple applications from an organization are not allowed.*

- 9) Our certificate paraprofessional training program is less than five years old. Does this categorize our application as non-responsive?

*RESPONSE: The element of providing five-years data related to number of students graduating from an applicant's certificate program(s), their demographics, and their job placement, is one of seven elements under Criterion 1: Need, and is an ideal. Provide the data you have available with an explanation of why you do not have five years of data. Programs need not be 5 years or older to meet the eligibility criteria.*

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- 10) We have a "Community Health Worker Certificate" but it is stand-alone and not related to any degree. Can we propose to develop this certificate into an associate-level degree or are any courses transferrable to the full degree?

*RESPONSE: Prerequisites for certificate programs for behavioral health paraprofessionals must be at a minimum a high school diploma or GED, and the certificate must be able to lead to an associate's and/or bachelor's degree in the future. The courses, curriculum and/or training associated with the certificate program must be able to count as credit towards an associate's or bachelor's degree; however, the certificate program itself does not need to include the attainment of an associate's and/or bachelor's degree. For example, the certificate program may be part of a career pathway with stackable credentials that leads to the attainment of the knowledge and skills required at different stages of a career.*

- 11) Does the entire certificate need to be behavioral health focused or are we talking about having a curriculum focused in behavioral health and a practicum or placement in an internship connected to the certificate in a behavioral health or primary care setting that is focused on behavioral health?

*RESPONSE: As stated in the program requirements, at a minimum, applicants must:*

- *Expand an existing paraprofessional certificate program(s) to include more behavioral health related content and curricula, and hands-on learning in the form of field placements.*
- *Focus should be on addressing behavioral health needs of at-risk children, adolescents, transitional-age youth, and their families.*
- *Create more slots in a paraprofessional certificate program(s) to expand the number of students trained with a focus on behavioral health and working with at-risk children and youth."*

**Q and A that Applies Only to the Peer Paraprofessional Certificate Programs**

- 1) We are the designated certifying body in our state for peer specialists. Currently, we do not teach with content related to young adults and teens. In order to create a curriculum that would be appropriate, we need to develop new curriculum and make it a designation or a specialty within our certification process. Is that acceptable?

*RESPONSE: Yes, if you focus on addressing behavioral health needs of at-risk children, adolescents, transitional-age youth, and their families.*

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- 2) Please give an example of "peer professional" certificate training that is "approved or accredited" by a state? Some states do NOT have licensing requirements for certain paraprofessional categories.

*RESPONSE: State recognition of licensing or certification is required for "Peer professional certificate training" only. The other paraprofessional training programs require certification by the accredited community and technical college, including tribal colleges and universities. If state certification does not currently exist for a given peer paraprofessional program, please work with the requisite state authorities to obtain this type of recognition for the program within the state.*

- 3) For the peer paraprofessionals, the training must be recognized by the state government(s) within the proposed geographic coverage of the training program, and must offer a state licensure or certification to the trainee upon completion. All certificates are approved by the state - is this acceptable to satisfy the state recognition statement?

*RESPONSE: Information regarding state certification for peer paraprofessional training must be included in Attachment 7.*

- 4) In working with paraprofessionals are we required to use "community or technical colleges", whereas if we are working with "peer paraprofessionals" we can use "other settings"? If so, what other "settings" are appropriate? Does this include non-academic venues, community-based organizations, family resource centers, etc.?

- 5) *RESPONSE: The training for peer paraprofessionals needs to be recognized by the state and can be based at accredited community or technical colleges. Peer professional certification programs that are not an accredited community or technical college, such as a consumer operated organization, must provide documentation of recognition by their state government to provide the peer professional certificate program as Attachment 6 (see page 5 of the FOA).*

- 6) Can HRSA provide examples of peer programs or information about peer support programs?

*RESPONSE: Applicants seeking examples of peer programs may visit <http://blogs.utexas.edu/mental-health-institute/files/2012/10/Peer-Specialist-Training-and-Certification-Programs-A-National-Overview.pdf> for the Peer Specialist Training and Certification Programs: A National Overview (2012) or <http://inaops.org/> for the International Association of Peer Supporters. Applicants may also contact their own local*

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*State Behavioral Health Authority for questions regarding peer specialist programs in their area.*