



**Office of Global Health
Office of the Administrator
Community-Led Monitoring of HIV Services in Sierra Leone
(HRSA-21-099)
Pre-application Conference Call
June 8, 2021**

Vision: Healthy Communities, Healthy People



Purpose of the Pre-review Conference Call

The purpose is to provide a general overview of the application and provide an opportunity for applicants to ask questions to ensure clarity on requirements.



Agenda

- OGH Vision and Mission
- Purpose of Funding Opportunity
- Award Information
- Eligibility
- Project Level Activities
- Application and Submission Information
- Application Review Information
- Application Submission Tips
- Project Officer's Role in the Objective Review
- Question and Answer Session



Office of Global Health

Vision

Healthy Communities, Healthy People Worldwide

Mission

To improve the health of Americans through global action by providing leadership to develop linkages, foster interconnectedness, and facilitate a mutual exchange of expertise that strengthens systems of health, access, workforce, equity, and quality



Purpose of Funding Opportunity

The purpose of this cooperative agreement, funded under the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), is to:

- use standardized data collection tools to conduct Community Led Monitoring (CLM) of HIV services in approximately 30 PEPFAR service sites in Sierra Leone for dissemination throughout the country to promote improvements in the national HIV response. This CLM program will use client feedback collected by trained community members in order to improve performance of PEPFAR service delivery.
- Areas of focus include HIV prevention services, testing services, treatment services (including linkage, retention, and viral load testing), service provider perceptions, attitudes, practices, and client satisfaction with services provided.

Refer to page 1-3 of the NOFO (Purpose and Background Sections)



Purpose of Funding Opportunity (Cont.)

- The goal of this program is to improve HIV care and services for a better client experience, and, ultimately, improve health outcomes through PEPFAR site and service monitoring.
- The objective of the program is to develop and conduct an assessment and reporting CLM system that reflects clients' experience in receiving quality HIV services in Sierra Leone and support stakeholder analysis with actionable insights.



Award Information

Anticipated Total Annual Available: **\$100,000**

Applications are accepted up to the ceiling amount of \$100,000 total cost (includes both direct and indirect, facilities and administrative costs) per year



Award Information (Cont.)

Estimated Number and Type of Award(s): One cooperative agreement

Period of Performance: September 30, 2021, through September 29, 2024 (3-years)

This program notice is subject to the appropriation of funds

Refer to the page i, and 4 of the NOFO



Eligibility

- Eligible applicants include domestic or foreign public or non-profit private entities, including schools of medicine, nursing, public health, management and public administration, and academic health centers, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and consortia consisting of such eligible organizations.
- Cost sharing/matching is not required for this program.



Eligibility (Cont.)

- HRSA will consider any application that fails to satisfy the deadline requirements referenced in [Section IV.4](#) non-responsive and will not consider it for funding under this notice.
- Multiple applications from an organization are not allowable.
- HRSA will only accept your **last** validated electronic submission, under the correct funding opportunity number, prior to the Grants.gov application due date as the final and only acceptable application.



Refer to page 6 of the NOFO

Project Level Activities

- CLM is a technique initiated and implemented by local community-based organizations and other civil society groups, networks of key populations (KP), PLHIV, and other affected groups, or other community entities that gather quantitative and qualitative data about HIV services. The focus is on getting input from recipients of HIV services in a routine and systematic manner that will translate into action and change.
- The PEPFAR Guidance for the 2022 U.S. Federal Fiscal Year (FY22), which begins October 1, 2021, offers additional information on PEPFAR's description and expectations for CLM.
- More information and tools on PEPFAR's approach to CLM are available at the following websites:
 - https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/PEPFAR_Community-Led-Monitoring_Fact-Sheet_2020.pdf
 - <https://www.pepfarsolutions.org/tools-2/2020/3/12/community-led-monitoring-implementation-tools>
- Applicants are encouraged to consult these sources in developing your application.



Project Level Activities

Activities Include

- A protocol and tools for administering CLM, covering the provision of high-quality HIV prevention services, testing services, HIV treatment services (including linkage, retention, and viral load testing), service provider perceptions, attitudes and practices, patient satisfaction, stigma and discrimination.
- Assessment of site-level activities to assure compliance with PEPFAR Minimum Program Requirements.
- A systematic process for analyzing CLM information and formulating recommendations. The application should include a description of the frequency of data collection, analysis, and dissemination.
- Communication and collaboration
- A monitoring and evaluation plan to show outcomes and impact.



Project Level Activities (*cont.*)

- PEPFAR currently supports sites in Western Area Urban and Rural, Port Loko and Kambia Districts, with plans to expand to Bo District in October 2021. The program will be supporting approximately 30 PEPFAR supported sites.
- Given the low overall national prevalence, the PEPFAR program in Sierra Leone focuses on key and priority populations, support extends to all PLHIV and individuals seeking HIV prevention and testing services.
- Applicants should describe actions to achieve rapid introduction and scale-up of activities following the award, including details of timeline and scale of activities.
- Will reach sub-populations such as pediatrics, adolescent girls and young women, and key and priority populations



Application and Submission Information: Application Package

Applicants must include the following:

- SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance
- Project Abstract (uploaded in box 15 of the SF-424)
- Project Narrative (uploaded to the Project Narrative Attachment Form)
- SF-424A Budget
- Budget Narrative (See Section 4.1.v. of HRSA's [SF-424 Application Guide](#))
- Project/Performance Site Location Form
- Attachments (page 19 of NOFO)
- Grants.gov Lobbying Form
- Assurances and Certifications
- Key Contacts



Application and Submission Information: Project Abstract

The project title is “**Community-Led Monitoring of HIV Services in Sierra Leone**” and includes a brief description of the proposed project including

- the needs to be addressed,
- the proposed services, and
- the population group(s) to be served.

Refer to Section 4.1.ix of HRSA’s [*SF-424 Application Guide*](#).



Application and Submission Information: Project Narrative

Sections:

- Introduction
- Needs Assessment
- Methodology
- Work Plan
- Resolution of Challenges
- Evaluation and Technical Support Capacity
- Organizational Information
- Budget and Budget Narrative



Refer to pages 10-18 of the NOFO

Project Narrative: Introduction

- This section should briefly describe the purpose of the proposed project.
- Describe the current state of client friendly services and the challenges related to the HIV cascade in Sierra Leone.

Refer to page 10 of the NOFO



Project Narrative: Needs Assessment

This section will help reviewers understand the community that you will serve with the proposed project.

- Outline the needs of the community. Describe and document the HIV population and priority sub-populations in Sierra Leone and their unmet health needs.
- Use and cite demographic data whenever possible to support the information provided.
- Discuss any relevant barriers in the service area that the project hopes to overcome.

Refer to pages 10 of the NOFO



Project Narrative: Methodology

Propose methods that address the stated needs and meet each of the previously described program requirements and expectations in this NOFO

- A protocol and tools for administering CLM.
- Assessment of site-level activities to assure compliance with PEPFAR Minimum Program Requirements (MPRs)
- A systematic process for analyzing CLM information and formulating recommendations.
- Communication and collaboration activities as per NOFO
- *Refer to pages 10-11 of the NOFO*



Project Narrative: Methodology cont.

- Propose a plan for project sustainability after the period of federal funding ends.
- As appropriate, include development of effective tools and strategies for ongoing staff training, outreach, collaborations, clear communication, and information sharing/dissemination with efforts to involve patients, families, and communities.
- Include a plan to disseminate reports, products, and/or project outputs so key target audiences receive the project information.

Refer to pages 10-11 of the NOFO



Project Narrative: Work Plan

The work plan must :

- Describe the activities or steps that will be used to achieve each of the objectives proposed during the entire period of performance in the Methodology section.
- Use a time line that includes each activity and identifies responsible staff.
- As appropriate, identify meaningful support and collaboration with key stakeholders (including clients) in planning, designing, and implementing all activities, including developing the application.
- Discuss how goals and objectives directly relate to the requirements and expectations of this initiative.
- Provide a work plan that demonstrates how the outcomes, strategies, and activities will take place over the course of the award. Include a detailed work plan for the first year of the project and a high-level plan for the two subsequent years.



Refer to page 11-12 of the NOFO

Project Narrative: Work Plan (Cont.)

- The work plan should include goals, objectives, and outcomes that are **SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-measured)**.
- Include all aspects of planning, implementation, and evaluation. The work plan should relate to the needs identified in the needs assessment and to the activities described in the project narrative with a minimum of the following:
 - Interventions for each goal.
 - Activities for each intervention.
 - Responsible staff to complete or monitor each activity.
 - Anticipated timeline for activity, intervention, and completion.

Refer to page 11-12 of the NOFO



Project Narrative: Resolution of Challenges

- Discuss challenges that you are likely to encounter in designing and implementing the activities described in the work plan, and approaches that you will use to resolve such challenges.
- Discuss the strength of your methodology in identifying and responding to these challenges. Describe how the five districts will be covered in your work plan, implementation and reporting.

Refer to page 12 of the NOFO



Project Narrative: Evaluation and Technical Support Capacity

- Describe the plan for the program performance evaluation that will contribute to continuous quality improvement. The program performance evaluation should monitor ongoing processes and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the project.
 - Include descriptions of the inputs (e.g., organizational profile, collaborative partners, key personnel, budget, and other resources), key processes, and expected outcomes of the funded activities.
- The monitoring and evaluation plan must show outcomes and impact.

Refer to page 12 of the NOFO



Project Narrative: Evaluation and Technical Support Capacity (cont.)

- Describe the systems and processes that will support your organization's performance management requirements through effective tracking of performance outcomes
- Describe current experience, skills, and knowledge, including individuals on staff, materials published, and previous work of a similar nature.
- As appropriate, describe the data collection strategy to collect, analyze and track data to measure process and impact/outcomes, and
- Describe any potential obstacles for implementing the program performance evaluation and your plan to address those obstacles.



Refer to page 12 of the NOFO

Project Narrative: Organizational Information

- Provide information demonstrating that the applicant is
 - a community-based organization (CBOs) or other civil society group; a network, other affected groups or community entities; or a consortium of such organizations;
 - is registered and based in Sierra Leone; and
 - has the capacity to gather quantitative and qualitative data about HIV service delivery and whose mission and activities focus on HIV programming.
- Succinctly describe
 - your organization's mission, structure, and scope of current activities;
 - The familiarity with the community and its needs based on interactions and observations obtained through community-based, immersive experience; and
 - how these elements all contribute to the organization's ability to implement the program requirements and meet program expectations.

Refer to page 13 of the NOFO



Project Narrative: Organizational Information *cont.*

- Describe the previous projects in Sierra Leone that reflect the expertise of proposed personnel in working collaboratively with Ministerial, education institutions, regulatory bodies, health management teams, other USG-funded programs, and stakeholders.
- Describe how you assessed, developed and implemented aspects of the HIV care continuum and international best practices for HIV service delivery at site and community levels in Sierra Leone.
- Describe your networks of CSOs throughout Sierra Leone, including a description of the diversity of populations and geographic area.

Refer to page 13 of the NOFO



Project Narrative: Budget and Budget Narrative

Follow the instructions in Section 4.1.iv of HRSA's [SF-424 Application Guide](#). A budget that follows the Application Guide will ensure that, if HRSA selects the application for funding, you will have a well-organized plan and, by carefully following the approved plan, may avoid audit issues during the implementation phase.

Reminder: The Total Project or Program Costs are the total allowable costs (inclusive of direct **and** indirect costs) you incur to carry out a HRSA-supported project or activity. Total project or program costs include costs charged to the award and costs borne by you to satisfy a matching or cost-sharing requirement, as applicable.



Budget Requirements

- Budget Information consists of:
 - SF424A Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (Included in the application package) - Refer to the SF424 Application guide for detailed instructions on how to complete this form
 - Program Specific Line Item budget for the 3 year period (Attachment 6) - Refer to the NOFO for detailed instructions
 - Budget Justification Narrative – Refer to the SF424 Application guide for instructions
 - Indirect Cost Rate Agreement if applicable (Attachment 7)



Budget Requirements

Budget information consists of:

- Provide a program-specific line item budget for each year of the three-year period of performance using the object class budget categories in the SF-424A (Attachment 6).
- Indirect costs on grants awarded to foreign organizations and performed outside of the territorial limits of the United States may be paid to support the costs of compliance with federal requirements at a fixed rate of eight (8) percent of modified total direct costs exclusive of tuition and related fees, direct expenditures for equipment, and sub-awards and contracts under the grant in excess of \$25,000.



Budget Requirements (Cont.)

- Allocation of multiple indirect cost rates: For institutions of higher education and nonprofits that have indirect costs benefitting major programs disproportionately, indirect rates will vary.
- Budget justification narrative

Refer to pages 14 of the NOFO and SF424 Application Guide



Budget Justification Narrative

- Provide a budget narrative that explains amounts requested for each line of the budget in Sections A-F.
- Describe each cost element and explain how each cost contributes to meeting the project's objectives/goals. Be very careful about showing how each item in the “other” category is justified.
- For subsequent budget years, highlight any changes from year one or clearly indicate that there are no substantive budget changes during the project period.
- **MUST** be concise. Do **NOT** use the justification to expand the project narrative.



Attachments

List of Attachments can be found in Section IV. 2. v. of the NOFO

- Upload attachments in the order specified to the Attachments Form in the application package
- Label each attachment clearly
- Unless otherwise noted, **attachments count toward the page limit**

Refer to pages 15-16 of the NOFO



Submission Dates and Times

The due date for applications under this NOFO is *July 19, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. ET*. HRSA suggests submitting applications to Grants.gov at least **3 calendar days before the deadline** to allow for any unforeseen circumstances. See Section 8.2.5 – Summary of emails from Grants.gov of HRSA's [SF-424 Application Guide](#) for additional information.

Refer to pages 17 of the NOFO



Application Review Information

Review Criteria are used to review and rank applications.

For HRSA-20-099 announcement, there are six (6) review criteria.

Application Review Information

Criteria	Points
Criterion 1: Need	10
Criterion 2: Response	35
Criterion 3: Evaluative Measures	10
Criterion 4: Impact	10
Criterion 5: Resources/Capabilities	25
Criterion 6: Support Requested	10
TOTAL POINTS	100



Application Review Information: Review Criteria Crosswalk

<u>Narrative Section</u>	<u>Review Criteria</u>
Introduction	(1) Need
Needs Assessment	(1) Need
Methodology	(2) Response
Work Plan	(2) Response and (4) Impact
Resolution of Challenges	(2) Response
Evaluation and Technical Support Capacity	(3) Evaluative Measures and (5) Resources/Capabilities
Organizational Information	(5) Resources/Capabilities
Budget and Budget Narrative	(6) Support Requested



Review Criteria #1: Need (10 points)

- The extent to which the application demonstrates the problem and associated contributing factors to the problem.
- The applicant should describe what they know about the current state of client friendly services and their understanding of the challenges related to the HIV cascade in Sierra Leone.

Refer to page 22 of the NOFO



Review Criteria #2: Response (35 points)

- The extent to which the proposed project responds to the “Purpose” included in the program description, including concise response to items M1 – M5 in the Methodology Section.
- The extent of the strength of the proposed goals and objectives and their relationship to the identified project.
- The extent to which the activities (scientific or other) described in the application are capable of addressing the problem and attaining the project objectives as described in the Methodology, Work Plan and Resolution of Challenges for each of the following sub-categories:
 - **M1** – Methodology for a protocol and tools for administering CLM. *(6 points)*
 - **M2** – Methodology for assessment of site-level activities to assure compliance with PEPFAR’s Minimum Program Requirements. *(11 points)*
 - **M3** – Methodology for analyzing CLM information and formulating recommendations. *(5 points)*
 - **M4** – Methodology of the communication and collaboration strategy *(10 points)*
 - **M5** – Methodology for sustainability after funding period ends. *(3 points)*

Refer to pages 22-23 of the NOFO



Review Criteria #3: Evaluative Measures (10 points)

- The strength and effectiveness of the application's plan for performance evaluation, which demonstrates the applicant's familiarity with the community and its needs, based on interactions and observations obtained through community-based, immersive experience, along with the method proposed to monitor and evaluate the project results.
- The extent that the monitoring and evaluation plan will demonstrate outcomes and impact.
- Evidence that the evaluative measures will be able to assess:
 - to what extent the program objectives have been met, and
 - to what extent these can be attributed to the project.

Refer to pages 23 of the NOFO



Review Criteria #4: Impact (10 points)

- The extent to which the proposed project has a public health impact and the project will be effective, if funded. This may include: the effectiveness of plans for dissemination of project results, the impact results may have on the community or target population, the extent to which project results may be national in scope, the degree to which the project activities are replicable, and the sustainability of the program beyond the this funding.
- The extent to which the applicant intends to successfully monitor, and rely on data, to manage performance, and to intervene as necessary; and any proposed approaches to explore and introduce new and innovative solutions to achieve results and cultivate sustainability.



Refer to pages 23 of the NOFO

Review Criteria #5: Resources/Capabilities (25 points)

- The extent to which the applicant is
 - a community-based organization (CBOs) or other civil society group; a network of Key Populations (KP), PLHIV, people with disabilities, other affected groups or community entities; or a consortium of such organizations; is registered and based in Sierra Leone; and
 - has the capacity to gather quantitative and qualitative data about HIV service delivery and
 - whose mission and activities focus on HIV programming project personnel are qualified by training and/or experience to implement and carry out the project in Sierra Leone.
- The capabilities of the applicant organization and the quality and availability of facilities and personnel to fulfill the needs and requirements of the proposed project in Sierra Leone.

Refer to pages 23-24 of the NOFO



Review Criteria #5: Resources/Capabilities *cont.*

5(a) Evaluation and Technical Support Capacity (10 points)

The extent to which the applicant

- Demonstrates capabilities to gather and communicate quantitative and qualitative data about client-centered HIV service delivery in Sierra Leone
- The organization's mission, structure, and scope of current activities.
- An organizational chart.
- The organization will routinely assess and improve the unique needs of target populations.
- The organization assesses, develops and implements aspects of the HIV Care continuum and international best practices for client-centered HIV service delivery.
- The applicant describes how they assess, develop and implement aspects of the HIV Care continuum and international best practices.

Refer to page 24 of NOFO



Review Criteria #5: Resources/Capabilities *cont.*

5(b) Organizational Information (15 points)

The extent to which the applicant

- Provides information demonstrating that the applicant is a community-based organization (CBOs) or other civil society group; is registered and based in Sierra Leone; and whose mission and activities focus on HIV programming.
- Succinctly describes their organization's mission, structure, and scope of current activities; and how these elements all contribute to the organization's ability to implement the program requirements and meet program expectations.
- Has implemented previous projects in Sierra Leone that reflect the expertise of proposed personnel in working collaboratively; and how well the activities at nation, district and site and community levels have demonstrated effective results and relationships.
- Has networks of CSOs throughout Sierra Leone.

Refer to page 24 of NOFO



Review Criteria #6: Support Requested (10 points)

The reasonableness of the proposed budget for each year of the period of performance in relation to the objectives, and the anticipated results.

- The extent to which costs, as outlined in the budget and required resources sections, are reasonable given the scope of work.
- The extent to which key personnel have adequate time devoted to the project to achieve project objectives.



Refer to pages 24-25 of the NOFO

Project Officer's Role in the Objective Review

- Advisory in nature
- Clarify issues for understanding
- Assure that reviewers are fully prepared and respond to any misplaced or inaccurate characterizations
- In collaboration with HRSA Office of Objective Review, assure that the review is complete, fair and consistent with all applicable requirements, criteria and results
- Grants Management Specialist has comparable responsibilities in relation to budget and other matters



Q&A



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