NWX-HRSA MCHB

Moderator: Hannah Reisner
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Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time all participants are in a listen-only mode. After the presentation we will conduct a question-and-answer session. To ask a question please press Star and then 1. I'd like to inform all parties that today's conference is being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect at this time. I would now like to turn to the conference over to your host Hannah Reisner. You may begin.

Hannah Reisner: Hi everyone. Welcome to the Pre-application Technical Assistance Webinar for the Emerging Issues in Maternal and Child Health Notice of Funding Opportunity. My name is Hannah Reisner and I'm a Public Health Analyst in HRSA's Maternal and Child Health Bureau and I'll be highlighting key aspects of the NOFO today.

We're also joined by MCHB Associate Administrator, Dr. Michael Warren who will provide an overview of the emerging issues program.

Today's agenda includes a brief overview of HRSA and MCHB and then we'll jump into program details and go over key sections of the NOFO including the project narrative and review criteria. We'll also hear from the

Program Grants Management Specialist, David Colwander who will discuss the budget and other key financial information.

Before we get started we have a few housekeeping items. You'll see on the bottom of your screen that there's a file share pod. In this pod you'll find a PDF of today's presentation and a copy of the full NOFO. A recording of today's Webinar presentation, slides and frequently asked questions will be posted to the program Web site listed here in the next week or so.

Feel free to enter any questions you have in the chat box as we go through the presentation but do note that we'll have a formal question-and-answer session at the end of the Webinar. To ensure that your questions get answered I encourage you to hold until then and we'll open up the phone lines for a verbal Q&A. To participate in this Q&A please be sure to dial in on the phone using the information in the upper left-hand corner of your screen.

Outside of today's Webinar there are a couple of other ways you can access the NOFO. And just a quick note, if you're having trouble seeing the images on this slide you can open the presentation in full-screen mode using the arrows at the top of the screen and that should make them a little easier to view.

The first option is that you can visit hrsa.gov at the link listed here to find the announcement for emerging issues. Or if you're accessing from the Emerging Issues page on grants.gov you'll want to click on the Package tab and select Preview then Download Instructions to download the full NOFO which is shown in these images.

And with that I'd like to introduce MCHB's Associate Administrator Dr. Michael Warren who will kick off our program overview. Dr. Warren?

Dr. Michael Warren: Good afternoon and thank you Hannah. And thank you to everyone for joining this call and for your interest in our Emerging Issues program. Before we talk more about this exciting new funding opportunity I want to take a few minutes to share a bit about HRSA and the Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

HRSA supports more than 90 programs that provide health (unintelligible) graphically isolated, economically disadvantaged or medically challenged. We do this through grants and cooperative agreements to more than 3000 awardees including communities and faith-based organizations, colleges and universities, hospitals, state and local tribal governments and private entities.

HRSA's (unintelligible) to people across the country including people living with HIV and AIDS, pregnant women, mothers and their (unintelligible) be able to access quality healthcare. You can read more about HRSA by visiting hrsa.gov.

The Maternal and Child Health Bureau or MCHB administers programs, supports research and invests in workforce training to ensure the health and well-being of mothers, children and families across their life span. In partnership with states and communities MCHB supports healthcare and public health services for an estimated 60 million people nationwide. You can learn more about MCHB programs and investments@mchb.hrsa.gov.

I want to share a little bit about our paradigm for improving Maternal and Child Health. Within MCHB we're framing our work through this lens of accelerate upstream together. And here's what we mean by this statement.

For accelerate we have to accelerate the pace of change in improving key MCH population outcomes. We've made a lot of improvement in some areas

like infant mortality but we can't be complacent with the pace of change or the current state of outcomes.

Similarly and importantly we have to eliminate disparities that exist and have existed for many years for MCH outcomes. We have to accelerate our progress in this area.

For upstream at MCH we talk about the life course model and we know that early experiences impact a person's health care trajectory over the course of their life span. While we're really good at taking care of sick people in this country we have to think upstream about how we keep them well and healthy in the first place and prevent them from ever becoming ill. And how do we do that?

Well when we think about what determines a person's overall health and well-being health care accounts only for about 10% to 20%. Other factors like health behaviors, community and environment collectively play a much larger role. So we have to think upstream about those factors beyond health care that influence health and we have to continue to address those.

And finally there's together. We can't do this work alone. We at MCHB must work closely with you with other parts of the federal government, with other partners within HRSA with state and local partners. And that deliberately includes families and consumers as we all work to accelerate upstream together.

So little bit about the emerging issues NOFO. When we started to design this program we wanted to find a way to rapidly provide support to address issues that are hard to plan for. And we recognize that many of the issues that have

emerged in MCH are difficult to anticipate. And so it's difficult to set resources aside in advance for those.

So our intention with this program is to provide our support to help MCH organizations strategically develop the necessary capacities so that you feel equipped to tackle emerging issues more proactively.

What is unique about this program is that its objectives are broad enough to allow for flexibility and creativity and for applicants to tailor proposals to specific needs of their states and local communities.

So for program overview, the purpose of this program is to strengthen the capacity of award recipients to respond to the emerging issues that affect maternal and child populations in their states and local communities and we have three objectives for the program.

The first is that recipients will measurably increase capacity under at least one of three capacity areas we've developed for this program. Those are data and informational systems, workforce development and strategic partnerships.

It's expected that applicants will center their proposal around at least one of these areas which we'll discuss further throughout this Webinar. You can read about each of these capacities in detail on Page 5 of the NOFO.

The second objective is that recipients will implement an innovative approach which for the purposes of this NOFO is defined as an approach that is not duplicate of any activities the recipient may already carry out. And third the program's final objective is that the recipient will sustain the activities that it implements and its associated capacity improvements. This program only has a one year period of performance so implementing strategies that will allow

projects to continue beyond the duration of this grant is a key component of this program.

In total MCHB is investing $1.5 million into this program and we expect to fund six awards at up to $250 million each. The project date is September 1, 2021 and the project will end on August 31, 2022. With that I'll hand it back over to Hannah Reisner who will go over the NOFO and application details. Thank you for joining us today.

Hannah Reisner: Great thank you Dr. Warren. So we are going to start with eligibility. And the eligibility for this program includes any domestic or private entity including Indian tribes and tribal organizations. So if applicants are trying to determine if there is a (dip) to this funding we encourage them to pay close attention to the program objectives, project narrative and review criteria.

Additionally, as Dr. Warren mentioned this is a one year grant and activities will require an efficient implementation. So we also ask applicants to pay special attention to projects throughout their project narrative instructions in order to demonstrate that your organization possesses the items necessary to execute your proposed project within the period of performance. So this includes knowledgeable personnel, facilities other infrastructure, financial resources, existing partnerships, et cetera.

These are the program expectations that should be kept in mind as you design your project proposal. You're expected to select at least one of the following capacity areas and projects may address more than one of these. Your project and the capacity areas you choose should address emerging issues specific to your state or local community and that affects an MCH population which for purposes of this NOFO includes women, children ages birth to 21, children with special health care needs, adolescents and families.

The NOFO also has a list of recommended data sources to inform your selection of an emerging issue. And at the top of this list is the Title V five year state needs assessments. MCHB encourages all its applicants to use this as a starting point for understanding the current emerging issues specific to your state. And you can find more information about the Title V information system that houses these needs assessments in Appendix B of the NOFO.

And all applications are expected to demonstrate that their proposal is innovative and sustainable. For the purposes of this program innovation is designed as projects that are not duplicate of your organization's current activities and will contribute to an improvement in your organization's performance outcomes.

HRSA also expects you to demonstrate that your project is sustainable beyond this grant funding. And full guidance on the sustainability is found on Page 8 of the NOFO.

Applicants are expected to comply with the instructions in HRSA SF-424 Application Guide unless otherwise stated in the NOFO and applications may not exceed more than 40 pages. The standard OMB approved forms that are included in the SF-424 application package do not count towards the page limit. But included in the page limit is the project abstract, project narrative, budget narrative and attachments. So we're going to dive into these section in a little more detail now.

I am going to move through the next several slides fairly quickly. But the pages in the NOFO that each of these slides corresponds to are noted so please refer to the document for full details and we can revisit these sections as necessary during the question-and-answer portion as well.

All project abstracts are expected to include the amount of funding you're requesting, the capacity areas you'll focus on and a brief summary of the associated activities. Also include your selected emerging issues and the MCH population that it affects, specific measurable objectives that you expect to achieve and the geographic scope of your project which would be either a state or local.

The introduction should overview the entire project including your capacity areas of focus, emerging issue and MCH population and other relevant information related to the NOFO's objectives and program expectations.

The purpose of the Needs Assessment section is to help reviewers understand the current capacities of your organization and the barriers you face in addressing your emerging issue. You need should be framed within the selective capacity area you've chosen to improve as well as your selected emerging issue and the MCH population that it affects.

The methodology should outline and demonstrate a thoughtful method for achieving the NOFO goals and objectives. And additionally you're expected to develop and describe objectives specific to your project. Can everyone hear me okay?

(Liz):   Yes.

Hannah Reisner: Okay thanks (Liz). All right so additionally your method should – methodology should result in some form of evidence that your project and its outcome have a positive impact on MCH populations. And this may be data, policies, products or direct services depending on the specific activities of your project.

The work plan is how you'll demonstrate the way in which you'll feasibly implement your methodology and successfully carry out your proposed project. In this section you are expected to outline the specific activities that you will implement to achieve your project's objectives including the key personnel but are responsible for each of these activities and how you will engage with relevant stakeholders. This is also where you will describe in detail how you plan to sustain this project's activities. And please note that you're expected to include a logic model in this section as well.

In the Resolution of Challenges section you will describe any anticipated challenges you may encounter as well as a plan to address each of them. And this slide list some of the potential challenges such as achieving the projects objectives within the one year period of performance and sustaining the project's activities. But of course this list is by no means exhaustive and the challenges are likely to vary from project to project.

The Evaluation and Technical Support Capacity section should include an evaluation plan that describes the expected outputs and outcomes of your project, all relevant baseline measurements and a plan to evaluate any of the evidence that demonstrates your project's impact on MCH populations.

Please also be sure to discuss how this evaluation plan will effectively assess that your project achieved its objectives and any obstacles that you may face in implementing the evaluation plan.

And the last section of the project narrative is organizational information. Here you are expected to overview information related to your organization's mission, structure and scope of activities as well as its experience with the fiscal management of grants and specifically managing federal grants.

In addition to the staffing plan and biographical sketches this is an opportunity to discuss the existing skills, capabilities, resources and anything else that your organization possesses that will demonstrate you have the ability to implement and complete the project within the year.

Please follow the NOFO instructions and provide the following attachments accordingly. These attachments are all noted throughout the project narrative and full description of each can be found on Page 13 of the NOFO. And I'm going to now hand it over to David Colwander, the Grants Management Specialist for this program and he will discuss the budget and budget narrative sections of your application. David?

David Colwander: Thank you Hannah. I'm going to go over the - there we go, the duties of the Grants Management Office and how it relates to assisting you in completing your application and our duties managing the grants going forward.

Hi. I'm David Colwander. I will be the Grants Management Specialist on this program.

DMS provides clarification on the regulations financial aspects and project budget matters. We monitor the compliance of the grant as it moves forward with regulation and cost policies. We monitor receipt of all reports and follow-up and as necessary to obtain any delinquent reports. And we issue all notice of awards that may be required to say prior approvals or such.

Tips and reminders for this program, a total award amount is up to $250,000. It's a one-year budget and project period. And indirect cost agreement if you have one should be included within the application. That does not count

against pages. The - if you do not have one, you can use the de minimis rate of 10% and you should identify that in your narrative.

Applicants must provide a complete budget cost breakdown in the narrative and also on the SF-424A budget sheet. Initial budget sheet Section A includes the grant program, the analog number for assistance and your requested amount there.

This is only a one year grant period so as you see on Section B you'll only need to complete the first column. And this Section B has all the various cost object categories -- personnel, travel, equipment contractual, et cetera.

Each one of these you will need to provide a budget - corresponding budget narrative. Provide a budget narrative that explains the amounts requested in each line of the Section B for the object category. Budget narratives should specifically describe how each item will be support your achievement for the produced objectives.

Personnel fringes. Personnel should describe in the narrative also include - are also included in the budget. An example get the name of the person, the position they'll hold, their annual or base salary or weight - rate how much is charged to the award which corresponds to the effort or FTE and description of the role and responsibilities as they relate to the project goals.

Note that the salary cap now for this year is 199,300. Also in fringe benefits please describe how these are calculated and applied to the individuals.

Travel we are looking for a narrative that explains what the travel is for, what we need, how many attendees. You can break it down per attendees with

airfare, hotel per diem registration and then derive the total cost for that meeting with the cost per person and the number of attendees.

Supplies, give a clear and justified request for the supplies whether they are general office supplies and what that might consist of or any other supplies needed. The difference between supplies and equipment, equipment is a tangible non-expendable property charged directly to the award with a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of $5000 or whatever your capital property policy is.

So if any item say as a laptop or something that costs less than $5000 that would be considered in supply. And you can request that in supplies and justify why you need it along with that.

Contracts, provide a clear explanation and the purpose of each contract sub award and how the costs were estimated and the specific contract sub award deliverables. In contracts you also want to if they are larger contracts want to - may want to break them down similar to a budget justification just for them with personnel, supplies, et cetera.

Other categories are items that are requested, must have a specific cost list and a explanation and justification. They can be printing costs, telephone fees, training activities, office supplies. Sometimes people put in here if there's any required meetings that you have meeting expenses.

That concludes my portion of this. And here is my contact information with HRSA and thank you for all considering applying. And I would like to return it over to Hannah.

Hannah Reisner: Thanks David. And as we mentioned if anyone had issues picking up the audio we will post full recording and the slides on the program Web site in the next week or so, so you'll be able to review if you missed any of that info.

So next up is the review criteria. And HRSA uses an objective and nonbiased process to fairly assess each application. And these are described in detail in the NOFO to help applicants understand the standards against which their proposals will be evaluated. I'm going to briefly overview each of these criteria to give you an idea of the basis upon which objective reviewers will evaluate and score your applications.

This crosswalk which is found on Page 13 of the NOFO summarizes which sections in the project narrative each criteria corresponds to. However reviewers will consider the entire application when they score.

Reviewers will score the need criterion based on the degree to which you justify your selection of an emerging issue. So you are encouraged to refer to the NOFO's definition of an emerging issue and its list of suggested data sources. Reviewers will also consider the extent to which you describe the unmet needs of the MCH population affected by your emerging issue in your organization's capacities to address the emerging issue and needs of the MCH population.

The response criteria holds the biggest chunk of points and is comprised of three subsections related to the methodology, the feasibility of your work plan and the extent to which you justify your response. In these subsections reviewers will assess the specificity and measurability of your objectives and how closely they align to the NOFO's objectives how well your work plan demonstrates that your project can be completed within one year and the

strength of the evidence that your application provides for justifying your project and its proposed methodology.

The evaluative measures criteria corresponds directly to the evaluation and technical support capacity section in your project narrative. And reviewers will assess your evaluation plan and consider the strength of the systems and processes you'll use to collect, manage and analyze your data as well as how well you demonstrate that your evaluation plan will assess the extent to which you achieved your project's objectives and the extent that achievements can be contributed to this specific project.

The impact criterion has the second-largest chunk of points with two subsections. As we've mentioned throughout this Webinar, sustainability is an important component of this program and you'll be scored based on the extent to which you incorporate a sustainability plan into your proposal.

Reviewers will also assess the extent to which you demonstrate that your project will have a positive impact on the MCH population that your emerging issue effects.

For the resources and capabilities criterion in addition to assessing that your organization possesses the necessary resources to carry out the project, there are a couple key things that reviewers will look for that I want to point out. Your staffing plan which you'll submit as Attachment 2 should demonstrate that the total sum of all key personnel working on this project is equal to at least one full-time equivalent. And your biographical sketches which you'll submit as attachment three are expected to demonstrate that your key personnel have the appropriate education and/or work experience as detailed here and in the NOFO.

And the final criterion response to your budget in project - in budget narrative section and reviewers will assess the degree to which your costs are reasonable and the evidence that you provide to demonstrate that these grant funds will primarily be used to directly support your capacity for strengthening activities.

And we receive lots of questions about what makes for a competitive application. So to provide some context, last year 75% of successful applications to MCHB funding opportunities received a score of 95 or above out of 100 during objective reviews. And the difference between an application being funded or not often came down to just one point.

So it is important to remember that every point counts. And in addition to carefully following the instructions in the project narrative, we do encourage you to pay close attention to these review criteria when you're developing your application.

And just a few final application reminders. Please be sure to review all instructions in the NOFO and SF-424 application guides thoroughly and carefully. Keep in mind the 40-page limit as you develop your proposal and remember that all applications are due April 9.

We do also encourage applicants to submit a Letter of Intent which are requested by February 5. And all the details for the Letter of Intent are found in the NOFO on Page 16.

For any programmatic or NOFO related questions you can continue reaching out to me at emergingissuesmch@hrsa.gov. And if you have financial or budget related questions you can reach out to David. And one last reminder

that we will post the recording, slides and frequently asked questions on the programs Web site which you can find the link in the chat and in these slides.

And what that we'll go ahead and begin the question-and-answer portion if there are any questions. (Kristin) can you give everyone a reminder of how to ask questions over the phone?

Coordinator: Yes thank you. We will now begin the question-and-answer session. If you'd like to ask a question please press Star 1. Please unmute your phone and record your name clearly when prompted. Your name is required to introduce your question. To cancel your request please press Star 2.

Once again to ask a question, please press Star 1, record your name clearly when prompted. To cancel your request please press Star 2.

Hannah Reisner: David it looks like there's a couple budget questions coming through. I see, "Is there a limit on the indirect rate that can be applied to this grant?" And then also a question about IRB reviews going into the budget. Do you have any input on that?

David Colwander: There is no limit on the indirect. It just should be further negotiated rate or the de minimis rate. And they should identify what indirect rate they are using. Where was the budget one that you were referencing?

Hannah Reisner: Just a couple above the indirect rate if you're looking at the Adobe but they want to know if it's acceptable to put the IRB review into the budget?

David Colwander: That I'm not sure of right now. I can try to follow-up on that later.

Coordinator: And at this time speakers, there are no questions on the phone lines.

It looks like we do have one question that is coming in from (Don Strong). (Don) your line is now open.

(Don Strong):   Yes hello. We are working with a couple of jurisdictions that are in different states but are in the same area and have a similar problem. Is that an acceptable approach in bringing strategic partnerships together?

Hannah Reisner: You can go ahead and repeat the first part. They have different emerging issues? Is that what you're saying?

(Don Strong):   No they have a similar emerging issues but they are in different states okay, but they have similar emerging issues. So is that an acceptable approach?

(Marie):   Hannah I can take that on.

Hannah Reisner: Sure, go ahead (Marie).

(Marie):   I think just remember that how do you justify your – you need to justify the project and why you're incorporating three states using the same approach. And you need to substantiate that with data from each of those jurisdictions you are including in your proposal.

(Don Strong):   Thank you very much.

Coordinator: And just as a reminder if you'd like to ask a question over the phone line you can press Star 1, record your name when prompted. To withdraw your request Star 2.

(Marie):   Hannah do you or David want to take on the one about standards or specification on how the funds are spent?

Hannah Reisner: Sure. I would just start by saying to make sure that you're reviewing both the information David presented in the NOFO as far as funding restrictions and guidance with the budget and then also refer to the review criteria to see how reviewers will be scoring your budget proposals. David I don't know if you have more input on that as well?

David Colwander: Not too much, just again the salary limitation that was presented and that the costs need to be justified towards the award.

Hannah Reisner: Seeing a question about collaborating with state departments of health or other state agencies. That is not a requirement but that is a recommendation that you're leveraging any relevant partnerships or collaborations as you develop your project proposal and execute the project. And that's detailed a bit more in the NOFO as well.

(Marie):   I think there's a question from (Alicia H.). "Is collaboration with state departments of health or other state agency require or recommended?" I can take that on.

                   It is not the requirement. We highlighted the availability of the Title V needs assessment data for use. That will be a good place for anyone to go to as to help inform the selection of the emerging issue. However you can also rely on other sources of data.

                   If you already have a relationship through your department of health or other state agency certainly that would be useful because we – you need to consider given this is a one year funding that you're going to need to address

sustainability. And the more you're already connecting with existing organizations the more likely your work will be continue and that will be as was noted earlier, that's a critical review criteria.

Hannah Reisner: And anymore questions in the queue (Kristin)?

Coordinator: Not at this time.

Hannah Reisner: And we'll give it another minute if anyone has anything last minute that they want to type in the chat. Otherwise again I'll put our contact information back up here quickly and you can feel free to email us.

Let me go back up to this question about IRB from (Megan). Feel free to email us and we can follow-up to make sure that that question gets answered thoroughly.

Let's see I'm seeing a question of about the states needs assessment. So the five year state needs assessments are going to be housed in MCHB's Title V information system. Let me see if I can get the link here quickly for you.

(Marie): And I think (EJ Tom) is on the phone and perhaps…

Hannah Reisner: Yes (EJ)'s on the line so the - oh perfect, you beat me to it. So the ,(TBIS) has all of the five years state needs assessment as well as some other information that you might find helpful when you're putting together your proposal and that's all detailed in the NOFO at the very bottom in Appendix B.

So you can go ahead and take a look at that and feel free again to email us if you have any issues accessing the Web site or navigating it and (EJ) can help out with that as well.

(EJ Tom):   Thanks Hannah. Just to address that question, you'll see in the chat that I put the exact link on where the state application and annual reports are located in the (TBIS) Web site. When you go there you can search by state and then you can look specifically at the 2021 Application 2019 Annual Reports. And that's where the needs assessment submission is.

Hannah Reisner: Perfect. Thank you (EJ). Yes we should note that the needs assessments are only done every five years and so those are embedded in this year's annual report. Correct me if I am wrong (EJ) but there is a small distinction between the two.

All right if there are no other questions then we will close out for the afternoon. Again feel free to email us and if not we look forward to viewing your proposals as they come in.

(Marie):   Hannah one other point. Do you want to - I - tell folks where they can go for answers to questions that may come in later or were not addressed today?

Hannah Reisner: Yes. So we noted before that we will post everything, the presentation slides as well as a recording of the Webinar. And then we'll compile a list of frequently asked questions. So you'll be able to find all of that on the program Web site. I'm trying to scroll back here quickly so you can see. But it will be at this link here on this slide. All right thanks everyone.

(Marie):   Thank you.

((Crosstalk))

Coordinator: That concludes today's conference. You may now disconnect.

END