

Request for Proposals

BUILDING EVALUATION CAPACITY FOR EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS

October 14, 2011

Dear Prospective Applicant:

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT) is soliciting proposals for mini-subcontracts to enhance local-level program evaluation capacity. Those eligible to apply include 43 programs that participated in a Regional Service to Science Academy between January and May 2011. You are receiving this solicitation because you are listed as a contact person for one of these programs.

This Request for Proposals supports SAMHSA's continuing effort to demonstrate how evaluation capacity-building can improve the assessment and documentation of program effectiveness. SAMHSA's CAPT expects to fund approximately 15 mini-subcontract awards of up to \$30,000 each for one year, **based on availability of fiscal year 2012 funds**, and provided applicants submit proposals that are rated by reviewers as technically acceptable.

Proposals should be submitted electronically. You may access instructions for online submission, along with the proposal guidelines and expectations attached here, at <http://msc.servicetoscience.hhd.org>. Organizations submitting a proposal will need to provide a username and password, which will be sent to you under separate cover. **If you are unable to complete this application online and prefer to submit a paper copy, then please contact Carmelita Grady at the email or phone number provided below.** Note that under SAMHSA's guidelines, CAPT staff or consultants shall not assist program applicants directly in the writing or preparation of applicant proposals.

The deadline for submitting a proposal in response to this announcement is **Friday, November 18, 2011 at 5:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time**. Thank you for your consideration of the attached solicitation. We look forward to reviewing your response to this request.

Sincerely,

Kim Dash, M.P.H., M.A.
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Enclosure

cc: Carol McHale, Ph.D., Senior Social Science Analyst, Division of Systems Development, CSAP, SAMHSA, DHHS

SERVICE TO SCIENCE INITIATIVE

Request for Proposals

BUILDING EVALUATION CAPACITY FOR EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS

A Project Supported by:

U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)

Proposal Due Date: November 18, 2011

Issued by:

**The Center for the Application of Prevention
Technologies (CAPT)**

Important Request for Proposals Information and Timeline (2011-2012)

Advance notice to programs announcing the Request for Proposals (RFP) release:	September 30, 2011
Release of RFP targeted to eligible applicants:	October 14, 2011
Questions due regarding the RFP:	October 21, 2011
Responses to questions:	October 27, 2011
Webinar for RFP:	November 1, 2011
RFP DUE:	November 18, 2011
Proposal review process:	November 21, 2011 – January 13, 2012
Notice of subcontract awards:	January, 2012
Orientation for award recipients:	January, 2012
Period of performance:	February 2012 – February 2013

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I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Service to Science is a national initiative supported by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration's (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) to enhance the evaluation capacity of programs and practices that address substance abuse prevention or behavioral health needs in states, tribes, jurisdictions, and communities. The Service to Science initiative provides direct assistance to program developers, implementers, and evaluators to help assess their programs' effectiveness through more rigorous evaluation methods. Ultimately, Service to Science seeks to support state prevention efforts by ensuring that more local programs addressing substance abuse and mental, emotional, or behavioral health needs are able to meet evidence-based standards.

One type of direct assistance provided through the Service to Science initiative is the award of competitive mini-subcontracts. Over the past six years, more than 175 programs across the United States, Native American Tribes, and Pacific Jurisdictions have been funded through a competitive process to enhance evaluation capacity. These programs have operated in such diverse settings as community-based organizations, schools, and health clinics; and have served diverse populations. Their evaluation enhancements have included, but have not been limited to, such things as implementing an enhanced evaluation research design, developing and administering an assessment tool that includes reliable and valid measures of outcome and intervening variables, running more complex analyses of data collected for evaluation purposes, conducting a process or implementation evaluation, and preparing an article for publication based on evaluation findings.

This year (FY2012), SAMHSA's Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT) shall award approximately 15 mini-subcontracts to state-nominated programs eligible to apply based on their participation in a Service to Science Academy held between January 2011 and May 2011. Each mini-subcontract award may total up to \$30,000 for one year, **pending availability of fiscal year 2012 funds**. A committee comprised of evaluators with expertise in substance abuse policy, programs, and practices shall review each proposal. Proposals are reviewed based on their individual merits. Proposals are not compared based on the sophistication of the evaluation enhancements proposed. For example, a proposal to develop a survey instrument to assess participant progress has no advantage over one proposing to prepare a journal article reporting final evaluation results. Therefore, programs should propose evaluation enhancements that are realistic for their specific interventions and achievable within the guidelines and time frame outlined in this RFP. That is, applicants should propose enhancements that are appropriate next steps given the progress they have made on evaluation.

II. SUBCONTRACT AWARD INFORMATION

A. The CAPT's Role

Service to Science is an initiative of SAMHSA/CSAP's Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT). Therefore, the CAPT shall administer all aspects of the Service to Science mini-subcontract process. This includes release of the RFP, collection of the proposals, facilitation of the proposal review process, and announcement of mini-subcontract awardees. After awards have been announced, the CAPT shall negotiate the subcontracts with the new awardees, provide a two- to four-hour initial consultation with each awardee, and collect and review awardees progress and final reports (discussed under reporting requirements). Kim Dash, Service to Science Chief for the CAPT, is responsible for overseeing all Service to Science activities and tasks. The CAPT Service to Science Mini-subcontract Administrator is Carmelita Grady, PhD. Ms. Dash's and Dr. Grady's contact information is provided in the *"Important Request for Proposals Information and Timeline"* section.

B. Period of Performance

The award of mini-subcontracts is contingent upon the availability of fiscal year 2012 funding. The period of performance for this award is February 2012 to February 2013.

C. Questions and Answers

Applicants may submit questions to the CAPT regarding the requirements of this RFP via E-mail to CAPT Service to Science Mini-subcontract Administrator Carmelita Grady at cgrady@crpcorp.com. Applicants should copy Kim Dash (kdash@edc.org) and Stacey Brown (sbrown@crpcorp.com) on such correspondence. The deadline for submitting questions is **Friday, October 21, 2011, at 5:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time**. Written responses to the questions will constitute an amendment and will be considered part of the RFP. Written responses shall be distributed by E-mail to all applicants on Thursday, October 27, 2011, unless otherwise notified.

D. Subcontract Award Amount

SAMHSA/CSAP expects to fund up to 15 fixed-price mini-subcontract awards to Service to Science programs eligible to apply based on their participation in a CAPT Regional Service to Science Academy, including those programs participating in a decentralized academy or onsite consultation, conducted between January 2011 and May 2011. Each mini-subcontract award may total up to \$30,000 for one year, **pending availability of fiscal year 2012 funds**.

E. Subcontract Award Announcement

The CAPT shall announce the subcontract awards by January 31, 2012. A mid-term progress report is due in the 6th month of the performance period. The final report is due 30 days after the 12th month of the performance period (March, 2013).

F. Orientation

Awardees are required to participate in an orientation conference call facilitated by the CAPT to discuss the terms and reporting requirements of the mini-subcontract. The date and time of the conference call shall be coordinated with all mini-subcontract recipients. The CAPT shall provide the agenda and a toll-free dial-in number. CAPT staff, including the STS Leads from each region, shall also be on the call. In addition, within a few weeks of award, mini-subcontract recipients shall participate in a two- to four-hour consultation with their CAPT Evaluation Technical Assistance (TA) Provider. The primary purpose of this meeting will be to address any reviewer comments and concerns regarding the proposal submitted.

III. MINI-SUB APPLICATION PROCESS

A. Eligibility

Participants eligible to apply are those programs that either participated, between January 2011 and May 2011, in a Regional CAPT Service to Science Academy or a “decentralized academy” that involved an initial site visit by a CAPT staff member and/or consultant.

B. Proposal Requirements

The purpose of this mini-subcontract is to support building or enhancing evaluation capacity to improve substance abuse prevention program performance and strengthen capacity to document substance abuse prevention outcomes. Funding for these mini-subcontracts shall not be used to support curriculum development, programmatic activities, or expansion of prevention services. Proposals requesting funds for curriculum development or programmatic activities/services, and proposals that do not address the purpose of this solicitation are deemed technically unacceptable and unresponsive to the RFP and shall be returned to the sender.

Service to Science technical assistance providers shall deliver substantive technical assistance following the Service to Science Academy, but shall not participate in the preparation of applicants’ proposals, beyond a referral to outside resources. It is important that applicants demonstrate their readiness and commitment to participate in Service to Science activities supported by the mini-subcontract award, including inquiries about the impact of this initiative conducted by CAPT evaluators.

C. Proposal Content

Organize your proposal as follows:

1. Front Matter

- a. Cover Page/Sheet
 - i. Name of primary agency/organization and its mailing address, telephone, fax number, and E-mail address
 - ii. Name and title of person with authority to sign subcontract award
 - iii. Name of contact person, title, mailing address, telephone, fax number, and E-mail address **(If different from the person authorized to sign the subcontract)**
- b. Proposal Abstract
 - i. An abstract of your proposal and evaluation enhancement, not to exceed 500 words. The abstract is not scored. It may be used when information is requested by the funding source.
- c. Table of Contents
 - i. Titles/headers and page numbers for each of the major sections and subsections of the Proposal Narrative

2. Proposal Narrative and Budget Outline (20 pages maximum)

- a. Section 1. Program Description (2 pages, maximum)
- b. Section 2. Description of Proposed Evaluation Capacity-Building Enhancement (8 pages, maximum)
- c. Section 3. Evaluation Capabilities (4 pages, maximum)
- d. Section 4. Staff Capabilities (4 pages, maximum)
- e. Section 5. Budget with Justification Narrative (2 pages, maximum)

3. Appendices

- a. Appendix A. Program logic model, flow chart or schematic drawing depicting program's theory of change
- b. Appendix B. Annotated list of program evaluation reports or articles
- c. Appendix C. Resumes of key staff (project director, project manager, project coordinator, evaluator) and consultants, with letters of commitment

D. Proposal Format

Proposals shall meet the following minimum requirements:

1. The proposal and budget shall not exceed 20 single-spaced, typed pages on 8.5 x 11-inch paper using Times New Roman twelve (12) point or a similar font. Margins shall be one (1) inch on all sides.
2. All pages shall be numbered sequentially. The cover page, table of contents, abstract, and appendices are not included in the page count.
3. Appendices are limited to those specifically requested in the proposal instructions. Additional appendices shall not be considered.
4. Hard copy submissions (see Section IV below) shall include one (1) original and six (6) copies of the proposal.
5. Hard copy submissions (see Section IV below) should not be bound or stapled. Use paper or binder clips.

Proposals not meeting the above formatting requirements shall be returned to sender without further review.

IV. METHODS OF SUBMISSION

A. Electronic

Submit proposals online at <http://msc.servicetoscience.hhd.org>, where instructions are provided to guide you through the submission process. If you encounter problems with online submission, please notify Carmelita Grady whose contact information is provided below.

B. Hard Copy – USPS, UPS, Federal Express

Programs may also submit hard copies of their proposals. Programs should allow sufficient time for delivery by the U.S. Postal Service. Postmarking by the due date shall not substitute for actual receipt of the proposal by the CAPT. Only proposals received by **5:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time on November 18, 2011**, shall be considered on time and eligible for funding. Proposals shall be submitted by U.S. Postal Service, Federal Express, UPS, or hand delivery. **Faxed proposals WILL NOT be accepted.** Proposals shall be mailed or hand delivered to CAPT Service to Science Mini-subcontract Administrator Carmelita Grady, who is based at CRP, Inc., a CAPT support contractor. The delivery address is:

**CRP, Incorporated
1110 Bonifant Street, Suite 400
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Attn: Carmelita Grady, Ph.D.**

V. INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

All proposals will be reviewed and scored by outside reviewers according to the evaluation criteria outlined in the paragraphs that follow. **The Proposal Narrative and Budget shall not exceed 20 pages**, and must be organized into five (5) major sections. These sections and the maximum points on which they will be scored are: Section 1, Program Description, 10 points; Section 2, Description and Justification of Evaluation Capacity-Building Enhancement, 50 points; Section 3, Organizational Capabilities, 10 points; Section 4, Staff Capabilities, 20 points; and Section 5, Budget, 10 points, for a maximum of 100 points.

A. Section 1: Program Description. In this section, applicants shall explain how their program design and activities will prevent or reduce the substance abuse and related behavioral health problems the program is meant to address or the risk and protective factors related to substance abuse. This section shall not exceed 2 pages and has a value of 10 points. Specifically, in this section:

1. Discuss the general substance abuse and related behavioral health problems to be prevented or the risk and protective factors related to those problems, with supporting evidence from research and/or practice. (2 points)

Example: Assuming a program is designed to reduce alcohol use among high school students, the applicant would be expected to explain risk and/or protective factors the literature suggest are associated with this problem, identify those factors the program intends to affect, and describe the consequences of alcohol use that the program is designed to impact (e.g., impaired performance at school, drinking and driving, school disciplinary actions related to alcohol possession or use, etc).

2. Summarize the essential prevention program activities, including who these activities target, and when and where they are implemented and/or duration of participant exposure to program elements. (4 points)
3. Identify the expected substance abuse outcomes (or related risk and protective factors) of the program activities and explain why the program will affect those outcomes. (4 points)

Include in **Appendix A** a logic model, flow chart or schematic drawing depicting the program's theory of change; that is, a diagram showing how program activities lead to expected outcomes.

B. Section 2: Description and Justification of Evaluation Capacity-Building Enhancement. In this section, applicants shall describe how they will enhance their evaluation and how this proposed enhancement will build on or strengthen their organizational capacity to demonstrate program effectiveness. This section shall not exceed 8 pages and has a value of 50 points. Specifically:

1. Describe the program's preliminary evaluation plan (i.e., its evaluation plan prior to participating in Service to Science). (10 points)
2. Identify and describe gaps in the preliminary evaluation plan, including what you have accomplished to date through Service to Science to address those gaps. (5 points)
3. Identify the evaluation enhancement(s) to be implemented and explain how this/these will address gaps and limitations of the preliminary evaluation plan. (10 points)

Examples of allowed enhancements include the purchase of evaluation expertise to design and implement evaluation methodologies or evaluative studies, development and/or implementation of data collection systems or instruments, data analysis, or preparation of a journal article reporting program findings.

4. Explain the purpose of the proposed enhancement(s) (i.e., how it/they will improve your organization's capacity to demonstrate program effectiveness). (10 points)
5. Explain how the technical assistance provided through the Service to Science initiative helped inform your decisions about the proposed evaluation enhancement(s). (5 points)
6. Identify potential barriers to the proposed enhancement(s) and describe how they will be addressed. (10 points)

C. Section 3: Organization's Readiness to Implement Proposed Evaluation Capacity Enhancement. In this section, applicants shall describe where their organization is in terms of its ability to conduct the program evaluation enhancement proposed above. From an evaluation perspective, applicants shall explain what their organization or program has done, what it is able to do, and what its limitations include. This section shall not exceed 4 pages and has a value of 10 points. Specifically, in this section:

1. Describe your organization/program's current evaluation capabilities (e.g., evaluation studies underway or completed, practices and methodologies currently in use, how evaluation informs program refinement, and resources allocated for evaluation). (4 points)

If you have prepared reports or published articles on the evaluation of your program since its inception, include, in **Appendix B**, an annotated list of these reports or published articles. These can include reports to funders or internal reports.

2. Identify evaluation needs, gaps, and/or limitations (e.g., evaluation-related training, identification of appropriate evaluation methods or instruments, and technical assistance). (3 points)
3. Describe organizational resources to be allocated to the proposed enhancement. Examples of resources include staff time, in-kind support from project partners, financial resources (it

is not required that the program contribute financial resources), and support from current evaluation staff. (3 points)

D. Section 4: Staff Capabilities and Project Management. Here, applicants shall demonstrate that staff members have the skills and experience required and the management procedures in place to successfully perform or complete the proposed work. This section has a value of 20 points and shall not exceed 4 pages. Specifically:

1. Identify key internal and external project staff, including evaluation staff or independent evaluators (if any), as well as other staff to be assigned to implement the proposed enhancement. Discuss (a) the specific roles and responsibilities of staff; and (b) amount of time staff are expected to provide on specific assigned tasks. (5 points)
2. Describe the relevant expertise, qualifications, and skills of staff assigned to this project. (5 points)

Attach, as **Appendix C**, resumes and letters of commitment for all key staff assigned to the project. Resumes should not exceed 2 pages.

3. Describe the management and administration of the proposed project enhancement. (5 points)
4. Include a timeline for accomplishing tasks and milestones that are necessary to implement the proposed enhancement and achieve your expected results over the period of funding (February 2012 – February 2013). (5 points)

E. Section 5: Budget. In this section, applicants shall provide a reasonable budget for implementing the proposed enhancement and a narrative justification of this budget. This section shall not exceed 2 pages and has a value of 10 points.

1. Provide a one (1) page budget. (5 points)
2. Include a narrative supporting and explaining your budget request. (5 points).

The Budget shall not exceed \$30,000. It should support the proposed enhancement plan and be within reason, showing all relevant cost breakdowns, including staff and staff time, other direct costs, etc. Equipment, such as computers, audio-visual aids, etc., is not an allowable cost.

F. Appendices

1. Attach, as **Appendix A**, a logic model, flow chart or schematic drawing depicting the program's theory of change; that is a diagram showing how program activities lead to expected outcomes.

2. Attach, as **Appendix B**, an annotated list of program evaluation reports.
3. Attach, as **Appendix C**, resumes, and letters of commitment, for all key project staff.

VI. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Proposals must be judged “technically acceptable” (that is, scoring 70 points or higher) by the reviewers in order to receive consideration for funding under this solicitation. The CAPT shall use a two-tiered process of review in selecting proposals.

A. First Tier of Review. During the first tier of review, CAPT review coordinators shall screen proposals for compliance with the following RFP requirements (also noted above):

1. The proposal and budget shall not exceed 20 single-spaced, typed pages on 8.5 x 11-inch paper using Times New Roman twelve (12) point or a similar font. Margins shall be one (1) inch on all sides.
2. All pages shall be numbered sequentially. The cover page, table of contents, abstract, and appendices are not included in the page count.
3. Appendices are limited to those specifically requested in the proposal instructions. Additional appendices shall not be considered.
4. Hard copy submissions (see Section IV below) shall include one (1) original and six (6) copies of the proposal.
5. Hard copy submissions (see Section IV below) should not be bound or stapled. Use paper or binder clips.

B. Second Tier of Review. Each proposal shall be reviewed independently by a panel of substance abuse prevention and evaluation experts and scored on each criterion as outlined below. More specifically, applicants shall be rated on the extent to which they are able to demonstrate that:

1. Section 1: The program design and program activities will prevent or reduce anticipated substance abuse and/or related behavioral health problems or related risk and protective factors. (10 points)
2. Section 2: The proposed evaluation enhancement will build on or strengthen the organization/program’s capacity to improve the demonstration of program effectiveness. (50 points)
3. Section 3: They are ready and capable to implement the proposed evaluation capacity enhancement. (10 points)
4. Section 4: There are staff with adequate skills/experience and management procedures in place to successfully perform or complete the proposed work. (20 points)
5. Section 5: The budget is reasonable and justified. (10 points)

Proposals rated by reviewers as technically acceptable (i.e., scoring at or above 70 points) shall be considered for award, **based on availability of fiscal year 2012 funds**. Should more than 15 proposals score in the technically acceptable range, then those with the highest scores shall receive awards. The CAPT anticipates the award of up to approximately 15 Mini-subcontracts to eligible state-nominated programs that participated in Regional or decentralized Service to Science Academies between January 2011 and May 2011.

VII. SUBCONTRACT AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. Subcontract Award Notices

When the review and selection process is completed, all applicants shall receive a correspondence from the CAPT that includes the reviewers' funding decision and a brief summary of the proposal strengths and limitations. Funded programs shall also receive the official Notice of Subcontract Award by **January, 2012**.

B. Subcontract Reporting Requirements and Expectations

Mini-subcontract recipients shall provide a ten-page mid-term progress report on the implementation of their evaluation capacity enhancements. That progress report, due in the 6th month of the award, shall describe the status of work undertaken during the first half of the funding period, including an assessment of milestones. A final report (which is more extensive than the mid-term progress report) is due 30 days after the end of the project award period (March 30, 2013).

SAMHSA's CAPT shall provide guidelines and requirements for programs at the time of subcontract award. The CAPT shall use the information contained in the reports to monitor the program's progress toward achieving the proposed evaluation enhancement(s). SAMHSA's CAPT shall not request or collect program evaluation data.

Note: Once your program has been awarded a Mini-subcontract, you may not change the organization designated to receive award funds.