

Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction (MIOCR) Grant Request for Proposals (RFP) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The information contained in this document has been compiled from current MIOCR Grant questions related to the RFP and the application process as well as questions from similar solicitations. This document will be updated as additional questions are posed or for clarification purposes.

FUNDING CAP

If our county submits two applications (one for an adult funded project and one for a juvenile funded project), can we request funds up to the targeted cap for each proposal or is the cap per county? The targeted funding cap is for each proposal submitted; not per county.

Is a county allowed to submit more than one application for juvenile projects (or adults)? No. A county may only submit one (1) application for funding for an adult project and/or one (1) application for funding for a juvenile project.

MATCH OBLIGATION

Can the 25% match obligation be met by utilizing any type of state funds? State General Funds are not eligible as match; however, state dollars not derived directly from the General Fund (e.g., realignment funds, Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds, Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act funds) are eligible as match. Applicants are responsible for ensuring the use of MHSA funds as match complies with the county's MHSA local plan.

Can Title IV-E monies be used as match? Yes. All federal funds dedicated to the project are eligible as match.

Can the 25% match obligation be met by putting funds into one line item category or do matching funds need to be dedicated to each line item for which grant funds are requested? The only requirement is the match amount must be a minimum of 25% of the total funds requested for the project (e.g., \$237,500 match for a grant request of \$950,000). It is up to the applicant to determine which budget line item or items are most appropriate for the match dollars being obligated.

If our county requests \$950,000 in grant monies, would our total proposal be written to include the 25% match for a total program cost of \$1,187,500? Yes.

Can the match consist entirely of in-kind contributions? Yes. The match requirement may be met with in-kind contributions, cash or any combination of the two.

Since the local strategic plan covers four (4) years but the grant funds cover only three (3) of those years, can the match obligation be met by project expenditures within the fourth year? No; all grant funds and match obligations must be expended by the end of the 3-year grant period.

In Section IX: Proposed Budget, there is a section that requests the funding streams available to the County/County Collaborative. Will we be held to only using these funding streams as our match? No, you will not be bound to utilize only these monies as match; however, the intent of the ESC was to be able to get a sense of options the county or collaborative

has available within the county for resources for leveraging and/or using for sustaining the proposed project after the third year of funding.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Would a staff person assigned to the MIOCR program for such functions as billing, clerical support, data collection, record/file maintenance, etc. be considered a part of the program cost or part of indirect costs? The RFP stipulates counties may not supplant - in this case, the use of state grant dollars to replace other funds currently supporting an existing staff position; therefore, the salary and benefits of such a staff person would be considered supplanting. To be eligible for reimbursement with grant funds, the individual must be in a newly established position. A county may include the salary and benefits of such a staff person as part of matching funds as long as the project maintains adequate documentation to substantiate the use of funds in this manner (e.g., coded time-sheets or a county's indirect cost rate plan).

State funds must be used to supplement existing funds for project activities/positions and must not replace (supplant) those funds that have been appropriated for the same purpose. Supplanting will be the subject of application review, as well as pre-award review, post-award monitoring, and audit. In short, if a county/agency/entity realizes a monetary savings by using grant funds to replace local funds already dedicated to supporting a position or activity, then it will be considered supplantation.

Can state grant funds be used to pay the salary of a judge, district attorney and/or public defender working with a mental health court? Counties may not supplant funds – i.e., use grant funds to replace funding previously directed to established positions within the county. However, if the county establishes new positions, whether full-time or part-time, which are dedicated specifically to the MIOCR project, then grant funds may be used to support those positions.

If we want to include a portion of an individual's time as part of the project, can we provide a flat percentage of their salary within the budget (grant and/or match)? No. Auditors with the Department of Finance have indicated this is not an acceptable accounting principle and to simply calculate a percentage and extend it across the life of the grant is an unallowable practice. In situations involving individuals who are assigned to the grant part-time, the grantee will need to develop and maintain some form of supporting documentation indicating the hours and tasks actually performed by this person or develop a time study reported on a quarterly basis.

Which budget line item would we put salaries for individuals in our contracted positions: Salaries and Benefits, Professional Services or CBO Contracts? Any of those line item categories are acceptable; it is entirely up to the county. However, we ask that the budget category and reimbursements for the invoices remain consistent throughout the grant term.

Are data collection costs eligible for reimbursement with grant funds? Yes; this would include necessary upgrades to the data collection system for mandatory MIOCR data measures.

Are expenditures related to an offender's family needs (e.g., travel needs, housing fees) reimbursable with state funds? Yes, as long as those expenditures are related to the design of the project and the grantee maintains adequate supporting documentation to substantiate the amounts claimed on invoices.

Can building renovations be reimbursed by grant funds? Yes. However, the grantee would first need to secure approval from BSCC staff.

Can the funds be used for a project to address mental health needs of juveniles who are not yet involved in the court system but have been contacted by law enforcement/school resource officers? Yes. The MIOCR funds support prevention, intervention, supervision, and incarceration/detention-based services and strategies; therefore, as long as all other requirements stated within Penal Code Section 6045 are met, funds may be utilized for this purpose.

Would funds from this grant be able to be applied to projects focused on juveniles pending court action for WIC 602 and WIC 709? Yes. Again, as long as all other requirements stated within Penal Code Section 6045 are met.

LOCAL STRATEGY COMMITTEE

Does the requirement to include “representatives from other local law enforcement agencies” on the Strategy Committee mean all local police departments within our county must participate? No. It is up to the county to determine whether the Committee should include multiple participants from the various jurisdictions within the county.

If a county does not have a local police department, how can it meet the requirement to include a representative from local law enforcement on the Strategy Committee? The representative should come from the agency that provides local law enforcement services for the county (e.g., Sheriff’s Department, California Highway Patrol).

Are local police required to participate in the implementation of the MIOCR project? No; however, the role they play in the project will depend on the 4-Year plan developed by the Strategy Committee.

Can we rely on an existing local committee for the Strategy Committee required by the RFP? Yes, as long as the existing committee includes all required individuals who must participate in the strategic planning process, including the mandatory chairs. Please refer to the RFP [Project Description (page 2) and Appendix A: California Penal Code Section 6045 (page 15)] for the required Strategy Committee participants for proposals targeting adult and juvenile offenders, respectively. The Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) committee, specifically, may be utilized as long as the CCP includes all those required positions/individuals as members.

Do the officials identified in Penal Code 6045.2 actually need to participate in the process or can they designate representatives to take part in the discussions? Penal Code 6045.2 specifically lists those individuals/positions that shall chair, serve and/or participate on the Strategy Committee; therefore, designees are not permitted. In addition, the ESC realized the importance of this and therefore, developed Section XI: Strategy Committee’s Collaborative Efforts to review Committee membership and the level to which individuals participated. The Technical Compliance Review, conducted by BSCC staff, will also verify the composition of the Committee and that Committee sign-in sheets are submitted as part of the application. Proposals that do not meet this portion of the Technical Compliance Review and those applications that cannot supply the necessary documentation will not go forward in the reading and rating process.

If a member of the Strategy Committee participated in the meetings telephonically, will an e-signature be allowed on the sign-in sheet? Yes; the ESC understands the time and commitment necessary to participate in the planning process for the MIOCR funding and that individuals may have logistical issues prohibiting them to attend in person. Therefore, it is

permissible to include an e-signature on the committee member sign-in sheets when individuals are unable to attend in person.

TARGET POPULATIONS

Is there a minimum and/or maximum number of participants (caseload count #'s) per year and/or total during the life of the grant? No; the target population and the individuals to be served must be decided at the local level in response to the need, the type of program/services proposed and the amount requested. Some preventions, interventions, detention-based programs, etc. will differ in the costs-per-participant; therefore justification for the number of participants to be served by the program should be explained in the narrative including any research determining evidence-based strategies in serving this population (e.g., lower caseload to participant ratios).

Should a current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSMMD) diagnosis be part of the program participants file in order to participate in the program? Yes. Based on the definition of mental illness for a juvenile in the Welfare and Institutions Code, a diagnosis must be part of the assessment in determining the youth's mental health issues and therefore, utilized in determining a subsequent individualized treatment/case management plan. This information should be part of the individuals MIOCR program case file. Based on the definition of mental illness for an adult or older adult, members of this population shall, in part, have a mental disorder as identified in the most recent edition of the DSMMD, other than a substance use disorder... Similarly, diagnosis and mental health assessment should be part of the individualized treatment/case management plan and, therefore, part of the participant's MIOCR program file.

For the purposes of this solicitation, the RFP states "... the age of a juvenile offender is defined as under 25 at the time of acceptance into the local MIOCR project." Does this mean a juvenile MIOCR grant can serve a population from 14-25? Yes, juvenile MIOCR funds may serve offenders up to the age of 25 (ex-minors) - based on the date of their admittance into the program.

Does it matter if the juvenile offender (under 25 years of age) is referred from the adult or juvenile courts? Offenders receiving services from the juvenile MIOCR-funded projects must be under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court.

Is an offender eligible if his/her primary diagnosis is substance abuse? No. While the DSMMD may list substance abuse as a mental illness, persons with substance abuse as their primary disorder are not eligible for participation in the MIOCR-funded programs; however, offenders with co-occurring disorders or tri-morbid conditions are eligible (as long as substance abuse or chronic medical conditions are not the primary diagnoses).

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS/SERVICES

Is it acceptable to utilize multiple/various evidence-based practices, strategies, models, etc., within the project design? Yes, depending on the different activities addressed in the proposed 4-year local plan. As one of the primary goals of the MIOCR funding is to reduce recidivism among the mentally ill offender population, Strategy Committees should be cognizant of the different practices, strategies, approaches, etc., to serving these individuals and their various needs while utilizing the four principles of effective intervention (risk, need, treatment and fidelity).

Can counties use MIOCR grant funds to continue existing programs? Counties may not use grant funds to supplant (replace) funds already dedicated to a program. However, counties may use these grant funds to expand, enhance and/or augment an existing effort. Program expansion includes, but is not limited to, increasing types of services currently offered to mentally ill offenders or extending existing services for mentally ill offenders to a larger target population or new geographic area.

If our county does not have a Juvenile Hall, can we still apply for a grant? Yes. The goal of the funding, in part, is to support prevention services and strategies.

Can staff working with the target population provide services in custody/detention? Yes.

Can a county place grant-funded staff in the institution as part of its project? Yes, as long as this is acceptable to the institution.

DATA COLLECTION

Will there be a mandated set of data/outcomes that will be required of all grantees under this solicitation? Yes; preliminary standard data measures are included in the application (page 11). However, additional measures will be required related to project services, treatment modalities, quality of life outcomes, etc., which measure the effectiveness of the strategies/practices supported by the grant funding on the target population. In addition, certain required data variables will include breaking-out gender, age, and race/ethnicity. The BSCC will solicit input from the grant awardees based on their funded proposals and finalize the data requirements per grantee within the first reporting quarter.

Do we need to establish a control group for the data collection component? No. MIOCR funding should support mental health treatment programs, practices, and strategies that have a demonstrated evidence foundation in reducing recidivism which are appropriate for the target population.

Will the BSCC be using an on-line data reporting system? Not at this time. Data reporting will be part of the progress report requirements which will occur on a quarterly basis. Progress reports will developed subsequent to the New Grantee Briefing, be available on the BSCC website, and submitted via an email process.

PROPOSAL RATING PROCESS

How many proposals will each rater review? Except in cases where a conflict of interest exists, each rater will review all proposals submitted within their designated category: six raters will evaluate the proposals targeting adult mentally ill offenders and six will evaluate the proposals targeting juveniles with mental illness.

Are there specific evidence-based practices/strategies the raters are looking for in the projects it will fund? No. Appendix C of the RFP provides a partial listing of resources on evidence-based programs, practices and strategies utilized throughout the country. Applicants need to anchor their proposed project in an evidence-based practice and/or strategy that has proven effective in reducing recidivism among the mentally ill offender population (for both adults and juveniles).It is important to include research and data to support the use of the evidence-based practice/strategy in the proposed project, given the target population.

What would the raters consider an acceptable project start-up time? The raters do not have a predetermined assumption regarding the amount of time involved in starting-up or expanding a project. The raters recognize new projects typically take several months to become operational, in part, due to county hiring and/or contracting processes. The raters also recognize start-up times will vary according to the design of the project.

Would a county that has a greater need (e.g., more mentally ill offenders per capita) have an advantage in the competitive process? The first factor in the rating criteria is the Need Statement, which examines the impact of the grant on reducing the number or percent of mentally ill offenders on the local justice system (using local data) as well as how the program supports prevention, intervention, supervision, and/or incarceration-based services and strategies to reduce recidivism and to improve outcomes for mentally ill juvenile and adult offenders, and why existing resources are inadequate to address the identified need. However, based on the weight (percentage of points to total points) given to this factor by the ESC, it does not have as much impact as other rating criteria. Please reference Appendix J: MIOCR Grant Proposal Rating Criteria (page 42) of the RFP for point distribution.

What is the rationale for asking about the applicant’s “probability of success” with other grant-funded projects? Penal Code Section 6045.6(b) states that as part of the funding criteria, applicants must provide a “demonstrated ability to administer the program, including any past experience in the administration of a prior mentally ill offender crime reduction grant. The intent is to examine the “grant management capacity” of applicants. For instance, the applicant’s demonstrated history of maximizing federal, state, local, and private funding sources to address the needs of the grant service population or the likelihood a project would succeed due to the proven effectiveness of its design for the target population including evidence of research-based results. This includes implementing and managing grant-funded projects in an efficient, effective and evidence-based manner.

The RFP states that priority or preference will be given to applications that include match amounts exceeding 25% of the grant amount. Will an application be awarded more points the more the match exceeds the 25% minimum? No. Matching funds must be a minimum of 25% of the total grant amount. Per Appendix J: MIOCR Grant Proposal Rating Criteria (page 44), a maximum of 5 points (out of 300) will be awarded should the proposal include a match amount greater than 25% of the total grant amount. Matching funds provided in the application will be contractually obligated and therefore, should be reasonable and attainable given the scope of the project, available funding streams, partnering agencies, etc.

Will there be oral presentations of the proposals? No.

APPLICATION FORMAT/REQUIREMENTS

Can we provide additional attachments, reference material or letters of support from partnering agencies as part of our county’s submittal packet? Any additional information submitted outside the narrative for Sections II–VIII (20-page maximum), Sections IX–XI information, Attachment A (single-page for charts/graphs referenced in narrative, if applicable), and Attachment B (Strategy Committee Meeting sign-in sheets) will not be provided to the raters.

Do I have to use the RFP format as it is posted on the website? Yes. Proposals submitted must use the RFP document provided on our website (http://www.bscc.ca.gov/s_cppmiocr.php). You may not delete the RFP narrative, questions, headers, etc. in order to “create” more writable space. The on-line RFP is already formatted with the 1 inch margin settings, 12-point Arial font,

and 1.5 line spaced, as specified in the RFP. These formatting criteria are part of the technical compliance review completed prior to RFPs being forwarded to the raters.

The RFP states to answer the questions in the space provided but there isn't sufficient room to respond. Can I use additional pages? Each fill-in section will expand as narrative is typed/copied into it. Sections II through VIII may not exceed 20 pages in total. If you experience technical problems with the RFP document, please contact the BSCC.

MISCELLANEOUS

Can the lead agency designate someone from the implementing agency to be the Financial Officer for the project? Yes. However, keep in mind the responsibilities of the Financial Officer include maintaining the official budget file for the project (including all grant-related material and documentation to substantiate expenditures) and ensuring appropriate internal controls are in place for all grant-related fiscal procedures (e.g., deposit of funds and reimbursement of partnering agencies). Additionally, the warrant (check) issued by the State Controller's Office will be made out to the county and sent to the Financial Officer.

Who will be contacted if there are technical compliance issues with the application submittal? As there are three (3) individuals listed in Section I of the application, we will be contacting those individuals first (i.e., Project Director, Project Financial Officer, and Day-to-Day Contact). It is recommended these individuals be available between Tuesday, April 14, 2015 and Thursday, April 16, 2015 in the event non-substantive updates need to be made within the proposal to bring it into compliance. If we are unable to reach the listed individuals, we will make every effort to make contact with an individual associated with the RFP.

Can the county/Strategy Committee members/grant writer contact the raters? No.

Will we be required to conduct a closing fiscal grant audit? No. However, BSCC staff will be monitoring and auditing expenditures/invoices/supporting documentation during site visits and fiscal desk reviews. In addition, the BSCC reserves the right to call for an audit, if necessary, at the BSCC's expense.

Can the Board of Supervisors' Chair sign the application? Yes, in those circumstances where it is county policy that the Board of Supervisors' Chair sign documentation binding contract agreements.

Our Board of Supervisors will not be meeting prior to the April 3, 2015 deadline. Will my proposal be disqualified? No. Due to the expedited nature of this RFP process, BSCC staff understand not all applicants may be able to secure a Board of Supervisors' resolution by the application due date. However, the BSCC will require a Board of Supervisors' resolution by July 1, 2015 as we will not reimburse for grant expenditure without a resolution. Please see Appendix E: Sample Resolution of the Governing Board for required language.