

Ohio Alternative Response Request for Proposals

August 13, 2007

Responses to Prospective Applicants' Questions

- 1. Will county participating only receive \$1,000 per family for first 500 families receiving post-assessment services? No dollars will be received for any additional families receiving services over 500?**

The operating assumption - at this time- is that participating counties only receive \$1,000 per family for first 500 families receiving post-assessment services. Although the state continues to secure additional resources for the project, the only dollars for which there is a guaranteed commitment to counties is specified in question 57 of the 'Responses to Participant Questions' document: "Counties selected to participate will be reimbursed \$1,000 per family for post-assessment services with a cap of no more than 500 families included in this study. In addition to the targeted service dollars, each selected site can receive up to \$50,000 per year to allocate as needed to support other aspects of the design and implementation." Should the county want to expand the service population that receives an Alternative Response, no additional project resources will be awarded beyond the 500 family limit. However, if local resources are available to support such an expansion and the participating county wants to exceed the 500 family cap, there is nothing prohibiting a participating county from serving more than 500 families with post-assessment services.

- 2. We have a question regarding the screening. On question 18 and question 28 of the response to participant questions it sounds like once the case is accepted, there is then a decision by staff on whether it gets assigned to AR or to traditional investigation.**

However, at the meeting on Alternative Response Pilot Forum we heard that this decision on assignment is done randomly. Could you clarify?

Let me attempt to clarify.

It is the case that once a report is accepted by the public children' services agency, based on screening criteria, a decision is made by staff regarding case assignment - Alternative Response or traditional investigation.

Random assignment occurs after the assignment occurs. For those cases that are assigned to the AR pathway, there is random assignment as to whether or not they will be part of the experimental group (those families that receive AR) or the control group (those that are responded to in the traditional manner). In this manner, the researchers of the Institute of Applied Research will be able compare and contrast

similar families who were 'eligible' for the Alternative Response. By virtue of random assignment, following pathway assignment, some of these families will receive AR and some will not.

3. Can the \$50,000 be used for staff costs?

Absolutely, the \$50,000 can be used to cover staff costs provided such expenses are related to this AR effort.

4. Are the September meeting dates set in stone? We are scheduled to "go live" with SACWIS on 9/17, so we are more than a little concerned about our ability to free up staff for the September meetings. That being said, if they are set in stone, and if we do get selected, while it will be hard, we will make sure that someone is able to attend these meetings.

The September dates are indeed 'set in stone.' We recognize that many folks will have issues/conflicts that make attendance difficult. We have encountered some 'sticky wickets' within our own team. We need, however, to stay the course. It really would require a Herculean effort on our part to chart a new schedule. So do the best you can. We recognize, at some point in time during the life of the project, scheduling conflicts will occur.

5. While it is clear that at least 25% of our reports during the life of the project would have to receive family assessments, we are a little confused about the 40% post-assessment requirement, and who would actually be considered to have received "services." For example, suppose a case is received by our intake department and is assigned for a family assessment, but after the assessment is completed, it is decided that it should be closed i.e. no ongoing services needed/offered). Did this family receive "services," and could they be considered in our 40% post-assessment?

You are correct in your understanding of the 25% of accepted cases receiving a family assessment. In terms of the 40% of this 25%, the Design Workgroup will have ultimate authority in determining the defining elements of post-assessment services. So frankly, a firm response cannot be provided at this time. That said, in the example you provided, the closed case that did not receive any service interventions is not likely to qualify as having received post-assessment services. The receipt of services is quite transparent in its meaning. Cases that are closed without the offer and/or receipt of any post-assessment services did not receive services once the family assessment was concluded.

6. Will Child Protective Service agencies be required to deposit grant funds (funds specifically associated with Alternative Response Pilot Project as described in the memo) in current Children Services Special Revenue Fund with our County Auditor, or will we be required to deposit grant funds into a special revenue grant fund separate from our traditional funding streams?

Any specificity in response is dependent upon the exact methodology for fiscal reimbursement, and that has not yet been finalized. However, I think a general response identifying the approaches the state is examining will assist you in estimating payment time frame and the level of effort that will be required for fiscal management of pilot funds.

There are two financial pools for which a pilot may receive reimbursement. The RFP:

a. Allows each applicant up to \$50,000 per year for pre-approved implementation costs. This will be reimbursed on an actual cost basis and will require documentation of expenditure.

b. Sets forth a reimbursement of \$1,000 for each family receiving post-assessment services. This is a unit cost and is paid on a "per family," rather than "service cost" basis. It will, however require documentation of each family and, for evaluation purposes, the nature of the services provided. Although the reporting mechanics are not yet developed, an example of how this could be accomplished is through a roster consisting of family name and category of services provided each family. This is something that we can work with pilot sites to identify the least painful manner of documentation.

7. If we are required to deposit in existing Children Services Fund, will ODJFS be developing expenditure and receipt codes and possibly RMS codes?

Answered above.

8. How and when will counties be reimbursed for services?

Counties will be paid on a reimbursement basis, and that payment will be made by ODJFS. There are two processes which activate the flow of funds from ODJFS to public children services agencies: direct allocation or contract. We are working with departmental staff to determine the most appropriate methodology.

o Direct Allocation

If payment is set up through direct allocation, a fiscal rule will be developed that outlines that parameters of allowable reimbursement. The county agency will bill for funds on the certification of funds sheet using currently established procedures.

The need for RMS codes is not anticipated, nor does it seem, at this time that there will be a need for a separate special revenue account.

Please note, however, that no decision can be finalized until the exact payment methodology is determined.

o Contract

If payment is made through contract, an agreement will be entered individually with each pilot site. Reimbursement will be activated by the submission of an invoice. The schedule of payment can be mutually set at a range of frequencies from twice a month to quarterly,

9. Will there be any local funds required for grant match?

There is no match requirement. Applicants are encouraged to consider the reallocation of existing local resources that can be used to support, expand, and sustain the AR system.

10. Does this pilot project intend to establish federal/state maintenance of effort criteria to be used in consideration for future funding opportunities regarding outcomes associated with alternative response service delivery?

At this time, there is no such intention to establish MOE criteria. However, such a decision is in the purview of the Design Workgroup, which includes representation from each of the pilot sites. Thus, requisites for future funding opportunities are currently unknown.

11. Who will take lead/responsibility for assuring staff training as recommended by the Design Workgroup?

The AIM team, in consultation with ODJFS and SCO, will have the lead responsibility for assuring that staff training, as recommended by the Design Workgroup, is conducted.

12. How will specific initiatives and data collection associated with ProtectOhio be influenced by participation in the pilot project (i.e. Family Team Meeting timeframes)? Or will this be the decision of the Design Workgroup?

These decisions will be made by members of the Design Workgroup. These decisions will be significantly influenced by the data collection needs associated with this project and the accessibility of the essential elements as well as the interface with existing data collection efforts.

13. I have a question regarding the proposal for AR for Ohio. On the last page it requires a signature. Whose signature are they looking for (Director, person filling out app) and if we send it electronically, how will you get the signature? Guess that's really two questions. Thanks for your help in advance

The person who 'signs' the application is really up to each pilot applicant. As I indicated in the RFP, the contact person and the pilot leader need not be the same person. For the purpose of the signature, I would identify the contact person who is named in the Application Cover Sheet.

As far as the signature, applicants will be asked to type in the name of the individual who will be providing signature. Once sites are selected, hard copies will be filed with ODJFS and these copies will have the actual signatures.