

# FY 2011 Drug Free Communities (DFC) Support Program Frequently Asked Questions

## Questions on Eligibility Requirements

### ***Requirement #1: 12 Sectors***

**Q. What is the purpose of the Coalition Involvement Agreement (CIA)?**

A. The application requires 12 CIAs to document the 12 individuals listed in the sector table. The agreements document that an individual understands that he/she represents, for the purposes of this application, a specific sector within the applicant coalition's membership. The CIA signature and the sector table should match 12 names to 12 signatures (one on each CIA) for each of the required 12 sectors.

**Q. My coalition has many members. How do I determine which members should be listed as the representative for each of the 12 sectors?**

A. In completing your sector table and CIAs, it is important that you provide the individuals that demonstrate the greatest likelihood of leveraging resources, including other members of his/her sector. For example, getting a school teacher to represent the School sector is sufficient, but can you get the individual who is the policymaker in the school district, such as the School Superintendent or School Board Member? Put your 12 "heaviest hitters" in your sector table and match those to the 12 required CIAs. The only individuals that cannot be listed on the sector table are those who are or will be paid by the DFC grant (should you be awarded).

**Q: Is there a timeframe prior to submitting an application that the sectors have to be members of the coalition?**

A: No, but all 12 sectors are required at the time of application and no CIA can be more than 12 months old.

**Q: Do you want a CIA from every coalition member/partner outlining involvement, just the ones contributing in-kind or just the ones on the required Sector Table?**

A: You must submit a total of 12 CIAs—one for each sector. The name that is listed in the sector table MUST match the person designated within the CIA as the sector representative. Submitting more than 12 CIAs will not positively or negatively affect your application.

**Q: Can we use a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) instead of the CIA?**

A. Yes, as long as the MOU is less than 12 months old at the time of application. You do not have to use the template of the CIA provided in the RFA, but please label (to include sector and individual name) the MOU or CIA so that it can be easily found. We do not consider an MOU, nor the CIA to be legally binding documents. They are simply there to document that the individual in the sector table knows that he/she is representing the sector for the purposes of this Federal grant.

**Q: Do the sectors' individuals that need to be represented have to be Board members or just involved in some manner with the coalition?**

A: They need to be active members of your coalition. While they need not be board members, Sector representatives need to be the individuals in your community that can best leverage other sector members and move the coalition forward.

**Q: How many representatives from each sector do you really want? One from each, or many from each?**

A: For the purposes of responding to the RFA, only one representative per sector (as named in the sector table) is required along with a matching CIA. For a coalition to be healthy and accomplish its Action Plan, it is up to the coalition how many members it needs.

**Q: Do legislators qualify as a sector representative from State agencies?**

A: Yes.

**Q: How is "Youth" defined?**

A: Youth is an individual 18 or under at the time of application. There is no minimum age requirement.

**Q. What signatures are needed on the CIA?**

A. Two signatures are required on the CIA. One must be that of the individual on the sector table for each of the 12 required sectors and the other must be the individual who signs documents on behalf of the applicant coalition. A staff person that is/will be PAID BY THE DFC GRANT cannot be a sector representative on the table and on the CIA, but can be the countersignature for the coalition. Each CIA should have two signatures—the sector representative and whomever the coalition has designated as the person to sign on their behalf (e.g., paid staff, Chairperson, Executive Director). Since is CIA is not a legally binding document, your youth sector representative may sign for themselves. However, we will also accept the signature of their parent or guardian if clearly identified in the CIA.

### ***Requirement #2: Six Months Existence***

**Q: Can we submit more than 2 sets of meeting minutes?**

A: Applicants must submit two sets of minutes—one within each specified timeframe. Submitting additional minutes will not affect your Peer Reviewed score positively or negatively.

**Q: We have not been listing our attendees at each meeting by sector. What do we do?**

A: Page 14 of the RFA states that attendees at meetings must be listed by sector. Please go back and annotate the minutes to include the sector each attendee represents.

### ***Requirement #3: Mission Statement***

**Q: We have a well-established coalition whose mission has been to reduce underage drinking. Is our coalition eligible if we expand our work to include alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco?**

A: Yes, as long as your coalition is addressing multiple drugs of abuse at the time you submit your application and has, as part of its principal mission, the reduction of substance use among youth, the coalition meets the eligibility requirements.

**Q: What if your coalition does not have a mission statement, but rather a vision statement? Do you need both?**

A: You are only required to have a mission statement. A vision statement could serve as your mission statement for the purposes of this grant. You need not have both.

### ***Requirement #4: Multiple Drugs of Abuse***

**Q: Can prescription medication/drug abuse be the focus of the applicant coalition when applying for the DFC grant?**

A: Yes, but remember that you must focus your efforts on at least two drugs. The terminology “prescription drugs” is sufficient for identifying this class of drugs. If you have specific drugs in your community that are considered prescription drugs and appear to be prevalent in your community, you may use specific names. However, naming two specific prescription drugs does not meet the requirement of your addressing at least two different drugs of abuse.

### ***Requirement #6: Entity Eligible to Receive Federal Grants***

**Q: Who can be a grantee?**

A: The Grantee is the organization that will receive Federal grant funds. If the coalition is not legally eligible to apply for a Federal grant, it must make arrangements with an outside agent that will apply for the grant on behalf of the coalition and serve as the legal entity (grantee). Grantees may be domestic, public or private non-profit entities, such as State, local, or tribal governments; public or private universities and colleges; professional associations; voluntary organizations, self-help groups; consumer and provider services-oriented constituency groups; community and faith-based organizations; and tribal organizations.

**Q: Would a university be eligible to serve as a grantee if it partnered with a coalition?**

A: Yes. For examples of agencies currently serving as grantees on behalf of coalitions, go to [http://ondcp.gov/dfc/files/fy09\\_combined\\_grantees.pdf](http://ondcp.gov/dfc/files/fy09_combined_grantees.pdf).

**Q: Can a grantee apply for a new grant if they are applying on behalf of a new coalition in a new community (regardless of whether the grantee previously had a grant for a different coalition serving a different community)?**

A: A Grantee may only hold one grant for one coalition at a time. Former applicants may apply as a grantee (outside agent acting on behalf of the coalition) for a new applicant coalition so long as they are holding no other DFC grant. The applicant should submit a letter on agency letterhead, signed by the Authorizing Official, certifying that the agency is applying for the DFC FY 2011 grant on behalf of a new coalition serving a new community. Please reference the grant number of the prior award, project start and end dates, name of the previous coalition, and the community served by that coalition. Include this letter as an attachment to the application. Mark "new" on form SF 424 v2 under the "type of application" and leave the Federal Award Identifier blank (Item 5b).

**Q: Our coalition is in the process of applying for tax-exempt status with the IRS but we do not anticipate having that completed until after March 19. However, it will be in place by the start of the grant period. How should we proceed?**

A: A private, non-profit organization must include evidence of its non-profit status at the time of application (see page 2 of the Checklist in the HHS 5161-1); therefore, not having your 501 (c) 3 at the time of applications makes you ineligible.

### ***Requirement #7: Substantial Support from non-Federal Sources***

**Q: Can pro-rated savings for office space, utilities, etc., be used toward the match requirement?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Can space be used as "match", for example, the "rent equivalent" of the space provided for grant personnel? How about telephone service?**

A: Yes to all.

**Q: In regard to the in-kind match, how are staff salaries handled? Are they part of in-kind match, and how is this documented?**

A: Yes, as long as the costs are consistent with those paid for similar work in the organization or the current market rate. Provide documentation for costs according to the sample match budget.

**Q: If the budget includes a match/in-kind cost and something happens where we cannot get the item or service donated, can it be purchased and the budget be amended?**

A: No, the applicant must find another source of non-Federal match funds.

**Q: What about parent and youth volunteers who are part of coalition? What is their time worth for the match?**

A: The value of their time is calculated consistent with the rate paid for similar work in the organization or the current market rate.

**Q: Is a church's expenditures for rent, mortgage, gas, lights, insurance, and maintenance part of the dollar-for-dollar match and how would you estimate the percentage?**

A: A mortgage payment is unallowable. However, full-time employees, square footage, etc., may be charged according to the costs incurred by the organization during the 12-month budget period.

**Q: Is there a ratio for cash match and in-kind?**

A: No.

### ***Requirement #9: Zip Code Overlap***

**Q: How can you find out which zip codes/communities funded DFC coalitions serve?**

A: A list of DFC grantees is available at [http://ondcp.gov/dfc/files/fy09\\_combined\\_grantees.pdf](http://ondcp.gov/dfc/files/fy09_combined_grantees.pdf). You will need to contact the listed coalitions in your area to determine all of the zip codes they serve.

**Q: How does a coalition demonstrate "cooperation with one another" when there is already a coalition in the community?**

A: A Letter of Mutual Cooperation between the two coalitions is required in the applying coalition's application.

**Q: As a new group seeking a grant, what is our chance to receive a grant if there is already a DFC grantee in our city?**

A: As long as you document that you are coordinating with the current grantee, your chances are the same as any other applicant. The DFC grants are not awarded based on how many are in a State, county, city, town or any other geographic boundary. They are decided by SCORE.

## ***GENERAL QUESTIONS***

**Q. Is there a method by which Peer Reviewers are assigned applications? Geographic boundaries? Community types, etc.?**

A. No. The applications for the DFC funding are assigned to Peer Reviewers in a random manner. Thus, it is important for applicants to use the Community Overview to paint the picture of their community's context for the Peer Reviewer.

**Q. What parts of the application do the Peer Reviewers receive for review?**

A. Peer Reviewers receive the entire application. They are instructed to score only the 30 pages of the Narrative, the Budget and the Budget Narrative. They can use the Attachments as tools to help them understand the applicant coalition, but are not to score the application based on those documents.

**Q: We are a college coalition serving 17-22 year olds, but concentrate many of our efforts on 1st year college students, those 17-18. Are we eligible to apply for DFC funds?**

A: Yes.

**Q: If you are already applying for another SAMHSA grant, can you apply for this one?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Can the community be defined across State lines if the community sits on the border?**

A: Yes.

**Q: How much preference is given to a community that is defined as economically disadvantaged over a suburban area that does not have 20% or more population of children living in a household below the poverty line?**

A: This criterion is only used to break ties in the peer review.

**Q: Is the size of a community (geography or population) used as a determining factor for funding?**

A: No. Realistic and feasible implementation of the scope of your planned efforts and population to be served will be the determining factor.

**Q: Realizing that the DFC grant is a community-based grant, is it okay to target a specific population within the community?**

A: Yes. It is the applicant's responsibility to define and choose the community and to provide the rationale for that choice.

**Q: Does acquiring other large grants negatively impact a coalition in the DFC funding process?**

A: No. It is not considered in the funding decision.

**Q: Are DFC coalitions required to use "evidence-based programs"?**

A: No. While, DFC does not require the use of "model" or "evidence-based" programs, it does require comprehensive prevention planning with an emphasis on environmental prevention strategies.

**Q: If you have been a DFC "mentee" coalition, but never received DFC funding, are you still considered a new applicant?**

A: Yes.

**Q: If you applied last year and did not receive the grant, is this a blemish?**

A: No, this will not affect the 2011 review.

**Q: Is an applicant who is applying for Year 6 new or continuation? We were funded Years 1-5, lapsed for a year, and now are applying for Years 6-10. Do we use your previous award # on the form?**

A: New. Yes, please show your old SAMHSA grant number.

**Q: Regarding the number of new grant awards and the funding available for FY 2011, do the 6th year applicants have any inherent advantage to receive funding over 1st year applicants?**

A: No. By law, Year 1 and Year 6 applicants must be treated equally in the funding process.

**Q: Can we represent multiple counties within one application?**

A: Yes.

**Q: I live in an area that previously received the grant, but the coalition there focused mainly on outlying areas around the city. My coalition's focus is inner city. Will their receipt of a grant, should they re-apply, hinder our coalition's chances of funding?**

A: Coalitions in close proximity do not compete against each other any more than a coalition that is far away. As long as there is evidence of collaboration between two coalitions (if they overlap any zip codes), one application will not affect the other. When there is no evidence of collaboration, continuing coalitions (those inside a five-year funding cycle) always take precedence.

**Q: If awarded, when will the funding period begin?**

A: The funding period begins September 30, 2011.

**Q: What were the cut-off scores in previous years?**

A: Cut-off scores vary from year to year based on the funding available for new awards. We are unable to predict the funding score cutoff in advance. For reference, past funding cycle cut-off scores have ranged from the 70s to the low 80s.

**Q: If your application is not funded, can you get specific feedback in order to improve the following year?**

A: Yes. You will receive comments including identified strengths and weaknesses from the Peer Reviewers through the SAMHSA Office of Grant Review in October 2011.

**Q: Can we apply for both a DFC Mentoring grant, as well as a "regular" DFC grant?**

A: Mentoring grants are awarded to current DFC grantees who are in good standing and whose applications meet the Mentoring eligibility criteria and score high enough to receive a grant. If a coalition is applying for Year 6 and a Mentoring grant, the Mentoring grant will only be awarded if the applicant coalition also receives its Year 6 DFC award.

**Q: Can the Business Official signatory be the same as the Program Director?**

A: Yes, but this is not recommended.

**Q: The RFA makes reference to youth. Are applicants to define the age bracket for youth or is this detail to be provided by ONDCP or SAMHSA?**

A: Since the DFC program is about community change over time, it is up to each applicant to define their community and describe how they will work with it, including defining the target groups and the age bracket of youth you are focusing on. Please keep in mind that one of the two DFC goals is to reduce substance use among youth and, over time, reduce substance abuse among adults by addressing the factors in a community that increase the risk of substance abuse and promoting the factors that minimize the risk of substance abuse.

**Q: Which title goes on page 2 of the SF 424 v2?**

A: HHS/SAMHSA.

**Q: Does every page in the application need to be numbered.**

A: Yes. Please number pages consecutively from beginning to end starting with the Table of Contents as page 1, even if you need to hand write the numerals, so that information can be located easily during review of the application.

**Q: Can you contract with another agency to handle payroll and financial administration?**

A: Yes, as long as the agency/organization is not a Federal agency.

## ***QUESTIONS RELATED TO EVALUATION***

**Q: If your community does not currently have data on the perception of risk/harm or disapproval by adults, can that be built in as a data gap and Year 1 needs assessment?**

A: Yes.

**Q. The grant requirements state that we must address multiple drugs, but we only have to supply data on alcohol, tobacco and marijuana. What if my coalition is addressing prescription drugs?**

A. The DFC National Evaluation currently requires that all grantees collect specific data on three substances (alcohol, tobacco and marijuana) in three grades every two years. The markers for alcohol, tobacco and marijuana are most prevalent within the DFC Program and have historically been the three substances most commonly addressed by grantees. If you choose, for example, to focus your efforts on prescription drugs, that is acceptable, but you will still need to comply with the collection of the measures the DFC National Evaluation Program requires.

**Q: Is there a particular survey you would like us to use to measure the 4 core measures?**

A: No. DFC does not require that you use a specific survey.



**Q: Do we have to conduct our own or can we use surveys provided to us by other agencies?**

A: You do not need to use your own survey. You can rely on data gathered by others through any instrument that proves valid and reliable.

**Q: Must we have an external evaluator?**

A: No.

## ***QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE PROJECT NARRATIVE***

**Q: Why are applicants required to re-write the questions in the Project Narrative if there is a 30-page limit and applicants may need the space?**

A: This is required to assist the Peer Review process. The requirement is the same for all applicants. You do not have to type the bullets under each question, nor do you have to answer each bullet specifically. The bullets are solely to be used for guiding your answer. Applicants are not expected to respond to each bullet specifically or any of them if they do not apply to you. **ANSWER ONLY THE BOLDED QUESTIONS.**

**Q: Can responses be bulleted as opposed to full narrative writing?**

A: Yes.

**Q: If the community was not as involved as we would like, is it okay to indicate as part of the 1st year plan the implementation of specific work on engaging the community in the planning and implementation process?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Is it okay to use tables or charts in the narrative section that illustrate data?**

A: Yes, as long as you comply with the page and font requirements. You may use 10-point font for charts and tables **ONLY** if you are submitting a paper application. Remember that charts and tables will count toward your 30-page limit.

**Q: If submitting for Year 6 funding, do we need to build on the strategies that we used in the first 5 years of funding or can we look at new strategies for the upcoming 5 years of funding?**

A: There is no requirement on this. This is your decision.

**Q. Where should Cultural Competence be addressed/discussed in the narrative?**

A. Throughout and where appropriate.

**Q. What is the difference between Question #4 and Question #10 in the RFA?**

A. Question #4 specifically asks how the coalition used data to inform and mobilize the community. Your coalition may have used some or none of the ways listed in the bullets under Question #4. Question #10 asks for the coalition's communication mechanisms, which may or may not be some of the same ways used to communicate data for the purposes of mobilization.

**Q. Is a narrative explaining the 12-Month Action Plan required in Question #10?**

A. A narrative is not required in Question 10. What is required is that you use the table provided, in the way that it is designed, to outline your coalition's plan for the first 12 months should you receive the grant. It is up to you if you feel you need to highlight or explain certain aspects of the 12-Month Action Plan that is not already described in the remaining 17 questions within the RFA.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO BUDGET

**Q: Can I include training in my travel line item?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Does the grant cover organizational development for a newly formed coalition (i.e., training, technical assistance, leadership development, etc.)?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Can the budget pay stipends for coalition members?**

A: Incentives may be paid to coalition members up to \$20 each.

**Q: Can I budget for food for coalition meetings?**

A: No.

**Q: Can the cost of food be counted as matching funds?**

A: No. You may not count as match anything prohibited for purchased with Federal funds.

**Q: Does the DFC announcement stipulate a budget amount or percentage that must be spent on evaluation?**

A: No, but you may not use more than 20% of your total award amount on evaluation or evaluation services.

**Q: Is there an administrative cap on how much of the budget can be used for salaries for paid staff?**

A: No, but it must be reasonable for the locale in which the coalition operates.

**Q: We plan to contract with a State university to provide evaluation. What would be a reasonable amount of the budget for this contract?**

A: This is up to you. No more than 20% of the total grant award may be used for data collection and evaluation.

**Q: Can a coalition member with special expertise be contracted for services (i.e., epidemiologist or evaluator)?**

A: Yes.

**Q: If you get a negotiated indirect rate, can that be put under match?**

A: No, unless the organization has another source of funding to pay for those costs other than Federal funds.

**Q: Are National Tobacco Settlement dollars channeled through State agencies and/or local health departments eligible for use as matching funds?**

A: Yes.

**Q: If some of our coalition members are paid by their employers with Federal grants (e.g., SPF-SIG, etc.), can we still count their contribution with the coalition as in-kind match?**

A: No, nor can you count any Federal dollars that pass through another entity (such as the State Government).

**Q: Does the indirect cost proposal need to be approved before the grant submission date, and can you explain the provisional rate?**

A: An indirect cost rate does not have to be approved before the submission date, but if you plan to negotiate with a Federal cognizant agency as it is explained in the application, then SAMHSA may provide your organization with a provisional indirect cost rate of up to 10% of salaries and wages only. Your organization must submit an indirect cost proposal within 90 days from the start date of the project in order to use the provisional indirect costs.

**Q: Do you allow institutions to take indirect costs? If so, what is the percentage?**

A: SAMHSA allows the grantee organization the use of indirect costs if you have a current indirect cost rate agreement negotiated with a Federal cognizant agency. Indirect costs may be charged as direct costs if the applicant does not have a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement.

**Q: Will we need a Federal negotiated rate of administration before applying?**

A: No.

**Q: How many training days are Year 1 applicants required to budget for?**

A: Budget for 18 total training days, spread out over the events outlined in the RFA (3-day New Grantee Meeting and 3 weeks of the National Coalition Academy (NCA)). To discuss estimated costs, call 800-542-2322, ext. 240 (CADCA TA Manager).

**Q: Are Year 6 applicants required to budget for 18 training days at the NCA and New Grantee Training?**

A: No. Year 6 applicants are only required to budget for the 3-day New Grantee Training. However, they may budget for more training days if they so choose. Year 6 applicants are allowed to attend the NCA if they have not already done so. They can also choose to send different individuals that did not attend a prior session. For more information on the NCA, contact 800-542-2322, ext. 240 (CADCA TA Manager).

**Q. Can our budget amount change for each year?**

A. Yes

**Q. Can we apply for less than \$125,000? Are there advantages to doing so?  
Reasons for doing so?**

A. Yes, you can ask for less than the allowed \$125,000/year, but know that when you write the budget for the remaining four years, you cannot later ask for more than what you projected in this original application. There are no advantages for asking for less than \$125,000.

**Q. Can officer overtime be used as match when he/she performs DUI/Safety Checkpoints, Alcohol Compliance Checks and other enforcement duties?**

A. Yes.

**Q. How do you calculate the value of volunteer time to be used as match?**

A. There are many volunteer time calculators available online. Cite which calculator you used in your application and remember that it must be reasonable for your coalition's location. Conduct market research as appropriate.