

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

4.12.24

This resource has been prepared by Cook County Health (CCH) to answer questions about the Stronger Together grant opportunity. This document will be updated during the duration of the application process, with updated content deriving from submitted questions to the email below and during Information Sessions and Workshops. Questions have been consolidated and adapted for clarity, and questions pertaining to specific proposed programs ideas are not included.

If you have a question that is not covered by the [“Stronger Together Open Call Information Packet”](#) PDF or this FAQ document, you may email StrongerTogetherOpenCall@cookcountyhhs.org.

Category	Question	Response
Application Portal	Are there character/word limits for the narrative sections?	No, there is no character limit.
	Can we submit additional documents to provide more information about our organization?	No, the only documents that reviewers for this grant will consider are the Application, Work Plan and Budget templates provided. Please do not attach or submit additional documents. This grant application does not require a cover letter or letters of recommendation.
	Can you save the application and come back to work on it?	No, you will need to fill out your organizational information and upload your offline documents in one-go.
	When submitting at GovGrants, which email addresses will receive the "application successfully submitted" email notification (Exc. Dir./CEO, Project Director/Manager, Authorized Representative)?	The Authorized Representative will receive the email confirmation.
	Who will be recruited as review team members to evaluate the proposals?	Members from the Office of Behavioral Health, Cook County Health, and Cook County will be involved in the review process.
	Can you provide a comprehensive list of all documents needed for the application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application • Workplan • Budget and Budget Narrative
	We also have a fiscal agent; can you confirm if that fiscal agent will also need to provide any documents?	The fiscal agent does not need to provide documentation.
	Do you request that the application uses a specific font?	No, we do not have font requirements. However, we ask that all text be legible.
	Does each organization have to be approved to use Salesforce?	No, each organization does not need to be approved to use Salesforce to apply.

Category	Question	Response
Application Portal (continued)	Could you please direct me to the CFDA number associated with the Stronger Together funding opportunity?	The CFDA for ARPA is 21.027.
	Privately funded organization, do we need to list the private grants?	No, please only list government grants.
	Should the attachments be submitted in the form they are presented as? Or should they be converted into PDFs	We ask that they are uploaded the same way they were downloaded.
	Can we be somewhat broad and just provide the name of the funder for funder history, such as HRSA? As an FQHC, we typically have 4-6 HRSA grants annually. Or do you want the names of each grant we received?	Please provide the name of the funder and the name of each grant.
	Would a single audit be required?	An audit will not be required for the application. However, for those organizations that are funded the Office of Behavioral Health will work with them to complete an ARPA Risk Assessment and Federal Award Audit Detail that will ask for an audit.
	How long do we have to complete the application in the portal before it times out?	Please upload your offline documents in one-go, then complete the organizational information in the portal.
	We're applying for the Stronger Together grant when it opens and are trying to acquire a UEI number in preparation. We are experiencing challenges in entity validation as a first step to registration, however, and we're wondering if there is any technical assistance available for going through the registration process?	Unfortunately, we are unable to provide any technical assistance for acquiring a UEI number. The SAM.gov website provides a service desk service. GSAFSD Service Portal Landing - GSA Federal Service Desk Service Portal
	Would you speak to, or describe the technical assistance providers, the type of technical assistance that will be provided, and when?	The Office of Behavioral Health will be providing technical assistance as needed by the partners. Technical assistance could include but is not limited to program development, monitoring and reporting, fiscal management, and sustainability.
	We have already submitted our application for 5013c NFP organization, and was told it will take 2 weeks for the approval process, can we still go ahead and apply for the grant?	Only applicants that are 501(c)(3) eligibility and fall under the applicant eligibility criteria as listed in the information packet by April 17th are eligible to apply for this grant.

Category	Question	Response
Application Portal (continued)	If our SAM ID is expiring in August, should we renew it now, or should we wait until August to renew it?	We recommend renewing sooner rather than later in case of unexpected delays in processing, but you do not need to renew before applying for the Stronger Together Open Call.
	Where in the application do we complete the risk assessment?	The risk assessment is not part of the application--organizations that are awarded funds will then be guided through the risk assessment process.
	Do we need to attach a copy of our NICRA for our application submission?	No, however, you will need to describe your NICRA in the budget narrative section of the indirect cost budget category. If selected for this grant, you will need to provide all of your relevant NICRA documentation to the program team prior to executing your legal agreement.
	If we have letters of recommendation, where is the appropriate place to send them?	The Office of Behavioral Health is not accepting letters of recommendation for this open call.
	If selected, how do we submit our expenses?	All subrecipients will submit their expenses through GovGrants. Financial reporting and compliance training will be provided prior to the launch of the grant.
	Can more than one person have access to the portal where we submit the expenses?	Yes, more than one person can have access to GovGrants.
Information Sessions and Capacity Building Workshops	Will the information session slide deck and recording be shared?	Yes, recordings and slide decks from the information sessions and capacity building workshops will be posted on https://cookcountyhealth.org/strongertogether/ after they are complete.
	When are the information sessions and how will I be able to access them?	The information sessions were held on Friday, March 8 th and March 13 th . You can access the meeting link at Stronger Together: Building a More Equitable Behavioral Health System – Cook County Health under Information Sessions.
	When are the capacity-building sessions and how will I be able to access them?	The capacity building workshops will be held on Wednesday, March 20 th Friday, March 22 nd , Wednesday, March 27 th , Friday, March 29 th , Wednesday, April 3 rd , and Friday, April 5 th . You can access the meeting link at Stronger Together: Building a More Equitable Behavioral Health System – Cook County Health under Capacity Building Workshops.

Category	Question	Response
Eligibility – Organization Type/ Service Line	Are Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) that are part of a larger health system eligible?	Yes, if the center is a registered 501(c)(3) at the time of submission.
	As a skilled home health agency serving mental health patients, are we eligible for this?	Yes, if the agency is a registered 501(c)(3) at the time of submission.
	Are institutions of higher education eligible to apply?	Yes, higher education institutions are eligible if they maintain 501(c)(3) status.
	Are centers based at universities eligible to apply if they are 501(c)(3)s?	Yes, if the center is a registered 501(c)(3) at the time of submission.
	Do applicants have to be 501(c)(3) non-profit entities and GATA certified? Could a higher education-affiliated entity that is GATA certified but not a 501(c)(3) apply? If the entity is in the process of attaining not-for-profit status at the time of application, is this sufficient?	This grant uses Federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act. GATA certification is not required by 2 CFR 200 , also known as Uniform Guidance. For this grant, 501(c)(3) status is required. Higher education entities and affiliates must have 501(c)(3) status to be eligible. Lead applicants must already have 501(c)(3) status at the time of application.
	What are the minimum requirements an education agency must meet to apply for the grant?	Education agencies must have 501(c)(3) status at the time of application submission and proposals can only serve residents of Cook County.
	Are hospitals that are 501(c)(3)s eligible to apply for this grant?	Yes, if the hospital is a registered 501(c)(3) at the time of submission.
	Are safety net hospitals that are 501(c)(3) eligible to apply to this grant?	Yes, if the safety net hospital is a registered 501(c)(3) at the time of submission.
	How should 501(c)(3) hospitals that don't fit into the community-based organization or FQHC categories categorize themselves in the application?	Organizations that are 501(c)(3) entities and do not clearly match one of the other eligible organization types can indicate that they are 501(c)(3) organizations and provide any additional details in the first section of the application.
	Can for-profit CBOs apply?	No, though for-profit organizations can be partners to lead applicants that are 501(c)(3) organizations. We value the work that all community-based organizations are doing, but for-profit organizations cannot be lead applicants for this grant opportunity.
Can for-profit mental health practices apply?	For-profit entities can apply as partners to non-profit organizations where the non-profit serves as the primary applicant.	

Category	Question	Response
Eligibility – Organization Type/ Service Line (continued)	Can an organization that applied to the previous ARPA funded Building Healthy Communities grant apply to this opportunity?	Yes, previous Building Healthy Communities grant applicants and recipients may apply for this funding opportunity. Applicants are responsible for coordinating funding from multiple sources and must be able to delineate which grants are being used to cover which expenses. As part of their application, these organizations should clearly define how the scope of work for this Open Call differs from the scope of work covered by previous funding.
	Does having received American Rescue Plan funds through other local agencies precludes us from applying?	Organizations that have previously received American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, as well as other government funding, are eligible to apply.
	Are start-up nonprofits that are still in the process of hiring and developing programs eligible?	Yes, if the center is a registered 501(c)(3) at the time of submission. However, the organization will need to demonstrate how they qualify in the application.
	Does the organization need to have past financials/track record in order to apply?	No, as long as the organization is 501(c)(3) at the time of the application they are eligible. However, the organization will need to demonstrate how they qualify in the application.
	Can an organization be eligible for funding if the project is focused on providing trainings on a variety of topics including mental health, LGBTQ+ health, substance use prevention, etc.?	Yes, if the center is a registered 501(c)(3) at the time of submission. However, the organization will need to demonstrate how they qualify for the strategy they are applying for in the application.
	Are CMHCs that are part of a health system with acute care hospitals and an outpatient clinic network eligible to apply?	Yes, if the CMHC is a registered 501(c)(3) at the time of submission.
	Does the organization have to be a 501(c)(3) registered or just a non-profit that is 501(c)(3) eligible?	The organization must be registered as a 501(c)(3) at the time of submission.
	Are community mental health centers that are part of a health system with multiple acute care hospitals and an outpatient clinic network eligible to submit an application?	Community mental health centers are eligible to submit an application.
	Will we need a sam.gov account?	Applicants do not need a sam.gov account at the time of applying, but all awarded entities must have an active Unique Entity ID (formerly DUNS number) through sam.gov.

Category	Question	Response
Eligibility – Organization Type/ Service Line (continued)	Do we need a CAGE number?	Applicants do not need a CAGE number, but all awarded entities must have an active Unique Entity ID (formerly DUNS number) through sam.gov.
	Are Libraries eligible for this grant?	If the library is a 501(c)(3) at the time of submission, it is eligible.
	Are we eligible for the Stronger Together Open Call as a youth development agency that teaches digital media arts workshops in schools (during and after school)?	Please check if your agency falls under the eligibility criteria listed on https://cookcountyhealth.org/strongertogether/ - if after reviewing the list you are still unsure, please feel free to follow up with additional information on your agency so we can help make the determination.
	Our health system is a 501(c)3 with multiple CMHC locations and other BH outpatient provider sites and eligible to submit an application. What is the Eligible Applicant category, we should use - community health center or community-based organization?	You can select 501(c)3 or community health center.
	I am interested in applying for the Stronger Together Open Call, but would need to apply under fiscal sponsorship. Do you have a list of fiscal sponsors that you partner with?	Please follow our guidance regarding applying for this open call as a primary applicant. All applicants will have to follow our applicant eligibility criteria listed in the information packet.
	Prior to completing the Call Application, we are wanting to confirm with you all if we as RUSH University Medical Center could apply, or if not, as the Center to Transform Health and Housing within RUSH?	Either RUSH University Medical Center or the Center to Transform Health and Housing can apply to the Stronger Together open call.
Eligibility – Partnerships	Can a 501(c)(3) entity have a for-profit entity as a partner as part of the program design?	Yes, organizations that are not 501(c)(3)s may partner with an eligible organization that serves as the lead applicant.
	Can two non-profits 501(c)3 partner as one entity with a wider range of expertise apply as one with one leading and primary organization?	Yes, we encourage collaborations. Please note that the lead applicant must be a 501(c)(3) or other eligible organization at the time of submission.
	If an organization is part of a collaborative application under one strategy, can they also submit a separate application for a different project within the same strategy?	Yes, if each organization only serves as the lead applicant for one application per strategy. An organization can serve as a partner on one application and the lead applicant on a separate application under the same strategy.

Category	Question	Response
Eligibility – Partnerships (continued)	Can one organization apply to be the lead for two different strategies?	Yes, each organization can serve as the lead applicant once per strategy. However, they will only be eligible to be awarded as the lead for one strategy.
	Can organizations use contractors to do part of their project, including clinical work?	Yes, organizations can bring on contractors to complete part of their project. Applicants should explain the scope of work and procurement method for contractors.
	If we are applying as co-leads, do we still have to pick one agency as the main contact?	Yes, each application should have one designated lead applicant. Applications with multiple co-leads should describe the respective roles and responsibilities of each organization and identify only one organization as the lead applicant for the purpose of the application.
	Do we need to submit letters of support/commitment along with the grant application?	No, letters of support or commitment from partner organizations are not required. The only documents reviewers for this grant will consider are the Application, Work Plan, and Budget templates provided. Please do not attach or submit additional documents.
	Does each partner have to be a 501(c)3?	No, only the lead applicant must be a 501(c)(3) or other eligible organization at the time of submission.
	Can public schools be considered partners in a proposal for school-based therapy?	Yes, public schools can be considered partners in a proposal for school-based therapy.
	Is it appropriate for a collaborative to apply collectively, or should it be with one primary organization and subcontracts?	The collaborative should pick one organization to serve as the lead applicant and identify the other organizations/partners and their respective roles in Section B of the application.
	Are partners required?	No, partners are not required.
	Can a collaborative of agencies use a local unit of government as a fiscal agent?	Local units of government can be a partner but not a lead under this Open Call.
	In a collaboration, if the lead organization is younger than its partners, does that make a difference?	No, the lead organization can be younger than its partners.
	Do we list partners that we collaborate with in our work even if they are not a co-applicant?	Yes, please list partners you plan to work with and note what roles and responsibilities they cover.
	Does there need to be a signed agreement or MOU with any partners?	There does not need to be signed agreements or MOUs with partners at the time of submission.
Will Cook County connect the recipients of the grants together? So that we can see how we could work together and be stronger together instead of isolated projects?	The Office of Behavioral Health will facilitate partner networks where partners can connect with peers, share experiences, align efforts, and learn from each other.	

Category	Question	Response
Eligibility – Partnerships (continued)	Upon being selected for funding, can an organization still negotiate and add relevant partnerships in addition to those listed in its initial proposal?	Subrecipients may add additional partners with approval from the Office of Behavioral Health if need. However, the total budget proposed in the application cannot change.
Eligibility – Geographic Scope/ Population	If we do not intend to serve the listed Priority Communities, can we still apply? Are grants being prioritized to the communities listed?	If your work would serve Cook County residents you may apply. Grants are being prioritized based on the communities they serve. The Priority Populations and Communities list notes groups that are more vulnerable, are at higher risk, or harder to reach, but may not include all eligible residents in need of services. Please highlight the need(s) in the communities/ populations you would serve in your application.
	Is this grant solely for Cook County?	Yes, this grant can only serve residents of Cook County.
	Are subset populations eligible?	Yes, organizations serving subset populations of Cook County may apply. Please highlight the need(s) in the communities/populations you would serve in your application.
	Is a program eligible if it serves primarily, though not exclusively, Cook County residents?	This grant can only serve residents of Cook County.
	On page 10 of the RFP, one of the priority communities is listed as "Cragin." Is this supposed to be Belmont Cragin?	Yes, "Cragin" refers to "Belmont Cragin."
	Are listed priority communities in order?	The priority communities are listed in order of highest Social Vulnerability Index (SVI).
	Are students of a higher education institution in Cook County eligible even if their permanent address is outside of Cook County?	Yes, higher education institutions within Cook County are eligible to provide programs and services to students.
	The Priority Populations reached has an "Other" section. Would victims of domestic violence living in a DV shelter be eligible? The shelter is not in a priority population neighborhood, but the clients are primarily low income, Latinx, and come from throughout the city.	Yes, victims of domestic violence living in a domestic violence shelter are eligible. Please be sure to describe the clients/population you are serving under the "Other" Priority Populations Reached section.

Category	Question	Response
Eligibility – Geographic Scope/ Population (continued)	Does the community area “Douglas East Side” refer to the Douglas community area?	Yes, “Douglas East Side” refers to the Douglas community area.
	Is there an age range we should be following for any of the specific strategies?	The age range depends on the type of program. For example, a program that serves youth and family could be ages 0-24, while programs for adults and older adults could be 18 and older.
	If our organization serves all of Cook County, is it okay to select every community listed under the ‘Priority Populations Reached?’	Yes, if the organization serves all of Cook County, they can select each community.
Grant Application – Timeline/ Project Period	What is the anticipated program period?	We expect the program period to start on September 1, 2024. The program end date will be November 30, 2026.
	How should we document the timeline for participant intake and treatment?	Applicants should identify and describe timeline phases, milestones, and deadlines that are most relevant for their program. Some phases may be ongoing for most of the program; applicants can use the Comments section of the Work Plan to provide any context needed for grant reviewers and funders to understand the process for participants.
	Does the timeline need to be for 3 years, or can there be different goals on each year?	All goals and objectives should be clearly illustrated in the program proposal and workplan.
	If we are needing to hire additional staff how much time will we have to hire and train?	Organizations should allocate a reasonable and realistic amount of time to hire and train staff.
Grant Application – Outcomes, Metrics, and Reporting	Are there outcome measurements included in the grant offering application, and are there other key outcomes that are required to fulfill? Is there a list of required metrics applicants can look at?	Yes, please see page 15 of the “Stronger Together Open Call Information Packet” PDF under Deliverables and Obligations of Awards for the deliverables and metrics. Please note that while required metrics are already determined, grant applicants should identify program-specific outcomes they will report on in their Work Plan.
	Is the reporting cadence the same for the CCDPH BHC Open Call grant programs or can the provider propose their own reporting cycle?	The reporting cadence is the same; the US Treasury and County require grant recipients to submit metrics monthly to the Office of Behavioral Health at Cook County Health. Recipients will have 30 days after the end of each month to report data from the month before. For example, recipients will submit metrics for September 2024 by October 31, 2024.
	Can the people served (outcomes) grow over time as the program gains momentum?	Yes, the number of people served can increase over the project lifetime. Applicants should identify outcomes that can capture any project growth.

Category	Question	Response
Grant Application – Outcomes, Metrics, and Reporting (<i>continued</i>)	Apart from financial reporting, can you please confirm if the following table, also from Page 16, is the only set of predetermined metrics that will be required for reporting? Are there any other defined and required reporting metrics for the funding source or the Office of Behavioral Health?	Subrecipients will also be expected to submit treasury-required and county equity-level metrics. These metrics will be built out during the program standup phase.
	In order to meet all the reporting requirements that you have outlined, grantees will need to report on the goals and objectives they proposed as well as the Treasury indices and indices given by the county. Is that correct?	Yes, the full reporting requirements are reporting on 1) Treasury-required metrics, 2) County Equity metrics, and 3) Program metrics agreed upon between Cook County and the grant awardees. Grant awardees will have a chance to revisit the metrics (outcomes) they submitted in their application and work with the County to determine the final list to report on.
Grant Application – Budget	We noticed an error in the funding track and strategy section in the budget and budget narrative template. Can you please correct this?	Thank you for this notification. The corrected budget and budget narrative template has been uploaded to the Stronger Together website Stronger Together: Building a More Equitable Behavioral Health System – Cook County Health .
	How do we identify Year 1 and so on for budgeting purposes?	Provided the program launches as planned, year one will be from September 1, 2024 – November 30, 2024. Subsequent years will be from December 1 – November 30.
	Please explain the difference between the two tracks	The only difference between the two tracks is how much total funding is awarded. The application and program requirements are the same.
	Is the amount of the award the same for each of the years (e.g., \$500,000 / year)?	Each funding track indicates the total amount available over the duration of the program (anticipated to begin September 1, 2024, and to end November 30, 2026). Each year can have different total allocations and different allocations between budget categories.
	Will grant awardees have opportunities to re-budget during the program?	Organizations should provide budgets that are as accurate as possible. Cook County Health recognizes program needs may change over time., and there will be case-by-case opportunities to adjust the budgets. Organizations will be asked to justify any changes.

Category	Question	Response
Grant Application – Budget <i>(continued)</i>	Will funding be reimbursement based?	Funding will primarily be advancement-based. Grant awardees can request advance payments between 25% to 50% of their estimated budget per fiscal year. Grant recipients will complete a Risk Assessment that will dictate the exact terms for advancements. As needed, recipients can also receive funds through reimbursements.
	Do organizations need to plan reserves for a 45-day-payments?	Organizations should plan for 4-6 week payments.
	Can funds be used on capital expenses?	Funds from this grant cannot be used for the purchase or improvement of land or purchase, improvement, or construction of a building. Please see the “Stronger Together Open Call Information Packet” PDF for a list of eligible and ineligible expenses.
	Are food and beverages eligible expenses?	Yes, food and beverages are eligible if tied to specific programming events or needs.
	Are hiring bonuses an eligible expense?	No, hiring bonuses are not eligible expenses for this specific grant opportunity.
	Is rent an eligible expense?	Yes, rent is an eligible expense under other direct costs if directly related to program services.
	Are consultant fees paid to a grants firm that will be tracking and reporting for this grant allowable as budget line items?	Yes, consultant fees are an eligible expense for this grant opportunity.
	Are matching funds required for this grant opportunity?	No, matching funds is not required.
	Is there a per-participant/recipient cost range or limit for services?	No, there is not limit on per-participant expenses if the proposal includes an explanation of the cost, likely in the Budget Narrative.
	Is there a section in the budget to describe in-kind contributions?	No, the budget template is specific to the funding you will be receiving for this grant opportunity.
What category of the budget template do cost associated with other partner organizations fall?	Costs related to partners in this project will be included in the budget template under Consultants and Contractors	

Category	Question	Response
Grant Application – Budget (continued)	What counts as indirect costs? How should we calculate that?	Indirect costs are costs that cannot be identified for a specific grant award, service, or activity of an organization, but are incurred as the result of multiple grant awards, services, or activities (see 2 CFR 200.56). Applicants that already have an established Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) with a federal agency for the upcoming fiscal year should use that rate. All other applicants can allocate up to 10% of their modified total direct costs (MTDC) over the project lifetime to indirect costs. MTDC are the sum of direct costs from salaries, wages, benefits, materials, supplies, training, marketing, travel, consultants, contractors, beneficiaries, up to \$25,000 of each subaward to partner organizations, and other direct costs. MTDC excludes rent, utilities, phone and internet, technology and equipment, program participant costs, and any unspecified administrative costs—these are eligible direct expenses but cannot be counted in the sum used to calculate indirect costs.
	Can you apply for both levels, \$500,000 and \$1,000,000?	Organizations can be the lead applicant once per strategy and must select one funding track per application . Please see the questions in the Eligibility – Partnerships section and Strategy-specific sections for more information.
	Can organizations submit more than one application for the same category, one for the \$500,000 track and one for the \$1,000,000 track, if they are not the lead on both applications?	Organizations can be part of multiple applications to the same strategy where each application is for a different funding track. Applicants should note that a key goal of this funding opportunity is to “improve equitable distribution of resources,” as noted in the Use and Availability of Funding section of the “Stronger Together Open Call Information Packet” PDF. Strong applications will clearly describe why each partner organization is uniquely positioned to fulfill the program goals and mission and advance the selected Strategy.
	Is there a cap on salaries?	No, but costs must be reasonable to the scope of the project and justified in the Budget Narrative.
	Is there fiscal agent that handles the flow of funding for this project?	Grant recipients will work directly with the Office of Behavioral Health at Cook County Health on project implementation and all fiscal processes.
	Can an organization hire an employee that will be responsible for tracking and reporting program metrics?	Yes, an organization can hire an employee that will be responsible for tracking and reporting program metrics.

Category	Question	Response
Grant Application – Budget (continued)	Can funding be used for marketing, hiring additional therapists, expanding, or securing larger facilities, etc.?	The eligible uses are detailed in the required Budget and Budget Narrative document for the application.
	Are equipment purchases allowed in the budget?	Yes, equipment purchases are allowed in the budget. In the budget narrative, explain how the equipment is necessary for the success of the project. Please see the budget category descriptions under budget and budget narrative document.
	Where is technology addressed in the budget form?	You can list technology used specifically for your program under the “equipment” budget category.
	Can organizations charge towards facility expenses?	Yes, if the facility expense is used directly for the funded program.
	Does the budget cover capital expenditures?	Yes, the budget covers capital expenditures. Examples of capital improvements and construction include Institutional Equipment, Computer and Tech Equipment, Office Furniture, Vehicle Equipment, etc.
	How are funds disbursed if you enter an application with a community partner?	Funds will be disbursed to the lead applicant.
	Are marketing, outreach, and translation eligible expenses?	Yes, marketing, outreach, and translation are eligible expenses.
	Can we pay youth as apprentices and interns for programs during the summer/school breaks and for opportunity youth not in school and under the age of 26?	Yes, you can pay youth as apprentices and interns for programs during the summer/school breaks and for opportunity youth not in school and under the age of 26.
	Is the cost of space like mortgage or mortgage assessments allowable if it is a commercial NFP condo?	Yes, rent costs are allowed as long as the space is used directly for the program.
	Is leasing a vehicle an allowable cost?	Yes, leasing a vehicle is an allowable cost as long as that vehicle is used directly for programmatic purposes.
Does this grant allow our teaching staff to use Uber/Lyft and get reimbursed?	Yes, transportation reimbursements are eligible as long as that transportation cost is used directly for programmatic purposes.	

Category	Question	Response
Grant Application – Budget (continued)	<p>Is it permissible to direct a portion of the grant award to an emergency assistance fund, overseen by a case manager, to support clients in need of transportation, housing, utilities?</p>	<p>Yes, it is permissible to direct a portion of the grant award to an emergency assistance fund, overseen by a case manager, to support clients in need of transportation, housing, utilities.</p>
	<p>Where do we list wraparound supportive services in the budget?</p>	<p>List wraparound supportive services under “other costs.”</p>
	<p>Can you tell me if the if the under \$500,000 track will be more or less competitive than the under \$1 million?</p>	<p>There is no difference between the two funding tracks.</p>
	<p>Can applicants allocate educational loan repayment stipends for clinical personnel (eg, nurse practitioners) to be hired?</p>	<p>Educational loan repayment stipends are not an eligible expense.</p>
	<p>We are currently under the 10 percent De Minimis rate for our programs. And just wanting to clarify that this means we can request 10 percent of the requested budget from the County grant. For example, With this in mind are we eligible to ask for up to 50k in indirect if we ask for 500 k in your grant offering, if we apply the 10 percent de minimis rate?</p>	<p>Organizations and entities receiving Federal funding may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) towards indirect costs. Modified total direct costs (MTDC) are all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward. MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs, and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000.</p>
	<p>Our proposed program will include support from subcontractors. While completing the budget, is a full breakdown of the subcontractor costs needed? For example, under Personnel, would we list our subgrantees Personnel (who will be funded through the grant), or do we include just subgrantee expenses in Other Direct Costs and use the budget narrative to explain how their portion of the budget will be used?</p>	<p>Please put subgrantee expenses in “Other Direct Costs” and use the budget narrative to explain how their portion of the budget will be used.</p>

Category	Question	Response
Grant Application – Budget (continued)	Can we cover training that would be used in counseling that is billed to Medicaid? We wouldn't have the grant cover the actual counseling, just the cost of the specialized training that will improve counseling services for our target population.	Yes, this funding can be used to specialized training that will improve counseling services.
	Medicaid does not cover anyone's full salary, and everyone also has a small number of unfunded clients on their caseloads. Are we allowed to use the grant to cover a percentage of a counselor's salary that is commensurate with the percentage of unfunded or non-Medicaid clients?	Funding can be used to cover the percentage of a counselor's salary that is commensurate the percentage of their uninsured clients.
	Is it \$500,000 or \$1,000,000 per year or spread over the grant period?	The funding is spread over the 26/27 month grant period (i.e. September 1 or September 30, 2024- November 30, 2026).
	Is this a one-time funding opportunity?	This is a one-time ARPA funded grant opportunity.
	This funding is not intended to be passed through?	This funding is not intended as a pass through.
	Is it reasonable to allow for cost-of-living increases to salaries in year 2 and year 3?	Yes, it is allowable to include cost-of-living increases to salaries in year 2 and year 3.
	Charging sliding scale prices for programming. Under this grant, are you permitted to charge a sliding scale?	Under this grant, organizations are not permitted to charge sliding scale fees.
	How much detail should we provide in the budget about our plans to subcontract grant funds?	Please identify the funds per year for each contract in the budget. Then describe their work and budget details in the budget narrative. Identify how the subcontractor will help you achieve your goals and outcomes.
	Can we use funds to help people with housing?	Yes, funds can be used towards housing.
	Would it be allowable for an organization to purchase a transportation voucher and give to an individual (in bulk)?	Yes, that is allowable. When it comes to stipends, including transportation vouchers, they must be directly tied to the program, and a description on the use of vouchers be included with the program invoices.

Category	Question	Response
Grant Application – Budget (continued)	Because the grant is 26/27 months, should Y1 be prorated?	Yes, year one should be prorated.
	Can we apply for funding of a behavioral health specialist position at a partner Chicago public or private school?	Yes, a behavioral health specialist position is an allowable expense.
	Is there a federal salary cap?	There is no federal salary cap.
	Could we use the funds to provide support for two programs, one an intervention program and one a prevention program?	Yes, funds can be used for both a prevention and intervention program.
	Will any effort be made to distribute the funds across the kinds of eligible organizations in this NOFO?	The awardees will be selected based on their applications as detailed in the scoring section of the Open Call Information Packet. There is not a specific number of each type of eligible organization to be selected.
	One of the programs we are requesting funding for will start in August. We believe during one of the workshops we heard that if we are awarded funding, the project would need to start in September, but we are unsure if that also means that grant funds would be received that the same time. Given this timeline, we are exploring options to ensure a smooth transition between program commencement and the availability of grant funds. We are willing to cover the upfront costs for the program, however, we wanted to inquire: Would Cook County consider reimbursement for the upfront costs if grant funds are awarded/received in September?	Funding cannot be allocated to any program prior to the September launch.
	Can funds be used to establish the office and staff in the office also is treating patients who are being charged for services? Would we use a percentage?	Funding must be used only for program expenses for this grant. Applicants should assign an appropriate percentage for shared office space and staffing.

Category	Question	Response
Grant Application – Budget (continued)	Are occupancy costs (rent and utilities) allowable in the budget based on percent of grant FTE to total agency FTE, understanding that we would not charge 10% indirect on these costs? If yes, would it go under “Contractual” or “Other” costs?	These costs are allowable as long as they are being used for direct programming purposes. Please refer to the “Other” budget category description listed in the Budget Category Descriptions tab in the budget and budget narrative form.
	Is a prorated mortgage payment total an allowable cost? Is the prorated mortgage interest payment an allowable cost?	Any reimbursements or charges must be for services performed within the timeframe of the program.
	Is this funding available to pay for AI technology innovations that would allow behavioral health clinicians to be more efficient in providing services directly to clients?	Technology is an allowable cost.
	For the purposes of this grant, would a stipend for coach recruitment be considered a cost directly related to programming?	Yes, stipends for coach recruitment that is directly related to programming is an allowable cost.
	Would it be allowable to submit for funding for (1) equipment such as psych safe beds and/or monitoring technology that aids in patient observation, and (2) making the space more ligature resistant, i.e., drywalling a ceiling or installing a garage door over medical equipment?	The listed expenditures are allowable as long as they are directly related to programmatic efforts and success.
	We’re in discussions with several local community based organizations that support longer term care coordination. If we’re not to a point by 4/17 where we can definitively layout resource / financial needs, could we submit as part of the above some money to support continued planning sessions over the ensuing months?	Yes, that is allowable, as long as the money is budgeted within the program’s intended timeline.

Category	Question	Response
Grant Application – Budget <i>(continued)</i>	Is the following an allowable cost: program completion incentives for clients, for example a gift card for attending group therapy?	Stipends are an allowable cost if you can justify how they will increase inclusivity and equity. For example, providing a stipend for transportation since it is a commodity that many families and youth in the communities, we serve do not have would be an allowable expense.
	Would a vehicle be considered an acceptable "equipment" purchase under this grant?	Yes, a vehicle is an allowable expense under 'equipment' budget category.
	Sign-on and retention bonuses for frontline staff are not allowed per previous FAQs, but are shift differentials an allowable cost? For example, an extra \$5/hr on top of standard hourly wage for any hours worked during a night shift for an RN?	Yes, shift differentials are an allowable cost.
	If a cost is budgeted in Year 1 but is delayed to Year 2, can the cost be expensed in year 2?	Yes, you can rollover unused funds from Year 1 to Year 2.
Grant Application – Strategy	For the early intervention strategy, as a CBO, can we provide screening for all clients, but then refer out for care? Could we screen under the Crisis Care strategy as a way of raising awareness?	For the early intervention strategy, you can provide screening for your clients and refer out for care. Under the Crisis Care strategy, an applicant could propose screening as a part of a continuum of care.
	How do you define "sobering centers?"	A sobering center is a short-term care facility designed to allow an individual who is intoxicated and nonviolent to safely recover from the effects of alcohol and drugs.
	Please explain the differences between prevention and early intervention and access to coordinated care. Is prevention focused on screening? Is access to coordinated care focused on clinical care?	We recognize potential overlap between early intervention and treatment, support, and recovery. An organization can apply to one strategy and have components of another strategy.
	Do access to employment opportunities for youth and violence prevention efforts fit into a category?	Yes, access to employment opportunities for youth and violence prevention efforts fit into the strategy, Prevention and Early Intervention - Youth & Family - Meeting the Behavioral Health and Health-Related Social Needs of Students and Families Inside and Outside of School.

Category	Question	Response
Grant Application – Strategy (continued)	How many grants will be awarded?	We expect to award 50-60 applicants. However, the number of grants is not set. We are awarding \$44 million in funding, and the number will depend on the total sum of the awards.
	Is there someone we can talk to make sure our ideas are in the correct category?	Currently, the Office of Behavioral Health is not able to offer technical assistance to the development of specific proposals. Applicants should review the " Stronger Together Open Call Information Packet " PDF for descriptions of the strategies.
	Are funds intended for behavioral health services exclusively, or would they also fund wraparound services that support social determinants of health (housing, parent coaching, workforce development)?	Funding is not exclusively for behavioral health services. Funding can also support wraparound services that support social determinants of health. Applicants should review the " Stronger Together Open Call Information Packet " PDF for descriptions of the strategies.
	Does an applicant have to provide team-based care and harm reduction and community-based peer support services?	No, an applicant does not have to provide team-based care, harm reduction, AND community-based peer support services. Those were examples of services. Applicants are not limited to just those services or must provide any or all of those services.
	Can funds be used for workforce development such as training and certifying peers and behavioral support specialist?	Yes, funds can be used for workforce development such as training and certifying peers and behavioral support specialists.
	Strategy 3- treatment support- does it have to be both mental health and substance use?	No, it can be mental health or substance use.
	Can this funding be used to outsource and take services outside of building location? Such as recovery homes, treatment centers or schools?	Yes, as long as you are not billing for services that are being paid by this grant.
	Can you clarify limits on Medicaid billable services? Some of our clients allow for Medicaid billing, but only 70%. We never deny services based on billing eligibility.	Funding is not to be used towards billable Medicaid services.
	Regarding strategy seven, does a level 3.7 medically monitored withdrawal management program count as a sobering center?	A level 3.7 medically monitored withdrawal management program does not count as a sobering center, but it is seen as a place to go in crisis.
We have a stabilization program but also provide substance abuse counseling and domestic violence counseling. Can we house that under the stabilization program?	Yes, you could house substance abuse counseling and domestic violence counseling in a stabilization program.	

Category	Question	Response
Grant Application – Strategy (continued)	Under Strategy 4 (Crisis Care: Increasing Community Awareness and Engagement Aligning Mobile Crisis Response) in addition we would like to implement mental health screenings during our client intake so we can appropriately refer to services. Is this something we can add to our workplan, even though screenings more closely align with Strategy 1 (Early Intervention Adults and Older Adults- Improving Screening and Integrated Care).	We recognize potential overlap between strategies. An organization can apply to one strategy and have components of another strategy.
	If, for example, we intend to apply as the lead for the Crisis Care Strategy focused on Adults, and in the application, we speak to our services for Youth, as well as our current strategy for increasing community awareness, are we allowed to include the youth and communication pieces in the budget?	Yes, if under the Crisis Care Strategy for Adults and Older Adults you are also providing services for youth and working to increase community awareness you could include those expenses in your budget.
	We are a youth development organization doing social-emotional learning through a trauma-informed lens. Is our work considered an “upstream driver of behavioral health?”	If your proposed work is addressing the upstream drivers of behavioral health or youth, you could apply under the Early Intervention and Prevention for Youth and Families Strategy.
	Our 501(c)(3) focuses on mentorship to provide additional support to at-risk families. Would this qualify as 'wrap around' services as mentioned in Prevention & Early Intervention Strategy?	Your proposal should describe how mentorship to at-risk families aligns with Prevention & Early Intervention Strategy.
	What are the sustainability requirements after grant period?	The application asks applicants to confirm if they will work towards sustaining proposed programs/services after the grant period ends. While it’s not a requirement, we highly encourage describing your sustainability plans beyond the grant period.
	For the Youth and Family - Prevention and Early Intervention track, are projects focusing on pregnant/parenting families and/or infant/early childhood eligible?	Yes, programs focusing on pregnant/parenting families and/or infant/early childhood are eligible.

Category	Question	Response
Grant Application – Strategy (continued)	Are wraparound support services and workforce support services allowed for all 7-strategies, or just for just strategy one?	Applicants should illustrate how their proposed work aligns with the selected strategy, including description of community need and benefit using data and published literature.
	The three strategies for Crisis Services overlap in our services, how should we apply to each strategy separately?	Applicants should consider applying as the lead for the strategy in which they'll be doing the most effort. If an applicant's work is more comprehensive, then they can include that work in their workplan and budget. While applicants can apply as the lead for more than one strategy, they will only be eligible to be funded as the lead for one strategy.
	We offer resource development coaching and connect community members to mainstream benefits, offer support to get connected to mental or physical health, including support on digital skills and scheduling. We also offer financial, employment and housing coaching/wraparound services to address root causes. We are fully bilingual (English/Spanish). Would we be eligible for early intervention?	Eligibility depends on the type of organization/institution you are at the time of submission. Please see Eligibility in the Open Call Information Packet. Proposed work should align with the selected strategy.
	Does the proposal favor existing services vs. creating a new program design?	The Open Call does not favor existing services versus new programs.
	Could grant awards result in partial program funding?	The Office of Behavioral Health at Cook County Health panels will review proposals, score them based on quality, and recommend full, partial or no funding.
	Is the priority to fund more applicants or to fully fund specific applications?	The priority is to fund proposals address behavioral health inequities across the region's system of care through increased systems alignment, enhanced system quality, and the expansion of access to early intervention and prevention, treatment, support, recovery, and crisis assessment and care.

Category	Question	Response
Grant Application – Strategy (continued)	<p>Our organization is looking to continue funding our older adult program that is already funded by ARPA dollars. If another department in our organization wanted to apply to a different priority, can they apply to be a lead on that?</p>	<p>Eligible applicants may apply for more than one strategy but will only be eligible to be awarded as a primary grantee on one strategy.</p>
	<p>Can we show the percentage Medicaid covers and then request funding for what it does not?</p>	<p>This funding is not intended to compensate Medicaid covered services. This funding can support the uninsured or unfunded services.</p>
	<p>If the lead wants to address two strategies subsequently, can they apply for one strategy as fiscal agent and the second strategy has to be the other fiscal agent?</p>	<p>An organization can serve as lead for one strategy and serve as a partner on a different strategy.</p>
	<p>I would like to ask if developing and delivering a training program focused on mental health information and triaging situations in elementary and middle school children would be considered an eligible activity under Strategy 1</p>	<p>Yes, delivering a training program focused on mental health information and triaging situations in elementary and middle school children would fit into Prevention and Early Intervention - Youth & Family. Applicants should review the “Stronger Together Open Call Information Packet” PDF for descriptions of the strategies.</p>
	<p>For the Treatment, Recovery, and Support Servies- Youth & Family- Increasing Access and Coordinated Care, would preventative mental health services offered to preschool children be eligible for funding?</p>	<p>Preventative mental health services offered to preschool children would fit into Treatment, Recovery, and Support Servies- Youth & Family. Applicants should review the “Stronger Together Open Call Information Packet” PDF for descriptions of the strategies.</p>
	<p>Our supportive service is that we provide nutrition education with a curriculum adapted for mental well-being, hands-on cooking skills focused on researched-based nutrients for mental wellness, and fresh produce food boxes to low-to-moderate income students and families across 75 Chicago Public Schools. Can you confirm for us that a program like this is eligible for funding under supportive services as described in the funding tracks?</p>	<p>Programs providing wraparound services that address health-related social needs for youth and families are eligible for funding. Applicants should select a strategy that aligns with their proposed work and include a description of community need and benefit using data and published literature in their proposal.</p>

Category	Question	Response
Grant Application – Strategy (continued)	<p>I would like to partner with the Seventh Day Adventist Church to propose a Lifestyle Center in the community of Pilsen. This would include cooking classes, hydrotherapy treatments, massage therapy, life-alignment sessions, and an herb shop. Would this project meet one of the eligibility criteria to apply?</p>	<p>Applicants should illustrate how their proposed work aligns with the selected strategy, including a description of community need and benefit using data and published literature in their proposal.</p>
	<p>We are a baseball and softball non-profit 501(c)(3) academy that is based on the campus of UIC providing access, free of charge, to the game for 5,000+ underprivileged inner-city youth in the geographic areas that you have outlined. Clearly, sports does play a part in the prevention and strengthening of a child's mental and behavioral well-being. That aside, as part of our life skill educational sessions, we are going to partner with UIC sports psychology to run clinics with coaches, parents and players to discuss how they can mentor their children to become stronger in social and emotional learning. Does that fit the grant criteria?</p>	<p>Yes, prevention and education programs for youth and families are eligible for funding. Applicants should include a detailed description of their work and proposed benefit using data and published literature in their proposal.</p>
	<p>Hospital I work for a hospital system that serves various community areas-we can't predict exactly which community areas our participants will come from. We have data about our service area and can expect our participants will come from. Can we use this in our SMART goals, understanding we will target certain communities, but some may be more or less participants?</p>	<p>As long as these funds would only be used to serve Cook County residents, it's okay to give estimates of what share of patients would come from different communities and populations across Cook County. Please feel free to share any notes explaining your estimate in the work plan and budget narrative.</p>

Category	Question	Response
Grant Application – Strategy (continued)	Could couples counseling be included for individuals who have completed a partner abuse intervention program and are still in a couple relationship?	Yes, couples counseling is eligible funding.
	If we use funds to augment or improve conditions for behavioral health patients that utilize emergency departments, i.e., creating improved settings or supportive services for patients boarding in an ED, or creating a separate unit or setting that's more appropriate for these patients, would that be considered a service that's billing Medicaid?	Yes, funds can be used to augment or improve conditions for behavioral health patients that utilize emergency departments.
	If we are serving youth and family, if the family member of the youth is older - for example a minor being cared for by a grandparent over 65, would the grandparent still be able to be counted and benefitted by the program as well as the minor?	Yes, the older family member can benefit from and be counted by the program.
	We're considering hiring a peer support specialist on our <u>inpatient units</u> experiencing a first episode of psychosis. Would this person's time / effort need to be directed only to unfunded patients or could they support anyone needing extra support during an initial episode of psychosis? This is not a billable service and it would be targeted to patients that are having a first break.	These specialists can be funded through ARPA as long as their services directly align with your chosen strategy's mission. Please ensure that their yearly budget aligns with the intended percentage FTE spent providing the services.
	After a patient discharges from the inpatient program they often transition to a Harvey-based IOP program. If we identified unfunded patients that were being treated for a first episode of psychosis on our inpatient unit (above), could we submit for funding to have them go to our IOP program? We know our marginal cost for the service and could submit for funding to offset that cost.	Yes, this is allowable.

Category	Question	Response
Grant Application – Strategy (continued)	We do not have any outpatient programming post-IOP for patients experiencing first break psychosis. If we created a clinic to support those patients that came through our inpatient unit, would we need to restrict access to that clinic by payer? Or could we fund those providers/clinicians time through the grant, and not bill for services rendered in that clinic – to ensure we’re not double billing any payers?	Yes, you may fund the providers/clinicians as long as there are sufficient processes in place that ensure services are not billed for.
	Is the provision of detox (ASAM Level 3.7) programs/services considered an allowable activity under STRATEGY #4: Treatment, Recovery, and Support Services - Adults & Older Adults - Increasing Access and Coordinated Care?	Yes, detox (ASAM Level 3.7) is an allowable activity under Strategy 4: Treatment, Recovery, and Support Services- Adults & Older Adults- Increasing Access and Coordinated Care.
Grant Application – Work Plan	Does the leader/person responsible for the objective need to be an existing employee/manager of the agency or can it be a position hired for the project?	People responsible/leaders for specific objectives can be new employees. Please name an existing employee for continuity and describe the timeline for hiring and scope of their work in the Work Plan Comments and Budget Narrative.
	Is it a requirement to have 3 goals (with 2-3 objectives each)?	Yes, the workplan requires at least 3 goals along with respective objectives. Applicants may include more goals as needed.
	Do the timelines for the objectives/outcomes need to be yearly or can some be completed/reported on at the end of the project in November 2026?	Metrics will be collected at program closeout but recommend that applicants collect metrics on a given cadence (yearly, quarterly, monthly).
	In the outcomes section of the work plan should we put in specific numeric targets?	Yes, please include specific numeric outcomes for each objective in the Work Plan. Full instructions are included at the top of the Work Plan template.
	Is there a portion of the workplan that needs to be new programming? Or is existing programming eligible as long as it fits the priorities and serves Cook County?	No, there is no requirement for new programming. But the narrative needs to illustrate how these funds are going to provide services that are not already funded.