

Q&A for REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS to Reduce Drug-Related Harms Among Communities of Color in Michigan

1. What does a racial equity lens/approach look like? What does that mean?

A racial equity toolkit is available here: https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GARE-Racial_Equity_Toolkit.pdf

A racial equity approach proactively seeks to first understand the racial inequities present in your jurisdiction including an analysis of how Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other populations of color are impacted by overdose and drug policy in your neighborhood or geography of interest. Decision making and community engagement efforts should be intentional in their inclusion of people of color. There should be clear goals, objectives, and strategies for addressing the inequities present in addition to a plan for monitoring as well as responding to lack of progress or an exacerbation of inequities.

2. Can academic institutions apply with community partners as a collaborative?

Yes, academic institutions may apply with community partners as a collaborative.

3. Are LLCs allowed to apply?

Yes, LLCs that meet the RFP criteria are welcome to apply.

4. Can organizations that are already working with Vital Strategies apply for this grant to expand work?

Yes, organizations that currently or have previously partnered with Vital Strategies may apply for this grant, provided that all criteria are met.

5. What are the forms of “previous” history of finance management would you be looking for?

A 501(c)3 status is **not** necessary to be eligible for this RFP. Basic documentation of accounting and good record keeping on finances will be sufficient attachments to your proposal for us to review and assess that the applicant engages in sound fiscal practices. The RFP was designed to be as low-burdened as we thought possible and therefore, encourage community-based, grassroots, low-resourced organizations or collaborations to apply. Applicants may also share their materials or ask specific questions relating to their finances at overdose@vitalstrategies.org and our team will respond in a timely manner.

6. Could you give examples of the types of technical support you provide after grants are awarded?

We plan to coordinate convenings to share learnings across awardees, offer one-on-one technical assistance sessions, and bring in other TA experts as needed.

7. Will virtual outreach and education be acceptable?

Yes, virtual activities are allowable. In addition, all awardee convenings and TA sessions will be conducted virtually.

8. What does this work look like if we have extended or are issued future stay at home orders?

We continue to monitor stay at home orders and are committed to responding to the concerns surrounding COVID-19. We also believe there is opportunity for creative work in this area including use of digital technologies for community engagement, education, advocacy and coalition-building. Overdose continues to be an issue in our communities and people who use drugs will need support and harm reduction services now more than ever.

9. Can we purchase PPE for COVID?

Yes, you can include purchase of PPE in your budget proposal. We do not supply PPE. However, PPE cannot be the sole or primary component of your proposal. It should be considered as an associated expense but not the featured intervention.

10. Could these funds be used to target legal advocacy to help individuals obtain expungements after a prior drug conviction?

Yes, organizations are welcome to submit a proposal that targets criminal-legal harms and social penalties related to the punitive drug policies.

11. Are indirect or admin costs allowable in the budget?

Yes, indirect costs to support the administration of the grant and the project are allowable. Any costs listed in the proposal will be considered holistically considering the scope of the activities.

12. Can you say more about the RFP statement that “activities that seek to ‘change’ individual behaviors are not appropriate?”

We recognize that racial disparities require a systemic response. This grant seeks to support change at the community level by educating and mobilizing community members towards changing policies, institutions and systems. Organizations that understand the root causes of social/racial injustice at a community level and are committed to movement building and systemic change.

13. Is there a preferred age range in those served by these funds?

No, people of any age may be served, and activities may be targeted to organizations or systems not just individuals.

14. Is there an expectation that a certain percentage of those served will be people of color?

For projects with a direct services component, we do not have a standard number or percentage of people of color who are served, and we look to the applicant to describe the demographics and community context of the project. For all projects, from direct services to capacity building, we are seeking applicants who meet the organizational eligibility criteria of BIPOC leadership and working to advance racial equity in majority BIPOC communities.

15. What are the documents need to be attached with the proposal?

Please see the RFP document pages 6-8 for full details on required materials. In summary, a full application will include a Cover Page, Project Narrative, and Budget.

16. Will you help us find additional funding to continue this work at the end of the grant period?

Yes. As part of this initiative, Vital Strategies and Yet Once More will be providing technical assistance as well as facilitate access to other experts and stakeholders in this field. We will assist with capacity building for our grantees, including identifying funding opportunities as well as addressing other capacity needs that grantees raise.

17. What are consequences to deliverables not being met?

Inability to meet deliverables can jeopardize payment. However, we understand that plans can be disrupted by forces beyond our control. We urge continuous communication with Vital and PDPH partners when encountering roadblocks. Vital Strategies and Yet Once More can work with you to strategize and troubleshoot around roadblocks and amend project activities, timeline and deliverables if deemed necessary.

