

FAQs Tier 2B FOA: Rigorous Evaluation of New or Innovative Approaches to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

Purpose and Target Population Questions

What is the goal of the Tier 2B FOA?

The purpose of the Tier 2B FOA is to increase the number of evidence-based TPP interventions available by rigorously evaluating new or innovative approaches for preventing teen pregnancy and related high risk behaviors. OAH is especially interested in expanding the evidence base for the field of TPP by funding rigorous evaluations of innovative interventions designed to address gaps in the existing evidence, reduce disparities in teen pregnancy and associated sexual and reproductive health outcomes, and/or serve high-need populations. OAH is also interested in the use of non-traditional delivery methods (i.e., non-curriculum based approaches) to address teen pregnancy prevention and related risk behaviors. (FOA pages 3-4)

What is the target population for the Tier 2B FOA?

The target population for interventions funded under this announcement should be individuals, or families of individuals, or professionals who work closely with individuals, 19 years of age or under at program entry. Youth who are not yet teenagers are eligible if the intent of the proposed intervention is to prevent teen pregnancy. Furthermore, young men older than 19 years who are at high risk for fathering a teen pregnancy are also eligible. (FOA page 14)

How does this funding announcement (Tier 2B) differ from that of the Supporting and Enabling Early Innovation to Advance Adolescent Health and Prevent Teen Pregnancy (Tier 2A)?

The purpose of the Tier 2B funding announcement (Rigorous Evaluation of New or Innovative Approaches to Prevent Teen Pregnancy) is to rigorously evaluate new or innovative strategies or approaches for preventing teen pregnancy and related high-risk behaviors. This announcement will fund applicant organizations to implement a multi-year, rigorous evaluation of an innovative intervention designed to prevent teen pregnancy or associated risk factors. Projects funded under this announcement are expected to have the potential to yield high impact results, reduce public health burden, and improve population health.

The purpose of the Tier 2A announcement (Supporting and Enabling Early Innovation to Advance Adolescent Health and Prevent Teen Pregnancy) is to enable and support early innovation to advance adolescent health and prevent teen pregnancy. The announcement will establish two independent intermediaries (one focused on technology interventions and one focused on program interventions) that will select, fund, and support a portfolio

of innovators across the country to design, test, and refine interventions to advance adolescent health and prevent teen pregnancy.

Program Expectation Questions

Are there requirements for how applicants under the TPP Tier 2B FOA should define geographic boundaries for the targeted community? (NEW)

No. Under the TPP Tier 2B FOA, there is not a specific definition of community that applicants must use. Applicants should describe and specify the community or communities in which the target population is located within the project narrative. For more information, applicants should review the FOA, including the proposed intervention (pp. 43-46), intervention implementation and work plan (pp. 46-48), evaluation design (pp. 49-60), and scoring criteria (pp. 71-78).

What is considered an innovative or new intervention under this announcement?

For the purposes of this FOA, innovation is defined broadly as new or promising approaches, strategies, interventions, or curricula, informed by scientific theory or empirical evidence that may lead to or have the potential to result in a substantial reduction in teen pregnancy rates, sexual transmitted infection (STIs) rates, and associated sexual risk behaviors. A new intervention may either be a recently developed intervention or an intervention that has been in use for some years but has never been rigorously evaluated. For the Tier 2B FOA, all interventions must be rigorously evaluated to determine effectiveness. The 2B FOA is not intended to fund early stage projects that are not ready to be implemented within the context of a rigorous evaluation (see Tier 2A FOA). The Tier 2B FOA is also not intended to be service delivery grant. (FOA pages 4-5)

Is preliminary data on the proposed intervention required, if so is there certain type required? (NEW)

As stated within the FOA, applicants should demonstrate why the intervention is promising, innovative, feasible and likely to have a significant impact on reducing teen pregnancy and existing disparities (FOA p. 43). The applicant should provide a summary of formative research that led to the development of the intervention and summarize any scientific evidence that supports the intervention (such as published or unpublished research) (FOA pp. 43-44). The proposed intervention is not required to have been rigorously evaluated prior to the time of application (FOA p. 4).

Applicants should carefully review the sections of the FOA related to the proposed intervention within the application content (pp. 43-46) and scoring criteria sections (pp. 71-72) for additional guidance. The applicant is responsible for presenting evidence within the application to demonstrate that the proposed intervention is promising and has scientific evidence.

What specific types of approaches or interventions are acceptable under this funding announcement?

The goal of the funding announcement is to identify, fund, and rigorously evaluate promising approaches, strategies, interventions, or curricula, informed by scientific theory or empirical evidence that may lead to or have the potential to result in a substantial reduction in teen pregnancy rates, sexual transmitted infection (STIs) rates, and associated sexual risk behaviors. A wide variety of approaches may be eligible for funding under this announcement, and the applicant should clearly demonstrate in the application that the proposed intervention is needed, likely to reduce rates of teen pregnancy and/or adolescent sexual risk behavior, relevant to the target population, and able to be rigorously evaluated according to the standards of the HHS TPP evidence review. OAH is especially interested in expanding the evidence base for the field of TPP by funding rigorous evaluations of new or innovative interventions designed to address gaps in the existing evidence. Applicants should review the funding announcement, including the section on the proposed intervention, for more specific information. (FOA pages 4-5, 13-16)

Are there any programs that are not acceptable for implementation under this funding announcement?

Interventions that are **not** acceptable for this FOA include (1) those already identified as an evidence-based TPP program by the HHS Teen Pregnancy Prevention Evidence Review, (2) significant adaptations of evidence-based TPP programs identified by the HHS TPP evidence review, or (3) programs currently undergoing a rigorous evaluation under the OPHS/OAH-TPP PREP Tier2-2010 FOA initially funded in FY 2010. Applicants should review the Appendix D of the FOA for a list of the program names. (FOA page 6)

How are research and demonstration projects being defined?

Research and demonstration programs develop and test additional models and innovative strategies to prevent teen pregnancy or associated risk factors. (FOA page 7)

Can an applicant propose an intervention that is not curriculum based?

Yes. OAH is especially interested in expanding the evidence base for the field of TPP by funding rigorous evaluations of new or innovative interventions designed to address gaps in the existing evidence and reduce adolescent sexual and reproductive health disparities. This includes an interest in interventions that use non-traditional delivery methods (i.e., non-curriculum based approaches). (FOA page 5)

What gaps currently exist in the TPP evidence base?

Existing disparities related to teen pregnancy prevention are described on pages 8-9 of the FOA and the gaps in the current evidence base are described on pages 10-13 of the FOA.

What if a previous evaluation of the intervention did not show outcomes? Can an applicant still propose to rigorously evaluate the same intervention?

The applicant is expected to present scientific evidence to support the proposed intervention and demonstrate its likelihood for success. This should include results of all previous evaluations of the intervention (published and unpublished) and other supporting evidence from the literature. If previous evaluations did not lead to anticipated outcomes, the applicant must describe why, and what will be done differently in the proposed implementation and evaluation of the intervention. This should include documentation of any evaluations of the intervention that have been reviewed for the HHS TPP Evidence Review with a description of why the intervention did not receive a high or moderate rating and what would be done differently with the newly proposed evaluation. Interventions that have undergone multiple evaluations and have not been found to be effective are not good candidates for this FOA. The applicant bears the burden to describe the potential of an intervention to be effective. (FOA page 15)

Does an application have to include an MOU with the copyright holder of intervention materials proposed for use in its application?

Yes. Applicants who choose to use any copyrighted materials in their proposed project must include a signed MOU with the developer or purveyor of the materials that demonstrates that the applicant has permission to use the materials as planned. (FOA page 16)

Are applicants required to submit a work plan for the entire 5-year project period, or just for the first year?

Applicants are expected to submit a detailed work plan (as an appendix) for the five-year project period that includes goals, SMART objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-framed), and activities for developing and evaluating the proposed intervention. (FOA page 16)

How long will the planning period be and what will be expected of grantees during the planning period?

Grantees will engage in a planning, piloting and readiness period for the first 6-12 months of the first grant year. Continued funding is contingent on the grantee's satisfactory progress in meeting planning period milestones and the continued availability of funds. The specific milestones that grantees will be expected to successfully complete

by the end of the planning period are included in Appendix G of the Tier 2B FOA. (FOA pages 17-18)

How far along in development does the intervention need to be to qualify for Tier 2B? How much program development can be done during the planning year?

(NEW)

As stated within the FOA, the intervention proposed should be well-defined at the time of application. The description should include the development status of the intervention components and note which aspects if any would need to be developed or refined during the planning year (pp. 43-44 of the FOA). During the planning and piloting period, applicants are expected to complete all milestones listed in Appendix G, which includes finalizing program materials (p. 105). However, all grantees would be expected to be ready to fully implement their intervention and evaluation by the second year of the grant. The applicant should review the FOA expectations carefully and demonstrate that the intervention materials could be finalized and all planning year milestones met by the end of the first grant year.

Early stage innovations that are in the initial stages of development and need to be further refined, prototyped, and developed before being rigorously evaluated are not ideal for the Tier 2B announcement, but would be better suited to the Tier 2A announcement.

Can an applicant propose to implement the intervention outside of the evaluation?

No. The purpose of the Tier 2B FOA is to rigorously evaluate new and innovative interventions to prevent teen pregnancy. The purpose is not service delivery. As a result, it is expected that applicants not implement the intervention with participants outside of the rigorous evaluation. (FOA page 18)

How does OAH define “adaptations”?

Adaptations are changes made to the program content, program delivery, or other core components of the program. Minor adaptations (often referred to as *green light adaptations*) do not impact the program’s core components. Major adaptations (often referred to as *yellow or red light adaptations*) significantly change the core components, program delivery, or program content of an evidence-based TPP program.

For the Tier 2B FOA, interventions that are **not** acceptable include (1) those already identified as an evidence-based TPP program by the HHS Teen Pregnancy Prevention Evidence Review, (2) significant adaptations of evidence-based TPP programs identified by the HHS TPP evidence review, or (3) programs currently undergoing a rigorous evaluation under the OPHS/OAH-TPP PREP Tier2-2010 FOA initially funded in FY 2010. Applicants should review the Appendix D of the FOA for a list of the program names. (FOA page 6)

How is OAH defining medical accuracy, age appropriate, culturally and linguistically appropriate and inclusive of LGBTQ youth?

Definitions of all terms can be found in Appendix B of the FOA.

When will program materials be reviewed to ensure that they are medically accurate, age appropriate, culturally and linguistically appropriate and inclusive of LGBTQ youth?

The review of materials will occur after grant funds have been awarded. Successful applicants will be required to submit all program materials, including all materials associated with the intervention and control and any supplemental materials, prior to use in the project to OAH for a medical accuracy review. Program materials should not be submitted with the grant application. Grantees should do an initial review of the materials for medical accuracy prior to submitting to OAH for final review. The review of materials for medical accuracy will occur prior to the use of any materials in the OAH-funded grant program. Grantees will not be able to begin implementation of materials until after the OAH medical accuracy review is complete and materials have been approved for use in implementation by OAH. The grantee must verify that all modifications have been made and accepted by OAH.

Grantees should also review all program materials for use in the project for age appropriateness, cultural and linguistic appropriateness and inclusivity of LGBTQ youth prior to use in the grant. Review of program materials should be conducted after an application is approved for funding using guidance and templates provided by OAH. Grantees are expected to inform OAH of their review process, results, and changes made to ensure that all materials are age appropriate, culturally and linguistically appropriate and inclusive of LGBTQ youth. (FOA pages 20-21)

Evaluation Questions

What does OAH mean by a “rigorous evaluation”?

For this FOA, rigorous evaluation is defined as high quality randomized controlled trials (RCTs), quasi-experimental designs (QEDs), or Regression Discontinuity Designs (RDD) designed and implemented to meet the standards for a high or moderate rating on the HHS Teen Pregnancy Prevention Evidence Review. Applicants should review the evaluation expectations within the FOA and the HHS TPP evidence review protocol (<http://tppevidencereview.aspe.hhs.gov/ReviewProtocol.aspx>) for more details. (FOA page 4)

Are applicants expected to evaluate their projects?

Yes. All applicants who request funding under this funding announcement are expected to conduct a rigorous, large-scale evaluation of their intervention and must include an evaluation design plan within their project narrative. Prospective applicants should

carefully review the evaluation design expectations in the funding announcement (pages 49-60) in advance of submitting an application. **Applications submitted without an evaluation design plan will be administratively eliminated and will not be reviewed.** (FOA page 36)

What items should be included in the evaluation plan submitted with the application?

Evaluation plans should include each of the following components: (1) Detailed description of the intervention; (2) Impact evaluation design; (3) Implementation study design; and (4) Evaluation processes. Applicants should review the evaluation design section of the FOA and the scoring criteria for more specific details. (FOA pages 25-28, 49-60, 73-76)

May an applicant propose an evaluation design other than RCT, QED, or RDD, such as a qualitative evaluation?

All applicants funded under this evaluation are expected to conduct a rigorous quantitative evaluation that meets the standards of the HHS TPP evidence review. Evaluation designs consistent with the standards of the HHS TPP evidence review may be either RCTs, QEDs, or RDDs. (FOA page 25) The evaluation design scoring criteria for applications under this FOA are based upon the expectation for conducting a rigorous evaluation. In addition to, but not in lieu of, a rigorous quantitative evaluation, applicants may also propose additional analyses of their interventions, subject to OAH approval. (FOA page 28)

Will evaluation-related technical assistance be provided to funded projects?

All grantees, once funded, will be required to participate in OAH's Evaluation Technical Assistance and are expected to implement the recommendations from OAH regarding evaluation technical assistance. Upon funding, through the evaluation technical assistance provider, OAH will review the proposed evaluation design to ensure the design is in a strong position to meet the HHS TPP evidence standards. Revisions to the proposed evaluation design may be required. In addition, OAH through the evaluation technical assistance provider will conduct ongoing monitoring and reporting on the status of each evaluation. (FOA page 27)

Who should evaluate the intervention?

Applicants should carefully review the evaluation expectations, including evaluator qualifications, in this funding announcement. Applicants are encouraged to partner with an independent evaluator who has expertise relevant to the design and implementation of similar studies on a similar scale and who has an established track record of publication and presentations. A signed Memorandum of Understanding or Letter of Commitment with the identified evaluator should be included in the application. Evaluators should play

a collaborative role in drafting the evaluation design as part of the application process. (FOA pages 26, 59-60)

Are applicants required to use an independent evaluator?

Use of an independent evaluator is strongly encouraged, but not required. An independent evaluator is an external person/agency commissioned by the applicant to plan, and conduct the evaluation. An independent evaluator has no pre-existing financial interest to the applicant (PI) or the intervention and has no conflicts of interest (such as but not limited to, being a relative of the proposed PI or having a financial stake in the intervention or its publisher/vendor). (FOA page 26)

Who should be the lead agency on the application? Can the lead evaluator apply as the Principal Investigator or Project Director? (NEW)

Eligible organizations are listed on pages 35-36 of the FOA. While independent evaluation is strongly recommended (FOA, p. 26), it is not required. If the lead evaluator works for an eligible organization, then he/she can apply to this announcement and could serve as the PI/PD for the grant. Prospective applicants should carefully review the entire FOA, including the sections on project management and partnerships, capacity and experience of applicant organization, and evaluation design, with their partners to ensure that the application adheres to all programmatic expectations and that the strongest application is being submitted. Applicants should refer to the scoring criteria on pages 71-78 for more information on how the application would be assessed by reviewers.

Performance Measure Questions

What are the expectations for reporting performance measures data under this funding announcement?

All funded grantees will be expected to monitor and report on program implementation and outcomes through submission of performance measures to OAH twice each year for the duration of the grant cycle. A complete list of the current TPP Performance Measures is included in the Appendix H of the FOA. Performance measures are intended for monitoring purposes and to provide feedback to programs about whether they are implementing programs as intended. (FOA page 23-24)

Will grantees be required to collect data on all performance measures listed in Appendix H? Are there any waivers?

Grantees must collect all performance measures included in Appendix H and report to OAH on a semi-annual basis (OMB #0990-0390, Expiration May 2015, pending renewal). Applicants should review relevant state laws, school district policies, and other administrative procedures of their sites or partner organizations to ensure the feasibility of data collection. There are no exceptions or waivers for this requirement. (FOA pages 23-24)

My proposed intervention is non-curriculum based and does not involve regular meetings. If funded, do I still have to report attendance to OAH?

All funded applicants will be required to report performance measures data to OAH twice each year. Applicants should review the performance measures information in the FOA. Applicants with non-curriculum based interventions are encouraged to identify and propose proxy measures based on their intervention to OAH. (FOA page 24)

Curricula and Materials-Related Questions

If an applicant is awarded grant funds based on its application, does that mean that the curricula and educational materials that were proposed for use in the application are approved for immediate use?

No. Grantees will engage in a 6-12 month planning, piloting, and readiness period prior to full implementation. During the planning and piloting period, grantees will work with OAH to review materials to ensure medical accuracy, age appropriateness, cultural and linguistic appropriateness and inclusivity of LGBTQ youth. OAH will provide approval for the grantee to move forward with full implementation at the end of the planning and piloting period. (FOA page 17)

Should an applicant submit the proposed curriculum with the application?

No. While the applicant should identify the intervention proposed for use in the project, actual materials should not be submitted with the grant application. The material review and approval process will occur during the planning phase of the first grant year. Applicants should describe the process that will be used to ensure all program materials implemented are medically accurate, age appropriate, culturally and linguistically appropriate and inclusive of LGBTQ youth in the application, but the review of materials will occur after grant funding has been awarded. (FOA page 21)

Funding and Budget Questions

What are the minimum and maximum amounts of funding allowed under this funding announcement?

The minimum amount of funding is \$400,000 per year and the maximum amount of funding is \$1,000,000 per year. Applicants who request above the maximum amount will not be eligible for funding and will not be reviewed. (FOA page 34)

Will agencies that apply for TPP funding be able to use the funds to provide funding through contracts or grants to other organizations to support program implementation or evaluation?

Yes, the applicant can provide funding to other organizations through contracts or grants to assist in program implementation or evaluation. The applicant should clearly describe the role of all partners in the project narrative and the funding that will be provided to partners in the budget narrative. (FOA pages 66-67)

Is there a cap on the amount of the annual budget to be spent on evaluation under the TPP Tier 2B announcement? (NEW)

No, for the TPP Tier 2B announcement, there is no cap on the amount spent on evaluation. Applicants are advised to carefully read the application content of the FOA to ensure that they are aligning their budget with the proposed 5-year work plan. Applicants should review the budget guidance on pages 65-68 of the FOA for more information on what to include in the budget.

Can TPP grantees include the cost of curricula and educational materials in their grants?

Yes, applicants may budget for the use of grant funds to cover the cost of program materials. OAH recommends that grantees wait to purchase any materials until after funding awards have been made and grantees have consulted with OAH on the selection of the evidence-based TPP programs to be implemented. (FOA pages 66-67)

Can TPP projects include the cost of staff training in their grants?

Yes, applicants can budget grant funds for training and technical assistance. (FOA pages 66-67)

Are there any requirements for level of effort or percent time allocations for key personnel? (NEW)

No, there is not any specific requirement within the FOA for minimum time on the grant for key personnel. However, applicants should review the entire FOA, especially the grantee expectations (pp. 13-30) and all project management and partnerships sections (pp. 30-33; 63-65) to ensure the development of a project staffing plan that is going to be sufficient to complete all aspects of the proposed project.

Do applicants need to submit a budget narrative for all five years of the grant in the application, or just for the first year of the grant?

Applicants are required to submit a combined multi-year Budget Narrative, as well as a detailed Budget Narrative for each year of the potential grant. Applicants should develop multi-year budgets based on level funding for each budget period. A level-funded budget

is equal to the exact dollar figure of the year one budget. The Budget Narrative does not count toward your total application page limit. (FOA pages 66-67)

Are there any OAH-sponsored meetings that grantees are expected to budget to attend?

Yes, grantees will be encouraged to attend the following meetings and trainings and should include funds in the budget to support this. The location for the meetings has not been determined, however, grantees should budget for the meetings to occur in Washington, DC.

- One staff to an annual Project Director’s Meeting
- The PI/PD and Lead Evaluator to an Evaluation Training during the first grant year
- 2-3 staff to an annual Regional Training in years 2-5
- 2-3 staff to the HHS Teen Pregnancy Prevention Conference every other year (2016, 2018, 2020) (FOA page 67)

Application Content Questions

What must an applicant include in its application to ensure the application is sent forward for review?

As stated on page 36 of the FOA, applications will be reviewed to determine whether they meet the stated application responsiveness criteria. Those that do not will be administratively eliminated from the competition and will not be reviewed.

Applicants to the Tier 2B FOA must include an Evaluation Design Plan in the Project Narrative as indicated on pages 49-60 of the FOA. (FOA page 36)

What is included in the 50-page page limit for the Project Narrative?

The Project Narrative must not exceed 50 pages. The Project Narrative should provide a clear and concise description of your project and should include: proposed intervention, intervention implementation and work plan, collection and use of performance measures, evaluation design plan, capacity and experience, and project management and partnerships.

All Appendices, including the work plan, logic model, MOUs, letters of commitment, resumes, job descriptions, and organizational chart do not count toward the 50-page Project Narrative page limit. In addition, the following items do not count toward the page limit: all required forms, including the SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL, Project Abstract Summary and Budget Narrative. (FOA page 37)

What is included in the 100-page page limit for the overall application?

The 100-page limit includes the Project Narrative and all Appendices, including the work plan, logic model, MOUs, letters of commitment, resumes, job descriptions, and organizational chart. The following items do not count toward the 100-page page limit: all required forms, including the SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL, Project Abstract Summary and Budget Narrative. (FOA page 37)

What forms are not counted in the page limits?

All required forms, including the SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL, Project Abstract Summary and Budget Narrative do not count toward the 50-page or 100-page page limits. (FOA page 37)

Who should the Letter of Intent be sent to?

The letter of intent should be directed to:

- Office of Adolescent Health, Attn: OAH TPP Tier 2B, 1101 Wootton Parkway, Suite 700, Rockville, MD 20852, or
- via E-mail at TPPTier2B@hhs.gov.

Application Review and Selection Questions

How will OAH determine who receives funding?

An independent review panel will evaluate applications that pass the screening and meet the responsiveness criteria. These reviewers are experts in their fields and are drawn from academic institutions, non-profit organizations, state and local government, and Federal government agencies. Based on the Application Review Criteria on pages 71-76, the reviewers will comment on and score the applications, focusing their comments and scoring decisions on the identified criteria. In addition to the independent review panel, Federal staff will review each application for programmatic, budgetary, and grants management compliance.

Final award decisions will be made by the Director of the HHS Office of Adolescent Health. In making these decisions, the following additional criteria will be taken into consideration:

- a. Geographic distribution of communities served nationwide.
- b. Distribution of projects in varying types of communities: rural, suburban, and urban communities.
- c. Representation of diverse interventions.
- d. Representation of a range of populations disproportionately affected by teenage pregnancy as described by the applicant.
- e. The prevalence of teen pregnancy in the geographic community to be served, as indicated by a current government data source.

- f. Applicant demonstrates that it has and enforces a policy prohibiting discrimination in the provision of services on the basis of age, disability, sex, race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity. (FOA pages 71-79)

What will OAH's role be in the cooperative agreement once funds are awarded?

In addition to the usual monitoring and technical assistance provided with a cooperative agreement (e.g., assistance from assigned Federal project officer, monthly conference calls, occasional site visits, ongoing review of plans and progress, participation in relevant meetings, provision of training and technical assistance), OAH anticipated substantial programmatic involvement is described on page 38 of the FOA. (FOA pages 33-34)