

## FIRE CLEARANCES & MEDI-CAL SITE CERTIFICATIONS



### What are BHCS' expectations around fire clearances?

All BHCS provider sites should have a current and valid fire clearance on file at all times. Fire clearances ensure that the site is deemed safe for occupation. A new fire clearance may be required if the site undergoes a major renovation or other structural changes. When you are unsure whether you need a new fire clearance due to renovation, consult with your local fire agency.



### How often does a mental health program site need to be re-certified for Medi-Cal?

Program sites certification frequency depends on the service modality: Outpatient services site re-certifications occur three years after the initial certification. Day treatment services re-certifications occur every two years after the initial certification.



### My program may move sites, what should I do?

Requests to change of program sites and other requests should go to your Program Contract Manager. They will provide a form or help you fill it out. Remember, you must request changes prior to any move. The appropriate BHCS staff will follow up accordingly.



### How should I prepare for a Medi-Cal site (re-)certification?

1. You should obtain a fire clearance annually and keep it on file. BHCS will contact you and request a current and valid fire clearance that affirms it meets local fire codes with a date and the exact address of the program location.
2. Once BHCS receives the fire clearance, BHCS will schedule a certification visit.
3. Prior to the certification visit, BHCS will provide you with a pre-filled certification template. Please review the template and prepare accordingly. The protocol may be found here: [http://www.acbhcs.org/providers/network/docs/2013/MH\\_Medi-cal\\_Program\\_Certification\\_protocol.pdf](http://www.acbhcs.org/providers/network/docs/2013/MH_Medi-cal_Program_Certification_protocol.pdf)
4. During the Medi-Cal site certification, the program site must:
  - Be clean, sanitary and in good repair.
  - Have posted brochures and notices in English and the County's threshold languages. If you require additional materials, please visit the Quality Assurance website: <http://www.acbhcs.org/providers/QA/QA.htm>
  - Have the appropriate written policies, procedures and forms as indicated in the certification template.
  - Have a currently licensed and appropriate individual as head of services. The site should provide a copy of the head of services' valid license during the certification visit.



## From the Network Office Director:

Dear Providers,

It is that time of year again, when we get ready to launch into a new year of contracting. Fiscal year 13-14 will include the launch of Health Care Reform so it should be an exciting one for us all. There are many decisions to be made from the federal government on down. Not all of those policy changes will impact your contracts, but some undoubtedly will. As you know, enrollment of individuals in Medi-Cal and monitoring other health insurance is a priority. At BHCS, the Network Office is teaming up with our partners across the Department and in the provider community to plan for those changes and implement them without disrupting care to clients or our partnership with providers. While I cannot promise there will not be challenges, I can commit to working through those that arise in a spirit of collaboration and partnership.



*The Network Office Team, October 2012*

Our funders continue to increase demands for greater accountability for the dollars BHCS spends. To that end, you will find that the Network Office will continue to focus on having your fire clearances, site certifications and program information up to date, so that neither BHCS nor providers are at risk of losing funds in an audit. We are also being held to higher levels of accountability for program outcomes. You will continue to see a slow, but steady movement that reflects those changes in your contracts.

In closing, let me say that I have a great team of dedicated program, fiscal and administrative staff in the Network Office. We are all invested in the success of your organization and the improvement your services support in the lives of our clients/consumers and family members. Please contact your Fiscal and Program Contract Managers for assistance not only in completing your contracts and discussing your program or fiscal challenges, but in "navigating the system" if you have a need in the Department and are not quite sure where to begin. And check out our website for updates!

*Fiona Branagh*



# NETWORK OFFICE NEWSLETTER 2013

## TIPS FOR RESPONDING TO REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS (RFPs)



### BEFORE GETTING STARTED

#### READ THE RFP AND ADDENDA!

It's critical. The Evaluation Panel must score proposals against the scope of work described and the criteria that the County sets forth for scoring.

#### Hiring Grant Writers

- If you decide to hire a grant writer, establish a working relationship that keeps the content of the proposal under the direction of key program and financial leads
- The best proposals allow the bidder's organizational strengths to shine and show the thinking and commitment to the work being proposed and the population to be served. Involve the grant writer as part of the team so they reflect the organization's values, ideas and experience fully

#### Plan the Program/Project & Budget

- A good proposal begins with a clear idea of the goals and objectives of the program/project – clear thinking is reflected in clear writing
- Start with an outline for each section, refer to the RFP and instructions while drafting
- Think through the program/project being proposed:
  - ◊ What is the program model and how will it be delivered?
  - ◊ Where will it live in the organization? What organizational support will it need from the ED, Finance, Technology, HR and Program Managers?
  - ◊ Who in the bidder's organization will provide it?
  - ◊ What is a realistic budget? Does it match what the County is offering? If not, what trade-offs can be made?
  - ◊ What other factors will influence its success and that need to be considered in the proposals
- Proposals are the basis of the awarded contract's Exhibits A and B, therefore bidders should provide realistic, thoughtful and thorough proposals

#### Conduct Research About...

- The priority population
- Models and similar programs



### WHILE WRITING

#### Remember...

- Answer every question directly & use page lengths fully & wisely
- Since space is limited each sentence counts. Edit the

document to the most concise language possible.

- Avoid repeating what BHCS has stated in the RFP
  - ◊ Instead provide specific details that demonstrates thoughtful research, knowledge and experience with the target population
- Avoid repeating what has been stated in the proposal in other sections

#### Be Specific & Detailed in Responses

- Demonstrate your organization's ability by incorporating as many specific details as possible
  - ◊ Instead of "Bidder will provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services", a more specific response would be: "Bidder employs two bilingual staff who speak Spanish and Tagalog. 2010 Ed data shows that 50% of youth in XX School speak one of these languages. In instances where additional translation services are needed, a translator will be used (see budget line item). Last year, 80% of 50 staff were trained in Providing Cultural Responsiveness to Latinas to ensure cultural responsiveness."
- Offer evidence by:
  - ◊ Quantifying items that are measurable and describing how the program will be operationalized.
  - ◊ Ensuring objectives are measurable, realistic and consistent with the County's needs
  - ◊ Explicitly stating outputs, such as the number of students whose training or careers are affected, data collected and outcomes, such as new knowledge, institutional strengthening, etc.
- Be clear and specific about outcomes that would make the project/program a success, such as high enrollments, more income, obtaining housing, reduced mental health symptoms, etc.

#### Show the Work

- Illustrate thoughtful budgeting by utilizing the budget narrative to show how the numbers were developed:
  - ◊ For example, instead of "Facilitated Training - \$850", include detail: "Facilitated Training: Refreshments for 50 staff, twice per year=\$400; Facilitator, twice per year=\$200; Training materials=\$250 =Total of \$850"
- Instead of stating that something is a policy or process, describe the major parts of the policy and/or steps of the process
  - ◊ Instead of: "It is Bidder's policy to provide culturally responsive services", include specific actions bidder takes or has taken: "Since 2011, Bidder has participated in the Ensuring Cultural Responsiveness Workgroup, which includes five partner organizations that work to share culturally responsiveness practices. One example of an adopted

practice is the inclusion of 'Other' and 'Decline to State' on gender portions of all intake forms."

- Define measures and methodologies used for outcomes
  - ◊ Instead of: "Bidder measures client satisfaction", include how satisfaction is measured: "Bidder measures client satisfaction through a ten question survey, which is distributed to clients after discharge from program. The measures include... In 2012, 85% of clients were 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with services."
- Share past outcomes and/or findings
  - ◊ If outcomes and/or findings were not ideal, describe how bidder is working to improve outcomes
- In sections where bidder is asked to describe relevant experience, in addition to duration, also describe meaningful achievements and changes

#### Think of the Audience

- BHCS' RFP Evaluation Panels may include content experts, community partners, consumers and family members and staff from other County departments who may not be familiar with terms
- Evaluation Panelists may only score what is included in the proposal, so Panelists should be able to read proposals, close their eyes and envision the program, how it works and who in the bidder's organization will run it
- Evaluation Panelists appreciate when bidders do the following:
  - ◊ Provide responses in the correct proposal section
  - ◊ Use colored and labeled tabs in proposals to make sections easy to find
  - ◊ Write in a simple, clear style
  - ◊ Spell out an acronym the first time it is used and define key terms
  - ◊ Provide internet accessible citations
  - ◊ Avoid unnecessary jargon and abbreviations



### BEFORE SUBMITTAL

#### Read & Edit Proposals

- Put the draft aside for a day or two, then re-read the proposal
- Find editors who are unfamiliar with bidder's program/project to provide feedback on clarity and ease of understanding

#### Read the...

- RFP instructions and Addenda to ensure all steps were followed and all questions were answered
- Proposal to ensure that it is free of errors, that it is clear, well organized and that all attachments are included

## REMINDERS for PROVIDERS



#### Please Remember:

- ◆ To contact the Program Contract Manager (PCM) FIRST to request or advise of any changes to the contract (services, staffing) and the Fiscal Contract Manager (FCM) FIRST for fiscal changes;
- ◆ To review the Exhibit A to become familiar with reporting requirements and due dates. When in doubt, contact the PCM sooner rather than later;
- ◆ To review the Exhibit A to become familiar with the requirement to advise the PCM when staffing changes occur, especially contact persons for specific programs;
- ◆ That the PCMs are required in some cases to make annual site visits (SAPT, BASN) and also might make other casual site visits just to gain familiarity with programs and staffs. Feel free to send an invitation to PCMs for provider events, celebrations, etc.;
- ◆ That Providers can and should feel free to send to their PCM any program materials of note, including promotional materials, annual reports, articles, etc. to help the PCM to learn more about programs/services;
- ◆ To share contract requirements with your contract managers.

