

The Application Review Process From A Reviewer's Perspective

Mimi E. Browne, M.P.H.
Senior Project Director
AFYA, Inc.
October 6, 2004

Background and Qualifications

M.P.H. - Health Care Delivery Systems
Boston University
School of Public Health

B.S. - Health Science
Boston University Sargent College

Background and Qualifications

25 years of experience in the field of
public health and social services as a

Program Administrator
Health Policy Analyst
Researcher, Evaluator
Program Developer
Project Director

Background and Qualifications

Content areas of special focus:

Maternal and Child Health
Substance Abuse Prevention
Youth Violence Prevention

Background and Qualifications

Areas of expertise include:

Health Disparities
Primary Care
School Based Health Centers
Collaboration across systems of care to create
the HHS vision of "one door " access for all

Reviewer/ Panel Chair Experience

Served on Panels including:

Title X Family Planning
Office of Population Affairs

Peer Educator Training Sites
HIV/AIDS Bureau

Reviewer/ Panel Chair Experience

Served on Panels including:

Violence Prevention in Vulnerable
Populations

SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health
Services

Reviewer/ Panel Chair Experience

Served on Panels including:

School Based Health Center
and
Consolidated Health Center Program New
Access Points
Bureau of Primary Health Care

Reviewer/ Panel Chair Experience

Served on Panels including:

Healthy Tomorrows Partnership for Children
SPRANS Community-Based Abstinence
Education
Healthy Start
Maternal and Child Health Bureau

Who Are the Healthy Start Reviewers?

- Educators/Program Staff
- Healthy Start Administrators
- Infant Mortality Experts
- MCH Program Staff
- Experts from the private sector
- Researchers
- Evaluators

Who Are Healthy Start Reviewers?

People who are committed to a fair and objective review of each application using HRSA programmatic guidelines, while never losing site of the search for excellence, creativity, and accountability.

What Do Reviewers Look For?

- Consistency with the Guidance
 - Each section is labeled in accordance with the Guidance
 - Application's format is consistent with the Guidance

What Do Reviewers Look For?

- Well written, clear applications
- Pages are numbered
- Sections have not been cut and pasted
- References in the narrative are found in the Appendices

What Do Reviewers Look For?

- Clear methodology
- Methodology is the "meat" of your application... *spend as much time as possible on it!*
- Imagine reviewers have no knowledge of the strategies you propose, for example:
Reviewer may not know case management

What Do Reviewers Look For?

- Overview of past and current program and successes
- "Toot your own horn" – to demonstrate capacity and capability

What Do Reviewers Look For?

- Comprehensive Needs Assessment
- Valid, relevant statistics for the population to be served
- Clear, reasonable budget justification

What Do Reviewers Look For?

- Realistic staffing plan
- Documentation of credentials and experience
- Job descriptions for all personnel – justify salaries

What Do Reviewers Look For?

- Capability for program Evaluation, is a **must!**
- Explanation of how the applicant will capture data and report on *National Performance Measures*
- Trained personnel responsible for conducting evaluations– contract or applicant staff

Application Do's and Don'ts

DO:

- Use statistics that justify the need in the community where services will be provided
- Provide comparative statistics that help justify community need

Application Do's and Don'ts

DO:

- Explain the culture in the target area
- Cultural competence is not limited to hiring bilingual staff

Application Do's and Don'ts

DO:

- Explain how cultural barriers to service will be overcome.
- Propose a realistic staffing plan. Ask yourself, is it top heavy?

Application Do's and Don'ts

DO:

- Ensure that staff credentials and experience are commensurate with proposed salaries
- Include job descriptions for all personnel – these help justify salaries

Application Do's and Don'ts

Don't:

- Ever try to rationalize supplanting funds – reviewers are very sensitive to this!
- Overemphasize innovation. While it's encouraged, focus on realistic approaches.

Application Do's and Don'ts

Don't:

- Recommend “pie in the sky” strategies – develop approaches that are reasonable and realistic

Final Thoughts

- Start the application process early to ensure sufficient time for reviewing and rewriting.
- Don't be afraid to "ask for help" – the Division is available to help you and they want you to be successful!

Final Thoughts

- Appoint a "Red Team" to read the final draft. The Red Team should not include anyone who helped write the application.
- Doublecheck your final to be sure all instructions have been followed – page limits, etc. – have the document copy edited and proofread by a skilled editor.

You Can Do It!

Good luck in your application!

Mimi E. Browne, M.P.H.
Senior Project Director
AFYA, Inc.
mbrowne@afyainc.com
301-270-0841

MCHB's Program Specific Information

MCHB's Program Specific Information and the HRSA Electronic Handbooks

An Orientation for Users

Christopher Dykton, SAIC

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

Outline of Program Specific Information

- Overview of MCHB's Program Specific Information: What is it?
- A Look at the Program Specific Forms and its Workflow
- Seeking Help

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

Program Specific Information: An Overview

- Developed a set of forms and performance measures to monitor MCHB discretionary grant programs
- OMB approved
- Used by all MCHB grantees during the life of a grant when both applying and reporting

Maternal and Child Health Bureau



**Program Specific Information:
An Overview - Goals**

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Begin collecting program and performance data at the time of the grant application and continue to collect through the life of the grant and closeout
- Provide data for grant review, program analysis and public information



**Program Specific Information:
Overview – Capturing the Data**

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Developed as a part of the HRSA online grant application system, the Electronic Handbooks (EHB)
- MCHB’s program and performance measurement data are called Program Specific Information in the EHB



**Program Specific Information:
Forms**

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- DGIS Guidance Forms or MCHB’s Program Specific Information
 - Financial and Demographic (Program) Forms (Forms 1-8)
 - 37 Performance Measures (Forms 9 and 10)
 - Additional Data Elements (Project-specific data)



Program Specific Information: Workflow

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Workflow is key in completing Program Specific Information
- Three times for entering Program Specific Information
 - Applying for a new award
 - Applying for continued funding as a noncompeting continuation
 - Reporting final data after a grant year is completed



Program Specific Information: Workflow

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Workflow constraints are in place
 - Different requirements for completing the forms depending if it is a new application, noncompeting continuation or data being entered during the reporting period
 - Required data must be completed
 - Example: New applications require that objectives for all performance measures be entered for all years of the requested period of performance
 - Application is not complete unless data are provided
 - Constraints in place to make sure data are not reported when they should not be
 - Example: Next year's expenditures cannot be reported this year



Program Specific Information: Financial Data Elements

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Four Financial Forms
 - Form 1, MCHB Project Budget Details for a Fiscal Year
 - Form 2, Project Funding Profile
 - Form 3, Budget Details by Types of Individuals Served
 - Form 4, Project Budget and Expenditures by Types of Services



**Program Specific Information:
Financial Data Elements**

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Form 1, MCHB Project Budget Details for Fiscal Year ____
 - Budget detail sheet for the application year
 - Includes Federal request as well as other project funds that contribute to the project
 - PHS financial forms must be completed before entering data on Form 1
 - Must be completed before completing Forms 2, 3 and 4



**Program Specific Information:
Financial Data Elements**

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Form 2, Project Funding Profile
 - Tracks budgets and expenditures across the life of the grant by source of funding
 - Data from Form 1 populates this form for the application year
 - Data for future year budgets for MCHB grant award is from PHS forms
 - Must be completed before completing Forms 3 and 4



**Program Specific Information:
Financial Data Elements**

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Form 3, Budget Details by Types of Individuals Served
 - Breaks down the budgets and expenditures by the types of individuals served for all grant years
 - Pregnant Women, Children, Infants, CSHCN, Others
 - Only completed for those projects providing direct health care, enabling or population-based services
 - Budget and expenditure totals for each year must match the corresponding totals for each year on Form 2



**Program Specific Information:
Financial Data Elements**

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Form 4, Project Budget and Expenditures by Types of Services
 - Breaks down the budgets and expenditure by four types of services provided for all grant years
 - Direct Health Care, Enabling Services, Population-based Services, Infrastructure Building Services
 - Completed by all grants
 - Budget and expenditure totals for each year must match the corresponding totals for each year on Form 2



**Program Specific Information:
Financial Data Elements**

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Validations between the totals on the financial forms
 - Ensures accuracy
 - Warnings generated for errors
- Program financial data is integrated with data provided on the PHS Forms 5161, 6025 and 398



**Program Specific Information:
Program Data Elements**

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Four Program/Demographic Forms
 - Form 5, Number of Individuals Served By Type and Source of Primary Insurance Coverage
 - Form 6, MCH Discretionary Grant Project Abstract
 - Form 7, Discretionary Grant Project Summary Data
 - Form 8, MCH Discretionary Grant Project Abstract (for Research Projects ONLY)

**Program Specific Information:
Program Data Elements**

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Form 5, Number of Individuals Served By Type and Source of Primary Insurance Coverage
 - Breaks down the number of individuals served by type and age range for a reporting year
 - Pregnant Women, Children, Infants, CSHCN, Others
 - Indicates primary source of coverage individuals served
 - Only completed for those grants providing direct health care, enabling or population-based services

**Program Specific Information:
Program Data Elements**

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Form 6, MCH Discretionary Grant Project Abstract
 - Synopsis of the grant
 - Populates data from other forms for easy access
 - Allows data entry of text describing the project
 - Problem, Goals & Objectives, Activities/Methodology, Coordination, Evaluation, Keywords, Annotation
 - Completed for each application year
 - Used by all discretionary grants except Research

**Program Specific Information:
Program Data Elements**

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Form 7, Discretionary Grant Project Summary Data
 - Collects other summary data
 - Project service focus, geographic project scope and infrastructure focus
 - Grantee organization type
 - Other data for certain types of grants
 - Number of products developed by type
 - Demographic characteristics of clinical service project participants
 - Resource, technical assistance and training center data



**Program Specific Information:
Program Data Elements**

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Form 8, MCH Discretionary Grant Project Abstract (for Research Projects ONLY)
 - Synopsis of the grant
 - Populates data from other forms for easy access
 - Allows data entry of text describing the project
 - Completed for each application year
 - Used only by Research Grants – Similar to Form 6



**Program Specific Information:
Performance Measures**

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- 37 National Performance Measures
- Cross cut programs
- Programs select performance measures for its projects
 - No set number of measures: some projects have several while others have none at this time.
 - No project reports on all 37 measures



**Program Specific Information:
Performance Measures**

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Performance Measures consist of:
 - Detail Sheet
 - Defines the measure, including scale of measurement
 - Provides background on the purpose of the measure
 - Tracking Form
 - Objectives
 - Targets for accomplishing performance
 - Entered for each year of the proposed grant
 - Indicators
 - Numerical value measuring progress toward accomplishing the objective
 - Provided after grant activity occurs

Program Specific Information: Performance Measures

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Two main types of Performance Measures:
 - Percentage-based Measures
 - Scale-based Measures

Program Specific Information: Performance Measures

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Percentage-based Measures
 - Titled "The percent of"
 - Example: PM20 - The percent of women participating in MCHB supported programs who have an ongoing source of primary and preventive care services for women
 - Require a numerator and denominator to calculate the indicator value for a reporting year
 - PM20 numerator: Number of women participating in MCHB supported projects who have an ongoing source of primary and preventive care services during the reporting period
 - PM20 denominator: Number of women participating in MCHB supported projects during the reporting period

Program Specific Information: Form 9 – Percentage-Based PM

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

Example of a Percentage-based PM

Forms 9
Grant Number: H49MCD0086

Performance Measure #20
The percent of women participating in MCHB supported programs who have an ongoing source of primary and preventive care services for women, dual dual.
All data entry fields in this form are required.

Enter or edit future objectives

Tracking Project Performance Measures	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005
Annual Objective and Performance Data				
Annual Performance Objective				
Annual Indicator				
Numerator				
Denominator				
Provisional or Final Data?	<input type="checkbox"/> Final <input type="checkbox"/> Provisional			

Click Cancel to leave form without saving data

Enter numerator and denominator for reporting year

Mark data as final or provisional

Save data when complete

Save



Program Specific Information: Performance Measures

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Workflow for Performance Measures:
 - New Applications:
 - Objectives entered for all years of the grant
 - Noncompeting Continuations:
 - Objectives for future years adjusted as needed
 - Provisional indicators entered
 - Reporting after the completion of grant year:
 - Objectives adjusted as needed
 - Final indicators entered
 - Process repeats for each grant year



Program Specific Information: Additional Data Elements

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Some programs have developed forms for reporting on data unique to their program that are not performance measures
 - Training
 - Injury/EMS
 - CSHCN
 - Perinatal Systems and Women's Health (including Healthy Start)
- Only completed by grantees at the time of noncompeting continuation or reporting at the end of a grant year
- Not completed by applicants for new competitions



Hands on Review

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Log into the HRSA EHB
 - Register yourself as a user in this system
 - For those seeking a new application for the first time: Register as a new user and organization
 - Check and see if your organization is already registered
 - Enter your organization if it does not exist
 - For those applying for continued funding as a non-competing continuations: Register as a user tied to your specific MCHB grant
 - If you have already registered in EHB, use that username and password
 - Only register once
 - URL: <https://grants.hrsa.gov/webexternal/home.asp>



Hands on Review: Applicant for a Noncompeting Continuation

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Click on 'Noncompeting Continuation' link
- Search for your grant by entering your grant number
 - Grant number consists of the activity code, bureau identifier and five digit number
 - Example: H01 MC 00001
 - Enter in the three fields provided and select 'Search'
- Begin your application



Hands on Review: General Layout of a Program Specific Form

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Data Fields and Data Entry
- Errors
- Notes
- Instructions
- Saving Your Data
- Status Checker
- System Timeouts



Hands on Review: General Layout of a Program Specific Form

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Data Fields and Data Entry
 - Data entry fields:
 - Enter data where there is white box
 - Different field types (numerical, text, etc.)
 - Display fields
 - Data is entered on other forms or pulled from the database
 - Data must be corrected on the original place of data entry, where noted

 Hands on Review: General Layout of a Program Specific Form

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Errors
 - Popup boxes
 - Error for a specific field. Correct immediately.
 - Red warnings
 - Problem with validations between forms
 - Correct the red warning or you cannot save the form

 Hands on Review: General Layout of a Program Specific Form

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Notes
 - To explain or interpret the data on a form
 - Access by clicking the red 'note' icon to the upper left, next to the form number
 - Enter your note and save
 - Edit your note as necessary

 Hands on Review: General Layout of a Program Specific Form

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- Instructions
 - Guide to data entry on the form
 - Access by clicking the 'Instructions' link to the upper right
 - Hyperlinked topics take you to a specific section of the form
 - Print complete instructions for the form by using the right click of your mouse

Hands on Review: General Layout of a Program Specific Form

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- **Saving Your Data**
 - Click the "Save" button at the lower right of the form to save data entered
 - All required fields must be entered to successfully save a form
 - Click the "Cancel" button at the lower left to exit a form without saving data
 - Avoid using the browser 'Back' button on the tool bar to exit a form

Program Specific Information: Partial View of a Form

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

Partial View of a Form

Click on icon to access notes

Click link for instructions

Some fields are pre-populated with data entered on other forms to avoid duplicate entry and errors. These budget figures are taken from data entered on PHS forms. These fields are read only.

Editable fields appear as boxes

Side menu allows navigation to other forms in the application

Hands on Review: General Layout of a Program Specific Form

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- **Status Checker**
 - Detailed summary of outstanding issues on a specific form
 - Shows a form as completed when all required fields have data
 - As forms are completed, status checker is updated
 - Access from both the sidebar and the main menu (Click on the main menu link, 'Details')



Hands on Review: General Layout of a Program Specific Form

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

- **System Timeouts**
 - Timeouts security requirement
 - You will time out if there is no communication with the server within 30 minutes
 - At the 29 minute mark, you receive a warning that you will time out and you must click the "OK" button to continue your session
 - You have 1 minute to respond
 - You will lose all unsaved data if you time out
 - Be careful about having multiple windows open
 - Warning could appear behind your active window
 - Turn off "pop-up blocker" software so that the warning message appears



Where to Go to Begin an Application Online

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

HRSA's Electronic Handbooks are located at:
<https://grants.hrsa.gov/webexternal/>

To access critical highlights about the system, go to:
<https://performance.hrsa.gov/mchb/mchreports/criticalhighlights.asp>

Apply online!



Call for Help

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

If you need assistance as you work on your application, contact:

HRSA Call Center
 12530 Parklawn Drive, Suite 350
 Rockville, MD 20850
 1 (877) Go4-HRSA or
 CallCenter@HRSA.GOV

We're here to help you if you need us.
 Call sooner rather than later!
