

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention Service to Science Initiative

Announcement

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announces a **Call for Nominations** to its Service to Science Initiative. Service to Science is a national initiative dedicated to enhancing the evaluation capacity of innovative programs and practices that aim to prevent substance abuse and related mental and behavioral health problems or the underlying factors associated with increased risk. Operated by SAMHSA's Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT), Service to Science assists local program developers, implementers, and evaluators in applying more rigorous evaluation methodologies to their work. Ultimately, the initiative supports state prevention efforts by increasing the number of local programs that meet evidence-based standards.

In order to participate in Service to Science programs must be nominated by their State Alcohol and Drug Agency (Single State Agency, or SSA) or National Prevention Network (NPN) representative. **We encourage interested programs to contact their SSA or NPN to seek nominations for participation. For information on reaching your SSA or NPN, contact the CAPT Service to Science Lead in your service area (see contact information below). **Deadline for nominations is August 1st.****

The Purpose of Service to Science

Over the last decade, SAMHSA has emphasized the use of evidence-based interventions (EBIs) to prevent substance abuse and address critical mental health needs. This emphasis is central to SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework, a five-step planning model based on epidemiological needs assessment, capacity building, planning, implementation, and evaluation. SAMHSA also recognizes that many innovative programs do not have the ability to demonstrate effectiveness, due to factors including a lack of resources or difficulties conceptualizing and designing evaluation. To build evaluation capacity at the local level, SAMHSA has established the Service to Science initiative, with the explicit long-range goals of:

- Supporting innovative local interventions seeking to demonstrate and document evidence of effectiveness.
- Increasing the number and array of EBIs from which States and communities can select to address substance abuse.

The Service to Science Approach

Service to Science offers a combination of face-to-face and electronic technical assistance (TA), tailored to meet the unique evaluation needs and readiness of participating programs. Using an intensive, hands-on approach, experienced TA providers work one-on-one with participants, matching services provided to evolving program needs.

Benefits of Participation

Pending the availability of FY2013 funds, selected programs will participate in the FY2013 Service to Science academies and, in so doing, may benefit from:

- Access to evaluation experts as well as to others implementing locally developed and innovative prevention programs
- Enhanced and significantly improved program evaluation capacity
- Improved programmatic approaches informed by evaluation findings
- Eligibility for competitive subcontract awards to enhance evaluation methodologies
- Greater quality of submissions to national, evidence-based program registries, such as SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP)

Previous Participants' Accomplishments

- National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors Exemplary Award recognition
- Application and acceptance to national evidence-based program registries, such as SAMHSA's NREPP
- Professional presentations of program's successes at national conferences
- Publication of reports and journal articles documenting program achievements
- Additional funding leveraged from federal or other sources

Some Areas of Technical Assistance

Participating programs receive various types of assistance from their TA providers to meet each program's specific needs. Some examples of TA include consultation from TA providers on how to:

- Develop logic models that link program goals and objectives to outcomes
- Design mixed-method data collection procedures
- Identify, developing, and adapting appropriate evaluation measures and instruments
- Apply procedures to protect the rights of evaluation participants
- Conduct qualitative and quantitative data analyses
- Hire and/or working with an evaluator
- Explore issues of innovation, adaptation, and fidelity
- Understand criteria for participation in SAMHSA's NREPP

Who is Eligible?

Eligible participants include practitioners or local evaluators who represent innovative prevention programs interested in demonstrating their program's effectiveness using more rigorous evaluation methods. To be eligible for Service to Science, programs must be:

- *Nominated for participation* by their Single State Agency (State drug prevention agency) or National Prevention Network representative. Nominated programs must then complete an application.
- *Innovative in design or focus*—that is, embody **new prevention approaches** resulting from practical experience in the field, and be distinguished by their creativity, originality, and utility. Programs must also be a first-time recipient of Service to Science services.
- *Responsive to local needs*. Programs must address local substance abuse prevention and related mental health needs, and gaps in service to address those needs, as identified through the application of SAMHSA’s Strategic Prevention Framework.
- *Informed by practical experience*. Participating programs are developed with or informed by input from the target populations served and/or based on practical experience working with the target population in the setting in which the program is delivered.
- *Focused on alleviating behavioral health disparities*. Participating programs should target populations disproportionately affected by substance abuse, or by substance abuse associated with trauma and mental health problems, and **for whom few established prevention interventions have been developed**. These populations include, but are not limited to, specific racial and ethnic groups (i.e., African Americans, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander youth, and Latina youth); lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning individuals; people with disabilities; women and girls; transition-age youth; military families; and persons who face economic hardship or live in health care workforce shortage areas.
- *Committed to evaluation*. Programs must be willing to dedicate the effort and time required to enhancing the rigor of program evaluation. **Pending the availability of FY2013 funds**, participating programs will work collaboratively with assigned evaluation experts for six to eight days within a 12-month period. During this time, participants will also work independently to implement recommendations made by the evaluation experts. Thus, programs must have a funding level sufficient to operate for at least one year and be ready and eager to build evaluation capacity.

In addition to the above criteria, SAMHSA is interested in programs that address **SAMHSA Strategic Initiative (SSI) #1: Prevention of Substance Abuse and Mental Illness, Goals 1 – 4**. These goals include the following:

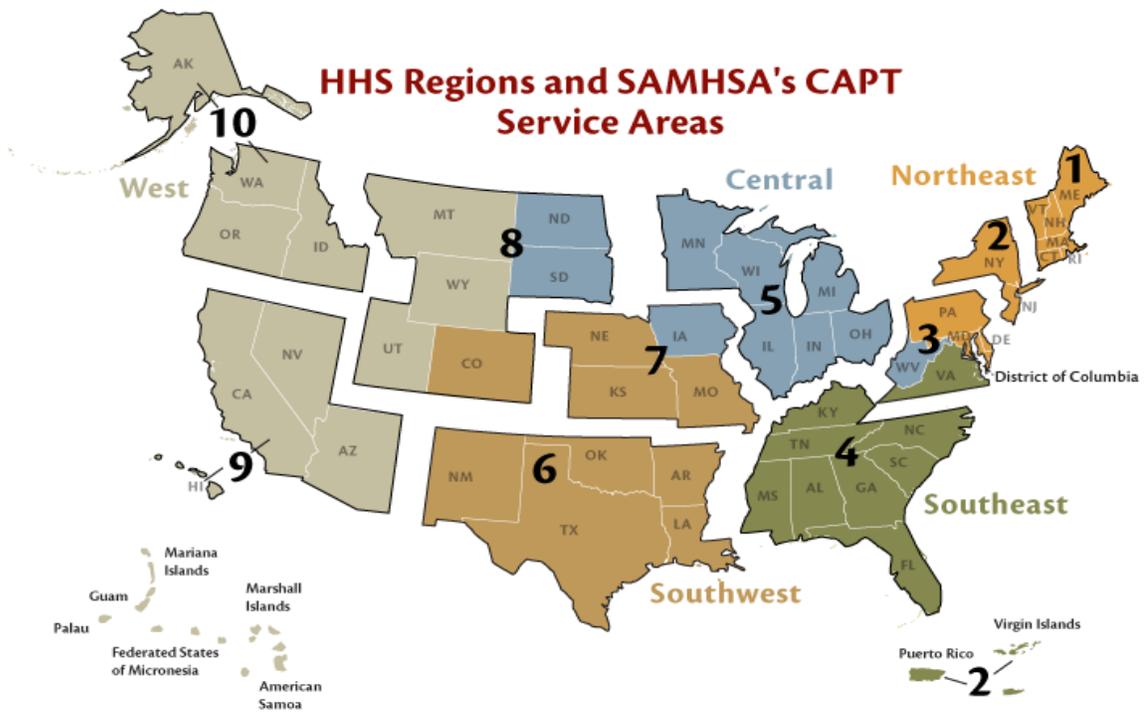
- With primary prevention as the focus, build *emotional health*, prevent or delay onset of, and mitigate symptoms and complications from *substance abuse* and *mental illness*.
- Prevent or reduce consequences of *underage drinking* and *adult problem drinking*.

- Prevent *suicides* and *attempted suicides* among populations at high risk, especially military families; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth; and American Indians and Alaska Natives.
- Reduce *prescription drug misuse* and *abuse*.

For more information on the SAMHSA Strategic Initiatives, go to <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA11-4629/01-FullDocument.pdf>.

Contact Information

For information about Service to Science, please contact the Service to Science Lead in your CAPT service area:



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Regions: 1–10
CAPT Service Areas: ■ Northeast ■ Southeast ■ Southwest ■ Central ■ West

Contact Information, continued

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