Connecticut Department of Public Health
Tobacco Control Program

DPH RFP Log# 2026-0905: Best Practice Tobacco Control Programs
Questions and Answers

1. **Question:** The RFP has links to several CDC documents that are no longer available via that link. Is there another source for those documents?
   Answer: In lieu of recent changes to the CDC website, Proposers may refer to the following links for guidance on best practices for Tobacco Control Programs:
   1. Guidelines and Resources for Tobacco Control Programs: https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/php/tobacco-control-programs/guidelines-and-resources.html
   2. Evidence-Based Guides for States: https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/php/state-and-community-work/guides-for-states.html
   3. *Component 1 - State and Community Interventions*: https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/153232
   4. *Component 3 – Cessation Interventions*: https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/153234

2. **Question:** Can you please verify that to be competitive, an application for RFP 2026-0905 Best Practice Tobacco Control Programs may include younger students – particularly, students in grades K-5? Previously, we were asked to keep our target youth audience to middle and high school. The CDC states that "Education to prevent tobacco use should be provided to students in each grade, from kindergarten through 12th grade."
   Answer: An application may include youth of all ages in activities that focus on community-level interventions that are comprehensive and work to change environments and social norms as outlined in *Component 1: State and Community Interventions Section II.E.2.*a on page 12. However, evidence-based prevention education in any grade should not be proposed as a standalone intervention, but rather as an activity to support tobacco-free policies in K-12 schools, for example.

3. **Question:** In the service expectations for *Component 1*, the RFP states: Proposals to provide State and Community Intervention must also address second-hand smoke (SHS) and/or point-of-sale access to Commercial Tobacco Products by Youth implementing the following evidence-based strategies to reduce Youth access to Commercial Tobacco Products, eliminate tobacco-related health disparities, reduce exposure to SHS, and support cessation. Does this mean all proposals need to include both SHS for housing and Point of Sale for youth?
   Answer: No, proposals do not need to include both secondhand smoke (SHS) and Point- of- Sale. Applicants can propose projects that include either or both as stated in Service Expectations found in *Section II.E.2a* on page 12.

4. **Question:** On page 12, Point-of Sale, the RFP states "Provide statewide Technical Assistance for Point-of-Sale policy implementation including, but not limited to, developing retailer trainings…". Can we use the existing online tobacco retailer training?
   Answer: Yes, depending on the purpose and the audience you may make communities aware of existing trainings and state requirements; however, there may be additional retailer trainings needed to support local communities who are working to expand Point-of-Sale policies in their jurisdictions that extend beyond statewide Tobacco 21 and statewide Tobacco Retailer Licensing. Statewide Technical Assistance proposals should discuss the Proposer's ability to coordinate and collaborate with partners across the state.

5. **Question:** Are all proposals under *Component 1* required to include all types of interventions listed in 2a on page 12 (building community awareness, engagement and mobilization; coordination of state and local efforts, policies, laws and regulations, and influencing people in their daily environment(s))? Or can a project focus on building community awareness and influencing people but not on the coordination of state and local efforts, policies, laws and regulations?
   Answer: No, proposals submitted under *Component 1: State and Community Interventions* are not required to include all the interventions listed in *Section II.E.2.a.* on page 12. However, successful Proposers will propose State or Community Interventions that are comprehensive and positively inform social norms regarding tobacco use and build relationships among multiple sectors of the community. Additionally, not all activities in Second-Hand Smoke and Point-of-Sale are required. For example, a proposal that wants to educate and expand smoke-free policies in a community does not also need to provide statewide Technical Assistance for smoke-free multiunit housing.

6. **Question:** Can the letter of reference from a previous funder come from a different program within the Connecticut Department of Public Health's Community, Family Health and Prevention Branch?
   Answer: No, the Agency cannot accept letters of reference from DPH staff, and this includes letters of reference from a different program within the Community, Family Health, and Prevention Branch, as stated in *Section III.A.6* on page 20; however, Proposers may provide letters from any organizations they have partnered or contracted with, regardless of whether the project was tobacco specific. Letters of recommendation can attest to a Proposer's performance, timeliness, completeness, etc. with respect to any project.

7. **Question:** The RFP requires a plan for post-funding sustainability, are there any available examples of approved strategies?
   Answer: No, examples of approved sustainability strategies are not available. However, page 10 of the CDC's Best Practices User Guide: Program Infrastructure in Tobacco Prevention and Control discusses sustainability plans and may provide guidance on developing a sustainability plan.

8. **Question:** What are the State's required metrics for evaluating Community of Practice effectiveness? For example, frequency of meetings, engagement rates, pre/post meeting assessments for knowledge/skills/confidence.
   Answer: A Community of Practice is an element of Component 1 and Component 2. The Department does not have specific predefined metrics for evaluating a Community of Practice separately but will give consideration to the Evaluation Plan Summary and Logic Model that is required per *Section II.E.3* on page 15 as part of the overall proposal submission. Proposers should propose how they will evaluate a Community of Practice in the Evaluation Plan Summary and Logic Model, as required in *Section II.E.3* on page 15. Templates for both are provided on pages 47 and 48 of the RFP.

9. **Question:** Is there any guidance that the State can share on the requirement to conduct "market or formative research"? Are there preferred research designs?
   Answer: No, the Department cannot provide guidance or preferred research designs. Market or formative research may include, but is not limited to, analysis of marketing tactics for cessation services and research into how specific populations are quitting or engaging with best practice cessation services.

10. **Question:** What is meant by "Regional and Statewide Coordination will be weighted more in proposal scoring" on page 14 under *Component 3*?
    Answer: Proposals that include regional or statewide coordination and impact (i.e., reach greater catchment areas) will be scored higher than a proposal for a single location or organization. All proposals should discuss their reach and impact.

11. **Question:** Is Cessation Intervention considered *Component 2* or *3*?
    Answer: Cessation Interventions are *Component 3.* The mention of *Component 2: Cessation Interventions* on page 13 of the RFP is an error.

12. **Question:** Can a proposal include elements of both *Component* areas 1 and 3? For example, if we are working to building awareness and influence people who speak Spanish, we have a responsibility to assure they have access to local Spanish language cessation services – can we provide them as part of a *Component 1* project?
    Answer: No, the submission of multiple proposals is not an option for this procurement. Proposers must submit a proposal for either *Component 1* or *Component 3*. Promotion of existing Spanish language cessation services, such as the CT Quitline, is an acceptable service under *Component 1*. For further information please see *Section I.B.12.* on page 6 of the RFP.

13. **Question:** Will Grantees be provided a database for data collection and evaluation or will Grantees be expected to acquire their own?
    Answer: No, the Agency will not provide a database for Grantees to use for data collection and evaluation purposes. However, the Agency has contracted services for a third-party evaluator who will be available to provide a database and support Grantees in their data collection and evaluation efforts.

14. **Question:** Is staff training and certification an allowable expense?
    Answer: Yes, staff training and certification may be an allowable expense if its purpose is directly related to the objectives of the proposal.

15. **Question:** Is the Work Plan included in the page limit?
    Answer: No, the Work Plan is an attachment which is not included in the page limit. Please refer to *Section II. E.4.* on page 15 of the RFP for more information about the Work Plan.

16. **Question:** Who needs to fill out the Workforce Analysis form?
    Answer: All Proposers must complete and submit the Workforce Analysis form with their proposals in order to be considered for this RFP. The Workforce Analysis form can be found in *Section VII: Application Forms* on page 56 of the RFP and is a required attachment.

17. **Question:** Are audited financials required for all proposals?
    Answer: Yes, audited financials are required for all Proposers. For organizations that were incorporated in the last two years, this requirement may be substituted by any financial statement prepared by a Certified Public Accountant.

<u>Budgetary Questions</u>

18. **Question:** What is the minimum and maximum amount of awards that will be issued per category?

Answer: The minimum amount for each component is not set. The maximum dollar amount that will be issued per category is $ 4,338,172 for *Component 1: State and Community Interventions* and $4,957,910 for *Component 3: Cessation Interventions*. These funds may be distributed across multiple awards. The number of awards will be determined based on the number of proposals received and the RFP Review Committee's selections based on the *Evaluation Criteria* provided in *Section III.B.4* on page 22.

19. **Question:** Is the total funding available as reflected in the RFP the amount per year or the amount in total for the three-year period?
    Answer: The total funding available outlined in *Section I.B.5* on page 4 of the RFP reflects the total amount available for the three-year period.

20. **Question:** What is the maximum allowable indirect cost rate?
    Answer: The Agency does not have a preset maximum allowable indirect cost rate that would apply to RFP Proposers. All budgets from individual Proposers will be evaluated by the RFP Review Committee to determine the fiscal competitiveness of each proposal. Proposals must contain an itemized budget with justification for each line item included in the budget forms, which can be found in *Section VII: Application Forms* on pages 50-53.