INTERACT FOR HEALTH

Improving Access to Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder

Request for Proposals

March 2022

GENERAL INFORMATION

Background

The United States continues to be in the midst of an opioid epidemic. More than 100,000 Americans died from drug overdoses between May 2020 and April 2021—the most ever recorded in a single year—according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That was an increase of almost 30% from the previous year when 78,000 drug overdose deaths were recorded. Drug overdose deaths were three times greater than traffic accident deaths and two times greater than gun deaths during the same period. Most of the deaths were due to opioids, fueled by the powerful drug fentanyl, which is often added to illegal drugs to enhance their potency.[1] Greater Cincinnati is disproportionately affected by the opioid epidemic. The region has one of the highest overdose rates in the country.[2] In 2020, the age-adjusted rate of overdose deaths in Greater Cincinnati was 42.2 per 100,000, compared with 28.3 per 100,000 for the nation.[3]

Opioid use disorder is a significant cause of morbidity and mortality in the U.S., yet many individuals with OUD do not receive treatment. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic worsened the rise in overdose deaths, making 2021 the deadliest year on record for the opioid crisis in the United States. In response to the opioid epidemic and the pandemic, Interact for Health has adopted a comprehensive approach to reduce the trend of opioid overdoses and deaths from opioids. These efforts include increasing access to treatment, recovery support, reducing the stigma of addiction and supporting harm reduction strategies. Research shows that a comprehensive approach can reduce substance misuse and related problems.[4]

During the COVID-19 quarantine period, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and the federal government increased the number of telehealth services that were billable. When emergency orders expired, the states and the federal government adopted permanent telehealth expansion rules. However, simply increasing capacity for treatment may not effectively increase availability—or decrease opioid-related overdoses—if treatment providers are not located in areas of need.[5]

> **RFP Goal**
>
> To increase access to evidence-based opioid use disorder treatment in Interact for Health's 20-county service area.

[1] *Drug overdose deaths hit record high.* Harvard T.H. CHAN School of Public Health. (2021, November 19). Retrieved Jan. 28, 2022, from https://bit.ly/3tZj85t

[2] Scholl L, Seth P, Kariisa M, Wilson N, Baldwin G. Drug and Opioid-Involved Overdose Deaths — United States, 2013–2017. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2019; 67:1419–1427. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm675152e1

[3] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death 2018-2020 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2021. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 2018-2020, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at https://bit.ly/3lTDxiw on Feb. 3, 2022 2:45:33 PM.

[4] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of the Surgeon General. (2016). Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health. Washington, DC: HHS.

[5] Center for Disease Control. (2020, December 17). Overdose Deaths Accelerating During COVID-19 [Press release]. Retrieved from https://bit.ly/3pJXqAU

RFP Overview

Interact for Health plans to improve patient access to treatment by supporting treatment providers with the development and/or implementation of strategies to alleviate patients' ability to engage in opioid use disorder treatment. Interact for Health seeks qualified community partners to improve access to treatment services. This does not include provision of services reimbursable by private or public insurance. This RFP is strictly focused on removing barriers and creating more access to treatment. Proposed projects will expand treatment services in areas where either prescribers or clinicians do not currently offer services, where the need is greater than existing capacity or people do not have existing access to treatment services.

Proposed strategies must alleviate at least one of the following counselor-identified barriers to effective substance use treatment:[6]

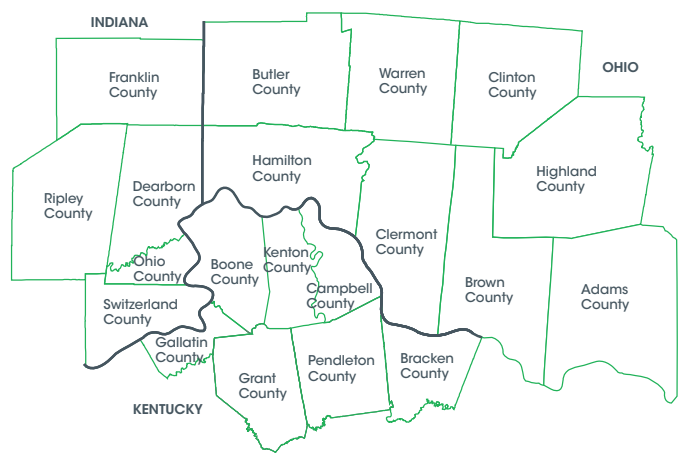| Lack of Funding |
| --- |
| • Difficulty meeting needs of non-English speaking clients. |
| • Lack of technological resources – i.e. computers (Using the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's telehealth toolkit, present a proposal to permanently integrate telehealth services for treatment of opioid use disorder). |
| • Heavy caseloads and understaffing. |
| • Fewer treatment options for rural clients. |
| • Limited career education opportunities for counselors. |
| **Transportation** |
| • Challenges getting to treatment facilities, especially in rural areas. |
| • Client distance from treatment centers. |
| • Reliance on friends/family for transportation. |
| **Bureaucratic Challenges** |
| • Lack of case management support. |
| • Need to improve efficiency of electronic health record systems. |
| • Delays getting clients into treatment in rural areas. |

In order to increase treatment access, Interact for Health will award up to a **total of $250,000** for planning and implementation grants. Planning grants will not exceed **12 months and $25,000** and must demonstrate a strong implementation and

sustainability plan as Interact for Health is completing the final year of its strategic plan and cannot assure support for implementation. Implementation grants will not exceed **12 months**. Funding amount will depend on the proposed activities and plans.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must:

- Be a public or private nonprofit or governmental organization.
- Provide services in at least one county of Interact for Health's 20-county service area (see map).

Organizations that are not nonprofits or governmental entities may still seek funding through fiscal sponsorship. A fiscal sponsorship is a relationship between a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization (the sponsor organization) and charitable project that does not have a tax-exempt status (the sponsored organization).

Interact for Health's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion

Interact for Health strives to promote health equity in all that we do. For us, health equity means that everyone throughout our diverse region has a fair and just opportunity to live the healthiest life possible. This requires that we intentionally work to reduce health disparities, as well as tackle the underlying root causes, such as inequality, poverty and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, age, education, immigration status, geography, socioeconomic status

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[6]Erin Pullen & Carrie Oser (2014) Barriers to Substance Abuse Treatment in Rural and Urban Communities: Counselor Perspectives, Substance Use & Misuse, 49:7, 891-901, DOI: 10.3109/10826084.2014.891615

and sexual orientation. We are on a journey to learn and work toward equity, diversity and inclusion within our own operations and practices at Interact for Health, and we encourage our grantee partners to join with us.

Interact for Health is particularly interested in supporting organizations and projects that:

- Understand disparities and intentionally work to reduce disparities.
- Authentically engage and include community stakeholders, especially those who the project aims to reach.
- Deploy equitable practices and culturally relevant services, with staffing of the project that is representative of the community served.
- Identify opportunities to engage in policy and advocacy to achieve systemic change.

Grantee Requirements

Grant recipients will be expected to complete an Evaluation Plan in partnership with Interact for Health's Evaluation Officer within 60 days after the grant is awarded. This plan will measure effectiveness and outcomes as part of the application process. Grantees will be expected to identify draft goals and outcomes as part of the application. Outcomes for similar projects include decreasing attrition of clients in treatment, decreasing patient no-show rates and increasing the number of patients served.

PROPOSAL SELECTION CRITERIA

Interact for Health will use the following criteria to select the most competitive proposals. Prioritized programs will:

- Demonstrate the need for treatment services in their community, using local data when possible.
- Demonstrate the capability to provide access to treatment in service area gaps.
- Include new or innovative treatment approaches.
- Describe whether this is planning or implementing a new program or expanding an existing program.
- Detail a realistic timeline.
- Include matching, or in-kind contributions from the lead organization and collaborating organizations.
- Leverage other funding and/or existing resources.
- Have a clearly delineated budget with justification for each line item.
- Have a plan to sustain the project or program after grant funding has ended.
- Provide a clear plan for evaluation including how data will be reported and responsible person.
- Demonstrate the ability to plan or implement the project or program during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Timeline

Proposal webinar	**1-2 p.m. March 18, 2022**
Proposal deadline	**5 p.m. April 11, 2022**
Site visits	**April 18-29, 2022**
Notification of grant award	**May 13, 2022**

Proposal Webinar

A proposal webinar will be held to answer questions about the RFP concept and application process **from 1 to 2 p.m. Friday, March 18, 2022**.

Attendance at the webinar is not required in order to submit a proposal. Please contact Sonya Carrico at scarrico@interactforhealth.org to receive access information for the live webinar or to receive the recording after March 18.

Proposal Submissions

Completed applications must be submitted **no later than 5 p.m. April 11, 2022**, via Interact for Health's online grants management system. To begin the application process or to access a PDF of the required application questions, please visit the Funding Oppprtunities page of our website. If you have an open grant or have received a grant from Interact for Health in the past two years, your email address may already be registered in the system. For assistance with the application process, please contact Director of Grants Management Kristine Schultz at kschultz@interactforhealth.org.

Site Visits

Before selecting projects for funding, Interact for Health staff will conduct a virtual site visit with the potential grantee. Representatives from collaborating organizations are required to attend the site visit. This meeting allows Interact for Health staff to hear more about the proposed project and ask any clarifying questions. Site visits will be conducted **April 18-29, 2022**. Applicants will indicate their preferred timeslot during the application process. Site visit topics will include:

- General discussion of your proposed project and budget.
- Population of focus for the project.
- Any disparities that exist and how this project plans to address them.
- Community engagement tactics.
- Collaborating partners and organizations or those you plan to engage.

Questions

For any questions regarding the process please contact Senior Program Officer Sonya Carrico at scarrico@interactforhealth.org or 317-695-6802.