Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA)
Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and
Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP)

OFR Database Pilot Site Selection Frequently Asked Questions

Webinar

Q: We are in the process of developing our OFR team. In the solicitation, I read about a requirement that a site have an established, up-and-running OFR team. I just want to confirm that. Thanks.

Q: I am also curious about the above question. We are currently in the planning process for an OFR.

A: This is a competitive application, so the score will increase if you have an up-and-running team. You need to show that you have the right people at the table and that you have experience collecting data. It takes months before a team is able to capture and collect the data for a case in a way that is robust.

Q: Can you give examples of budget use?

A: Here are some examples of what the budget could include:

- Salary for an individual spending time collecting/inputting the data
- Travel expenses for required meetings

Applicants should look at how the money could best be used and then propose and explain how it will be used.

Q: Can we apply to be a pilot site without requesting any funding?

A: Yes, more information about being an unpaid volunteer will be available in late summer. Information will be sent out via the same mechanism as for this solicitation.

Q: I saw that one of the letters of support can come from a medical examiner/coroner. Can the OFR requesting funding be part of a coroner's or ME's office?

A: Yes, whichever agency is hosting the OFR effort can apply. If a coroner's or ME's office applies, it is in your best interests to show partnership with a law enforcement agency and/or behavioral health agency.

Q: Will volunteer sites have fewer requirements?

A: Yes, the requirements will be listed in information coming out late this summer. To cite one example, paid pilot sites (but not volunteer sites) must meet the requirement to travel and attend an in-person meeting. Also, volunteer sites will not have to participate in as many evaluation requests as paid pilot sites. However, they will still have criteria such as REDCap.

Q: Is REDCap only free to nonprofits?

A: Yes, it is free to nonprofits and government agencies. Check out REDCap for additional details about the fee structure.

Q: If a jurisdiction has funding and REDCap, can we use the software without applying for the grant?

A: Yes, but you will need to apply to be a volunteer site so we can coordinate with you.

Q: Is an OFR allowed to apply for the grant if the site has not conducted at least 30 overdose fatality reviews?

A: This is a competitive application, so it depends on who else applies and what their experience is. You will need to demonstrate that you are rolling and have a system in place to capture data from multiple partners. Also demonstrate that you will not experience delays in getting up and running and have multiple data sources and complete data. In addition, you must show that you have the capacity to handle 16 reviews in 12 months.

Q: I imagine that an existing "death review team" could apply for this grant as well. Is this true? In California, such teams are mandatory. Counties in California report such data to the state. This includes overdoses, usually in the context of determining whether a death was a suicide.

A: As long as you have experience reviewing cases including overdoses, are receiving data from multiple sources, have a process for securely collecting and storing data, and have the capacity to handle 16 overdose death reviews in 12 months, then you can apply.

Website

Q: [Our team] applied for a scholarship through the Indiana Department of Health to attend a National OFR Forum (through IIR), which is tentatively going to be held in Washington, DC. Is that meeting the same as the one listed in the BJA COSSAP OFR Database Pilot Site Selection?

A: The 2020 National OFR Forum for which the Indiana Department of Health plans to provide scholarships is tentatively rescheduled for December 2020; as of now, however, the date is uncertain because of the COVID-19 pandemic and concerns over traveling and attending in-person events of more than ten people. We are not sure at this point whether the forum is going to be an in-person or a virtual event.

The meeting mentioned in the solicitation may be a separate meeting for spring or summer 2021. It is recommended that your budget account for travel expenditures for this possible separate pilot site convening. If the pilot site convening does not happen, you should be able to move the funds to other line items as needed.

Q: What type of documentation would be sufficient to show that an applicant has access to REDCap? Is a screenshot of the home Web page, which displays the agency's name in collaboration with REDCap, sufficient?

A: A screenshot is fine. Include the agency's name, explain which OFR project staff members have access to REDCap, and discuss—if appropriate—any prior projects or use of REDCap by OFR project staff members.

Q: If the applicant on the grant is the medical examiner's office, does the one required letter of support need to be from behavioral health or law enforcement?

A: Letters of intent are to show collaboration and support by organizations that need to provide data. The application will be stronger if letters from both law enforcement and behavioral health can be provided. Multiple letters can be submitted.

Q: [Our agency] has an interest in applying to be an Overdose Fatality Review database pilot site. Under "eligibility," we read that "any interested, experienced, OFR initiatives can apply." Will we be eligible? We have conducted fatality reviews before and would like to apply to further our experience.

A: If your agency has done OFRs in the past, you can apply on behalf of your agency. This is a competitive application. Applicants will be scored based on the criteria as outlined in the application. As long as you have experience reviewing cases including overdoses, are receiving data from multiple sources, have a process for securely collecting and storing data, and have the capacity to handle 16 overdose death reviews in 12 months, then you can apply.

In addition to the paid pilot sites, IIR and its partners will be supporting nonpaid volunteer sites to pilot the OFR database. There are fewer eligibility criteria for these volunteer sites. More information about the volunteer pilot site opportunity will be available in late summer.