

# Philadelphia EMA HIV Integrated Planning Council

## Assessing the Administrative Mechanism

*Approved March 2008 (updated April 2018)*

One of the Congressionally-mandated responsibilities of a Planning Council is to conduct an ongoing assessment of “the (Recipient’s) administrative mechanism in rapidly allocating funds to the areas of greatest need within the EMA consistent with established priorities, allocations, and instructions.” To fully assess the administrative mechanism of the Recipient involves answering three questions, as follows—each of which carries with it an explanation and a specific request that the Recipient provide (a) information (b) within a specific timeframe (c) in a specific manner or format:

### **Question 1: Is the Recipient rapidly allocating funds?**

**Explanation:** This question is answered by looking at Recipient expenditures to determine if funds are getting out to the agencies and the community in a timely fashion. The Finance Committee is charged with looking at expenditures to determine that spending is timely. The Recipient provides (each quarter) a spreadsheet showing the percentage of funds that have been spent in each category. The Committee then looks to see if the percentage is appropriate (so, for instance, in June, approximately 25% of funds should be spent, given that this is  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the way through the fiscal year). If there are areas where spending does not match roughly with the time of year, the Recipient will explain the discrepancy (for instance, underspending due to delayed hiring of staff; overspending due to high use of a service that is seasonal—like transportation). The Finance Committee then reports to the full Council on expenditures.

**A. What information is requested of the Recipient?** The Planning Council requests that the following information be provided by the Recipient to the Finance Committee for each service category by geographic region (NJ, PA, PH):

- Total amount budgeted to each service category
- Total amount invoiced by/paid to agencies for each service category to date
- Percent of the annual budget amount of each service category expended to date
- Explanation of any discrepancies (overspending or underspending)

**B. When is the information to be presented?** The Planning Council requests that the information be provided to the Finance Committee (which meets the first Thursday of the month at 2:00 p.m.) as follows:

- In August: information about March, April, and May
- In November: information about June, July, and August
- In November, December, and January: most updated information available
- In May: year’s end information

In order to provide for adequate review, the Council requests that the Recipient provide documentation to the Office of HIV Planning at least one week prior to the Finance Committee meeting at which information will be discussed.

**C. In what format or manner is the information requested?** The Planning Council requests that expenditure data be provided in spreadsheet format and that a Recipient representative attend the relevant Finance Committee meetings to address the written documents and to answer questions.

**Question 2: Do expenditures follow the Planning Council’s priorities, allocations, and instructions to the Recipient?**

**Explanation:** The Finance Committee is also responsible for answering this question. The Committee monitors spending to determine if the approved allocations are being followed. The Recipient may be asked to provide additional information to help the Committee determine if instructions are being followed (for instance, in the category “food”, if the Council instructed that food would be provided through grocery vouchers—as opposed to hot delivered meals, is the Recipient following those instructions?). The Finance Committee then reports its findings to the full Council.

**A. What information is requested of the Recipient?** The same information requested in Question 1 will be used to determine if priorities and allocations are being followed. To aide in determining adherence to instructions to the Recipient, the Planning Council requests that the Recipient provide a brief action plan to the Finance Committee that describes activities and timeframes being planned for each instruction provided.

**B. When is the information being requested for presentation?** The Planning Council requests that the information be provided to the Finance Committee quarterly, at its monthly meetings in the following months with the following information:

- December: Plan to respond to the instructions that go into effect March 1
- April: Status report
- June: Status report
- September: Status report

In order to provide for adequate review, the Council requests that the Recipient provide documentation to the Office of HIV Planning at least one week prior to the Finance Committee meeting at which information will be discussed.

**C. In what format or manner is the information requested?** The Planning Council requests that reports be a page or two in length per instruction, in narrative form and that a Recipient representative attend the relevant Finance Committee meetings to address the written documents and to answer questions.

### **Question 3: Is the Recipient's contract procurement process efficient and effective?**

**Explanation:** The Finance Committee reviews the Recipient's Request for Proposals (RFP) process is clear, fair, and efficient. The Committee reviews the Recipient's procurement process. *It should be noted that the Council is only to assess the process; the Council must not be involved in any way that might influence which agencies the Recipient selects for funding.*

**A. What information is requested of the Recipient?** The Planning Council requests that the following information be provided by the Recipient to the Finance Committee:

- How are RFPs advertised (in what venues, how else distributed)?
- What are the common elements of an RFP as utilized by the Recipient?
- What technical assistance is provided to aid agencies to respond to RFPs (including agencies not currently funded)?
- How are RFPs reviewed (what criteria is used, how was that criteria selected)?
- Who makes the decisions (who serves as a reviewer, what qualifications must reviewers have, how are reviewers selected, to what extent are Recipient employees part of the review/and/or selection process, how is objectivity assured, how does the review lead to selection of agencies and funding levels for those agencies)?
- Is there an appeal/grievance process (is the process in writing, is it accessible, is it used by individuals/agencies who have appealed/grieved, how does the process ensure objectivity)?

**B. When is the information being requested for presentation?** The Planning Council requests that the information be provided to the Finance Committee annually at its February meeting. In order to provide for adequate review, the Council requests that the Recipient provide documentation to the Office of HIV Planning at least one week prior to the Finance Committee meeting at which information will be discussed.

**C. In what format or manner is the information requested?** The Planning Council requests that information be provided in a written format (with a written description of the above requested information and examples of RFPs, blank review rating sheets, etc.) and that that a Recipient representative attend the February Finance Committee meeting to address the written documents and to answer questions.