

## 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 SAMHSA's CAPT Service to Science Lead in your Service Area (see contact information below). Deadline for nominations is August 1<sup>st</sup>.**

### 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 for 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 FY2012 funds**, selected programs will participate in the FY2012 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 mini sub-contract 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

- Building the capacity of local practitioners and evaluators to assess program's effectiveness
- Developing logic models that link program goals and objectives to outcomes
- Designing mixed-method data collection procedures
- Identifying, developing, and adapting appropriate measures and instruments
- Applying procedures to protect the rights of evaluation participants
- Conducting qualitative and quantitative data analyses
- Hiring and/or working with an evaluator
- Exploring issues of innovation, adaptation, and fidelity
- Understanding 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.
- *Be innovative*—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.
- *Be responsive*. 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.

- *Be practice-based.* 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.
- *Be committed.* Programs must be willing to dedicate the effort and time to advancing their program along the evidence-based spectrum. **Pending the availability of FY2012 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.

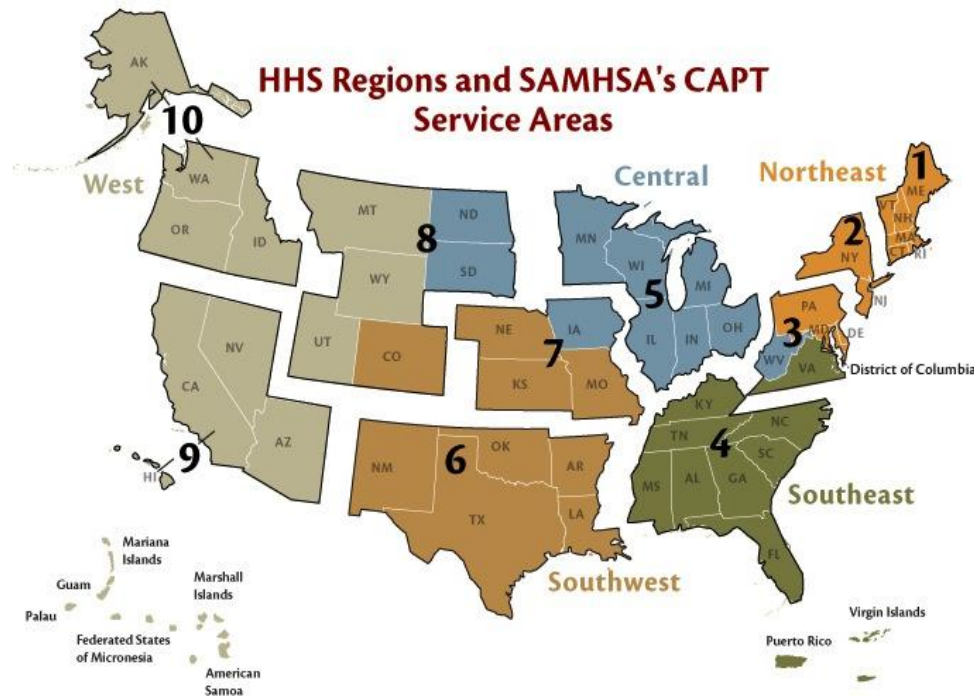
In addition to the above criteria, SAMHSA is interested in programs that address **SAMHSA Strategic Initiative (SSI) #1: Prevention of Substance Abuse and Mental Illness**, Goals 1 – 4. These goals include the following:

- 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, LGBTQ 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 SAMHSA 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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