

## Washington Health Information Collaborative

### Application: Questions and Answers

*Note: As new questions are submitted, the questions and answers are added to the beginning of this document. Scroll down to see all questions asked and answered. Answers to questions sent in about the Letters of Intent which were due on June 16, 2006, are included at the end of this document.*

Posted July 14, 2006

**Question: What is meant by the request for an “organization’s global budget as well as a detailed budget for the Health IT planning and implementation project”?**

**Answer:** The aim of the budget question is to assess the level of financial planning undertaken for the Health IT project as well as the viability of this project when compared to other financial considerations for the practice. The “global budget” should be informative enough to offer a solid understanding of the organization’s revenues, expenditures and current financial commitments. A detailed annual financial statement could be substituted for a global budget if it provides substantive answers to the above questions. Also in reference to the “global budget”, the Collaborative is not requesting organizations to submit specially prepared audited financial statements, but is asking for those materials the organization currently uses for its business needs.

**Question: Please clarify what is meant by the timeframe referenced as "projects of up to 18 months in duration may be requested." What is the beginning point or the ending point of the 18 months? Are health IT systems or equipment that have already been purchased within the past 18 months eligible for consideration for the funding, effectively as reimbursement for expenses incurred to date? Are purchases already made eligible for consideration?**

**Answer:** The intent of the Collaborative is to spur new investments in health information technology. This means that the eighteen-month period refers to costs incurred after the award date. Expenses incurred prior to this date would not be reimbursed by awards from the Collaborative.

**Question: Who is considered a “community partner?” For example, could a radiology facility to which we refer our patients be included as a partner? Hospitals? Lab companies? Are there specific items that must be mentioned in the letter of support from a community partner?**

**Answer:** All of the organizations you mention could be community partners, as could business and professional organizations, and patient access and advocacy groups. There is no list of specific items that must be mentioned in the letter of support.

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**Letter of Intent to Apply: Questions and Answers**

*PLEASE NOTE: Letters of Intent were due June 16, 2006. No new Letters of Intent (LOI) will be accepted for the 2006 award cycle. Questions and answers regarding LOIs are included for background reference only. Scroll down to see all questions asked and answered regarding LOIs for the 2006 cycle.*

Posted June 6, 2006

**Question: We are looking at expanding our current health IT system and converting our paper records to electronic records and storing them on a server. Please let us know if this project fits the parameters for Collaborative funding – We will be converting from paper files to improve the speed and accuracy of delivering patient information to providers. It will eliminate the need for transfer of medical records from storage to the clinics, improving efficiency and reducing administrative costs. It will also fill the information gap between the area clinic providers and our hospital/clinic. Currently, all of the area primary care providers (who all have admitting privileges in our hospital) have electronic medical records but we, as the only hospital in the area, do not have any way of providing electronic access to records.**

**Answer:** Based on your description the project does fit the Collaborative's parameters for funding. As long as the hospital in question is a Critical Access Hospital (scroll down for how to find the definition of a Critical Access Hospital) and serves Public Employees Benefits Board members, it would be eligible to apply for funding.

**Question: As two naturopathic primary care clinics, we are interested in applying for funding. We are early in our planning process and have not yet selected a specific system. Would this grant support staff time to develop a comprehensive implementation plan and to hire a consultant to assist in selecting an appropriate system? A second question is: these two clinics are independent, but would like invest in the same system. Should the clinics apply jointly or individually?**

**Answer:** Practices could qualify for funding if they have identified clinical champions, and have developed a strategic plan, budget, and funding plan **and** are in the process of selecting an EMR and developing an implementation plan (workflows, etc). Funding will not be made available to develop a strategic plan, budget, funding plan, or to evaluate whether or not the practice should adopt Health IT. Please review the initial adoption checklist to gauge the readiness of the two practices to apply for funding. If you decide to apply, both clinics should apply separately.

Posted May 30, 2006

**Question: Our County is implementing an all-inclusive electronic health record (EHR) system that will involve our Rural Hospital and outside primary care clinics in the area, each with their own specific EHR needs. Are the hospital and the clinics**

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**eligible to apply separately? Also are the other hospital-owned clinics eligible to apply?**

**Answer:** Yes, the hospital (provided it is a Critical Access Hospital) and the outside primary care clinics are eligible to apply separately. Clinics owned and operated by the hospital are not eligible to apply separately from that hospital.

Posted May 25, 2006

**Question: Can practices that have already been received a First Choice award for health IT last year apply again? If yes, are there different considerations for such clinics?**

**Answer:** Practices that received a health information technology award from First Choice Health last year are not eligible for awards in the 2006 funding cycle.

**Question: What is a Critical Access Hospital?**

**Answer:** Critical Access Hospitals are designated by the State and certified by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Additional information, as well as a list of Critical Access Hospitals in Washington state is available from the Department of Health at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/hsga/ocrh/CAH/cah399.html>.

Posted May 23, 2006

**Question: We are in the process of converting to an electronic health record. We need support to be able to abstract data from the paper charts into the electronic health record. Would this be considered an eligible project for your grant funding?**

**Answer:** If this activity is part of a conversion to an electronic medical record, it could be eligible for funding. When submitting a letter of intent, please be sure to provide an explanation of your overall conversion, and also demonstrate how this project ties into your implementation plan (include timelines, costs, and dedicated resources). Also, please specify how the award funding would be used, such as for staff overtime pay, hiring outside staff to extract and enter data, scanning data, etc.

Posted May 22, 2006

**Question: Are the award criteria the same for all grants?**

**Answer:** No. There is a common set of requirements that are defined in the document called "Award Requirements and How to Submit a Letter of Intent" then there are somewhat different requirements depending on whether you are applying for an award for 1) initial support for acquisition and implementation or 2) increasing the functionality of health information technology already in operation. First Choice Health and the Health Care Authority are each contributing \$500,000 to the funding

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pool for these technology awards, and each funding sponsor has additional individual award criteria. For example, First Choice Health will be making awards only to practices that contract with First Choice Health regardless of location, while the Washington State Health Care Authority will only make awards to practices and critical access hospitals in Washington state which provide services to Public Employee Benefits Board (PEBB) members. A complete list of the sponsor-specific award criteria will be included in the Award Application.

**Question: Can the award funds be used for purchasing consulting services?**

**Answer:** Yes, if the use of consultant services clearly fits within a larger framework of practice expenditures for adopting or expanding health information technology. If this is how you intend to use the award (in whole or in part), please make sure your letter of intent describes how the funds would be spent, the consultant(s) and consulting services desired, and how these services are an integral part of your health information technology adoption or expansion. Also, please be aware that no-cost consulting services are available to practices participating in the DOQ-IT program (go to the Qualis Health website at: [www.QualisHealth.org/qi-washington](http://www.QualisHealth.org/qi-washington) for more information about DOQ-IT).

**Question: Groundbreaking for a new clinic takes place next week and it is expected to open early next summer at the latest. They are in the process of purchasing a Practice Management System (PMS) now to manage their current behavioral health system, and to purchase an Electronic Medical System (EMS) for implementation next Spring at the new clinic. Could this project be eligible for a \$20,000 award?**

**Answer:** The Collaborative is funding health information technology used in clinical care, and is not funding technology for business functions such as Practice Management Systems. Eligibility criteria require that an applicant be a primary care provider or critical access hospital and either be part of the First Choice Health network of providers or serve the needs of Public Employees Benefits Board enrollees. Additionally, applicants will be evaluated on a number of readiness criteria. These criteria include due diligence in selecting a health information technology system, and lack of other competing projects. We encourage you to review the eligibility criteria described in the document called "Award Requirements and How to Submit a Letter of Intent" and the readiness checklists (all on the Collaborative website) to determine whether the clinic in question would be a suitable candidate for this award cycle.

**Question: In addition to awards for Electronic Medical Records (EMR) technology, will funding be available for clinics to implement the CHILD Profile Immunization Registry? Implementation of the registry requires that providers have a custom interface built for their EMRs, and this cost is often prohibitive for many providers and clinics.**

**Answer:** An interface between an EMR and the Washington State CHILD Immunization Registry would add efficiency for pediatric and family practices. Funding for such projects would be considered if this interface is a component of a larger interoperability plan for the practice or facility.

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**Question:** I am reviewing the information needed for the Letter of Intent and the “Intent to Apply for Award Checklist.” Do you want to have all of the documentation on the checklist submitted with the Letter of Intent or do you just wish that I generally discuss each of the points on this checklist?

**Answer:** There is no need to submit documentation supporting the checklist with the Letter of Intent. Applicants selected to submit a formal application will be required to submit supporting documentation at that time.

**Question:** I want to send my Letter of Intent electronically but your PDF file for the checklist is not formatted to allow data entry. Could you fix this so we can fill in the checklist and save it and send it electronically?

**Answer:** The PDF files containing the checklist documents have now been modified to allow for data entry. To submit your Letter of Intent electronically, please send it in as a Word document or in PDF format.