Sample Application

This sample grant proposal is provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Human Development Services, Coordinated Discretionary Funds Program.

The sample includes the applicant’s narrative section of the proposal and reader/reviewer comments are in the margin.

A review of this sample grant proposal will acquaint you with what the reviewer looks for as (s)he reads the proposal and evaluates it for both quality and quantity of information.

(Note: This document was scanned from the federal source.)
Preface

This “sample application” and related evaluative comments has been prepared by the Office of Human Development Services (HDS) to assist prospective applicants in developing their applications to the Coordinated Discretionary Funds Program (CDP). The CDP which is published annually in the Federal Register announces HDS’ research, demonstration and training priorities.

This is the third such guide which has been developed. This “sample application” is only the narrative portion of an application because applicants tend to have the most problems with this part of their applications. In addition to the narrative, a typical application includes a Standard Form 424, budget information, table of contents, project summary, organizational capability statement, letters of commitment, and assurances.

A highly-ranked and funded application from The Advisory Centers, Inc, entitled “Drug Prevention and Education for Youth Gangs” was selected as the “sample application” this year. This application was originally submitted in response to last year’s Youth Gang Drug Prevention Program announcement. Although this application did very well in the competition, there are still some weaknesses and ways that the application could be improved.

Evaluative comments about the application were provided by expert reviewers as well as by HDS staff. We have included comments that we think would give potential CDP applicants a better understanding of what HDS considers to be the necessary attributes of a strong project narrative. Prospective applicants, in any case, should adhere to the specific instructions provided in the CDP announcement. For example, although there is a 45 page limitation on CDP applications, this sample has an adjusted format and, therefore, has 55 pages.

HDS wishes to express its appreciation to The Advisory Centers, Inc. of Grand Rapids, Michigan, for agreeing to allow us to use the narrative portion of their application for this sample. We hope it will prove useful in the developing higher quality, successful CDP applications. Best of luck in the CDP grants competition.
A. OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE

I. Purpose: The purpose of the proposed program is to support activities of local police departments and other law enforcement agencies in conducting educational outreach activities in two targeted neighborhoods in which youths commit drug-related crimes.

II. Needs: Incidents of gang-related activities and illicit substance sale and abuse are increasing in Grand Rapids, the second largest city in the State of Michigan. In an 11-month period beginning June 1, 1988, arrests of juvenile offenders accounted for 19% of all arrests. The Grand Rapids Juvenile Division Prosecutor states that 100% of those juveniles arrested in the past four months have been arrested for drug-related crimes. Though there is a need to address the problems of gang activity and substance abuse throughout the city, this pilot program targets the two major high-risk sectors in the city limits, referred to by police as sections A and D (see map).

Section A: Of 1,617 total arrests in section A during an 11 month period, juvenile arrests accounted for 20.5%, youth in section A are currently served by the “Westside Center” at 252 Indiana N.W., a recreational center operated by youth Commonwealth Inc., a non-profit organization under the direction and assistance of the Grand Rapids Police Department. The Westside Center serves a population of approximately 100 youth on any given evening. Ages of the targeted population range from 8 to 19; 60% of the youth are male. The cultural breakdown is similar to that of the surrounding neighborhood: 30% Hispanic, 20% Native American, 50% White, predominately of Polish and Dutch descent. The area is heavily industrial, and its Hispanic and Native American residents account for 62.5% of the city’s 27,685 persons now living below the poverty threshold. According to the Inter-Tribal Council, a non-profit agency located in this west-side neighborhood and serving the Native American population, 90% of their 500 Native American youths are directly affected by alcohol or substance abuse in their immediate families. Though incidents of crack and cocaine abuse are rising on the west side, alcohol and inhalants (readily available in nearby factories) continue to be the drugs of choice, and mixing of illicit substance is rising. According to Family Outreach, another non-profit agency in Grand Rapids which serves minority clients, of the 50 Native American youths between the ages of 8 and 16 counseled there, 100% were substance abusers and 100% came from substance abusing families.

Comments:

- The purpose of this prevention Project is stated clearly and concisely.
- Need for the project is well documented and is tied to the problems related to substance abuse and gang activity; data sources are identified.
- Statistics support the extent of the problem, but not an increasing trend in the incidence of the problems in the community.
- Indicates detailed geographic target and provides good demographic description of the target area
- Adequate profile of the high-risk populations. However, it could be improved by including information on the family composition of the target population, as well as information on their educational backgrounds. This would provide a more complete picture of the problems the project must address.
- It would be helpful to have information on the applicant’s current relationship, if any, with the educational system.
- It would also be useful to have information on the business/employment environment and whether any of the youths are currently employed.
Gangs are forming in section A according to ethnic and family lines, with the highest incidence of gang-related substance abuse and illegal weapons use among the Native American population. In the past several months, workers at the youth Commonwealth Westside Center have confiscated increasing numbers of knives from nation American youths, and the building that houses the center has sustained frequent damage from rocks thrown through windows by youth frequenting the Center.

Section D: Of the 1,945 arrests made in section D over the past 11 months, juveniles accounted for 16.8%. In the D-3 area, home of the Seidman center, 139 Crofton S.E., a second recreational center operated by youth Commonwealth and the Grand Rapids Police, juvenile arrests are at a 1 to 4 ratio with adult arrests. The Seidman Center serves approximately 125 to 150 youths on any given evening. Ages range from 8 to 19, and the majority of the youths, 70% are male. The population is predominantly African-American, and police report that 50% of the neighboring houses are crack houses or abandoned homes. Police staff at the Center estimates that substance use and abuse among youth attending the Seidman Center for recreational serves is in excess of 80%.

In Section D, local gangs calling themselves the “Vice Lords” are forming in separate pockets in the area and at present have approximately 200 members. Another informally structured gang referred to as “The Gang of 500,” is congregating nightly at a nearby corner, drawing its population from the inner city (areas C and D), surrounding suburbs, and non-resident drug sellers. Drug sales and use are visible activities. The Gang of 500 has recently been involved in the assault of two police officers (May 23, 1989), and with the use of stun guns and other weapons on neighborhood residents and small children. In recent drug raids operated under police operation “Crackdown,” area homes have been targeted as crack houses and there is evidence that several of those arrested are member of “Best Friends.” Police are aware that Best Friends and other Detroit area crack operators are currently recruiting section D youth, ages 8 to 14 and their parents to operate crack house sin exchange for drugs and money. It is estimated that 80% of section D gang activity is drug related. African Americans account for 28.9% of all persons now living below the poverty threshold in Grand Rapids.

Comments:

The relationship between the socio-economic conditions and the high crime rates is not probed sufficiently.

Applicant presents convincing discussion that gangs are beginning to form and the racial/ethnic composition of the gangs. The discuss in makes a good case for preventive action in Grand Rapids.
Because of the high incidence of poverty and minority-related problems, such as unemployment, transience, sociological deprivation, low neighborhood attachment, academic failure, and alienation, section A and section D youth are particularly at risk. Gang involvement and substance use provide avenues for these youths to feel a sense of belonging and are now providing them with financial rewards that they have not been able to obtain elsewhere.

III. Youth Commonwealth – Advisory Center Consortium:
Youth Commonwealth currently operates the Seidman and Westside Centers under the direction and supervision of the Grand Rapids Police Department. Yet Commonwealth was founded in 1938 by then-Superintendent of Police, Frank O’Malley and members of the Grand Rapids business community including former President Gerald R. Ford’s father. Former President Gerald R. Ford and Betty Ford continue to support youth Commonwealth’s efforts in Grand Rapids. The purpose of this organization is to provide places for youths to go for recreational and educational services that are supervised by Grand Rapids police officers. The goal and mission of youth Commonwealth is to reduce juvenile delinquency by providing role models in available police officers at neighborhood recreation centers. The organization currently serves approximately 6,000 youths throughout the year and 1,000 youths at a summer camp on nearby Thornapple River. All activities and services are provided free of charge to disadvantaged youth ages 8 to 19.

Youth commonwealth is governed by a 24-member Board of directors and staffed by an Executive Director, three Grand Rapids Police Department officers, and two secretaries. Funding derived from private donations from the community at large and other foundations. Youth Commonwealth does not receive Federal dollars. Programs utilize volunteers from the community and have a roster of more than 200 adult volunteers. Youth Commonwealth is currently the only youth-oriented non-profit agency directly linked with a local police department in Western Michigan.

During the 1988-89 school year, officers and workers at both the Westside and Seidman Centers have noted increased incidents of gang-related activities and identifications, substance use and abuse, and property damage that has escalated to violence against others. As operators of a recreational facility, workers have found themselves increasingly unable to cope with the psychological and sociological problems experienced by neighborhood youths.
Youth Commonwealth Director, Jane Marsh, has contacted Advisory centers, Inc., to request assistance toward intervention and prevention of gang formation and the resulting substance use and abuse. Youth Commonwealth has offered to provide office facilities at both Centers and has requested that Advisory Centers provide the needed programs and trained personnel to implement prevention programs.

The Advisory centers, Inc. is a private non-profit agency that was founded in 1969 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Its purpose is to help individual during transitional periods in their lives to achieve a greater level of emotional and mental health, and, when appropriate, to assist them in securing living conditions that will promote independence and self-respect. To this end, the Advisory Centers operates five programs for young people and their families: Outpatient Services, a mental health clinic serving people ages 12 to 23 and their families, with 6,807 clients in 1988; Alternative Behavior Choices, a mental health prevention and Juvenile Court diversion program for first-time offenders ages 10 to 16 and their families, which served 150 clients in 1988 and more than 300 family members; The Bridge for Runaways, a 13-bed, 24-hour, unlocked residential facility for runaway youth between 10 and 17 years old, which served 380 youths and 500 family members with shelter and counseling and other support services in 1988; Homeless Youth Services, a case-management program serving 16 to 19 year old homeless youth, which served more than 130 youths in 18 months of operation and handled more than 600 requests for assistance; and Total Life Counseling, a counseling and case-management program for individuals with life-threatening diagnoses. Priority is given to referrals between the ages of 0 and 18 years. In 1988, Total Life Counseling served 32 clients and more than 400 family members.

All Advisory Center programs operate with funding provided from a variety of sources including the Federal government, State Department of Social Services, Kent County Department of Social Services, United Way of Kent County, Kent County Community Mental health, local foundations, churches, FEMA, Kent County Juvenile Court, the City of Grand Rapids, and private individuals. The agency operates with a 22-member Board of Trustees which includes representatives from community corporations, the police department, the juvenile court, the legal community, the educational system, area businesses, and consumers of the agency’s services.
The agency’s programs meet all standards of care required by its multiple funding sources. The Bridge for Runaways and Homeless Youth Services programs are full licensed by the State of Michigan as Child Caring and Child Placing Institutions respectively. The agency is also in the process of being licensed as a provider of substance abuse services by the State Office of Substance Abuse Services in Lansing, Michigan.

Though Advisory Centers has sought the advice and help of local law enforcement and vice versa, the program being proposed here is innovative in several ways:

a. This is the first time in the community’s history that police and a mental health agency are working toward establishing goals and objectives to intervene on the behalf of at-risk youths and to form a coalition against gang formation and substance use and abuse.

b. This is the first time that the Student Assistance Program (SAP) developmental model of peer counseling and parental involvement has been applied to police-operated neighborhood recreational center.

c. The proposed program will demonstrate to the community at large and to the mental health and law-enforcement communities that gang involvement and substance use and abuse are problems that must be addressed collectively and cooperatively.

d. This is the first time that a police-operated program has requested the help of a mental health agency in combating social problems connected with gang formation and substance use and abuse.

Comments:

Good discussion on the innovativeness of the proposed project. However, more background information could have been provided on the state-of-the-art related to this type of project to substantiate the innovativeness of the project.

The project emphasis on strong networking and outreach efforts will ensure community empowerment.
Grand Rapids, Michigan, is an ideal location for implementing an innovative program that is carefully monitored and evaluated:

a. Gangs are just beginning to form and individuals are beginning to be recruited by members of national groups.

b. Grand Rapids is in the rare position of being able to take early steps toward intervention and prevention and to do so in cooperation with law enforcement agencies and with members of hard-hit neighborhoods.

c. Seidman and Westside Centers are familiar landmarks in their respective neighborhoods, and have provided safe areas in which at-risk youths have been able to meet and form friendships. Both Centers have earned respect from neighborhood adults and both are used extensively by neighborhood youths.

d. The proposed program does not require additional facilities. Rather, the existing facilities and their users require additional services.

IV. General Goal and Specific Objectives: The goal of the proposed program is to conduct community based, comprehensive, and coordinated activities to reduce and prevent the involvement of at-risk youth in gangs that engage in illicit drug-related activities. The following objectives are intended to define program efforts that will be implemented toward the achievement of this goal:

1. To prevent and reduce the use of drugs and to educate youth at both Center locations about substance use and abuse, using both written information and structured group process toward the following objectives:

   a. 100% of the youth participating in the group process will show increased knowledge of the impact and consequences of both legal and illicit drug use.

   b. 80% of the youths participating in the group process will evidence an increased ability to apply “refusal skills” in resisting drug use when with their peers.

Comments

The general goal reflects the purpose of the program as stated in the program announcement.

The objectives and sub-objectives are logically related, have measurable targets or indicators of success, and support the established goal. Objectives are clearly stated and well defined with sub-objective or specifically intended results. However, the estimated number of youth participating in the project is not provided, only percentage. The total number of youth benefiting is unknown.

Much of the program success is predicated upon the ability of the youth to read and participate in structured group meetings. This approach, particularly the group counseling, may be too clinical for all of the youths.
c. 50% of the youths participating in the group process who are known to be using substances will decrease their use by 30% within the 17 month project period.

2. To promote positive self-esteem in youth participating in groups held at both Centers toward the following objectives:

a. 80% of the youths participating in group sessions will report higher self-esteem.

b. 80% of the youths participating in group sessions will be able to identify at least three ways of improving their self-concept.

c. 80% of the youths participating in group sessions will be able to demonstrate their knowledge and use of non-violent problem-solving techniques and exhibit change of attitude toward fighting as a means of resolving disputes.

d. 80% of the youths participating in group sessions will decrease their participation in illegal drug use, sales, and other illegal activities by 25%.

e. 6 youths at each Center site will be trained and employed for up to 5 hours per week each as Peer Counselors.

3. To involve the parents of youth attending the Centers and other positive adult role models from the neighborhood/community in the ongoing activities of the Centers toward the following objectives:

a. 4 parent aides will be employed at each location, an average of 5 hours per week for the purpose of monitoring youth behavior and role modeling.

b. 25 parent/adult role models at each location will be involved in the decision making process regarding rules and regulations for youth participating in Center activities.

Comments:

Realistic understanding of problem is reflected in establishing reachable success rates.

It is unclear whether more than one group of youths would receive services during the project period.

The parents of the participating youths were not discussed previously in the needs section. While parent involvement is definitely desirable, the case for involving the parents/families was not previously made.
c. 25 parent/adult role models at each location will be involved in volunteer outreach efforts in the Center’s neighborhoods for the purpose of outlining rules, policies, and behavioral expectations.

d. 25% of the parents of youth attending the centers will understand the provisions of and sign a Parent Network Agreement.

4. To prevent gang involvement among at-risk youth attending Westside Center and Seidman Center toward the following objectives:

   a. 30% of the youths participating in the Centers who have dropped out of school will be reenrolled before the expiration of the project (within 17 months).

   b. 30% of the youths participating in the Centers who are unemployed will be enrolled in a public or private employment and training program before expiration of the project (within 17 months).

   c. 30% of the youths age 11 through 14 participating at the Centers who are at-risk of becoming involved in gangs or gang-related activities will be diverted from gang membership.

   d. 30% of the youths participating at the Centers who are already identified with or involved in gangs or gang-related activities will reduce or cease their gang involvement.

B. RESULTS OR BENEFITS EXPECTED

I. Appropriateness for target population: Student Assistance Programs (SAP) have functioned successfully as intervention and prevention tools in schools that have understood that gang formation and substance use and abuse are peer-acceptance related activities. Student Assistance Programs focus on developing youths’ self-esteem, highlight behavioral choices, examine alternative ways to have fun, provide educational information, supply knowledge about drug use and abuse, and teach problem solving skills. Youths participating in Student Assistance Programs have consistently demonstrated positive behavior choices, as evidenced in Louis Gonzales’ model program in Los Angeles County.

Comments:

Only targeting on having 25% of the parents sign a Parent Network Agreement appears low. How will this be measured?

The applicant may have wanted to increase the number of youth attending school to a certain percentage to prevent the youth from dropping out of school as well.

Information on the employment status of the target population should have been presented previously to justify this sub-objective.

This will be difficult to measure.

The results and benefits to be derived from the project are not clearly specified. The contribution of this proposed project to policy, practice, theory and research is not adequately addressed.

Adaptation and application of a successful model, such as the Student Assistance Program, to a new target group, if carefully evaluated, could contribute significantly to programs in other communities.
Following extensive investigation, Advisory Centers has concluded that such a program is adaptable to an out-of-school target population and plans to introduce the Student Assistance Program model at Seidman and Westside Centers. Advisory Centers believes that this model is the appropriate program to implement in Grand Rapids for the following reasons:

a. The Student Assistance Program provides positive role models for at-risk youths. One police officer on duty for every 100 or more youths participating in recreational activities does not, at present, provide enough individualized attention for youths to achieve the on-on-one relationships that nurture role identification and modeling. With this model, Advisory Centers can provide at least one other positive adult role model in the outreach/facilitator, and can provide training for parents who will be able to supervise and, by their presence, also provide role modeling for at-risk youths. Further, this model provides positive peer role models – fellow at-risk neighborhood youth who are singled out, honored, and reinforced for their positive behavior choice, and who will be trained as Peer Counselors at both sits.

b. Through the Student Assistance Program model of peer counseling and parental involvement, at-risk youth learn that their community cares and is concerned about their behavior choices. The very presence of parents in the recreational cents provides a deterrent to gang-related substance use and abuse.

c. The Student Assistance Program is an empowering tool. Youths realize that behavior is a choice and that their choice matters to their community. This program encourages youth to choose their values, and it provides positive enforcement for positive behavior choices.

d. Youth traditionally look to other youth for their behavior cues. In providing positive Peer Counselors/role models, the Student Assistance Program model provides examples for positive behavior.

Comments:

The out-of-school target population is not addressed in the need statement.

There is no discussion of how this model will be different from the Los Angeles Student Assistance Program.

The projected benefits from the Student Assistant Program to the target populations served, effected neighborhoods and peer counselors are clearly described.
II. **Alternative Support Sources:** Youth Commonwealth, which is currently 80% funded by private donations, is committed to continue to give this new project priority when soliciting funds. In its formative stages, the proposed program has already generated the cooperation and collaboration of area service centers, government and non-profit agencies, and funding sources including, but not limited to: Baxter Community Center, Inter-tribal Council, and the Hispanic Center, (all of the above are Grand Rapids centers which service specific minority populations targeted by the proposal), United Way of Kent County, the Grand Rapids Police Department, the Grand Rapids Public Schools, Kent County Community Mental Health, Kent County Community Mental Heal, Kent County Health Department – Office of Substance Abuse Services, and the Kent County Juvenile Court. Additionally, Advisory Centers intends to employ a part-time fund developer whose job it will be to continue to explore sources of private, public and corporate funding toward the continuation of this project.

III. **Duplication of this Model:** The proposed program will provide a Policy and Procedures Manual for Center users, staff and volunteers, and for use by any person or agency intending to duplicate this program. Advisory Centers is also committed to providing descriptive information in the form of brochures, pamphlets, or promotional articles. Employees of Advisory Centers will be encouraged to attend conferences and workshops to introduce and discuss this program and to describe ways in which other communities can introduce their own programs, and will act as consultants as needed. Staff members will also be encouraged to attend such conferences in order to participate in the free exchange of ideas that will help to promote and improve the existing program.

The program will establish a resource file for educational materials including, but not limited to, information on substance use and abuse, self-esteem, Student Assistance Programs, various community service organizations, study skills, and others. This resource file will provide information for the formation of educational/awareness groups within the program, and for the referral of at-risk youths to other appropriate service agencies as needed or desired.

One of the most important ways in which this program will be promoted is by youth presentations. Those involved in the project as Peer Counselors will be encouraged to present their stories on videotape or in person. This will have a multiple impact: the youths will receive needed

**Comments:**

The budget appears reasonable given the fact that new services would be added to the existing facilities and programs.

The project has the potential to produce increased public/private interagency collaboration.

Concern for continuation funding is demonstrated.

The involvement of the business sector only after the project begins could reduce their commitment to the project. The applicant should have involved the business sector in the initial stages of program development to assure their strong support.

A Policy and Procedures Manual and other project products will be useful in promoting replication of the project.
recognition and reinforcement for their positive behavior choices; they will have further opportunity to develop self-esteem in a highly visible and enviable role; youths will be able to reinforce their decision-making skills in deciding whether or not to participate in presentations on an individual basis; and presentations will benefit the program in offering promotional demonstrations and testimonials.

C. APPROACH

I. Description: Advisory Centers, Inc. will provide a Student Assistance Program developmental model at each of the two youth Commonwealth Centers. Effective Student Assistance Programs are multi-faceted and include six basic components:

a. Prevention services, education and other activities designed to help develop and sustain healthy lifestyles among youth that do no manifest current problems.

b. Identification of youth who are manifesting problems

c. Assessment of the nature and severity of the problem.

d. Intervention, including motivation of the youth and his or her family to seek help.

e. Treatment referrals to appropriate community agencies.

f. Support services for youth engaged in making any needed lifestyle adjustments.

Additionally, this model builds service user “ownership” of the program through community involvement in the development of policies and procedures and through neighborhood attachment, rather than to impose a “we’re going to fix it for you” program on the neighborhoods.

The Student Assistance Program developmental model is a proven and valuable tool which has been applied to academic environments to foster positive role modeling, encourage mental health prevention strategies, and to prevent or decrease negative behavior, such as substance use and abuse. Advisory Centers is adapting this model to a unique

Comments:

There is no discussion of how the project results will impact current state-of-the-art.

This section of the application should describe the methodology of implementing the project to meet the goal/objectives specified previously. The task and subtask for achieving each objective/sub-objective should be specified to demonstrate how the applicant would achieve the objectives. Some of the information covered here more appropriately addresses concerns to be covered in other sections of the application.

There is no detailed plan of action specifying by task how actions are to be carried out to meet goal/objective.

The individuals responsible for implementing and the time lines for completion are provided.
situation – a neighborhood recreational facility that is sponsored and provided by the Grand Rapids Police Department. The success of this new application of a proven tool will have an impact on several social problems in at-risk communities: broader empowerment of neighborhoods and neighbors (in their individual decision-making and in their new-found ability to get involved in taking positive steps toward changes in youths’ behaviors); community attachment, available when neighbors work together toward one specific goal; political and social problems being addressed in an innovative manner (and the resulting impact on other communities and people who realize that there is something that can be done); the demonstration of a first-time, successful coalition between police, Youth Commonwealth, Advisory Centers, the juvenile court systems, respective boards of director, school, and corporations in the battle against gang-related violence and substance use and abuse among youth people.

II. Financial Feasibility: It is cheaper to fund prevention than to fund aftercare. Consider the amount requested by this grant against the amount of money now spent in Grand Rapids schools. The Grand Rapids Public Schools now employ 31 full-time police officers to patrol schools for drugs and weapons at a cost of $930,000 per year; there is an assistant principal in each middle and high school whose sole responsibility is to deal with behavior problems and violations. Assistance principals cost an additional $585,000 per year. Alternative Education programs which serve 400 at-risk youths and an additional 75 court-referred juvenile offenders per year cost $3 million annually. Another educational program for pregnant and parenting teens costs $750,000 per year and serves 200 girls and their children. Many of the youth receiving alternative education are from the Seidman and Westside neighborhoods. Both areas are part of the Grand Rapids school district, thus any improvement and prevention of substance use or abuse and violent behaviors will save educational funds currently slated for punitive action and special services.

Additional savings will be felt in the area of the Juvenile Court. Currently, Ken County Juvenile Court is placing 200 children per year out of their homes. 80% of these children come from substance abusing families. An average out-of-home stay for one child is 15 month at $100 per day. For just one child, costs can range from $30,000 to $54,000. At the present time, there are 450 wards of the court, 70% of who come from families with substance abuse problems. Foster care costs $20 per day; group home care, $45 per day; state training school, $150 per day, detention,
$95 per day; and, probation, $15 per day. Average stays in any one of these programs range from 22 days in detention to 15 months in foster care. Clearly, early intervention and prevention programs such as the one proposed here, are not critically needed, but financially responsible.

III. Community Involvement: The proposed program will begin by using identified positive role models, individuals whose names will be provided by the Hispanic Center, Baxter Community Center, and Inter-tribal Council staff members. These identified youth and parents will be contacted by the Advisory Centers staff and will be asked to become involved in the community project. These individuals will be encouraged to participate with staff in establishing policies and procedures and in recruiting other concerned individuals from their neighborhoods. Awareness groups for youth will be lead by staff at both sites, and will address priority issues: substance use and abuse, increasing self-esteem, learning problem solving techniques, learning how to say “no”, and negotiation skills. As other needs are identified by youths attending these key groups, other groups will form around specific needs. These groups might address such issues as children without fathers, children of substance-abusing parents, teen pregnancy, study help, and employability skills. Group topics and focuses will be self-generating and group participation will be voluntary.

In implementing the project model, Advisory Centers will hire 16 youth to work a total of 60 hours per week (inclusive of both sites with distribution based on need) for 50 weeks. These 12 youth will be paid stipends of $4.50 per hour. Payment is intended to have the following benefits:

a. Youth can accept a part-time position without work affecting school attendance.

b. Payment enhances self-esteem and self-valuing.

c. Payment provides a positive alternative for earning spending money.

d. Payment shows youth that their services are valued by others.

Further, these youths will be encouraged to view their employment as an avenue to employability in the private sector with opportunities to demonstrate reliability, punctuality, skill development, high-profile visibility in the community, and self-worth. These youth will be identified

Comments:

Strong community participation is planned

Linkage with various minority organizations is already in place.

The project has the potential to build youth leadership

The project does not incorporate competency/skill development, basic life skills or environmental factors as options in its prevention approach.

Hiring both youths and parents is a positive step towards community acceptance and involvement.

There is no discussion on how the youths will be recruited, criteria to be used in selection or youths prior/future involvement with drugs.
by project staff and peers as Peer Counselors. This recognition is believed to be as valuable a tool against gang formation as is payment. Benefits for the individual include: attendance at conferences and the opportunity to promote the program; extra individualized attention from Center and project staff, and neighborhood leaders; awards and awards ceremonies that will recognize individual contributions to the project; and newspaper and other media recognition for personal and project achievements. The 12 youths will experience enhanced self-esteem and positions of status in their neighborhoods. Advisory Centers believe that acclamation needs in at-risk youths are an important priority and the positive fulfillment of these needs is crucial to all successful battle against gang formation and substance use and abuse.

Additionally, the project will employ a total of 8 parent aides (distribution between sites to be determined by need) working 5 hours each for a total of 40 hours per week paid service between the Centers. Parent aides will receive stipends of $6.00 per hour for 50 weeks service and will receive the same sociological rewards, i.e., status and recognition on the community, as will the young people. Parent aides will help to establish policies and procedures provide on-site supervision and intervention; help to recruit other community parent volunteers; and establish parent networks and Parent Network Agreements. These networks will be comprised of community parents who agree to help establish behavioral criteria for their children and who, in networking with other committed parents, can be assured of similar criteria being established in other neighborhood homes. Parent Network Agreements are signed agreements, call “contracts” presently used in Advisory Centers Outpatient Clinic that have historically worked well and will be incorporated as part of the project model. Signed agreements commit parents to, “encourage wholesome activities for our children by chaperoning and by not allowing alcohol or any other drugs to be consumed by minors who are socializing our homes; agree to communicate with the appropriate adults to ensure that events outside our homes will be properly chaperoned and will not include the use of alcohol or other drugs by minors; and support and use curfews for our children as a “general guideline”, based on age of the child, week night/weekend night and special considerations.”

Comments:

The project offers good incentives and opportunities for recognition.

There is no discussion of how the parent aides will be recruited or the selection criteria. Will steps be taken to assure that an appropriate number of the parent aides are male?

The establishment of parent networks and use of Parent Network Agreements are strong components of the model.

Whether the parent aides will have to sign the contract is not addressed. This would be desirable, if parent aides are to be role models.
IV. **Key Project Individuals and Timeframes:** The Student Assistance Program project model will be implemented in November, 1989 with the hiring of one full-time program supervisor. At that time, Jane Marsh, Executive Director of Youth Commonwealth, will work with the Youth Commonwealth Board of Directors, Advisory Center, Inc. President, Carol Thomas-Smedes, the Grand Rapids Police Department, neighborhood associations, crime-prevention workers, Youth Commonwealth site staff and project staff to help develop the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee will be comprised of the following 8 members: 2 members from each agency’s Board of Directors; Youth Commonwealth Executive Director, Jane Marsh; Advisory Centers, Inc. President, Carol Thomas-Smedes; and 2 community leaders with special experience or expertise in working with at-risk youth.

Grand Rapids Inter-Tribal Council Executive Director, J. Wagner Wheeler; Hispanic Center Executive Director, Maria Marino-Idsinga; and Baxter Community Center Executive Director, Gene Proctor, will all be involved in helping to identify 8 positive adults in their respective neighborhoods to serve as parent aides, 12 youth to be trained as Peer Counselors, and 25 parent volunteers per site.

Daryl Lancaster, police officer and Seidman Center supervisor, will work with Jane Marsh, Carol Thomas-Smedes and the project supervisor towards the development and management of the Seidman project, while Emerson Van Buren, police officer and supervisor of the Westside Center, will do the same for his neighborhood. Both officers will help to target positive role-model youths in their centers for introduction to the project model. Additionally, these police officers will become members of their respective Core Teams. Each of two Core Teams will be comprised of the following 4 members: Center Police Officer supervisor; Center Outreach/Facilitator; Youth Commonwealth Executive Director, Jane Marsh; and the Program Supervisor.

Carol Thomas-Smedes, President of the Advisory centers, will work with Advisory Center Board of Trustees, the Advisory Committee, youth Commonwealth Executive Director and Core Teams, neighborhood associations, and crime prevention workers to help develop and manage the project. She will hire and supervise the project supervisor and fund developer, will help establish the advisory committee to the project, and will be responsible for coordinating the evaluation process with Dr. Irving Berkowitz and Dr. Ronald Poitras of Grand Valley State University School of Social Work.

**Comments:**

The project has already generated considerable cooperation and collaboration with a wide variety of public and private agencies whose cooperation is critical both to its effective operation during the demonstration period and to its continuation after Federal funding ends.

The roles of the 2 outreach/facilitators, 8 parent aides and 25 parent volunteers are never fully discussed.

The project involvement with the school system is not detailed.
Thomas-Smedes will be responsible for fiscal management of grant monies, and all reporting requirements for the grant.

By January 30, 1990, project staff will identify 8 parent aides and 12 peer counselors to be employed by the project. One of the first obligations of these employees will be to help develop a youth survey which will be administered to neighborhood youth. By March 1, 1990, the Project Supervisory will have recruited and hired one outreach/facilitator to begin work at one of the Centers. A second outreach/facilitator will be recruited for hiring on July 1, 1990. By April 1, 1990, parent and youth volunteers and staff will begin to establish policy and procedures and to identify services to be provided at each site. Groups will begin focusing on topics such as substance use/abuse, self-awareness, problem solving, improved self-concept, and negotiation skills. By May 1, 1990, the Policies and Procedures Manual for the project will be completed by parents, youth and project staff. On or before April 1, 1990, Thomas-Smedes will hire a part-time fund developer who will begin to establish alternative financing for the project and its activities (see chart).

V. Impediments and Aids to Program Development: Some problems which might affect implementation are as follows: time needed to identify peer leaders; locating and recruiting qualified outreach/facilitators with appropriate minority backgrounds; and time needed to promote involvement on the part of area businesses and corporations.

However, the two Youth Commonwealth Centers provide an atmosphere in which the Student Assistance Program model application may be accelerated in several ways: The Grand Rapids Police Department has had continuing on-site involvement with neighborhoods and can comprise early identification of gang members and activities; youth are familiar with and using the centers; in May of 1989 several incidents have indicated that summer gang activity and substance use and abuse problems will increase. Surrounding communities are eager for direction and help in curbing problems before they become insurmountable. Other factors that will help to accelerate this program are existing directorships and management teams at both youth Commonwealth and The Advisory Centers, and existing staff members at each targeted location; both agencies involved (Youth Commonwealth and Advisory Centers) are well-known and well-respected in the community. Advisory Centers have had 20 years experience working with at-risk youths, and Commonwealth has 52 years invested in police-supervised community recreation programs.

Comments:

The work-plan is not presented in a format which is easy to read and understand.

Key potential impediments to project development are identified and means to address them specified.

Potential organizational conflict and its potential limitation to project development are not addressed.

Good discussion of factors which should aid in project development.
VI. **Special Features:** The proposed program offers many innovative features, including but not limited to: 25 parent volunteers in each neighborhood location; a linkage between neighborhood associations and crime-prevention workers in both communities; both Centers are high visible and are recognized and valued by their respective communities; Youth Commonwealth is acknowledging that they cannot provide all needed services to combat social problems and is asking for Advisory Center’s help. The call for additional services makes it clear to community youth and their parents that the situation is serious and that steps will be taken to curb gang involvement and substance abuse.

VII. **Evaluation Tools:** It must be noted at the outset, of course, that the newness of the program, the size of the client population, and the 4-month time frame of this evaluation (3/1/91 to 7/1/91) preclude many kinds of evaluative strategies which require large sample sizes or longitudinal assessment. Nevertheless, certain strategies are appropriate for the task and sample at hand.

Evaluation of any program logically begins with a consideration of the program’s stated goals. In the case of the Youth Gang Drug Prevention program, these expected outcomes have been stated as General Goals and Specific Objectives.

Goal #1 concerns the prevention and reduction of drug use and abuse among actual or prospective gang members. Specific outcomes will be measured qualitatively and quantitatively using semi-structured interviews, direct observation and recording as well as yet to be identified standardized instrument which ascertain:

a. drug knowledge before and after participation in a structured group process which provides information and fosters understanding of the deleterious impacts of various substances on the human body and behavior;

b. the nature, frequency and volume of drug use and the underlying reasons for this; c. ability to resist peer pressure to use drugs or engage in other kinds of illicit and anti-social behavior.

Comments:

Discussion of innovative features strengthens project designs.

The four month timeframe for the evaluation does not seem adequate. An evaluation effort should begin with the funding of the project of allow for pre- and post-test date collection.

It would be helpful to have more information on the instruments to be used to measure the prevention/reduction of drug use. Can tested instruments from previous projects be used?
Measuring the reduction of drug use among youth participating in the Centers activities is somewhat more definitive and unequivocal than assessing the effectiveness of the program in preventing drug use and abuse among those with no prior history. Nevertheless, this is the only reasonable measure of this expected outcome.

Goal #2 is aimed at increasing the self-esteem of youth involved in Center activities. Outcome indicators related to this goal will be assessed by the use of a standardized measurement of self-esteem. Alternative scales will be considered for this purpose such as the Piers-Harris Self Concept Scale (Piers, 1969); the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967); the Perceived Competence Scale (Harter, 1982); or the Primary Self-Concept Scale (Stage & Young, 1982). Other outcome indicators will be assessed by means of semi-structured interviews and director observation and recording.

Goal #3 seeks to promote neighborhood/community/youth involvement in the activities of the Centers. Measurement of the involvement of parents, youth, and other volunteers from the neighborhood is simple to demonstrate and empirically verify.

Goal #4 related to the prevention of involvement in gangs is perhaps the most complicated to measure. A multi-faceted strategy will be essential. Baseline data will be necessary to determine the nature, extent, and reasons for gang involvement among Center youth, among other psycho-social variables. An assessment of the predisposition or propensity for gang involvement by as yet “uninvolved” but at-risk youth will also be necessary. A follow-up of random sample of youth with prior involvement in gang and those who were not yet gang members at the time Center activities were/were initiated will be undertaken.

Program effectiveness will be determined by a qualitative assessment of the attitudes, behaviors, knowledge and skills of youth gang members or prospective gang members participating in Center activities. Diminished involvement in gang-related activities will be assessed by both self-reports and observation and recoding. Diversion from, or prevention of, gang membership will be similarly measured.

Semi-structured interview will also be conducted with staff members, police, juvenile Court personnel, parents, social agency representatives, and others. This aspect of the evaluation will have a formative dimension to it. A series of open-ended questions will be posed to the individuals.

Comments:

Good discussion of alternative measurement tools.

More detailed information should be provided on the information to be collected and analyzed to measure achievement of this objective.

The evaluation design does not adequately address the establishment or collection of baseline data. Baseline data collection is not possible if the evaluation is not to begin until late in the project.
interviewed, allowing them an opportunity to reflect upon and discuss aspects of the program and aspects of the success the program had in fostering cognitive and behavioral change among youth participating in Center activities. In particular, attention will be focused upon respondents' assessments of various features of the Centers’ environment and approach(es) to achieving the aforementioned goals and objectives. Respondents will individually and collectively identify those characteristics of the Center (i.e., staff, programs, activities, etc.) and other environmental features which contribute to or impede the accomplishment of expected results. Perceived strengths and limitations will be ascertained along with specific recommendations for modification and/or improvement. Any other information they feel is important will also be solicited.

All data will be collected anonymously. Identification of evaluation subjects will be for purposes of statistical analysis only and no individual will ever be associated with any of his or her responses to any interview or instrument in any written or oral report of this study's findings.

Permission for the participation of all individuals in the evaluation will be secured in writing from the individual or his or her guardian. Copies of the permission form will be retained by the principal investigators.

Responses to the semi-structured interviews will be analyzed for content and the results summarized and presented as tables and discussions of findings. This formative aspect of the evaluation process will yield very valuable information for programmatic consideration and improvement.

D. STAFF BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

The program supervisor and part-time fund developer will be screened, hired, and supervised by the president of Advisory Centers, Inc.: Ms. Carol G. Thomas-Smedes, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Thomas-Smedes had been affiliated with Advisory Centers since 1985, as Executive Director of the Bridge for runaways for 2 years, and Director of Youth Services until assuming Presidency of the Advisory Centers in December, 198. Her career spans 20 years of working with high-risk populations. Prior to her affiliation with Advisory Centers, Thomas-Smedes worked as an administrator for Kent County Community Mental Heal, and for 2 large non-profit agencies in Rhode Island and in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Comments:

Two key staff members will have to be hired. This often takes 4-5 months to do and can result in delays in the project.
which focused specifically on substance use and abuse prevention and treatment.

With cooperation from youth Commonwealth and other community sources, Thomas-Smedes will conduct the search and/or recruitment of the proposed Program Supervisor. Qualifications for this position include a B.A degree and at least 5 years experience in program development, program management and administration, and specific training and experience related to at-risk youths and substance use and abuse. In addition candidates for program supervisor must have demonstrable knowledge or program development and evaluation, techniques for organizing and motivating groups, personnel management techniques, methods of administrative problem solving, principles of organization and administrative and fiscal program management, community and agency consultation methods and procedures, school systems and the functioning of the educational environment, principles and techniques of group process, learning process and skill development, basic principles and practices of chemical dependency. The Program Supervisor shall demonstrate ability to plan, organize, control and evaluate a public service program; plan and assign workloads clearly and effectively; train, develop, and motivate staff; deal effective with a variety of government and private agencies and community organizations, prepare clear and concise reports; speak and write effectively; develop and recommend effective courses of action; develop and effectively utilize all available resources; maintain program’s objectives; effectively consult with and advise top administrators on the activities of the program; and have knowledge of early intervention techniques and practices, and demonstrated success in intervention techniques.

This Program Supervisor will be an active member of the Joint Advisory Committee and each Core Team, and will oversee both centers’ project operations. With assistance from Carol Thomas-Smedes, the Program Supervisor shall recruit and hire two outreach/facilitators, one for each Center, with the first being hired on March 1, 1990, and the second on July 1, 1990. These outreach/facilitators shall have 2 to 3 years related experience in human services with emphasis on the substance abuse field, and serving youth at-risk. A combination of training and experience will be equivalent to a B.A. degree in social sciences, behavioral sciences, education, or a related field. Each outreach/facilitator shall demonstrate understanding and knowledge of gang behavior as it relates to issue of self-esteem, financial reward, and substance use and abuse. Every effort will be made to recruit outreach/facilitators.

Comments:

The job description and qualifications are sufficiently outlined for the Program Supervisor still to be hired. However, it would have strengthened the application if the background and qualifications of the person in this key staff position were known.

The division of responsibility between the program supervisor and Carol Thomas-Smedes is not specified. This could lead to problems in project implementation.

There is a good clear description of who is involved and how they will collaborate.

The coalition seems strong and stable.

The job requirements for the outreach/facilitators and fund developer to be hired are relevant to the functions that they would perform. However, college degrees might not be required for the outreach/facilitators.
who are the same ethnic and cultural backgrounds as those using the Center the will be hired to oversee.

Additionally, Carol Thomas-Smedes shall hire a part-time fund developer to develop alternative funding resources for the agency and this project. Requirements for this position are as follows: possesses knowledge and ability to access funds available in the community through foundations, grants, businesses, and other legitimate resources to ensure the continued operation of this program as well as funding to provide ancillary services not available in the current budget.

Further, current employees of Advisory Centers, Inc. shall assist as needed in setting up programs. Ronald May, Program Coordinator for Alternative Behavior Choices (ABC), will be consulted regarding training of personnel regarding gang and substance abuse prevention. May has attended Student Assistance Program workshops presented by national expert, Louis Gonzales, and brings 14 years experience working with at-risk populations. Other 32 Advisory Centers staff members who provide comprehensive services to at-risk youth, will be available as consultants on substance abuse, mental health treatment and prevention, and gang-related behaviors as needed.

Comments:

The project need not channel funds for a part-time fund developer; rather, this function could be handled by the sponsor agency.