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**Competitive Application Process for Subcontracts**

**Overview**

The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR) subcontracts with local centers throughout Pennsylvania to provide services to victims/survivors of sexual harassment, abuse, and assault, and to those collaterally affected by a victimization. Subcontracts to provide these services are awarded through a competitive application process that occurs every five years. Subcontracts awarded to centers during the open competitive application process are reviewed annually.

PCAR supports the competitive application process as a way to ensure that the most qualified applicant/center in a county is funded to provide services. This process has been in place since the Department of Human Services (DHS) began subcontracting with PCAR to manage the grants that support services to victims/survivors of sexual harassment, abuse, and assault, and to those collaterally affected by a victimization.

Applications submitted during the open competitive application period focus on direct services and are funded through Title XX (federal funding) and Act 44 (state funding). Applicants/Centers that are awarded subcontracts to provide direct services automatically receive funding from the Pennsylvania Health and Health Services Block Grant (PHHSBG) and the Sexual Assault Service Program grant (SASP), and have the opportunity to apply for Rape Prevention and Education funding.

**Competitive Application Process**

While the yearly renewal Request For Proposals (RFPs) are reviewed by the Director of Grants and Contracts and the Chief Financial Officer, PCAR uses an Independent Review Committee (IRC) during the competitive application process.

PCAR’s IRC is composed of five (5) individuals who represent diverse interests, cultures, and backgrounds. Former employees are eligible to serve on the IRC only if that person has not been employed by PCAR or a local center funded by PCAR for two (2) or more years. Current members of the PCAR Board of Directors are not eligible to serve. Current Board members of a local center seeking funds from PCAR are also not eligible to serve.

The IRC reviews all applications and has the authority to rule on their acceptability, make recommendations on application content, and request revisions to a proposal. Applicants whose proposals have been accepted will receive notification in writing. Applicants whose proposals have been conditionally accepted will receive notification in writing of the changes that must be made for full acceptance. Applicants whose proposals are not accepted also receive written notification of the IRC’s decision.

Applicants may appeal the IRC’s decision to the PCAR Board of Directors if the applicant believes the review process was not followed appropriately.

**Funding an Applicant/Center**

All decisions related to funding an applicant/center to provide services to victims/survivors of sexual harassment, abuse, and assault, and those collaterally affected by a victimization are based on the applicant/center’s ability to provide services in the county or counties in which the center operates. Unless otherwise indicated in the funding announcement, PCAR is not required to provide funding to an applicant/center that submits an application for funding, or to fund only centers currently receiving support.

The recommendation to fund an applicant/center to provide services is based on the merits of the applicant/center’s application for funding as evaluated by the IRC, using the review criteria and scoring system promulgated by PCAR.

The IRC is comprised of community members who are knowledgeable about the services provided to victims/survivors of sexual harassment, abuse, and assault, and those collaterally affected by a victimization, are free from bias or prejudice, and have no vested interest in the outcome of the IRC’s decision.

**Appeal Process**

If an applicant/center requests reconsideration of the IRC’s decision, it must complete an Appeal Form and submit the form, in hard copy, to the PCAR Director of Grants and Contracts within 14 calendar days from the date of the IRC’s official notification of its decision. The Appeal Form can be acquired from the PCAR Director of Grants and Contracts.

An applicant/center that files an appeal may make written arguments regarding the manner in which the information in their application for funding was reviewed, but it may not present additional evidence or information in the Appeal Form that was not contained in the original application for funding.

The PCAR Director of Grants and Contracts, or the PCAR Chief Operating Officer, will submit the appeal to the PCAR Board of Directors.

The PCAR Board of Directors will convene an Appeal Panel by selecting three members of the board who are free from bias or prejudice and have no vested interest in the outcome of the decision.

PCAR’s Director of Grants and Contracts will notify the appellant applicant/center, and any other applicant/center that also applied for funding in the county or counties in which the appellant applicant/center operates, that the appeal will be considered by an Appeal Panel.

Any other interested applicant/center that also applied for funding in the county or counties in which the appellant applicant/center operates, and which may be affected by the result of the appeal, may submit a rebuttal document within 14 days of being notified by the Director of Grants and Contracts of an appeal, explaining why they believe the decision of the IRC should stand.

Within 14 days of receiving requests and rebuttal requests, the Appeal Panel will consider the appeal to determine whether the IRC made a clear error that resulted in an incorrect review of the application for funding. In conducting this review, the Appeal Panel will review the Appeal Form, the appellant applicant/center’s application for funding, the PCAR Review Response Form, and all documents and records from the IRC’s decision-making process. If necessary, the Appeal Panel shall also review the Response to Appeal of Other Interested Applicant/Center Form and the same pertinent documents from any other interested applicant/center that also applied for funding in the county or counties in which the appellant applicant/center operates.

The Appeal Panel will notify the Director of Grants and Contracts with the results of their review of the appeal.

Within seven (7) days of the Appeal Panel decision, the Director of Grants and Contracts will notify the appellant applicant/center and any other interested applicant/center which also applied for funding in the county or counties in which the appellant applicant/center operates.

The decision of the Appeal Panel will be final.