

Strengthening the Safety Net

Improving Health Care
Access Through Michigan's
Free Clinics



Strengthening the Safety Net Grants 2012 frequently asked questions and answers

Eligibility, priorities and awards

- 1. What's new this year?** Other than the earlier start date, there are no significant changes between this year's and last year's competitive or noncompetitive eligibility requirements, funding priorities or application processes.
- 2. Are we eligible to apply for competitive grant funding two years in a row?** Yes, you may apply for competitive grant funding two years in a row. However, you will need to apply for a new program or activity and include a sustainability plan. Each application is scored independently each year. No preference is given to previous grantees.
- 3. Do we need a fiduciary relationship with another organization to be eligible?** Blue Cross issues Strengthening the Safety Net grant awards only to nonprofit organizations designated by the IRS under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. If your clinic doesn't have its own 501(c)(3) designation, an organization that has this designation must serve as your fiduciary. Without that fiduciary relationship, you aren't eligible for this grant program.
- 4. If we don't currently have volunteers working at our clinic, are we eligible for the grant?** No, you aren't eligible unless volunteers are currently working at your clinic. For more information about the program's eligibility

criteria and who qualifies as a volunteer, please refer to pages 4 and 5 in the request for proposals.

5. **In addition to creating and sustaining partnerships, what other activities will Blue Cross consider for a competitive grant?** Refer to pages 6 and 7 in the RFP for an explanation of this grant option and examples of projects that may compete favorably. We encourage you to use this guidance to be creative and develop new ideas.
6. **The request for proposals states that the noncompetitive grant award will be at least \$15,000. Does this mean we can apply for more than \$15,000?** No. Blue Cross expects to award approximately \$1 million through the Strengthening the Safety Net initiative. Blue Cross will decide on the exact amount of the noncompetitive awards by dividing a portion of the pool of funds available by the number of qualified applicants. We expect that the noncompetitive awards will be at least \$15,000. Once the noncompetitive grants are awarded, Blue Cross will determine the number of competitive grants that will be funded. Blue Cross expects to provide a very limited number of highly competitive grants up to \$50,000 each.

Application forms and processes

7. **Where can we find the *Notice of Intent to Apply*, grant application and other grant forms?** You can find a link to the *Notice of Intent to Apply*, grant application and all other grant forms on the grant program website, bcbsm.com/safetynet.
8. **Do we need to complete separate NOI forms for the competitive and noncompetitive portions of the grant? Will we receive separate confirmations?** No. The single form covers both competitive and noncompetitive grants. Clinics will receive only one confirmation email after submitting the notice of intent.

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- 9. When can we submit our application?** You may submit your grant application to Blue Cross any time after you submit your notice of intent form and before the application deadline. The deadline to submit applications this year is July 9, 2012.
- 10. When will we receive the budget form for the noncompetitive grant?** Once all applications are submitted, BCBSM will determine this year's noncompetitive award amount. We'll send eligible clinics the noncompetitive budget form and any request for additional information on or near August 27, 2012.
- 11. Why won't the system accept my response when I try to enter the clinic's revenue in the noncompetitive grant application?** You may be using symbols such as dollar signs, commas or spaces. Use only numbers, and your answer should be accepted.
- 12. Why would Blue Cross contact our medical director?** We generally communicate about grant-related matters with the primary contact person named by the clinic. In some cases, we reach out to the medical directors and executive directors with invitations to educational events or to obtain information we've been unable to get through other contacts.
- 13. For competitive grant applications, what needs to be included in the partnership board resolution or the letters of commitment?** Blue Cross is interested in projects that include well-defined partnerships. The board resolutions or letters of commitment should include an agreement to work together on the proposed project, a specific statement about the amount of funding that the sub recipient will receive and the specific grant activities in which the sub recipient will lead or participate.
- 14. For the competitive and noncompetitive grant applications, what forms must be emailed to Blue Cross?** Applying for funding is a two-step process. First, the Strengthening the Safety Net application must be submitted online. Then, the additional materials listed on Page 9 of the RFP must be

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assembled and sent electronically. The emailed documents should be sent to safetynet@bcbsm.com.

15. What if my clinic doesn't have an annual report? If your clinic doesn't have an annual report, please contact us at safetynet@bcbsm.com.

Definitions

16. How is third-party payer defined? For grant program purposes, a third-party payer is an organization or entity, other than the patient or the provider, involved in the financing of health care for that patient. Medicare, Medicaid, MIChild, county health plans, commercial insurers such as Blue Cross and health maintenance organizations are all examples of third-party payers.

17. How is primary care defined? We use a definition similar to the American Academy of Family Physicians. Primary care is care provided by physicians specifically trained for and skilled in comprehensive initial and ongoing treatment for patients. Primary care includes health promotion, disease prevention, health maintenance, counseling, patient education, and diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic illnesses in a variety of health care settings (office, inpatient, critical care, long-term care, home care, day care and others). Primary care is performed and managed by a personal physician, often collaborating with other health professionals, and offering consultation or referral as appropriate. Primary care provides patient advocacy in the health care system to accomplish cost-effective care through coordination of health care services. Primary care promotes effective communication with patients and encourages the role of patients as partners in their own health care.

18. The noncompetitive grant application asks whether we provide specialty care services. How do you define specialty care? Specialty care is care rendered by medical specialists — physicians who have successfully completed both medical school and residency in a particular specialty.

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Common specialties include cardiology, pathology and endocrinology, for example. Specialty care includes the care provided by specialists at your clinic or elsewhere in your community.

19. We operate weight-loss, diabetes and hypertension clinics run by primary care physicians, who offer quarterly group visits. Would these be considered specialty care? No. These services would be considered primary care when provided by a primary care physician.

20. In Section 1 of the budget form, you ask about referrals to external providers. Should referrals for mental health counseling or chiropractic services be included? Yes. Include any referral of a patient to an external licensed provider for medical care services, care management, disease management, mental health counseling or chiropractic services.

After the grants are announced, recognizing Blue Cross

21. We currently have the BCBSM logo on our website as a sponsor. Is this permissible? We support your efforts to promote your mission and services while acknowledging contributions from the Blues. However, any use of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan brand name or logo must be pre-approved by Blue Cross. If you currently use or plan to use the Blue Cross name or logo in any internal or external publication, website or social media, please contact us at safetynet@bcbsm.com so we can make certain that the use of our brand or logo is consistent with corporate standards.