

Program Information Notice

Document Number: ONC-REC-PIN-007

Date: March 21, 2013

Document Title: Regional Extension Center Sustainability

TO: Health Information Technology Extension Program: Regional Centers Cooperative Agreement Program Grantees

As stated in the Health Information Technology Extension Program: Regional Centers Cooperative Agreement Program Funding Opportunity Announcement and Grant Application Instructions (FOA), the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) may provide ongoing program guidance to successful award recipients. The purpose of this Program Information Notice (PIN) is to clarify the process for Regional Extension Centers (RECs) to request scope of work changes related to sustainability activities.

If you have any questions or require further guidance, please contact the Regional Extension Center Division of the Office of Provider Adoption Support at regional-center-applications@hhs.gov.

Sincerely,

/ Farzad Mostashari /

Dr. Farzad Mostashari
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology

Attachment: ONC-REC-PIN-007

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Program Information Notice (PIN) is to clarify the Health Information Technology Extension Program: Regional Centers Cooperative Agreement Program Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) and more specifically, clarify the process by which regional extension centers (RECs) request scope of work changes specifically related to sustainability activities.

II. APPLICABILITY

This applies to all RECs that have entered into a cooperative agreement with ONC under the Health Information Technology Extension Program.

III. BACKGROUND

The Health Information Technology Extension Program: Regional Centers Cooperative Agreement Program Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) and Grant Application Instruction, Section II. Award Information, Item 4: Years Three-Four Funding (FY 2012-2013 Continuation), in relevant part, states: "From the outset of the four-year project period, the cooperative agreement must include, and the recipient must implement, a plan to build a direct technical assistance infrastructure that will become self-sustaining by the end of the cooperative agreement's second year."

Further, Section II. Award Information, Item 1: Funding Description, in relevant part, states: "Cooperative agreements will include terms and conditions reserving the ability of ONC to negotiate during the course of the awarded project period further modifications to any regional center service area(s) in the best interest of the program."

IV. PROCESS

ONC recognizes that in order to support the sustainability of REC services, many RECs need to expand upon or update their originally submitted sustainability plans. Thus, ONC is clarifying the process by which such a change is to be requested by the awardee. This type of change is considered a scope of work change by the REC program office and requires prior approval. These types of scope of work changes include: (1) new activities, within the limits of eligible activities under the REC program (2) new service area boundaries.

RECs seeking approval for a scope of work change as allowed per 45 CFR 74.25(c)(1) and the HHS Grants Policy Statement (Change in Scope) II-53 should submit the following:

- Current and projected (to target completion) REC milestone performance
- Description of the activity, including anticipated contribution to the REC program, and specifically impact to underserved areas, providers and/or populations
- High-level budget for the activity (further budget information may be required as part of prior approval request – see detail below), including tasks and breakdown of core and direct funds, as applicable
- Number of patients, providers and practices that will be reached
- Service area
- Synergy with other state, federal, public or private programs
- Mutual understanding of activity by affected RECs

Project officers and REC program leadership in coordination with the ONC Office of Grants Management will consider these and other germane factors in reviewing and responding to sustainability activity requests.

Examples of when prior approval will be required by the Office of Grants Management include when the RECs fall within the following circumstances for particular requests:

- Significant Re-budgeting: a threshold that serves as a quantitative indicator of a possible change in scope. Based on HHS grants policy, significant rebudgeting occurs when, under a grant or cooperative agreement where the Federal share exceeds \$100,000, **cumulative transfers among direct cost budget categories for the current budget period exceed 25 percent of the total approved budget (inclusive of Federal funds and required matching or cost sharing) for that budget period or \$250,000, whichever is less.**
- Transfer of the performance of substantive programmatic work to a third party.

Please reference your award and [ONC-GMA-2011-007 Prior Approval](#) for guidance on prior approval requirements.