



**Department of  
Mental Health &  
Addiction Services**

**Office of Community and Family Resiliency Request for Applications**

Ohio Problem Gambling Excellence and Innovation Program Initiative

RFA #: 89 Number MHA-FY26-OCFR-Problem Gambling

Funding Period: 09/29/2025 – 06/30/2026

Request for Applications Posting Date: 08/22/2025

Request for Applications Due Date: 09/12/2025, by 3 p.m. EDT

Mike DeWine, Governor  
Jim Tressel, Lt. Governor  
LeeAnne Cornyn, Director

# Grants Posting Evaluation Criteria for Request for Applications (RFA)

Office of Community and Family Resiliency, Ohio Problem Gambling Excellence and Innovation Program Initiative

RFA# 89

**Applications should be completed using the following information, guidance, and requirements:**

## **SECTION I. GENERAL PURPOSE & APPLICANT INFORMATION**

### **1.1 Purpose**

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) releases this Request for Applications (RFA) for the purpose of soliciting applications from qualified and experienced behavioral health organizations, health systems, prevention providers, institutions of higher education and community coalitions that currently offer programming related to problem gambling services. This RFA seeks to select multiple grantees who will perform one or more of the objectives and activities more fully set forth in Section 1.4 of this RFA in order to implement a full continuum of services - from prevention and public awareness to clinical treatment and long-term recovery supports. These agencies are expected to have experience in providing problem gambling services in their respective domains and demonstrate innovations that will help move the service system forward.

For the purposes of this RFA, the term “applicant” is a qualified organization interested in this opportunity. The terms “application” and “response” may be used interchangeably to indicate materials submitted to OhioMHAS by an applicant to be considered for award of a grant for services described in this RFA. The terms “grantee” and “selected applicant” may be used interchangeably in reference to an organization selected by OhioMHAS through this RFA for award.

### **1.2 Overview of the Project**

Problem gambling continues to impact individuals, families, and communities across Ohio, requiring a coordinated, evidence-based and/or evidence informed response. The Problem Gambling Excellence and Innovation Program Initiative will serve as a model for delivering comprehensive, evidence based and/or evidence-informed services across the continuum of care. The selected certified agencies will provide prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery support services related to problem gambling, as outlined in their respective applications. Multiple agencies may be selected, with awards reflecting the scope and focus proposed by each agency. The agency will also serve as a learning site and resource for peer organizations and communities across Ohio. Selected agencies will convene on a quarterly basis to collaboratively share their outcomes, success and challenges fostering mutual learning and continuous improvement throughout the pilot project.

### **Issuing Office**

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) Office of Community and Family Resiliency releases this Ohio Problem Gambling Excellence and Innovation Program Initiative (RFA).

### 1.3 Background

More than a quarter million Ohioans are now estimated to have a diagnosable gambling disorder; a staggering figure that underscores the seriousness of this public health issues. The recent and rapid expansion of legal sports gambling options in the state, particularly the widespread availability of mobile sports betting, has made gambling more accessible than ever. With just a smartphone, individuals can place bets 24/7 from virtually anywhere in the state, dramatically increasing the opportunity for problem gambling behaviors to develop and escalate.

Unfortunately, this swift proliferation of gambling options has far outpaced the growth of prevention, treatment, and recovery infrastructure. As such, the rising tide of problem gambling calls for a bold, comprehensive, and innovative response.

To truly protect Ohioans, we must invest in forward-thinking solutions that demonstrate measurable and repeatable effectiveness. This includes expanding access to prevention programs in schools and communities, expanding evidence-based treatment services, and strengthening recovery support options across the state. By prioritizing these efforts and fostering innovation in throughout the field, Ohio can further position itself as a national leader in addressing and mitigating the harms of problem gambling—ensuring that individuals and families affected have the resources and support they need to achieve recovery and healing.

### 1.4 Scope of Work

The objectives of the Ohio Problem Gambling Excellence and Innovation Program Initiative will be:

- A. To deliver either an innovative, evidence-based and/or integrated approach that enhances impact for problem gambling services from prevention through recovery.**
- B. Promote access to high-risk populations.**
- C. Foster cross-agency and cross-sector collaboration and knowledge dissemination.**
- D. Strengthen local and regional capacity to prevent and respond to problem gambling.**

The following are examples of key activities that applicants may apply for but limited to their respective areas of expertise and licensure. Applicants may submit plans that cover multiple domains but still must demonstrate their qualifications for each category a submission that is applied for. Each activity should outline key personnel responsible, expected project timeline and milestones, cost associated to implement and measurable outcomes resulting from the activity. The following are examples of possible activities applicants may submit for:

#### **1. Prevention Services**

- Implement Ohio’s Problem Gambling Prevention Core Competencies.
- Provide gambling prevention curricula in schools and/or community settings.
- Conduct community awareness campaigns (e.g., Problem Gambling Awareness Month).
- Coordinate outreach to populations at elevated risk (e.g., youth, veterans, older adults).
- Participate in data collection or local needs assessments. May include environmental scans, heat maps, key informants to help address local issues.
- Facilitate environmental strategies (e.g., policies around youth access, advertising).

#### **2. Screening and Early Intervention**

- Provide referral pathways for individuals identified at risk or showing signs of gambling disorder (digital self-assessment).
- Offer screenings in different formats (in-person, digital) and in different languages.
- Integrating gambling screens into other routine health and behavioral health screens.

### **3. Clinical Treatment**

- Offer innovations in a clinical setting that help streamline treatment, provide better quality care or meet needs of those being seen for problem gambling.
- Ensure treatment staff maintain Problem Gambling GAMB endorsement.
- Coordinate care with co-occurring disorder treatment (e.g., mental health, substance use).
- Provide telehealth options to increase access, where appropriate.

### **4. Recovery Supports**

- Engage Certified Peer Recovery Supporters trained in gambling disorder.
- Facilitate recovery housing referrals and peer-led support groups (e.g., Gamblers Anonymous).
- Support skill-building for employment, financial literacy, and social reintegration.
- Develop and engage community partnerships.

### **5. Workforce Development & Technical Assistance**

- Provide technical assistance and mentoring to emerging providers or regional partners.
- Host training, workshops, or webinars on best practices in problem gambling services.
- Serve as a regional hub for professional development related to problem gambling.
- Regularly meet with other awardees on a quarterly basis and share outcomes.

#### **1.5 Eligible Applicants**

Eligible applicants include experienced behavioral health organization, health systems, prevention providers, institutions of higher education and community coalitions that currently offer, programming related to problem gambling services. Applicants must hold appropriate licensure and show either a track record or a clear commitment to addressing gambling-related issues through prevention, treatment or recovery services.

Priority will be given to applicants who are subject matter experts in problem gambling, and that demonstrate a history or successful programming, and strong commitment to statewide collaboration, evidenced by including past examples of their organization's work and ability to execute on their plans for the Ohio Problem Gambling Excellence and Innovation Program Initiative.

#### **1.6 Award**

Multiple agencies will be awarded funding through this funding opportunity, for a total up to \$600,000. Applicants may request up to \$100,000 per project, with a minimum request of \$25,000. Funding decisions will be based on the quality of the proposal, including a clear 12-month plan outlining project goals and expected impact. Projects demonstrating strong results and the ability to present a new plan for the next interval will have the opportunity to apply for renewal.

Awards are expected to be announced for project implementation by **09/29/2025**. Future funding award years are contingent upon receipt of federal funds.

The actual dollar amounts awarded for the selected application will be based on the amount of state funding made available to OhioMHAS. Applications are qualified if they are in accordance with the application submission requirements and earn at least the minimum score requirements for quality and completeness of applications, as specified in this RFA. Scoring and final selections will be completed by a team selected by OhioMHAS. To make its final selection of the applicant which will be awarded and to determine the size of the award, OhioMHAS may, at its option, take into consideration application quality, reasonableness and appropriateness of the proposed budget, geographic diversity, local collaborations, and funding available.

OhioMHAS may, at its option, make selections based in part on geographical and demographic criteria to provide a wide range of services around the state, and in both urban and rural areas. Applicants are encouraged to prepare and submit applications and budgets which are both practicable and capable of the scope of work.

Applicants are to be aware that OhioMHAS may, at its sole discretion, negotiate with all technically qualifying applicants for a revised Project Budget, if the Project Budgets of all technically qualifying applicants are more than the available funding for this project. Please refer to Section 7.1 C. of this RFA for further information on OhioMHAS procedures to be implemented if this occurs.

## **SECTION II. Posting and Award PROCESS INFORMATION**

### **2.1 Anticipated Timetable**

1. The RFA, accompanying documents, and all questions and answers will be posted on the OhioMHAS website at: [\*\*https://mha.ohio.gov/supporting-providers/apply-for-funding/funding-opportunities\*\*](https://mha.ohio.gov/supporting-providers/apply-for-funding/funding-opportunities)
2. All questions must be submitted electronically no later than **09/05/2025, by 3 p.m. EDT**, to OhioMHAS at: [MHAS-OPWGRANTS@mha.ohio.gov](mailto:MHAS-OPWGRANTS@mha.ohio.gov)
3. The FAQ mailbox will close one week prior to the application due date. No questions will be answered after the deadline. You may **NOT** contact any OhioMHAS staff member directly with questions regarding this RFA. Contacting staff directly with questions could result in disqualification of an application.
4. Responses to all questions (FAQ) will be posted to the OhioMHAS website at [\*\*https://mha.ohio.gov/supporting-providers/apply-for-funding/funding-opportunities\*\*](https://mha.ohio.gov/supporting-providers/apply-for-funding/funding-opportunities) and will be updated frequently.
5. Applications must be submitted electronically to:  
[\*\*MHAS-OPWGRANTS@mha.ohio.gov\*\*](mailto:MHAS-OPWGRANTS@mha.ohio.gov) by **09/12/2025 by 3:00p.m. EDT**.
6. Application grant notification letters will be sent approximately fourteen days post grant application closure.

7. OhioMHAS agreements are not valid and effective until the issuance of an approved State of Ohio Notice of Sub-Award (NOSA). The NOSA will contain the start and end dates of the award.
8. The grantee(s) must be able to begin work no later than seven (7) working days after the time funds are encumbered and approved by the Office of Budget & Management. The grantee(s) will be notified by the OhioMHAS Agreement Manager when work may begin. Any work begun by the grantee prior to this notification may not be reimbursable by OhioMHAS.
9. All work must be completed and approved by the OhioMHAS Agreement Manager. All work must be completed by 3:00 p.m. of the last day of the programmatic period as it appears on the NOSA.

It is the responsibility of all applicants to check the webpage dedicated to this RFA on a regular basis for responses to all questions, as well as for any amendments, alerts, or other pertinent information regarding this RFA. OhioMHAS is not responsible for the accuracy of any information regarding this RFA that was obtained or gathered through a source different from the Q & A process described in this RFA.

Should applicants experience technical difficulties accessing the OhioMHAS website where the RFA and its related documents are published, they may contact the OhioMHAS Helpdesk at [MHAHelpdesk@mha.ohio.gov](mailto:MHAHelpdesk@mha.ohio.gov) for guidance.

If a bidders' conference is scheduled, it will be held -- NO BIDDERS CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD -- for any organization interested in learning more about this funding opportunity.

### **SECTION III. APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

The applicant must submit electronic response to ([MHAS-OPWGRANTS@mha.ohio.gov](mailto:MHAS-OPWGRANTS@mha.ohio.gov)). A copy of the grant *application* must be received by OhioMHAS no later than 09/19/2025. *Applications* received after this date and time will not be reviewed. Materials mailed or submitted separately from the *application* packet will not be accepted or added to the application/proposal by staff of OhioMHAS. Faxed or mailed *applications* will not be accepted. Costs incurred in the preparation of this application are to be borne by the applicant; OhioMHAS will not contribute in any way to the costs of the preparation.

#### **3.1 Page Limit**

The page limit for this application is 10 pages, single spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point readable font such as Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri. The 10 pages do not include the Budget Expenditure Form and Budget Narrative.

#### **3.2 Application Components**

##### **A. Face-sheet**

- a. Name of applicant organization, address, phone number
- b. Executive director name and contact information
- c. Project Director name and contact information
- d. Fiscal officer name and contact information
- e. Applicant's federal tax ID
- f. Specify whether applicant is a 501 C (3) or (4) non-profit or government entity
- g. Title of this RFA
- h. Amount of funding requested

- B. **Abstract** – Summary of services and supports to be provided, the target population(s), number of individuals projected to be served in the first and second funding period, the goal(s) and objectives(s) of the proposed services and supports, and the total amount of funding requested for the first and second funding period. (400 words or less)
- C. **Scope of the Work/Project Description:** Provide a detailed description of the proposed approach to completing each deliverable and timeline for completing each deliverable. In the project description, please also include the following information.
- a. **Population of Focus:** Identify and describe your population(s) of focus and the geographic catchment area where your organization and/or sub-awardee(s) will deliver services that align with the intended population of focus and scope of the grant.
  - b. **Number to be Served:** Please identify the number of individuals projected to be served.
  - c. **National Outcome Measures (NOMS):** Applications must include a description of the project goals and measures to be achieved during the programmatic project period.
  - d. **Applicant Qualifications:**  
Applicants must address all minimum qualifications and fully describe their prior experience working with this population, the level of subject matter expertise (SME) and other related qualifications and/or credentials.
  - e. **Staffing Plan:** Applicants' responses must identify by position and name, the staff who will be key to the project's success. Include FTE, qualifications and the service providers' level of subject matter expertise implementing the proposed services and supports.
  - f. **Sub-Awardee** qualifications and staffing plan (if applicable)
  - g. **MOUs and Contracts:** Signed by multiple partner organizations across key functional areas, including training and technical assistance, event planning, marketing, and evaluation. (if applicable)
  - h. **Adherence to the National CLAS Standards:** Applicants' responses must identify how they will meet adherence to the National CLAS Standards - **Link to National CLAS Standards** <https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas/standards>
- D. **Outcome Measures:** Applications must include a description of:
- a. Project goals and outcomes to be achieved.
  - b. Detailed methodology for measuring progress; benchmarks that provide an indication of standards to be achieved.
  - c. Methodology for tracking progress achievements or shortfalls.
  - d. Methodology for analyzing and correcting project errors.
- E. **Reporting:** Award recipient will be required to participate in OhioMHAS sponsored meetings and provide regular communication regarding status and project outcomes throughout the grant project period, including but not limited to:
- a. Startup meeting with OhioMHAS project lead;
  - b. Submission of Office of Community & Family Resiliency Monthly/Quarterly Status Reports;
  - c. Monthly monitoring calls with OhioMHAS project lead;
  - d. Technical Assistance calls with OhioMHAS project lead as needed;
  - e. Mid-Year Reporting; and
  - f. End of Year Reporting
- F. **Budget Expenditure Form and Budget Narrative**
- a. Applications must include a Budget Expenditure Form and Budget Narrative that identifies all costs to complete the project as described in the Request for Application.
  - b. Include a signed Notice of Award/Sub-Awardee Statement of Assurances including budget

and budget narrative for each sub-awardee.

- c. Include the Budget Checklist which can be found on the OhioMHAS Funding Opportunities Page.

## **SECTION IV. CRITERIA FOR APPLICATION SCORING**

### **4.1 Scoring Applications**

OhioMHAS will enter into agreement(s) with a grantee(s) that best demonstrates the ability to meet requirements as specified in the RFA. Applicants submitting a response will be evaluated based on the capacity and experience demonstrated in their Application and Project Budget. All applications will be reviewed and scored by a team from OhioMHAS.

Applicants who demonstrate contracts and/or willingness to contract with a nationally recognized youth-led training organization to increase knowledge and skills of effective prevention, creating meaningful connections, and project implementation will receive preference.

OhioMHAS is under no obligation to issue an agreement as a result of this solicitation if, in the opinion of OhioMHAS and the Scoring Team, none of the applications are responsive to the objectives and needs of the Department. OhioMHAS reserves the right not to select any application should OhioMHAS decide not to proceed.

All applications and any other documents submitted to OhioMHAS in response to any solicitation shall become the property of OhioMHAS. This RFA and, after the selection of an applicant for award, any applications received in response to a solicitation that have been opened, reviewed and considered by OhioMHAS are deemed to be public records pursuant to ORC 149.43. For purposes of this section, the term “application” shall mean both the Technical Application and the Project Budget submitted by an applicant and any attachments, addenda, appendices, resumes, letters of recommendation, or sample products.

#### **A. Criteria for Scoring**

All applications will be scored based on the available points per section according to the following scale, based on a proposed plan’s ability to meet the objectives outlined in this RFA. The application scoring uses the following point values for rating each requirement:

Technical Performance Scoring Definitions: Each application will be scored, and numerical technical point values will be assigned according to the criteria listed below. The scale (0-5) will be used to rate each application response to the RFA on the technical evaluation sections:

OhioMHAS will score the application responses by multiplying the score received in each category by its assigned weight and adding all categories together for the Offeror’s total technical score. Representative numerical values are defined as follows:

- DOES NOT MEET (0): Response does not comply substantially with requirements or is not provided.
- WEAK (1): Response was poor related to meeting the objectives.
- BELOW AVERAGE (2): Response indicates the objectives will not be completely met or at a level that will be below average.
- MEETS (3): Response generally meets the objectives (or expectations).
- ABOVE AVERAGE (4): Response indicates the objectives will be exceeded.

- **STRONG (5):** Response significantly exceeds objectives (or expectations) in ways that provide tangible benefits or meets objectives (or expectations) and contains at least one enhancing feature that provides significant benefits.

## **SECTION V.            AWARD**

1. Awards are expected to be announced during the week of 09/29/2025
2. Total grant awards will not exceed \$600,000.00.
3. All grant funds must be expended by 06/30/2026
4. Renewals are subject to successful performance and the availability of future funds.

**Deadline for submission of all applications is 09/12/2025, 3 p.m. EDT and must be submitted to MHAS-OPWGRANTS@mha.ohio.gov**

## **SECTION VI.            CONDITIONS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

\*According to requirements of Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 126.07, OhioMHAS agreements are not valid and enforceable until the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) certifies the availability of appropriate funding, as indicated by the approval of the Purchase Order (PO). The selected applicant(s) may neither perform work nor submit an invoice for payment for work performed for this project for any time period prior to the PO approval date. The OhioMHAS Agreement Manager will notify the selected applicant(s) when the requirements of ORC Section 126.07 have been met.

\* \* Subject to all applicable approvals, the agreement period is expected to run from approximately 09/29/2025 through 06/30/2026. Renewal of the agreement(s) will be contingent upon availability of funding, satisfactory performance, the continued need for the services described herein, and all required approvals.

### **6.1    Public Release of Records**

Public release of any evaluation or monitoring reports funded under this agreement will be made only by OhioMHAS. Prior to public release of such reports, OhioMHAS must have at least a thirty (30) day period for review and comment.

## **SECTION VII.    ATTACHMENTS AND THEIR USES**

- A. Required Applicant Information and Certifications (*To be completed & included in the application as specified*)
- B. Assurances
- C. Application Score Sheet (*For applicant reference purposes*)
- D. Project Budget Form (*To be completed and included in cost application packet as specified in Section 3.2, F.*)

## RFA Scoring Evaluation Instructions

**EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

**VALUATION TEAM:** The evaluation team shall be comprised of three to five individuals, with three being the absolute minimum, who are required to individually review and score each application. The team members should have some knowledge of the RFA’s subject matter; however, every member does not need to be knowledgeable in every aspect of the RFA. After each individual separately reviews and scores each application, a consensus meeting will take place to discuss all applications and determine a consensus score on a separate scoring sheet for each application. All finalized scoring sheets must be submitted to the Agency Procurement Officer for review and verification, prior to an award being made.

**TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS, EVALUATION, RATING, AND SCORING:** Each application will be scored, and numerical technical point values will be assigned according to the criteria listed below. The scale (0-5) will be used to rate each application response to the RFA on the technical evaluation sections:

DOES NOT MEET	WEAK	BELOW AVERAGE	MEETS	ABOVE AVERAGE	STRONG
0 POINTS	1 POINT	2 POINTS	3 POINTS	4 POINTS	5 POINTS

OhioMHAS will score the application responses by multiplying the score received in each category by its assigned weight and adding all categories together for the Offeror’s total technical score. Representative numerical values are defined as follows:

- DOES NOT MEET (0): Response does not comply substantially with requirements or is not provided.
- WEAK (1): Response was poor related to meeting the objectives.
- BELOW AVERAGE (2): Response indicates the objectives will not be completely met or at a level that will be below average.
- MEETS (3): Response generally meets the objectives (or expectations).
- ABOVE AVERAGE (4): Response indicates the objectives will be exceeded.
- STRONG (5): Response significantly exceeds objectives (or expectations) in ways that provide tangible benefits or meets objectives (or expectations) and contains at least one enhancing feature that provides significant benefits.

Review Criterion	Weight	Rating 0-5	Highest Possible Score
<b>Requirements:</b> Demonstration that applicant meets the minimum requirements to apply for the grant. Applications that do not meet the minimum requirements will not be scored.	1		5

<b>Abstract:</b> Summary of the proposed plan	1		5
<b>Project Description Components:</b>			
<b>Scope of Work</b>	20		100
<b>Prior experience:</b> Demonstration that applicant has prior experience successfully implementing complex projects across multiple organizations, including prior experience developing training curricula, hosting trainings, providing technical assistance, implementing statewide conferences and events, and leading organizations to improve performance as applicable.	20		100
<b>Staffing and Partnerships:</b> Plan for recruiting staff, including a list of staff positions, assigned duties, proposed qualifications, and the amount of FTE for each position on the project. Demonstration to a strong commitment to statewide collaboration, evidenced by signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with multiple partner organizations across key functional areas.	15		75
<b>Proposed implementation approach:</b> A realistic timeline for each month of the project. The timeline should include objectives that are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound). All key dates, key activities, and responsible personnel should be outlined in detail and align with the proposed phases of the project.	20		100
<b>Evidence-based and evidence-supported practices (EBPs/ESIs):</b> A discussion of proposed EBPs and ESIs.	6		30
Adherence to National CLAS Standards	2		10
<b>Evaluation:</b> Reasonable plan for evaluating fidelity of each EBP/ESI and working with organizations to implement changes to improve fidelity. Include a discussion of both on-site and virtual consultations.	6		30
<b>Sustainability Plan:</b> Initial plans on the development of a sustainable program after the grant ends.	6		30
<b>Funding Restrictions:</b> Identified projects and programs follow funding restriction set forth in the funding restrictions	1		5
<b>Cost:</b> Cost is reasonable, realistic, and is within the projected annual budget	2		10
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>500</b>