

DRAFT

Dear Commissioner:

You are invited to submit a State application for the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant (BG) for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2009. The Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), is pleased to offer funding to support comprehensive community-based systems of care for adults with serious mental illnesses (SMI) and children with serious emotional disturbances (SED). A copy of the FY 2009-2011 Mental Health Block Grant MHBG Application Guidance and Instructions is enclosed to assist you in the preparation of your application (Enclosure 1).

As SAMHSA/CMHS continues to move forward with its charge to transform the nation's mental health system, we have continued to refine the guidance to support States' ability to report transformation activities and expenditures. In response to the number of States that objected to reporting transformation in the format presented in the FY 2008 Guidance, CMHS convened a working group of State planners and other representatives to seek input on ways to decrease the reporting burden. The working group recommended that the number of transformation categories be consolidated from twenty (20) to six (6) for States to describe and estimate the amount of block grant funding. The group also made recommendations to improve the overall content and organization of the guidance.

Revisions to the FY 2009-2011 Guidance include: 1) consolidating into six categories states' use of block grant funds to support mental health transformation, 2) eliminating the requirement for States to report the State-Level Capacity Checklist to the State Data Infrastructure Coordination Center, 3) eliminating Table 18 from the URS Tables, and 4) reorganizing and consolidating sections of the guidance to improve readability and clarity, and to reduce redundancy.

CMHS continues to encourage States to submit their state plans and applications through the Web Block Grant Application System (WebBGAS). WebBGAS was introduced in FY 2005 to reduce the paperwork burden in applying for block grant funds. In FY 2008, 52 of the 59 States and Territories that receive MHBG funds submitted the plan through WebBGAS.

#### FY 2009 - 2011 Application Guidance and Instructions

SAMHSA/CMHS developed the Application Guidance and Instructions in consultation a State working group of planners, other MHBG stakeholders, and the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD). FY 2009 will begin the first year of the three-year cycle of OMB approval for the guidance. With OMB approval, States will be permitted to submit multi-year plans for FY 2009-2011 and 2010-2011.

Information on Allotment Amounts

States are asked to submit their FY 2009 applications based on the FY 2008 Allotment Table that is provided in Enclosure 2. If necessary, States should plan to amend the application once a final appropriation is made and the MHBG allotment is received.

Consultative Regional Peer Review

States are asked to discuss their FY 2009 applications and modifications at the consultative regional peer review. State staff and MHPC members are expected to speak to the content of the application and progress made towards transformation, as well as respond to questions from the review panel.

The Regional Consultative Peer Reviews for FY 2009 are scheduled on the following dates:

Northeast & Midwest:	October 15, 16, & 17
Southwest & Southeast:	October 21, 22, & 23
West:	November 18, 19, & 20

Implementation Reports for FY 2008

The FY 2008 MHBG Implementation Report should provide sufficient information to determine the extent to which the State accomplished its prior year's plan. The legislation mandates a reduction in State allotment when the State's plan is not fully implemented within the reporting year.

Submission of Application and State Plan

The State's FY 2009 application is due no later than Tuesday, September 2, 2008. Since September 1 falls on holiday, the application is due the first work day following the September 1 holiday. The implementation report for FY 2008 is due no later than Monday, December 1, 2008. If a State application and implementation report is not received in the Office of Grants Management by these dates, the State will not receive a grant for the year indicated.

Hard copies of State applications should be mailed to:

Regular Mail

Barbara Orlando  
Grants Management Specialist  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Division of Grants Management, OPS  
1 Choke Cherry Road, Room 7-1091  
Rockville, Maryland 20857

Overnight & Express Mail

Barbara Orlando  
Grants Management Specialist  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Division of Grants Management, OPS  
1 Choke Cherry Road, Room 7-1091  
Rockville, Maryland **20850**

For additional information related to fiscal management of the block grant, please contact Ms. Orlando at (240) 276-1422. Federal project officers may be contacted at: (240) 276-1760.

Sincerely yours,

Joyce T. Berry, Ph.D., J.D.  
Director  
Division of State and Community  
Systems Development  
Center for Mental Health Services

cc: State Planners  
Mental Health Planning Council Chair  
Grants Management Office

Enclosures:

1. 2009-2011 Block Grant Application Guidance and Instructions
2. 2008 MHBG Allotment Table