

Territorial Stakeholders and Public Engagement Schedule for proposed New Mental/Behavioral Health Services and Facility and Community Health Centers Proposal

The negative impacts of Covid-19 and the public health emergency declaration have exacerbated problems related to mental/behavioral health which necessitates the urgency to expand American Samoa's response capabilities for mental/behavioral health services and facilities in American Samoa. The present facilities do not meet the requirements to be fully operational lacking adequate equipment, supplies and certified doctors and personnel to address the impact of the border closure and limited access to these services. The establishment and expansion of community health centers in the territory is another critical project to help strengthen our healthcare system. Covid-19 has exacerbated the disparities in access to adequate healthcare and shown the urgency and immediate actions necessary to address local healthcare needs and services. Investments in mental/behavioral health services and facility and community health centers will help enhance healthcare capacity, improve disparities with public health outcomes, address pandemic operational needs and support underserved areas with access to those services. The Department of Health (DOH) is the designated ARPA sub-recipient for the ARPA funds. Included in the conditions for the use of ARPA funds, the Department of Health will adhere to all ARPA guidelines to ensure transparency and accountability.

OVERVIEW

- Given the crossover for the various governmental departments and key stakeholders at the mental/behavioral health facility and community health centers, it has been determined that the most effective use of time is to combine the key stakeholders and public engagement process.
- Developing and designing the Scope of Work for the proposed New Mental/Behavioral Health Services and Facility and Community Health Centers must be a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the public health emergency declaration.
- Determining the size, scope, functionality and structure of the new mental/behavioral health facility and community health centers requires input from a wide range of territorial stakeholders and general public engagement.
- The New Mental/Behavioral Health Services and Facility and Community Health Centers must be a direct response to identified exacerbation of pre-existing disparities including public health outcomes, strains on the health care system, personnel shortages, lack of key protective equipment, supplies and medicines as a result of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency declaration

- In addition to determining the physical structure, new or expanded mental/behavioral health and community health centers services and treatment, an assessment of the operational costs and the sustainability of the proposed new Mental/Behavioral Health Services and Facility and Community Health Centers along with the current facilities must be included.
- We applaud the considerable information and assessments that have already begun to be collected by the lead Departments/Authorities. This engagement schedule will ensure the information is collected under the established protocols of the American Samoa ARPA Oversight Office thereby further ensuring our compliance with the ARPA use of funds criteria.

(a) KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- DOH
- LBJ
- DHSS
- Medicaid Office
- Treasury
- NGO's
- Non-profit organizations
- Private sector representation
- Healthcare professionals
- Other branches of Government (legislative representation)
- ARPA Oversight Office

The lead department which is the Department of Health will conduct assessments and evaluations of the proposed facilities and develop a scope of work to include all relevant components covering:

- physical construction and site development (as needed),
- expanded or new mental/behavioral health services access to all the American Samoa Islands
- expanded or new community health center services all the American Samoa Islands
- Mental/Behavioral Health professionals' personnel and staffing needs
- Medical and Public Health Professionals' personnel and staffing needs
- Administrative and facilities personnel and staffing needs,
- Climate change considerations for renewable energy systems/ minimize carbon footprint
- Redundancy systems
- Projected annual operational costs
- Proposed budget for total project

- Proposed timeline

Proposed questions to consider

1. How does the new mental/behavioral health services and facility and community health centers specifically respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and the public health emergency declaration for American Samoa?
2. How can mental/behavioral health services be made available to all islands?
3. What are the specifications for the size of the new mental/behavioral health facility and community health centers?
4. What are the primary mental/behavioral health services and community health center services to be provided in the new facilities?
5. Will the new mental/behavioral health facility operate independent or as an extension of the current ones?
6. What are the estimated annual operational costs for the new mental/behavioral health services and facility and community health centers?
7. What new or existing services will be prioritized?
8. What are the estimated annual operational costs?
9. What are the plans to staff the new mental/behavioral health facility and community health centers?
10. ARPA funding includes certain language for construction relating to climate change (green energy, etc.), how will we incorporate into the scope of work?
11. Is developing Tele-medicine services being considered (broadband related issue that is prominent in the ARPA language)?
12. What are the overall plans for the distribution of the award for mental/behavioral health facility and community health centers (how much for building costs, equipment, supplies & medicines, staff and personnel costs, etc.)?
13. Have all stakeholders had sufficient opportunity to provide input?

Committee and General Public engagement schedule:

- (Date) - Release the Committee and General Public engagement schedule
 - a) Overview of agenda and timeline, responsibilities
- (Date) - Initial Committee meeting
 - a) Identify key objectives
 - b) Identify Committees (design, construction, medical, finance, etc.)
 - c) Timeline for draft scope of work
- (Date) - First draft of Scope of work for committee review
- (Date) - Release the Committee Scope of work draft for general public input
- (Date) - Initiate ARPA Oversight Office adopted Community Engagement protocols (see below)
- (Date) - Public hearing to be scheduled
- (Date) - 30-day public notice period closes
- (Date) - Public input period open

- _____ (Date) _____ - Scope of work and submission released
- _____ (Date) _____ - Procurement process begins based on final scope of work

(b) COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The general public engagement is an essential aspect of ARPA funded projects. The intent of the US Treasury in fostering public participation is to maintain transparency and provide opportunities for feedback to ensure that funds are used in the most beneficial manner.

In keeping with the intent of the US Treasury, the American Samoa ARPA Oversight Office has adopted the following notice and comment timeline for proposed projects:

- A Notice of Proposed Project will be published online, in local newspapers, and via television or radio broadcasts. The Notice will specify that there will be thirty (30) days for the public to provide comment either in writing or by attendance at scheduled public hearings.
- Concurrent to the publication of the Notice, a draft proposal and scope of work will be published on the ARPA website for the public to review.
- General meetings with the public will be scheduled and publicized within the thirty (30) day Notice period. Email comments will also be accepted.
- Presentations to the Legislature will be conducted during the Notice period, as needed.
- At the close of the public comment period, the agency will have 20 days to revise the project as appropriate and submit the Final Draft to the ARPA Oversight Office.
- The Final Draft of the Project will be posted for public review once completed and certified by the ARPA Oversight Office.

It is the responsibility of the agencies in charge to publicize notices and adhere to the stated timelines. For the New Mental/Behavioral Health Services and Facility and Community Health Centers Projects, the anticipated date for the Notice of Proposed Projects will be ____ (Date) ____.