

San Francisco Eligible Metropolitan Area
HIV Community Planning Council

Grantee Assessment

2024



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Introduction

Background

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) mandates Planning Councils to fulfill certain activities. Among them is a grantee assessment, the purpose of which is to assess the efficiency of the administrative mechanism, including the following areas:

- How efficiently providers are selected, paid, and monitored, including:
 - A review of the process used for the solicitation or bidding of services and disbursement of funds
 - Time-framed observations of the processes of solicitation of services, development or modification of contracts, processing of invoices, and payment for services
 - Date of service delivery through invoicing to payment, with documentation of any adverse impact on clients or providers related to payments
 - Contract certification process
 - Contract monitoring process
- How well services that are funded by the grantee address the Planning Council's priorities, allocations, and instructions for addressing these priorities

Purpose

In addition to fulfilling the HRSA mandate outlined above, this grantee assessment aims to facilitate a broader conversation about how the grantee supports the work of both local providers and the community planning process.

Scope of Work

The scope of work will cover an assessment of the administrative mechanism through the lenses of council members and providers. This approach aims to highlight both efficiencies and areas for improvement in the administrative mechanism, in the hopes that a more effective administrative mechanism enriches the community planning process, service provision, and the continuum of care as a whole.

Methodology

The methodology used in this assessment was tailored to each key stakeholder group, in order to optimize collection results.

There was a total of 17 respondents.

For providers, we felt that confidentiality was the primary consideration in choice of methodology. For this group, we provided an anonymous survey with 5-point scale rubrics for assessing the administrative mechanism, as well as the opportunity for free-form answers. There was a total of 12 responses. The providers were selected from local agencies providing Ryan White services, and were intended to capture a broad range of services, both core and support. Individual providers from these agencies were selected based on having direct interface with the grantee, and experience with contract management, procurement, and reimbursement processes.

For council members, council staff, and members of the government, individual interviews were conducted. Because these individuals are considered to be working within the public sphere and therefore acting with transparency, anonymity in the collection of their responses was less important. We conducted 5 interviews (4 council members and 1 SFDPH HHS staff member).

Results

Council Members

Council member feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Every interviewee indicated a supportive relationship between the grantee and the council. Council members highlighted information-sharing as an area where the grantee went above and beyond, both in presentations and in providing answers to council questions.

Quotes:

“They're very thoughtful in how they break down the information to make it digestible and understandable for all of us, on any literacy level. They also always make themselves available either before a meeting or after a meeting to discuss whatever issue related to the council is of concern.”

“I think the staff from DPH has always been extremely supportive. They're pretty involved in the Council. And not only involved, but the team that represents DPH at the Council is super smart, they know what they're doing, they're extremely professional. They're in tune with everything that's happening and how it's going to effect the work of the Council.”

“The staff at DPH that have come in and either presented or supported directly have always been quite responsive to councilmembers' questions. And they attempt to follow up and provide really full answers to any concerns that people have.”

“Anytime that they share with the council--presentations and things like that--it's in depth, informative, and necessary.”

“They bring a lot of respect, they bring a lot of knowledge, and they give us visibility as the Council.”

“The quantitative data is deep, and they make it so that it's not over your head. There's a lot of it, but they break it down so that it's understandable, it's pertinent to the presentation that's going on, and they feed it to us. Everyone's involved and they understand.”

“They make sure that we are informed about what they do and how things are funded, and provide understanding for the Council members who are not necessarily so connected with direct services.”

“They understand the budgetary process, the populations that we deal with. They have their finger on the pulse of what's actually going on in the areas that we serve for HIV care.”

“Everyone from DPH is just extremely helpful and invaluable to the functioning of the Council. The information they provide, the experience, both educational and lived experience.”

“A handful of years ago, this was with the ARIES data, we were really getting into the weeds of the information. At some point everything was being referenced to, ‘What about aging?’ And at the time there just wasn't that detailed of information that was easily pulled out. And I remember a year or two after that they came back, and said ‘Hey, just to let you know, we heard you, and we have some of this information. It's not easy to pull because the database isn't structured like this,’ but they chased it up the chain to see how they

could make some adjustments and pull some of the information out, and I think it was really great.”

“San Francisco is blessed with a serious Department of Public Health here. These people are excellent at what they do, and they're tireless.”

“It would be great if DPH could provide a little more support to the Council staff to recruit people living with HIV or affected by HIV, that represent the communities that benefit from the work we do. When you mention DPH in the city and among providers, there's a lot of respect, and that could be translated into maybe combining outreach efforts, tapping into their ability to reach out to agencies who work directly with people living with HIV.”

Providers

Provider feedback was generally, though not universally, positive. The grantee received the highest ratings in regard to level of support, responsiveness, and clarity of expectations regarding program monitoring. Providers were least satisfied with the writing quality of RFPs, and also indicated room for improvement when it came to grantee familiarity with their programs.

The 2024 survey included several questions that were also asked as part of the 2019 Grantee Assessment. On these questions, average provider ratings of the grantee had **universally improved**. The most improved rating was on invoice processing, which the 2019 Grantee Assessment noted as an area for improvement. In 2019, providers rated grantee invoice processing performance at 3.57 out of 5. This improved to 4.33 in 2024.

Below are topics with provider feedback.

Responsiveness

“I think the grantee/HHS has come a LONG way over the years to become more responsive and transparent with providers. I appreciate this relationship so much.”

“HHS is always quick to respond and quick to help create solutions for any issues that come up.”

Program Monitoring

“In general, the expectations are very clear. Sometimes there are additional requirements that were not communicated until the monitoring. Ex: new opioid training, change in documentation...”

“Could use more support leading up to the program monitoring, would like to have HHS staff reach out more often rather than just around the time for program monitoring.”

Contract and Budget Support

“The budget and invoicing process is extremely complicated. But the people and support are superb.”

“Our program manager is fantastic.”

“Inconsistent support with capacity building and technical assistance with contracts.”

Provider Survey Results

Question	2024 Average Response	2019 Average Response	Change
How supportive do you feel HIV Health Services (HHS) has been to you as a provider and to your programs?	4.50	4.14	+0.36
How responsive do you feel the grantee/HHS is to your questions or requests for information?	4.42	4.28	+0.14
How well has the grantee ensured ongoing processing of invoices (even in years when significant reductions in grant funding occurred or were anticipated)?	4.33	3.57	+0.76
In terms of the process of program monitoring, are you clear on the expectations prior to the site visit and monitoring?	4.42	3.71	+0.71
How familiar with your program and its community impact was your program monitor during your most recent site visit?	4.17	-	-
In regard to the development of your HHS contract and budget documents, how would you describe the level of technical assistance and support provided by your assigned Program Manager from the Business Office of Contract Development & Technical Assistance?	4.25	3.85	+0.4
How well written are the Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and do you feel they provide clear direction?	3.92	3.6	+0.32
Do you feel the grantee's process of awarding contracts for services is fair and accurate?	4.33	4	+0.33

Grantee

The grantee was given the opportunity to self-assess the administrative mechanism. They emphasized the high performance of their small team, especially in offering many forms of technical support to providers.

Notes from the grantee's self-assessment are provided below.

Efficiency of the Administrative Mechanism

"I do feel that DPH and HHS is efficient because we have multiple funding sources, many providers funded, and a very small administrative office that handles a variety of needs for funding to get to the provider. And some of the activities that we perform are multiple different job tasks per person so we can keep it at a smaller administrative level."

Provider Reimbursements

"Generally, it is not a fee for service—providers are able to invoice for all their services and then they get reimbursed. So it doesn't matter if they serve 5 clients or 10 clients. We do have expectations about how many clients they serve by the end of the period, but that doesn't hinder them from still getting their payment."

Barriers to rapid allocation of funds

"I know that there is a contracting process that we don't have a lot of control over, that is the city—they have to go through the commission. We have to follow that process. But there are some of our staff that assist with that process and making sure that gets approved, making sure there's not a lot of back and forth when it gets reviewed."

Forms of support provided to the Council

"Bill Blum, the director, attends all the in-person meetings as well as some of the committee meetings. Even though we're not voting members, he's able to attend and offer support with information the planning council needs, from ARIES as well as from our invoicing."

Forms of support provided to Providers

"When providers have to submit data to HRSA, we actually pull the reports and submit them on their behalf. We use the ARIES system and we pull the data for them to submit to the federal database. And I think with us being able to do the quality checks on the data, that allows the provider not to worry about that."

"We're starting trainings to support a lot of our providers. We just had a motivational interviewing training last week. We're bringing in new topics that are of interest."

"We're able to assist our providers with training on how to use ARIES. We are doing 2.5 hour trainings online where we give a lot of hands-on assistance. We also have a helpline available."

Process of Contract Monitoring

"Contract program managers definitely have everything organized and listed so providers know everything they're being asked for—so there are never any surprises with that. There are sometimes follow-up questions that happen when reports are finalized, and we have assisted the business office with that. And they're able to coordinate with us."

Support of the planning process for carry-forward allocation

"We provide ideas on what are different options that funding can be used in, that would be quick and efficient turnaround."

Conclusions

In summary, we find the following conclusions in assessing the administrative mechanism:

- Providers and council members consider the grantee highly responsive and supportive.
- Council members emphasized the value of grantee's presence at council proceedings, as well as their willingness to find answers to council questions even when doing so requires significant extra effort.
- Some providers reported low levels of satisfaction with the quality of RFPs.
- Some providers indicated that the program monitors did not have a high degree of familiarity with their programs.
- The grantee self-assessed the administrative mechanism as very efficient.

Appendix – Provider Survey Results

#1

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, November 07, 2023 9:26:09 AM
Time Spent: 00:03:23

Q1 4

How supportive do you feel HIV Health Services (HHS) has been to you as a provider and to your programs?

Q2 4

How responsive do you feel the grantee/HHS is to your questions or requests for information?

Q3 4

How well has the grantee ensured ongoing processing of invoices (even in years when significant reductions in grant funding occurred or were anticipated)?

Q4 5 - Extremely clear

In terms of the process of program monitoring, are you clear on the expectations prior to the site visit and monitoring?

Q5 4

How familiar with your program and its community impact was your program monitor during your most recent site visit?

Q6 5 - Extremely clear

In regard to the development of your HHS contract and budget documents, how would you describe the level of technical assistance and support provided by your assigned Program Manager from the Business Office of Contract Development & Technical Assistance?

Q7 4

How well written are the Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and do you feel they provide clear direction?

Q8 4

Do you feel the grantee's process of awarding contracts for services is fair and accurate?

Q9

If you have additional comments or feedback regarding the grantee/HHS, please share them here.

I think the grantee/HHS has come a LONG way over the years to become more responsive and transparent with providers. I appreciate this relationship so much

#2

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, November 07, 2023 10:29:06 AM
Time Spent: 00:02:28

Q1 2

How supportive do you feel HIV Health Services (HHS) has been to you as a provider and to your programs?

Comment::

inconsistent support with capacity building and technical assistance with contracts

Q2 3

How responsive do you feel the grantee/HHS is to your questions or requests for information?

Q3 4

How well has the grantee ensured ongoing processing of invoices (even in years when significant reductions in grant funding occurred or were anticipated)?

Q4 2

In terms of the process of program monitoring, are you clear on the expectations prior to the site visit and monitoring?

Comment::

could use more support leading up to the program monitoring, would like to have HHS staff reach out more often rather than just around the time for program monitoring

Q5 3

How familiar with your program and its community impact was your program monitor during your most recent site visit?

Q6 2

In regard to the development of your HHS contract and budget documents, how would you describe the level of technical assistance and support provided by your assigned Program Manager from the Business Office of Contract Development & Technical Assistance?

Q7 2

How well written are the Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and do you feel they provide clear direction?

Q8 3

Do you feel the grantee's process of awarding contracts for services is fair and accurate?

Q9 *Respondent skipped this question*

If you have additional comments or feedback regarding the grantee/HHS, please share them here.

#3

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, November 08, 2023 4:35:27 PM
Time Spent: 00:03:08

Q1 5 - Extremely supportive

How supportive do you feel HIV Health Services (HHS) has been to you as a provider and to your programs?

Q2 4

How responsive do you feel the grantee/HHS is to your questions or requests for information?

Q3 5 - Extremely well

How well has the grantee ensured ongoing processing of invoices (even in years when significant reductions in grant funding occurred or were anticipated)?

Q4 5 - Extremely clear

In terms of the process of program monitoring, are you clear on the expectations prior to the site visit and monitoring?

Q5 3

How familiar with your program and its community impact was your program monitor during your most recent site visit?

Q6 3

In regard to the development of your HHS contract and budget documents, how would you describe the level of technical assistance and support provided by your assigned Program Manager from the Business Office of Contract Development & Technical Assistance?

Q7 4

How well written are the Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and do you feel they provide clear direction?

Q8 4

Do you feel the grantee's process of awarding contracts for services is fair and accurate?

Q9 *Respondent skipped this question*

If you have additional comments or feedback regarding the grantee/HHS, please share them here.

#4

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, December 05, 2023 3:58:10 PM
Time Spent: 00:02:14

Q1 4

How supportive do you feel HIV Health Services (HHS) has been to you as a provider and to your programs?

Q2 4

How responsive do you feel the grantee/HHS is to your questions or requests for information?

Q3 4

How well has the grantee ensured ongoing processing of invoices (even in years when significant reductions in grant funding occurred or were anticipated)?

Q4 4

In terms of the process of program monitoring, are you clear on the expectations prior to the site visit and monitoring?

Q5 2

How familiar with your program and its community impact was your program monitor during your most recent site visit?

Q6 3

In regard to the development of your HHS contract and budget documents, how would you describe the level of technical assistance and support provided by your assigned Program Manager from the Business Office of Contract Development & Technical Assistance?

Q7 4

How well written are the Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and do you feel they provide clear direction?

Q8 4

Do you feel the grantee's process of awarding contracts for services is fair and accurate?

Q9 *Respondent skipped this question*

If you have additional comments or feedback regarding the grantee/HHS, please share them here.

#5

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 12:29:36 PM
Time Spent: 00:00:45

Q1 5 - Extremely supportive

How supportive do you feel HIV Health Services (HHS) has been to you as a provider and to your programs?

Q2 5 - Extremely responsive

How responsive do you feel the grantee/HHS is to your questions or requests for information?

Q3 5 - Extremely well

How well has the grantee ensured ongoing processing of invoices (even in years when significant reductions in grant funding occurred or were anticipated)?

Q4 5 - Extremely clear

In terms of the process of program monitoring, are you clear on the expectations prior to the site visit and monitoring?

Q5 5 - Extremely familiar

How familiar with your program and its community impact was your program monitor during your most recent site visit?

Q6 5 - Extremely good

In regard to the development of your HHS contract and budget documents, how would you describe the level of technical assistance and support provided by your assigned Program Manager from the Business Office of Contract Development & Technical Assistance?

Q7 5 - Extremely clear/well-written

How well written are the Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and do you feel they provide clear direction?

Q8 5 - Extremely fair/accurate

Do you feel the grantee's process of awarding contracts for services is fair and accurate?

Q9 *Respondent skipped this question*

If you have additional comments or feedback regarding the grantee/HHS, please share them here.

#6

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 12:33:02 PM
Time Spent: 00:01:07

Q1 5 - Extremely supportive

How supportive do you feel HIV Health Services (HHS) has been to you as a provider and to your programs?

Q2 5 - Extremely responsive

How responsive do you feel the grantee/HHS is to your questions or requests for information?

Q3 4

How well has the grantee ensured ongoing processing of invoices (even in years when significant reductions in grant funding occurred or were anticipated)?

Q4 5 - Extremely clear

In terms of the process of program monitoring, are you clear on the expectations prior to the site visit and monitoring?

Q5 5 - Extremely familiar

How familiar with your program and its community impact was your program monitor during your most recent site visit?

Q6 4

In regard to the development of your HHS contract and budget documents, how would you describe the level of technical assistance and support provided by your assigned Program Manager from the Business Office of Contract Development & Technical Assistance?

Q7 4

How well written are the Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and do you feel they provide clear direction?

Q8 5 - Extremely fair/accurate

Do you feel the grantee's process of awarding contracts for services is fair and accurate?

Q9

If you have additional comments or feedback regarding the grantee/HHS, please share them here.

The budget and invoicing process is extremely complicated. But the people and support are superb.

#7

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 12:45:23 PM
Time Spent: 00:00:56

Q1 5 - Extremely supportive

How supportive do you feel HIV Health Services (HHS) has been to you as a provider and to your programs?

Q2 5 - Extremely responsive

How responsive do you feel the grantee/HHS is to your questions or requests for information?

Q3 5 - Extremely well

How well has the grantee ensured ongoing processing of invoices (even in years when significant reductions in grant funding occurred or were anticipated)?

Q4 5 - Extremely clear

In terms of the process of program monitoring, are you clear on the expectations prior to the site visit and monitoring?

Q5 5 - Extremely familiar

How familiar with your program and its community impact was your program monitor during your most recent site visit?

Q6 5 - Extremely good

In regard to the development of your HHS contract and budget documents, how would you describe the level of technical assistance and support provided by your assigned Program Manager from the Business Office of Contract Development & Technical Assistance?

Q7 5 - Extremely clear/well-written

How well written are the Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and do you feel they provide clear direction?

Q8 5 - Extremely fair/accurate

Do you feel the grantee's process of awarding contracts for services is fair and accurate?

Q9 *Respondent skipped this question*

If you have additional comments or feedback regarding the grantee/HHS, please share them here.

#8

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 12:36:33 PM
Time Spent: 00:11:58

Q1 5 - Extremely supportive

How supportive do you feel HIV Health Services (HHS) has been to you as a provider and to your programs?

Comment::

HHS is always quick to respond and quick to help create solutions for any issues that come up.

Q2 5 - Extremely responsive

How responsive do you feel the grantee/HHS is to your questions or requests for information?

Q3 5 - Extremely well

How well has the grantee ensured ongoing processing of invoices (even in years when significant reductions in grant funding occurred or were anticipated)?

Q4 5 - Extremely clear

In terms of the process of program monitoring, are you clear on the expectations prior to the site visit and monitoring?

Q5 5 - Extremely familiar

How familiar with your program and its community impact was your program monitor during your most recent site visit?

Q6 5 - Extremely good

In regard to the development of your HHS contract and budget documents, how would you describe the level of technical assistance and support provided by your assigned Program Manager from the Business Office of Contract Development & Technical Assistance?

Q7 5 - Extremely clear/well-written

How well written are the Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and do you feel they provide clear direction?

Q8 5 - Extremely fair/accurate

Do you feel the grantee's process of awarding contracts for services is fair and accurate?

Q9 *Respondent skipped this question*

If you have additional comments or feedback regarding the grantee/HHS, please share them here.

#9

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 12:48:27 PM
Time Spent: 00:01:39

Q1 5 - Extremely supportive

How supportive do you feel HIV Health Services (HHS) has been to you as a provider and to your programs?

Q2 5 - Extremely responsive

How responsive do you feel the grantee/HHS is to your questions or requests for information?

Q3 5 - Extremely well

How well has the grantee ensured ongoing processing of invoices (even in years when significant reductions in grant funding occurred or were anticipated)?

Q4 4

In terms of the process of program monitoring, are you clear on the expectations prior to the site visit and monitoring?

Q5 4

How familiar with your program and its community impact was your program monitor during your most recent site visit?

Q6 4

In regard to the development of your HHS contract and budget documents, how would you describe the level of technical assistance and support provided by your assigned Program Manager from the Business Office of Contract Development & Technical Assistance?

Q7 3

How well written are the Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and do you feel they provide clear direction?

Q8 4

Do you feel the grantee's process of awarding contracts for services is fair and accurate?

Q9 *Respondent skipped this question*

If you have additional comments or feedback regarding the grantee/HHS, please share them here.

#10

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 12:52:29 PM
Time Spent: 00:02:24

Q1 4

How supportive do you feel HIV Health Services (HHS) has been to you as a provider and to your programs?

Q2 4

How responsive do you feel the grantee/HHS is to your questions or requests for information?

Q3 2

How well has the grantee ensured ongoing processing of invoices (even in years when significant reductions in grant funding occurred or were anticipated)?

Q4 4

In terms of the process of program monitoring, are you clear on the expectations prior to the site visit and monitoring?

Comment::

In general, the expectations are very clear. Sometimes there are additional requirements that were not communicated until the monitoring. Ex: new opioid training, change in documentation...

Q5 5 - Extremely familiar

How familiar with your program and its community impact was your program monitor during your most recent site visit?

Q6 5 - Extremely good

In regard to the development of your HHS contract and budget documents, how would you describe the level of technical assistance and support provided by your assigned Program Manager from the Business Office of Contract Development & Technical Assistance?

Comment::

Our program manager is fantastic.

Q7 4

How well written are the Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and do you feel they provide clear direction?

Q8 4

Do you feel the grantee's process of awarding contracts for services is fair and accurate?

Q9 *Respondent skipped this question*

If you have additional comments or feedback regarding the grantee/HHS, please share them here.

#11

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 4:12:29 PM
Time Spent: 00:00:57

Q1 5 - Extremely supportive

How supportive do you feel HIV Health Services (HHS) has been to you as a provider and to your programs?

Q2 4

How responsive do you feel the grantee/HHS is to your questions or requests for information?

Q3 4

How well has the grantee ensured ongoing processing of invoices (even in years when significant reductions in grant funding occurred or were anticipated)?

Q4 5 - Extremely clear

In terms of the process of program monitoring, are you clear on the expectations prior to the site visit and monitoring?

Q5 4

How familiar with your program and its community impact was your program monitor during your most recent site visit?

Q6 5 - Extremely good

In regard to the development of your HHS contract and budget documents, how would you describe the level of technical assistance and support provided by your assigned Program Manager from the Business Office of Contract Development & Technical Assistance?

Q7 4

How well written are the Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and do you feel they provide clear direction?

Q8 5 - Extremely fair/accurate

Do you feel the grantee's process of awarding contracts for services is fair and accurate?

Q9 *Respondent skipped this question*

If you have additional comments or feedback regarding the grantee/HHS, please share them here.

#12

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 4:43:30 PM
Time Spent: 00:05:34

Q1 5 - Extremely supportive

How supportive do you feel HIV Health Services (HHS) has been to you as a provider and to your programs?

Q2 5 - Extremely responsive

How responsive do you feel the grantee/HHS is to your questions or requests for information?

Q3 5 - Extremely well

How well has the grantee ensured ongoing processing of invoices (even in years when significant reductions in grant funding occurred or were anticipated)?

Q4 4

In terms of the process of program monitoring, are you clear on the expectations prior to the site visit and monitoring?

Q5 5 - Extremely familiar

How familiar with your program and its community impact was your program monitor during your most recent site visit?

Q6 5 - Extremely good

In regard to the development of your HHS contract and budget documents, how would you describe the level of technical assistance and support provided by your assigned Program Manager from the Business Office of Contract Development & Technical Assistance?

Q7 3

How well written are the Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and do you feel they provide clear direction?

Q8 4

Do you feel the grantee's process of awarding contracts for services is fair and accurate?

Q9 *Respondent skipped this question*

If you have additional comments or feedback regarding the grantee/HHS, please share them here.

REPORT PREPARED BY:

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