



PHIC Improving Communication about the Drug Supply to Improve Health  
Outcomes among PWUD:

Learning Exchange with People Who Use Drugs on Drug Supply Communications

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Release Date: December 6, 2024

Proposal Due Date: January 5, 2025

Period of Performance: February 1, 2025 – July 31, 2025

Total Award: \$43,000

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## 1. About NASTAD

NASTAD is a leading non-partisan non-profit association that represents public health officials who administer HIV and hepatitis programs in the U.S. NASTAD work to advance the health and dignity of people living with and impacted by HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, and intersecting epidemics by strengthening governmental public health through advocacy, capacity building, and social justice.

Each of NASTAD's seven programmatic teams—Health Care Access, Health Systems Integration, Policy & Legislative Affairs, Hepatitis, Prevention, Health Equity, and Drug User Health—interpret and influence policies, conduct trainings, offer technical assistance (TA), and provide advocacy mobilization for U.S. health departments to improve health outcomes for people living with HIV and hepatitis.

Questions about this RFP should be directed to [DrugUserHealthTA@NASTAD.org](mailto:DrugUserHealthTA@NASTAD.org).

## 2. Project Background

This funding opportunity is supported by the CDC National Center for Injury Prevention and Control through *Strengthening Public Health Systems and Services through National Partnerships to Improve and Protect the Nation's Health*, [CDC-RFA-PW-24-00800101SUPP24: Improving Communication about the Drug Supply to Improve Health Outcomes among PWUD](#).

In collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Division of Overdose Prevention (DoP) within the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC), NASTAD will work with project contractors to improve the quality of and access to high-quality community drug checking information, drug-related morbidity and mortality data, and related harm reduction recommendations through the provision of tailored TA and through strategic coordination, product creation, and workforce development with public health and harm reduction stakeholders, namely people who use drugs. To more effectively respond to [documented overdose-related health disparities](#), project activities and products will center the health needs and communications preferences of Black and American Indian/Alaska Native people who use drugs.

This project, *Improving Communication about the Drug Supply to Improve Health Outcomes among PWUD*, aims to increase the access of people who use drugs to practical and actionable information on the drug supply by:

- Improving the quality of community drug checking through TA with Remedy Alliance/FTP and the UNC Street Drug Analysis Lab;
- Documenting what people who use drugs want and need to know about changes in the drug supply to reduce health and safety risks associated with drug use; and
- Ensuring that critical health and safety information about the illicit drug supply is communicated meaningfully and in a timely fashion to people who use drugs, in particular Black and American Indian/Alaska Native people who use drugs.

Goals for this project are to:

- Ensure states, localities and communities conducting or thinking about conducting drug checking have expertise and resources to effectively implement and support high quality, evidence-based, equitable and accessible drug checking programs;
- Understand perspectives of people who use drugs, and in particular Black and American Indian/Alaska Native people who use drugs, on what information about the drug supply and related health and safety risks is desired and how health departments should and should not disseminate this information; and
- Through qualitative data collection with a multi-disciplinary group of experts, identify promising practices in how health departments and federal agencies communicate information about dangerous adulterants in the drug supply and related health risks to people who use drugs— information which may come from, for example, emergency department reporting, overdose spike alerts, community-based drug checking program data, and other sources.

The contractor selected through this RFP process will be responsible for the following required *Improving Communication about the Drug Supply to Improve Health Outcomes among PWUD* activities:

- Facilitating a Learning Exchange with up to 10 people who use drugs—the majority of whom will be Black or American Indian/Alaska Native—to share perspectives on the project and gain skills in working on national, federally funded communications projects; and
- Building capacity for meaningful inclusion of Black and American Indian/Alaska Native people who use drugs by providing support and compensation to Learning Exchange participants.

### **3. RFP Overview**

Using a competitive RFP process, NASTAD will identify an organization, agency, or individual(s) to partner in the development and facilitation of a Learning Exchange with people who use drugs, with a majority of Learning Exchange participants identifying as Black or American Indian/Alaska Native and involving people both with and without experience utilizing community drug checking services. The contractor(s) will be responsible for:

- Designing and carrying out an open participant selection process with support from NASTAD;
- Managing participant compensation;
- Offering mentorship and professional development; and
- Planning and leading facilitation, of virtual or, if feasible, in-person convening(s) with support from NASTAD.

Participants in the Learning Exchange will share expertise and consumer-level perspectives on project activities and products produced through the [PHIC Landscape Analysis and Toolkit RFP](#), including landscape analysis, qualitative data collection and analysis, best and promising practices for community drug checking and public health and safety surveillance data sharing, and the resulting public health communications toolkit, as well as direct feedback to NASTAD and CDC. In partnership with Learning Exchange participants and NASTAD, the selected contractor(s) will complete a summary document or similar public-facing product sharing successes, challenges, and lessons learned, including

recommendations to public health and harm reduction stakeholders and priority areas for future work related to communications on the drug supply.

The selected contractor(s) will be responsible for managing compensation for up to 10 Learning Exchange participants through a low-barrier direct payment process. Proposed workplan and budget may include in-person convening(s) with Learning Exchange participants in addition to or instead of virtual sessions(s), but **please note that in-person convening(s) are not required**. NASTAD will provide additional planning and facilitation capacity for any in-person convening(s) and may be able to support venue rental, A/V, and printed material costs. NASTAD will provide virtual meeting platform for virtual convening(s). NASTAD will be responsible for any graphic design costs through existing organizational contracts.

Competitive proposals will include the following required activities:

- Designing Learning Exchange structure, content, and selection process, facilitating session(s) virtually or, if feasible, in-person with support from NASTAD, and completing public-facing summary document/similar product in partnership with Learning Exchange participants;
- Designing and completing, with NASTAD support, a participant selection process;
- Compensating up to 10 Learning Exchange participants through low-threshold direct payment mechanism that abides by federal requirements;
- Planning and delivery of professional development and mentorship support for Learning Exchange participants;
- Collaborating with other project contractor(s) (Remedy Alliance/FTP, UNC Street Drug Analysis Lab, and to-be-selected Landscape Analysis and Toolkit contractor) to identify opportunities for shared learning, to support consistency and utility across deliverables, and to provide feedback to NASTAD and CDC; and
- Participating in regular check-in meetings with NASTAD staff.

Competitive candidates will demonstrate:

- Experience and expertise in concepts and topics related to drug user health and harm reduction (candidates do not need to have specific expertise in community drug checking programs and approaches but some familiarity may be helpful);
- Experience and expertise in working with people who use drugs and who have experience navigating the illicit drug supply;
- Experience and expertise in working with communities of color, especially professional development and mentorship with Black and American Indian/Alaska Native people;
- Facilitation skills for virtual and any in-person convening(s);
- Ability to implement low-barrier mechanism to directly compensate Learning Exchange participants that abides by federal requirements;
- If proposing in-person convening(s), administrative capacity to plan event and to budget for and arrange participant travel and accommodations;
- Ability to quickly implement a contract with NASTAD via independent contracting, 501c3, fiscal sponsor, LLC, or host institution and to submit invoices in a timely manner; and
- Readiness to manage federal funding.
  - This funding agreement will be a fixed-price (deliverable-based) contract between NASTAD and the selected contractor(s). The selected contractor will need to provide a

recent W9, resume or CV, NICRA documentation if claiming indirect costs, and payment information during the contracting process, as well as finalized versions of the workplan and budget proposed in the application.

#### 4. Submission and Selection Process

NASTAD Drug User Health intends to follow the review and selection timeline below:

January 5, 2025: Deadline for application submission [via ClickUp form](#), 11:59pm PT

January 13-24, 2025: NASTAD project staff hold virtual interviews with finalists

January 27-31, 2025: Final selection, notification

Proposals will be reviewed through the following process:

- Each proposal will be reviewed by multiple NASTAD staff using a standardized rubric;
- Reviewers will meet to discuss scores and identify finalists;
- Project staff will hold virtual interviews with finalists;
- Project staff will make final selection based on application materials, virtual interview, and overall demonstration of ability and readiness to carry out project deliverables.

#### 5. RFP Application

Applicants should complete and submit the [RFP application form through ClickUp](#) to be considered for this award. **Please submit application form by Sunday, January 5, at 11:59pm.** Applications submitted by email or other methods will not be reviewed.

For reference, application questions and materials are included below:

- Organization/Lead Applicant Name
- Organization/Lead Applicant Email
- Organization/Lead Applicant Phone Number
- Please describe your (organizational/individual) interest in and goals for this project. (500-word limit)
- Please describe your (organizational/individual) experience supporting or advancing the leadership of people who use drugs. (500-word limit)
- Please describe your (organizational/individual) experience working with Black and American Indian/Alaska Native communities on public health programming and/or intervention development. Please highlight any professional development and mentorship experience with Black and American Indian/Alaska Native people. (650-word limit)

- Please describe your (organizational/individual) experience with concepts, topics, and public health interventions related to drug user health and harm reduction. Please highlight any previous experience related to navigation of the illicit drug supply, drug checking programs, strategies for sharing drug-related morbidity and mortality data, and/or health communications with people who use drugs. (650-word limit)
- Please describe your (organizational/individual) experience with virtual facilitation and, if proposing any in-person convening(s), in-person facilitation. (650-word limit)
- Please provide any additional details about your proposed participant selection process and proposed approach, structure, and content for Learning Exchange (including ideal degree of NASTAD involvement in planning and completing activities). (500-word limit)
- **Upload:** Proposed workplan and timeline for project period that includes required activities identified above.
- **Upload:** Proposed budget, including Learning Exchange participant compensation and costs for any in-person convening(s), including participant travel and accommodations. [Download budget template.](#)
- **Upload:** Sample work product relevant to project scope and/or required activities (optional).