

Sonoma County HIV Education and Prevention– Program Materials Review Protocol

Why do we need to have our prevention materials reviewed?

In 1992 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released the *Content of AIDS Related Written Materials, Pictorials, Audiovisuals, and Educational Sessions in Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Assistance Programs* guidance. This guidance called for the development of review panels “to consider the appropriateness of messages designed to communicate with various groups.” Additionally in February of 2002 the California State Office of AIDS released guidelines calling for the establishment of materials review panels by all local health jurisdictions. These program materials review panels are required to review and approve all HIV/AIDS materials.

What materials need to be reviewed?

HIV/AIDS educational materials that are developed using monies administered by the Office of AIDS (OA) must be reviewed. The specific funding streams are Education & Prevention, all five of the High Risk Initiatives, the Social Marketing Campaign, and Tobacco Settlement monies used to support HIV/AIDS education and prevention programs. These funding streams are subject to change. All Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJ) that develop materials with State funds are required to adhere to these guidelines, even if it's only a portion of their funding. This includes funds not only for the development of materials, but also for any salary of personnel that work with the program(s) related to the materials (i.e., administrative costs, other costs, indirect costs, etc.).

The types of materials that need to be reviewed are:

- Written materials (e.g., pamphlets, brochures, fliers, web-based written materials)
- Print Media (e.g., fliers, advertisements, posters, palm cards)
- Audiovisuals (e.g., motion pictures, video tapes, radio PSAs)
This includes radio scripts (audio or script), video (tape or script), a flyer advertising an event, questionnaires and survey instruments.

Materials developed prior to the development of Program Materials Review Panels must be reviewed if still in use.

My agency runs a website that has HIV/AIDS prevention information on it, does that need to be reviewed?

If monies administered by the OA fund the website (fully or partially), then yes the educational information needs to be reviewed. In addition, a notice regarding the availability and content of the HIV/AIDS information needs to be placed on the website. Please see the *Website Notice Summary* for more information.

Who reviews the materials?

A six (6) member panel, including an Prevention and Planning Division staff member, will be selected to serve. This panel will be trained in HIV and transmission, epidemiology, and the extent of HIV/AIDS in Sonoma County. As per CDC's June 1992 Guidelines, "The Program Review Panel must consist of no less than five individuals which represent a reasonable cross-section of the general population. Since Program Material Review Panels review materials for many intended audiences, no single intended audience shall predominate the composition of the Program Review Panel, except in the case where panels review materials intended for racial and ethnic minority populations. Program Review Panels must include one health department representative, and individuals that can represent cultural sensitivities and the language of the intended audience either through representation on the panel, or as consultants to the panel. Panels reviewing school-based materials for use with school-based populations should include representatives of groups such as teachers, school administrators, parents, and students." It is important to note that one PRP may be established for all education and prevention work and target audiences may vary by project.

What is the panel looking for?

The panel's job is two-fold. They must gauge the appropriateness of materials based on our community's standards on obscenity. In addition, the guidance from the CDC states that:

- Draft materials shall be reviewed to determine that, "None of the funds appropriated to carry out this title may be used to provide education or information designed to promote or encourage, directly, homosexual or heterosexual activity or intravenous substance abuse."
- "All program of education and information receiving funds under this title shall include information about the harmful effects of promiscuous sexual activity and intravenous substance abuse, and the benefits of abstaining from such activities."
- Materials "provide accurate information about various means to reduce an individual's risk of exposure to, or transmission of...[HIV]...provided that...informational materials used are not obscene."

What are our "community standards on obscenity"?

Defining obscenity can be very difficult. Materials developed should be accessible to a wide-range of people within your program's target population. The use of gratuitous full-frontal nudity, pictures depicting or suggesting sex acts, images glorifying drug use, and graphic language should be avoided.

How long does this process take?

We understand that responding quickly to your community's needs and issues is of great importance to you and your agency. To help support you in those efforts we will try our best to make sure that the process does not take more than 15 working days.

When and how do I submit materials to be reviewed?

The material review process will occur twice a month. The process will start on the 1st and the 15th of each month. Seven (7) copies of all proposed materials and a cover letter must

be received by the 1st or the 15th of the month, or the first business day after the 1st or the 15th if either of those days fall on a weekend. Within two (2) working days following receipt, a written (e-mail) notice will be sent with a projected final review date (no more than 15 working days after receipt of the materials).

If appropriate, materials can be sent to the OAC electronically in lieu of sending hard copies. Materials sent electronically need to be converted to an Adobe Acrobat PDF.

What does the cover letter need to say?

The cover letter needs to address the following concerns:

- Target population(s)
- General message concepts
- Types of media being used
- Modes of distribution
- Methods of development and pre-testing with the target population

A sample cover letter is attached.

What happens once my materials have been submitted?

- Copies of draft materials will be mailed to all panel members within two (2) working days of receipt.
- Panel members will have five (5) working days to review the materials and return a signed statement approving them or calling for a meeting to discuss the material.
- If the panel (by simple majority) approves the material, the agency will be notified within two (2) working days.
- If a panelist requests a meeting, efforts will be made to hold the meeting within five (5) working days.
- A decision to approve or not approve the draft material(s) will be made through consensus by the review panel at the time of the meeting.

If my materials are approved can I immediately use them?

Once you have received (oral or written) that your materials have been approved you may use them.

What if I am developing something in a language other than English?

All materials must be submitted in English and the native language with specific notes on the differences in the interpretation. OA staff will be identified with the specific language skills needed to review the materials for the translation to assure accuracy. The English version will go through the review process outlined above.

How “finished” do the materials have to be?

As close to finished as possible. For example, if you are designing an advertisement that will include a photograph, it is not enough to just submit the photograph. The panel would also need to know what text went with the photograph, and how the photograph was going to be cropped and placed.

If you were to develop something larger, like a short video, it would be appropriate to submit the storyboards and script. This will allow you to make any changes before incurring the expense of filming.

Do I need to re-submit something if we are using it again and are making only minor changes to it?

Call the Eric Acuna at (707) 565-6615 or Ellen Swedberg at (707) 565-6683 if you have any questions about what needs to be submitted.

Can the panel ask for revisions to be made?

Yes. If the panel believes that the materials reviewed would be appropriate if revisions were made, then the panel may provide conditional approval. If the agency chooses to make the suggested changes, a new draft of the revised material needs to be resubmitted to the OA. OA staff will review the revised materials within two (2) working days.

My agency has an internal review panel and/or a community panel for materials developed for our direct CDC funded program, can we just use that panel?

No. All materials developed with money administered by the OA must be reviewed by the OA panel.

Where do I send my materials?

Mail: Ellen Swedberg
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Prevention and Planning Division
475 Aviation Blvd., Ste. 210
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Email: eswedber@sonoma-county.org

Questions: Ellen Swedberg, (707) 565-6683