

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) HOPE Demonstration Field Experiment (DFE)

May 24, 2011

1. *Q. What should a site proposal contain?*
  - A. A proposal should be written in clear and precise language and address the site's plan for implementing each of HOPE's programmatic requirements, especially:
    - How the site will conduct Rapid Drug Testing.
    - What mechanism HOPE probationers will have to be informed about when and where to appear for testing.
    - How the site will ensure that violation hearings are scheduled as soon as possible after a violation is discovered.
    - Attest that the site has the ability to modify probation.
    - Identify key data elements the site will make available for evaluation.
    - Letters of support from the key HOPE team members listed in the solicitation.

Please refer to pages 23-25 of the [BJA solicitation](#) for details on these requirements. See also OJP's guidance in Grants 101: "[Write the Proposal.](#)"

2. *Q. Can sites that are proposing targeting parolees apply under the HOPE DFE solicitation?*
  - A. Because we are seeking to conduct a strict replication of the original Hawaii HOPE model, we will be looking for proposals that have plans for Judge-led interventions that focus on probationers.
3. *Q. What is the purpose of the hotline, which probationers will call?*
  - A. The HOPE hotline is a mechanism for the HOPE program staff to process the large volume of drug tests necessary to create the viable threat of a random testing for every HOPE probationer. HOPE probationers call in the morning to see if their color is selected. If it is, they must be tested in the afternoon. The frequency for testing a probationer (as determined by the color) is set largely by the probationer's past behavior.
4. *Q. What is a Motion to Modify?*
  - A. A Motion to Modify allows a Judge to impose a brief sanction on HOPE offenders and return them to probation to continue their relationship with their probation officer. Because the jail stay is brief (if offenders do not abscond), usually the probation officer needs to simply complete a standardized form detailing the basics of the violation. This is in contrast to the more extensive paperwork required for a complete revocation of probation. Sites need to demonstrate that they are able to modify probation sanctions.

5. *Q. What is the purpose of the Project Coordinator?*
  - A. The Project Coordinator in each site will ensure that the original HOPE program is being implemented with fidelity and that the necessary programmatic data is collected. The Project Coordinator will troubleshoot problems, identify assistance needs and coordinate with the Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) providers, and be the primary liaison between the site and the Research Coordinator.
  
6. *Q. What is the purpose of the Research Coordinator?*
  - A. The evaluation team will provide a Research Coordinator for each site who will ensure that random assignment is being followed. The Research Coordinator will ensure that the HOPE model is being implemented with fidelity, that the data needed for research are being provided, and that the data accurately reflect what is happening at each site. The Research Coordinator will also be an additional resource to troubleshoot issues when necessary.
  
7. *Q. What is the purpose of the Webinars?*
  - A. Webinars are informational sessions about the HOPE program and the expectations of the evaluation. Each webinar will be followed by a question and answer session. We encourage interested parties and key HOPE team members to participate in both webinars. The webinar about the HOPE program will be held on Thursday, June 2. The webinar about the evaluation of the HOPE DFE will be held on Thursday, June 7. All key members (see question 9) should attend.
  
8. *Q. How many sites will be funded for HOPE?*
  - A. Depending on the availability of funds, BJA will fund at least **four** DFE sites through this solicitation. Applicants may request up to \$850,000 in funding for a period of 24 months with a start date of October 1, 2011.
  
9. *Q. How does the site prepare for site visits?*
  - A. If your jurisdiction is selected to participate as a BJA demonstration site, staff from BJA, NIJ, and the evaluation team will visit before you launch your program. At a minimum, you can prepare for the site visit by making the key members available for an interview. The key members include:
    - a. Lead Judge for HOPE.
    - b. Judicial Assistant.
    - c. Chief Probation Officer.
    - d. A Front-line Probation Officer

- e. Jail Administrator
- f. Representative of Sheriff/Police (whoever has responsibility for warrant service and offender transport)

During the interview, these key members of the DFE should be able to speak to, and provide documentation about, the key programmatic aspects of HOPE. The site visits will likely occur between July 18 and July 29.

10. *Q. What training and technical assistance will the sites receive?*

- A. Sites will receive HOPE training in case and courtroom management during the 180-day start-up period for implementing the program. In addition, BJA will select training and technical assistance service providers to partner with the sites to implement the HOPE DFE model with fidelity.

11. *Q. Does the probation officer lose total discretion under HOPE and simply implement the Judge's recommendation concerning offender sanctioning?*

- A. No. Under HOPE, the Probation Officer makes sanction recommendations to the Judge. What is different is that the Probation Officer must initiate the process for a violation hearing for each sanction.

12. *Q. Is a violation hearing valid if it is held after 72 hours from when the violating offender is taken into custody?*

- A. Yes. Although 72 hours after the offender is in custody is an exemplary goal, having the hearing as soon as possible is HOPE's operating philosophy. The programmatic objectives are to instill swift and certain sanctions into probation through HOPE as opposed to probation as usual.

13. *Q. Are sanctions still brief for absconding offenders?*

- A. The Judge still has discretion over sanctions in HOPE. At the initial warning hearing, it should be made apparent to offenders that they are expected to acknowledge when they have violated and not to abscond from the system. Absconding offenders should expect much harsher sanctions.

14. *Q. What happens if an offender contests the results of the drug test?*

- A. The results are sent for outside verification and a review hearing is scheduled.

15. *Q. Is HOPE easier than probation as usual?*

- A. HOPE entails much more intensive monitoring of the offender. The offender, however, often believes HOPE is fair and transparent since the program expectations and likely sanctions for violations are known ahead of time.

16. Q. *Who is the target population for this program?*
- A. The target population includes probationers who are considered high-risk for: (a) failing probation through continued drug use, (b) missed appointments, or (c) reoffending - using information from risk assessment results, criminal histories, and past behavior while on probation.
17. Q. *Is it possible to have a team of Judges work on HOPE cases?*
- A. Yes, but it is advisable to have one Judge responsible for the program.
18. Q. *Who is responsible for providing the Research Coordinator for the sites?*
- A. The evaluation team must provide for a research coordinator for each site. The evaluation team should determine the necessary time commitment for each Research Coordinator to fulfill the following tasks:
- Ensure that data is being collected (real time);
  - Assist with random assignment at the site;
  - Ensure program fidelity and takes actions to mitigate potential fidelity issues at the site in collaboration with other HOPE site team members;
  - Liaise with the Project Coordinator and other HOPE team members.
19. Q. *Can a sanction be shortened or delayed to accommodate for space available in the jail?*
- A. No. The offender must serve the entire sanction imposed by the judge as soon as possible. This will ensure the swift and certain sanctions component of HOPE.
20. Q. *One of the required letters of support is from the Chief Justice. Can this be the Presiding Judge of the County Courts, or does it mean the Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court?*
- A. A letter of support is needed from the Judge who essentially will commit the judge(s) to HOPE and ensure that HOPE is implemented with fidelity. That may be the Presiding Judge of the County Courts, or the Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court.
21. Q. *On page 22 of the RFP it lists required travel for five meetings. How long would those meetings last, for budgeting purposes?*
- A. The meetings will likely be 2 days, 2.5 days maximum.
22. Q. *If a probationer is in substance abuse treatment, would they be eligible for the HOPE program? If they enter treatment while in the program, do they remain in HOPE?*
- A. A HOPE offender can be in residential or outpatient treatment before, during, or after enrollment in HOPE.