

## **Applicant Strength and Weakness Summary for Proposals for State Fiscal Years 16 & 17**

**Applicant:** University of Nevada, Reno - CASAT

**Average Proposal Score:** 77

**Requested Amount:** \$78,547

**Program Area:** *Prevention*

### **Executive Summary (Required) \*From application**

The Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technologies (CASAT) at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) mission is to provide training, technical assistance, evaluation, research, and other services to support prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery professionals. The overall goal of CASAT is to help states, organizations, agencies, and individuals apply evidence-based practices. Established in 1994, CASAT is almost entirely grant funded and employs up to 60 individuals. The annual grant income varies according to currently funded programs, and averages approximately \$5,200,000 annually. CASAT has been on the cutting edge of addiction and behavioral health treatment, prevention and recovery for 20 years. The expertise and experience of its employees in substance abuse and behavioral addictions and disorders, including problem gambling prevention, make it ideally suited to provide the support and infrastructure needed for this proposed Problem Gambling prevention project.

The proposed project represents the next logical step toward a comprehensive, institutionalized problem gambling prevention program at UNR, and includes outreach activities to Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC), where a working relationship already exists through Nevada's Recovery and Prevention Program (NRAP). Infusing problem gambling prevention, education and awareness efforts begun in the past two years into current and future activities at TMCC begins an expansion that will lead to eventual inclusion of problem gambling prevention activities statewide by providing a theoretically sound, evidence-based program that can be implemented at any of Nevada's institutions of higher education.

The proposed project will continue to follow recommendations of: "A Call to Action Addressing College Gambling: Recommendations for Science-Based Policies and Programs," and remains aligned with Nevada's 2009 prevention strategic plan, focusing on social media and graphics products and education activities to raise awareness and reduce gambling related harms described by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The proposed project will build on achievements, lessons learned, and data gathered about gambling behaviors, knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of UNR students, faculty and staff during the first two years of program efforts. The project expands collaborative efforts with NRAP and the Sober and Healthy Living Coalition using best practices described by Williams, et al (2012), which integrate Problem Gambling prevention into existing programs and policies that promote and support healthy lifestyle choices.

Data from surveys and key informant interviews will be used to adjust social norms marketing messages and education and awareness endeavors. Program adjustments and mid-course corrections implemented to date have increased the involvement of NRAP staff and students and allowed the use of budget savings to be used to expand social media marketing to increase successful efforts with the college student population and for additional staff training for increased program effectiveness. A proposed new element of the program is an online personalized problem gambling feedback web application based on the "Bet on U" survey at [Collegegambling.org](http://Collegegambling.org). The application, modeled after one used nationally, will allow UNR students to compare

their knowledge, attitudes and behaviors to those of their UNR peers, and will add an additional evidence-based prevention element to increase program effectiveness.

**Reviewers Strengths:**

- No duplicate funding from State. University appears to broadly support prevention efforts (i.e., Nevada’s Recovery and Prevention Program has been institutionalized and the Problem Gambling prevention program received exempt status).
- Service models are evidence-based. Plans include activities around Problem Gambling Awareness Month. Project is developed with an eye toward institutionalization of Problem Gambling prevention in the university system. Informal partnership with Nevada Council on Problem Gambling is established.
- Applicant provided good supporting documentation about the target population (college students), although one website address was invalid and required a little additional effort to find the right page.
- Organization is well-established and has significant experience with prevention including Problem Gambling. Most staff members are well-suited to their roles.
- Good justification provided as to why there is a need to implement PG prevention programs on campuses.
- Strong history of providing PG awareness programs and other activities that can fall under the umbrella of prevention. Staff has lots of experience.

**Reviewers Weaknesses:**

- Project has no other direct source of funding (just general support from the university). If this funding is not received, there is no other way to sustain the project.
- Letters from university programs submitted with application are essentially letters of support for funding; they do not outline a partnership or reciprocal arrangement so cannot be considered as evidence of collaborative partnerships. Outcomes are not discussed; only outputs (i.e., 350 students and teachers reached, and 40 contacts for information/assistance). Applicant needs to devise methods of measuring impact; at minimum surveys to gauge whether those who receive materials or participate in educational sessions have increased knowledge of the subject matter).
- No particular emphasis is placed on reaching students in rural and frontier counties who utilize distance learning techniques. Applicant appears to assume that just the online presence (e.g., social media, online surveys) will sufficiently serve these students without any additional effort such as targeted messaging.
- One concern is that the peer recovery counselor will have a BA in addictions before this grant is funded and is beginning master-level coursework in the same discipline. However, no mention of specific experience with Problem Gambling is made.
- Most funding is for administrative costs (over \$60,000 of the \$78,500 requested)
- Little discussion of evaluation other than providing for a variety of outputs. Unclear how efforts will be measured, implied program effectiveness measures via success in reaching target outputs but not made clear.
- Limited reach; UNR and TMCC. Although described as a pilot project implying with success the reach could expand as other NV institutions of higher ED adopt program.

- The lack of a prevention specialist on staff; that is addressed in other section via MOU with certified prevention specialist but not called out in the response specifically addressing the qualifications of project staff.

**Comments and Questions:**

None

## **Applicant Strength and Weakness Summary for Proposals for State Fiscal Years 16 & 17**

**Applicant:** Nevada Council On Problem Gambling (NCPG)

**Average Proposal Score:** 75

**Requested Amount:** \$169,238

**Program Area:** *Prevention*

### **Executive Summary (Required) \*From application**

The NCPG Prevention Initiative will support and expand problem gambling prevention efforts through the existing infrastructure of our organization whose mission is dedicated to problem gambling Awareness, Education and Advocacy. Utilizing the experiences, feedback, outcomes, and lessons learned during FY14-15, we will focus our efforts on (1) Continuation and expansion of core prevention programs; (2) Further development and implementation of emerging programs; and (3) Building sustainability through effective outreach and strategic partnerships. Some brief examples of the work we will perform in each of these areas are as follows:

1. Continuation and expansion of core programs and services that Nevada has come to rely upon for problem gambling awareness and prevention efforts in Nevada. Efforts will include:
  - > Development, production and statewide dissemination of problem gambling awareness and education materials;
  - > Integration of problem gambling messaging, materials, and referral resources into community awareness and health promotion activities and events;
  - > Promotion and coordination of activities in support of Problem Gambling Awareness Month;
  - > Maintenance and use of website and social media to provide and promote problem gambling awareness, information and resources for help
2. Further development of emerging approaches introduced in FY14-15 to expand prevention efforts through individual and agency partnership opportunities. Efforts will include:
  - > Leadership development, goal setting, and skills training to strengthen recruitment and engagement of persons in recovery and concerned others through the PRESS ON project, "Promoting Recovery by Expanding Service, Support and Outreach in Nevada".
  - > Enhancement of the Prevention Mini-grant program to provide more direction and support to potential applicants through a selective menu of priorities and prevention activities, with corresponding funding levels, implementation guidelines, and prescribed outcome measures.
3. Development of an effective communication and collaboration strategy that provides a mechanism to engage community partners and key stakeholders in cooperative relationships to inform, enhance, expand and sustain problem gambling prevention initiatives in Nevada. Efforts will include:
  - > Regular and timely communication with GMU staff, consultants, problem gambling service providers and community partners to identify needs, resources, and opportunities to reduce barriers to engaging service providers in problem gambling prevention efforts in Nevada.
  - > Participation in strategic planning discussions and activities to consider models of cooperation that can provide the best systems and supports for sustained statewide prevention efforts in Nevada.

**Reviewers Strengths:**

- Maintaining existing outreach through provision of materials and adding a “kit” that becomes a self-contained resource display. Continuing and expanding use of volunteers through PRESS-ON project. Promising enhancements to mini-grant program (e.g., creating a “menu” of activities and requiring PG Awareness Month activities). Proposal includes a collaboration component to increase communication and coordination.
- Good effort described to reach rural and frontier communities. Good idea to begin asking partners about special needs populations; at least that will provide some future direction.
- Organization and two of the four identified staff/contractors are well-qualified to manage this grant and deliver the proposed services.
- Good range of services with strategies that should aid in program success, such as use of consultants and collaborators.

**Reviewers Weaknesses:**

- As written, the proposal does not capture the monetary value of the additional resources that the applicant brings to the table. The applicant was conducting prevention activities during the three years State funding was not available, so it seems that the applicant could have placed a value on those basic services and counted them toward the cost of the broader prevention project.
- Evaluation of materials is limited to partner agencies; how do they know whether consumers found the materials helpful? Evaluation of PRESS-ON activities is limited to outputs; no method to measure whether volunteer activities are impactful. No evaluation for mini-grant program are mentioned. In the Outputs/Outcomes section, only outputs are described; nothing about how the services impact individuals or the community.
- Choosing special populations because resources and programs already exist does not necessarily mean there is a need. Supporting information (which must exist) would have been useful.
- Insufficient information is provided about a new staff member’s background.
- Unclear how efforts will be measured. The program needs an evaluation component. No outcomes were noted, only outputs.
- The lack of a prevention specialist on staff, which is addressed in other section via MOU with certified prevention specialist but not called out in the response specifically addressing the qualifications of project staff.
- Doesn’t clearly outline what criteria Mini Grants are awarded on.
- Organization seems to have high staff turnover, the only current staff member that has been there for an extended time is the director.

**Comments and Questions:**

- Stipends for PRESS-ON volunteers to staff tables at outreach events and for speaking engagements probably do not belong in “Other Expenses.” These sound like payment for services (particularly the speaking fees) so they should be in Contractual/Consultant. If left in “Other Expenses” as expressions of appreciation for volunteer services, we need to be sure that the amount per volunteer does not exceed the State Administrative Manual and the Grant Instructions and Requirements (GIRS) limit on “gifts” to

- volunteers. Need to determine whether cost of snacks in Supplies can be charged to this grant. Does the applicant really need \$6,000 for giveaways at outreach events? How much was expended for this purpose in FY14 and FY15?
- The arrangement with Ted Hartwell is not a collaborative partnership; it is a subcontract. In the Coordination and Strategic Planning section, is the applicant proposing to develop a new prevention strategic plan?
- If Ted Hartwell is still employed by Desert Research Institute (which is part of the Nevada System of Higher Education), how will his time be tracked to ensure that his contractual work does not overlap with his DRI employment? According to the GIRS, grantees are discouraged from contracting with public employees because of the concern about double-dipping.