

**California Health Facilities Financing Authority (Authority)**  
**Specialty Dental Clinic Grant Program Development Update**  
**Information Item**

**June 29, 2023**

**Specialty Dental Clinic Grant Program Overview**

On June 27, 2022, the Specialty Dental Clinic Grant Program (Dental Program) was chaptered into law, authorizing the Authority to administer a \$25 million grant program for the purpose of increasing access to oral health care for special health care needs populations through the development and expansion of specialty dental clinics.

**Dental Program Updates**

Since the last update to the Authority board on January 26, 2023, Authority staff has continued to work on clarifying statutory language and further refining key issues for the development of the guidelines with input from various stakeholders with whom staff continues to engage. Authority staff has been meeting regularly and communicating with its technical advisor, the California Dental Association Foundation (CDAF), to discuss the Dental Program guidelines, licensing requirements for dental clinics, geographic regions, and evaluation criteria.

In addition to the CDAF, Authority staff has met with several stakeholder groups, including the California Department of Developmental Services, the California Association of Nurse Anesthetists, and the California Dental Hygienists' Association, to discuss each organization's specific expertise related to the implementation of the Dental Program. Authority staff has also discussed several guidelines topics with internal contacts, including legal counsel regarding statutory interpretations, as well as TAP International Inc., the Authority's financial analyst, regarding types of financial statements and accounting issues.

**Dental Program Guidelines and Statutory Interpretation**

At the January board meeting, Authority staff reported six key elements that were being considered for the Dental Program guidelines. However, after receiving extensive stakeholder input, Authority staff has determined to alter some of those key elements. The table below contains a summary of previously reported key elements and determination since the January board meeting.

	Key Element	Previously Proposed Action	Current Action
1)	Two-phase application process	Phase one would have been a letter of intent (eligibility screening), and phase two would have required a more detailed application with extensive project details and cost estimates.	<b><u>Changed:</u></b> Authority staff determined that using a one-step application process would be more expedient, efficient and less confusing to applicants.
2)	Extra points for project collaboration	Offering extra points to applicants who collaborated and applied jointly.	<b><u>Changed:</u></b> Extra points for project collaboration would be difficult to coordinate and would unintentionally punish applicants who could not apply jointly.
3)	Defining the 50% caseload of special health care needs patients for ten years requirement	Statute requires that the special health care needs population must constitute at least 50% of the facility's total patient caseload for ten years. Authority staff previously proposed that it would define the requirement to apply only to projects financed with grant proceeds, and not for the entire facility.	<b><u>Under consideration:</u></b> Authority staff is considering that patients with special health care needs may be better served if the requirement is placed on the entire facility, instead of only the project that was financed with grant proceeds. Also considered is the fact that renovation/remodeling projects not tied to an operatory (i.e. widening of hallways) or equipment only projects that can be utilized in all rooms would complicate the tracking of the 50% caseload if tied to the project alone.
4)	Project completion timeframes	Requirement that projects be ready by certain deadlines based on the type of projects awarded.	<b><u>Developed:</u></b> Project timeline requirements were determined as follows: 18 months for construction or expansion, 12 months for acquisition or renovation, and nine months for equipment only projects.
5)	Geographic distribution of funds	Defining regional areas and setting funding maximums for each region to ensure an equitable distribution of funding across California.	<b><u>Developed:</u></b> Defined each geographic region and allocated funding based on its population with a disability and its proportionate share of population with a disability when compared to all of California.
6)	Method of grant disbursement after approval	Disbursement of grant funds either as an advance or on a reimbursement basis.	<b><u>Unchanged:</u></b> Grantees will have the option to receive grant funds as an advance or as a reimbursement.

The Authority has also further refined the guidelines for the Dental Program as follows:

**(1) Eligible Uses of Funds:** In consultation with its technical advisor and legal counsel, Authority staff has determined the following eligible uses of grant proceeds:

- Construction of real property: including the following costs: project planning, project management, appraisals, inspections, or pre-construction costs such as permit fees, surveying, architectural, and engineering fees.
- Expansion: the acquisition of real property and the purchase of mobile dental units.
- Modification: the renovation or remodeling of real property.
- Adaptation: the purchase of equipment.

**(2) Geographic Distribution:** In response to stakeholder concerns and the statutory goal of reducing geographic shortages of dental care for special health care needs populations, Authority staff used census data to define five regions in California: the San Joaquin, Superior, Bay Area/Central Coast, Southern, and Los Angeles regions. Additionally, in order to calculate maximum funding allocations for each region, each region's data was analyzed for both its total number of population with a disability and its proportionate share of population with a disability when compared to all of California. These two variables were used to calculate a weighted average, which was used in calculating the maximum amount of funding that each region could receive in the first funding round. The plan is that if funding remains available after the first funding round, there would be no regional funding maximums for subsequent funding rounds.

**(3) Evaluation Criteria:** Based on statutory requirements, feedback received from CDAF (the Authority's technical advisor), and past experience from other Authority grant programs, Authority staff has drafted the application evaluation criteria for the Dental Program and continues to develop the criteria and engage with its technical advisor. Each applicant would need to address each of the following regarding its proposed project to be funded with Dental Program grant funds.

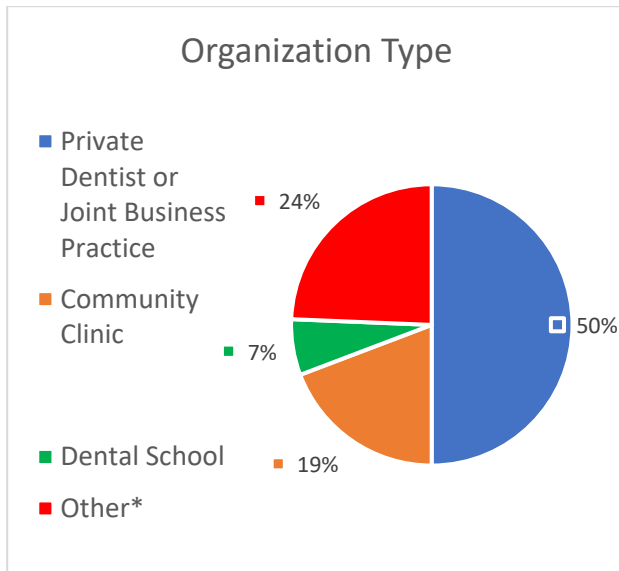
- (a) Project supports or improves timely access to patient care, describing:
  - (i) The current wait times for appointments for the special health care needs populations, current wait times for specialty dental care, and how the project will decrease wait times in the project's area.
- (b) Project reduces geographic shortages of specialty dental care, describing:
  - (i) The geographic location of the project, the area served, and how the project is addressing the shortage of services.
  - (ii) The need for a specialty dental clinic in the project's geographic area and any current collaborations with local regional centers, government entities, community organizations, or other local providers, including letters of support from one or more community groups.

- (c) Project increases equity, describing:
  - (i) The special health care needs population served by the project, including an estimate of the percentage of children and adult patients to be served by the project.
  - (ii) How the service provider will provide culturally and linguistically competent care, communication and/or cultural/ethnic information to the special health care needs populations.
- (d) Project supports quality of care for the special health care needs populations, describing:
  - (i) The service provider's experience working with special health care needs populations and the commitment and interest in serving these population.
  - (ii) How the project will assist in increasing the quality of patient care or expand access to care.
  - (iii) The percentage of the service provider's current special health care needs population served relative to the total patient caseload, as well as the projected increase after completion of the project.
- (e) Project includes plans to reduce the need for dental care using sedation or general anesthesia, describing:
  - (i) The percentage of patients with special health care needs who are receiving dental treatment under general anesthesia/deep sedation, moderate, conscious, or oral conscious sedation, minimal sedation, nitrous oxide, and no anesthesia, as well as how the level of sedation required is determined and any techniques or treatment methods used to reduce the need for anesthesia.
  - (ii) Behavior modification or desensitization techniques used for patients with special health care needs.
- (f) Project is, or will be, ready, feasible, and sustainable, describing:
  - (i) A detailed plan and timeline with steps needed to complete the project and the ability to meet the Dental Program timeframe requirements, including site selection, renderings, request for proposals, contracts, permits, staffing process, challenges, supporting documentation, etc.
  - (ii) The total cost of the project and identified sufficient funding sources or a plan for acquiring them.
  - (iii) A demonstration of the project's sustainability for at least 10 years, including a budget with annual projected operating costs.

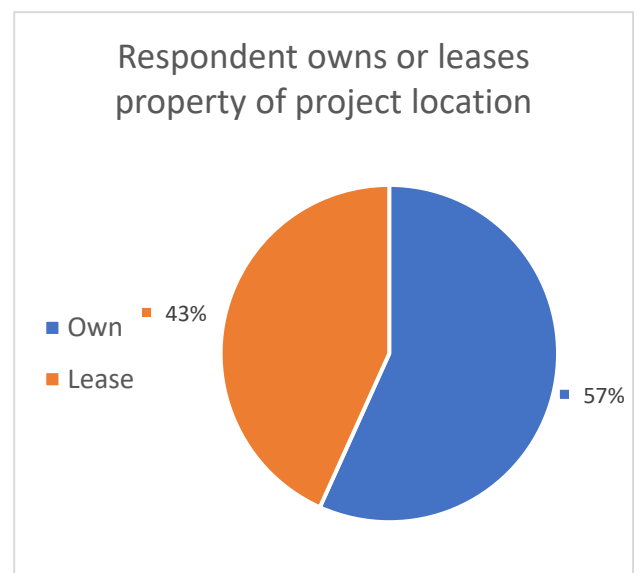
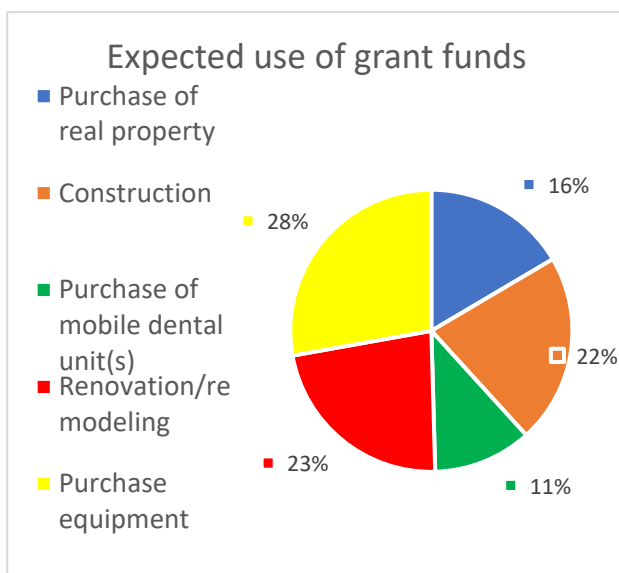
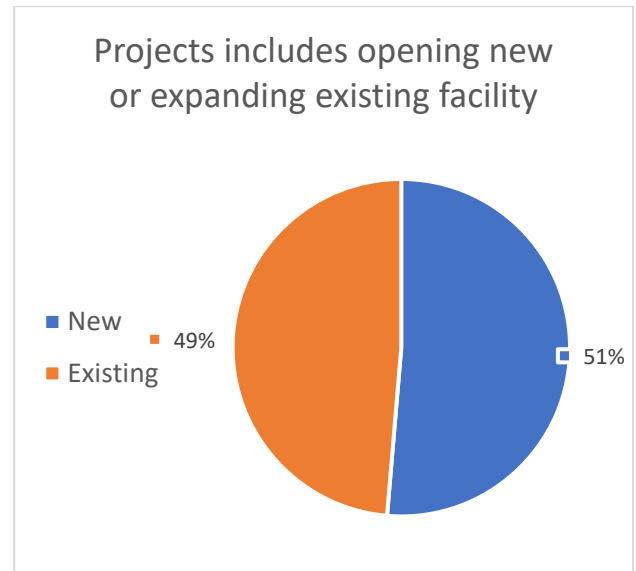
## **Program Survey**

In an effort to better understand interest in the Dental Program, potential applicants, projects, and funding amounts, Authority staff released a survey to the Dental Program stakeholders and received 74 survey responses from a variety of entities, including private dentists or joint business providers, community clinics, and dental schools. The survey results showed that respondents may cumulatively request approximately \$158 million in grant funding, that requests for funding would be vastly spread across California, and that grant proceeds would be split among a variety of different types of projects.

A breakdown of responses and the corresponding survey questions are presented below:



\*Other includes non-specified non-profits, ambulatory surgery centers, hospital networks, and FQHCs.



## **Site Visits**

### **Alta California Regional Center and Health and Life Organization Clinic**

In order to get a better understanding on how a specialty dental clinic operates, staff attended a site visit on March 9, 2023, of a community clinic that offers medical and specialized dental services, including for patients who are diagnosed with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD). As a result of the partnership between Alta California Regional Center (Alta) and Health and Life Organization (HALO), the new clinic, constructed from the ground up, opened in Sacramento in May 2022. The Alta/HALO Clinic is a mixed-use medical and dental facility that features specialized equipment, including a panoramic imaging machine, spacious dental treatment areas, wide hallways, a desensitization area, and staff who has received additional training geared towards providing dental services to individuals with I/DD. The space is also equipped with a Versatilt, which is a piece of equipment that allows for more comfortable dental treatment for patients with physical disabilities while in a wheelchair who may not otherwise be able to be transferred into a standard dental chair. Pictures of this site visit may be found in Attachment A.

### **University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry**

Authority staff also visited the University of the Pacific's Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry (UOP) in San Francisco on June 8, 2023. Opening in 2014 at its new downtown location, UOP features six dedicated operatories for patients with special health care needs, with dental care being provided by students and faculty specifically trained to serve patients with special health care needs. The dedicated space has wide treatment rooms, operatory space for root canals, and quiet spaces for dental treatment with added windows to promote family support during treatment, and also features specialized equipment that includes a portable dental x-ray machine. Specialty dental care services are provided three days a week, and approximately 3,600 patients are treated annually. Pictures of this site visit may be found in Attachment B.

## **Next steps:**

In consultation with CDAF and other stakeholders, Authority staff will continue to work on developing the Dental Program. Next steps include the following:

- Additional stakeholder meetings as needed including meetings with CDAF.
- Finalizing the Dental Program guidelines and application.
- Authority Board approval of the Dental Program guidelines, including application.
- Opening of a first funding round.
- Technical assistance webinar to help applicants apply for grant funding.

## **Attachments:**

Attachment A – Alta California Regional Center and Health and Life Organization Clinic Site Visit

Attachment B – University of the Pacific, Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry Site Visit

## ATTACHMENT A

### Alta California Regional Center/Health and Life Organization Site Visit

March 9, 2023



The Alta California Regional Center/Health and Life Organization Clinic,  
located at 965 El Camino Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95815



Reception Area



Desensitization Treatment Area





Standard Treatment Area



Specialized Treatment Area with Versatilt Equipment  
used to Treat Patients with Disabilities



Panoramic Imaging Machine with the Capability  
to Scan Individuals in Wheelchairs



## ATTACHMENT B

### University of the Pacific, Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry Site Visit

June 8, 2023



Exterior view of the Arthur A. Dugoni  
School of Dentistry



Private treatment room to offer patients with special  
health care needs dental care in a quiet space



Customized treatment area designed to decrease the  
stress of a dental procedure



Space used to train students how to treat patients with special health care needs



Portable dental x-ray machine



Main area used to treat patients with special health care needs