

Boston EMA Ryan White HIV/AIDS Services Planning Council



ASSESSMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE MECHANISM

2024-2025 Final Report

July 2025

Services, Priorities and Evaluations Committee

Planning Council Support

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Assessment of Administrative Mechanism

Background

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) requires that all Ryan White Part A Planning Councils conduct an annual assessment of the administrative mechanism (AAM) to evaluate how efficiently and rapidly grantees disburse funding to the areas of greatest need within the eligible metropolitan area (EMA).

The AAM is an annual evaluation to assess the efficiency of the grantee, Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) via the Ryan White Services team (RWS), in disbursing the Part A funds to the agencies contracted to provide Part A HIV services within the Boston EMA. Methodologies include distributing a survey to Part A providers and reviewing BPHC's internal documentation.

The Boston EMA Ryan White HIV/AIDS Services Planning Council (hereby referred to as the Planning Council) has charged the Services, Priorities, and Evaluations Committee (SPEC) with this responsibility. SPEC develops or revises data collection tools, distributes them, provides input on the analysis of the results, and provides recommendations to BPHC in areas where improvements are necessary. Planning Council Support (PCS) is responsible for revising the data collection tools according to SPEC's direction, distributing them, conducting data analysis, and presenting the analysis to the committee. SPEC develops its recommendations for a corrective action plan to address any issues that arise from the results and presents these recommendations to the Council for a vote. RWS responds to the recommendations with how they will implement the plan and address any concerns.

Methodology

From December 2024 to February 2025, SPEC members updated the previous year's agency survey. The survey included 20 questions: 18 multiple-choice and 2 open-ended. The survey asked Part A-funded agencies to respond about the effectiveness of BPHC's disbursement of funds, including agency location and capacity, procurement, contracting and budgeting, and overall satisfaction with BPHC's administration of Part A funds. The survey was sent out via SurveyMonkey to agencies in February of 2025 with a due date of March 28th, 2025. The SPEC PCS Liaison was responsible for regular follow-up with Part A providers during the data collection period. Providers were also reminded to fill it out via communications and newsletters from RWS.

SPEC also reviewed and agreed upon a BPHC Data Request including five questions, spanning three sections: 1) Contracting, 2) Disbursement of Funds, and 3) Training. This request was sent out on February 14th, 2025, with a due date of March 28th, 2025.

In March, April, and May, PCS presented updates to SPEC regarding the AAM survey and BPHC Data Request. The presentation in March included the number of responses collected. In April, PCS presented the raw and aggregated results of the agency survey and the responses to the BPHC data request. In May, SPEC discussed the results in depth and developed a corrective action plan for BPHC.

The final results and recommendations were presented to the Planning Council on May 8th, 2025, with a vote to approve the recommendations on June 5th, 2025. BPHC presented their response on June 26th, 2025.

Results

Respondent Demographics and General Information

There was a 46.8% response rate – only 15 out of 32 agencies responded to the agency survey. One agency responded after the deadline and, therefore, is not included in this report.

Table 1. Number of HIV clients in the last year by number of employees

Number of employees working in HIV services or with clients living with HIV	Number of HIV Clients in the last year					
	Less than 100	101-250	251-500	Over 500	I am not sure.	Total
1 – 10 Employees	1	2	3	1	1	8
11 – 20 Employees		2	2		1	5
21 – 30 Employees*						
Over 31 Employees		1				1
I am not sure	1					1
Total	2	5	5	1	2	15

Overall, the most respondents were from agencies with fewer than 20 employees working in HIV services or with clients living with HIV. This number does not equate to the total number of employees at each provider site. The majority of respondents reported serving 101-500 clients in the past year.

**Note: Since we received no respondents who reported having “21 - 30 employees working in HIV services or with clients living with HIV”, that line will not be reflected in the remainder of the tables in this report.*

Table 2. How long have you worked at your agency?

Years	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
1 - 5 years	4	26.7%
5 - 10 years	4	26.7%
Over 10 years	7	46.7%
Total	15	100%

SPEC members introduced this question to determine if there was a correlation between the number of years worked at their agency and experience of managing the Part A grant. There was no significant correlation between these two factors, and this data will not appear in the rest of the report.

Table 3. How many service categories were you funding for in FY24?

Number of Categories	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
1 - 2 Categories	8	53.3%
3 - 4 Categories	5	33.3%

5 - 6 Categories	2	13.3%
Total	15	100.0%

The majority of respondents were funded for only 1 to 2 categories in FY24.

Table 4. Are you the person at your agency who is responsible for contracts, budgets, both, or neither?

Both	10
Budgets only	2
Contracts only	1
Neither	2
Total	15

2 respondents are not responsible for either, 1 respondent is responsible for contracts but not budgets, 2 respondents are responsible for budgets but not contracts, and 10 respondents are responsible for both. SPEC added this question to determine if there was a correlation between responsibility for budgets and/or contracts and experience managing the Part A grant. Broadly, there was no significant difference in responses or trends in responses depending on whether the respondent was responsible for budgets, contracts, both, or neither. This analysis is included in some of the questions below.

Multiple-choice responses that correspond to a comment will be marked by an asterisk where applicable for the remaining analysis.

Assessment Questions

Table 5. BPHC provides potential agencies with adequate information on applying for funding.

Number of employees	Adequate funding information					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
1 – 10 employees				3	5	8
11 – 20 employees		1*	1	1	2	5
Over 31 employees		1				1
I am not sure					1	1
Total		2	1	4	8	15

53% of respondents strongly agree that BPHC provides potential agencies with adequate information on applying for funding.

Comments:

11 – 20 employees

- *There was little information regarding whether they would entertain new program services to existing providers.*

Table 6. In your experience, how long does it take BPHC to finalize contracts with your agency?

Number of employees	Number of days
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	30 days or less	31-60 days	61-90 days	I am not sure	More than 90 days	Total
1 – 10 Employees	1	2	2	1	2	8
11 – 20 Employees		1	2		2	5
Over 31 Employees					1	1
I am not sure					1	1
Total	1	3	4	1	6	15

53% of respondents said that their contracts were finalized within 90 days or less, and 40% said more than 90 days. One respondent was unsure.

Table 7. Upon submission of all your required documents, how long does it typically take BPHC to reimburse invoices?

Number of employees	Number of days			
	30 days or less	I am not sure	More than 30 days	Total
1 – 10 Employees	4	2	2*	8
11 – 20 Employees	2	1	2*	5
Over 31 Employees			1*	1
I am not sure	1			1
Total	7	3	5	15

47% of respondents said that it typically takes BPHC 30 days or less to reimburse invoices, 33% said more than 30 days, and 20% were unsure.

Overall, more respondents said that invoices are reimbursed within 30 days or less (46.7%), and only 6.7% of respondents said that contracts were finalized within 30 days or less.

7.1 If more than 30 days for invoice submissions, in general, how long does it typically take?

1 – 10 Employees:

- *If more than 30 days: average is 36 days; from submission of invoice with all backup to the check date, range from 7 days to 71 days with about half of invoices being paid within 30 days.*

11 – 20 Employees:

- *45-90 days, depending on the time of the grant year. At the beginning of the grant cycle, it can take several months to get paid. They take an inordinately long time to issue purchase order numbers, which slows up the billing and therefore the payment of the invoices.*
- *Can vary from 30-60 but I have seen as long as 4 months*

Over 31 Employees:

- *Varies*

8. At the start of FY24, did you receive each of the following documents?

10 respondents (66.7%) reported that they received all five documents. Two respondents reported that they did not receive any of the documents. The following tables 8.1 to 8.7 are in reference to the question above.

Table 8.1 Documents Received

Document Received	Award Letter Packet	Expected Performance Measures	Program & Reporting Requirements	Provider Handbook	Service Standards
Yes	12	11	12	10	10
No	3	3	2	3	3
I am not sure	0	1	1	2	2

The majority of respondents (80%) received their award letter packet. The majority of respondents (73%) received their expected performance measures, a few respondents did not receive their performance measures (20%), and one respondent (.07%) is not sure whether or not they received the document. 80% of respondents received the program and reporting requirements, which is the highest response rate for all of the follow-up questions in this section. 67% of respondents received the provider handbook. 67% of respondents received their service standards, 13% were not sure whether or not they received their service standards, and 20% did not receive their service standards.

Comments:

- No, to all documents except Program and Reporting Requirements: *Supplied in April*
- Yes, to all documents: *Provider Handbook available on website.*

8.2 Do you feel the above documents and other resources provided to you as a Part A-funded agency were adequate for managing this grant?

→ 100% of respondents said yes.

Table 8.3 Are you satisfied with the accessibility and availability of the above documents and others related to your contract with BPHC?

Number of Employees	No	Yes	Total
1 - 10 Employees		8*	8
11 - 20 Employees	1	4	5
Over 31 Employees		1	1
I am not sure		1	1
Total	1	14	15

The only person who responded that they were not satisfied did not leave a comment.

Comments:

1 – 10 Employees

- Yes: *Yes. We get emails and can access them on the website. I would say the RFP this year especially made us more familiar with them.*

9. How would you rate the Ryan White Services Team in providing your agency with (1) Programmatic, (2) Fiscal, (3) Quality Management technical assistance (TA) or training during FY 2024 (this may include recommendations from a site visit or a special technical assistance training)?

The following questions 9.1 to 9.4 are in reference to the question above. The answers for each document are organized by number of employees.

Table 9.1 Programmatic TA

Number of Employees	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	I did not require TA	Total
1 - 10 Employees	2	4	1			1	8
11 - 20 Employees	1	1	1			2	5
Over 31 Employees				1			1
I am not sure						1	1
Total	3	5	2	1		4	15

53% of respondents rated the programmatic technical assistance as excellent or good, 20% rated the TA as average or fair, and 27% reported that they did not require programmatic TA.

Table 9.2 Budgeting and Contracting (Fiscal) TA

Number of Employees	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	I did not require TA	Total
1 - 10 Employees	3	4	1				8
11 - 20 Employees	1			2	1	1	5
Over 31 Employees					1		1
I am not sure	1						1
Total	5	4	1	2	2	1	15

60% of respondents rated the budgeting and contracting technical assistance as excellent or good, 33% rated the TA as average, fair, or poor, and 6% reported that they did not require programmatic TA.

Table 9.3 Quality Management TA

Number of Employees	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	I did not require TA	Total
1 - 10 Employees	2	3	2			1	8
11 - 20 Employees	1			1		3	5
Over 31 Employees			1				1
I am not sure		1					1
Total	3	4	3	1		4	15

46% of respondents rated the quality management technical assistance as excellent or good, 26% rated the TA as average or fair, and 26% reported that they did not require programmatic TA.

9.4 What do you recommend to improve the technical assistance?

1 – 10 Employees:

- *As a fiscal person, I cannot respond regarding Programmatic & QM TA*

11 – 20 Employees:

- *The fiscal team needs to better understand federal funding cost guidelines, especially as it relates to indirect costs.*

Over 31 Employees:

- *Availability*

Table 10. Who typically trains your agency on contracting and budgeting?

Tables 10 to 10.2 are related to training employees on contracting and budgeting.

Number of Employees	BPHC	My own agency	Another agency	Total
1 - 10 Employees	3	5		8
11 - 20 Employees	1	4		5
Over 31 Employees		1		1
I am not sure		1		1
Total	4	11		15

The majority of respondents (73.3%) reported that their agency conducts its own training on contracting and budgeting.

Table 10.1 When were you or someone from your agency last trained on contracting and budget revision? This table organizes the answers by number of employees.

Number of employees	Last trained on contracting and budget revision				
	Within the last fiscal year (FY24)	1-2 years prior to FY24	3+ years prior to FY24	I am not sure	Total
1 – 10 Employees	4	1	2	1	8
11 – 20 Employees	1	1	2	1	5
Over 31 Employees	1				1
I am not sure				1	1
Total	6	2	4	3	15

Table 10.2 When were you or someone from your agency last trained on contracting and budget revision?

This table answers the same question as Table 10.2, but the answers are organized by number of years worked at the respondent’s agency.

How long have you worked at your agency?	Last trained on contracting and budget revision				
	Within the last fiscal year (FY24)	1-2 years prior to FY24	3+ years prior to FY24	I am not sure.	Total
1 - 5 years	1	1		2	4
5 - 10 years	2		2		4
Over 10 years	3	1	2	1	7
Total	6	2	4	3	15

40% of respondents were trained within the last fiscal year, and 40% of respondents were trained at least a year before FY24. 3 respondents (20%) were not sure when they were last trained. Almost 50% of people who have been at their agency for over 5 years and were still trained in the last FY (5 respondents); and 50% of people who have been at their agency for over 5 years but were trained at least 1 year before FY24 – also 5 respondents. 1 person who has been there for over 10 years responded I am not sure.

11. Please list your agency’s top three gaps in funding regarding Ryan White Part A services if applicable.

Many respondents did not list any gaps in their funding regarding the Ryan White Part A services, and only two respondents filled out all three gaps, one from an agency with 1 – 10 employees and one from an agency with over 31 employees. The data reflected below are only the respondents who left comments, and there were no trends in the comments depending on agency size.

Gap 1: 6 responses

- Medical Case Management for 40 new HIV + patients*
- Indirect amount allowed*
- Budget for QI projects*
- Medical Transportation*
- Need more EFA*
- Consistent funding*

Gap 2: 3 responses

- Not enough EFA funds*
- Funding for fiscal/administrative staff in salary line*
- Agreed upon funding is changed mid-stream despite no change in the grant allotment*

Gap 3: 2 responses

- Transportation*
- Monies are found at the last minute when they could have been used throughout the year*

Additional Comment:

- Level of funding is not adequate to fully fund program*

Table 12. How would you rate the communication between your agency and the Ryan White Services Team?

Number of Employees	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	Total
1 - 10 Employees	5**		3			8
11 - 20 Employees	1	2*		2**		5
Over 31 Employees				1		1
I am not sure	1					1
Total	7	2	3	3		15

60% of respondents rated communication between their agency and the Ryan White Services team as excellent or good, and 40% rated communication as average or fair. No respondent rated communication as poor.

Comments:

1 – 10 Employees:

- Excellent: *BPHC Fiscal Team responds very well to our questions, concerns, etc.*
- Excellent: *Communication between us and RWSD is great, especially now that they are fully staffed.*

11 – 20 Employees:

- Good: *Current grant manager seems to be pretty good.*

- *Fair: *Disconnect between BPHC program and fiscal staff.*

Over 31 Employees:

- *Fair: *Very hard to reach*

Table 13. Overall, are you satisfied with BPHC's administration of Part A funds?

Number of Employees	No	Yes	Total
1 - 10 Employees		8**	8
11 - 20 Employees	3***	2	5
Over 31 Employees	1*		1
I am not sure		1	1
Total	4	11	15

73.3% of respondents are satisfied overall with BPHC's administration of Part A funds.

Comments:

1 – 10 Employees:

- *Yes: *Excellent work!*
- *Yes: *I am satisfied with the admin of these funds to our agency.*

11 – 20 Employees:

- *No: *The delay in getting the new award letters for the most recent RFP was unacceptable*
- *No: *I often feel they have no accounting knowledge. I have tried to explain basic accounting to them on more than one occasion, and they do not understand.*
- *No: *Contract processes are ridiculously slow. Revision process is unnecessarily slow, complicated and inaccurate.*

Over 31 Employees:

- *No: *Monies are found at the end of the year, fiscal continually issues budgets with serious errors, fiscal team changes their requirements without notice and that are different from HRSA*

Table 14. Is there any other feedback you'd like to share about your experience working with BPHC's Ryan White Services Division?

Number of Employees	Comments
1 – 10 Employees	<i>I appreciate everything you do in support of our clients and organization. Thank You!</i>
	<i>Staff showed grace, professionalism, and commitment to the community served during the year, particularly related to all the work that went into the RFP. Shout out to Lopez, Balthazar-Toussaint, and Ritterman.</i>
	<i>I feel as though there is less interaction with the programmatic staff compared to previous years.</i>
	<i>Things have only improved. Short staffing/staff turnover made it challenging at times, but I would say I felt very supported in FY24 from the RWSD Team.</i>
	<i>Enforce the deadlines at your end.</i>

11 – 20 Employees	<i>BPHC has the slowest and most onerous budget revision process among all of our grants, from private to public, from local to state to federal. Their process needs a serious overhaul and is currently a hindrance to efficient use of funds.</i>
Over 31 Employees	No comments
I am not sure	No comments

BPHC Fiscal Data Request

Table 1. How long did it take to finalize Part A contracts in FY24 once the full award was received?

Full Award Date	5/23/24
Average	152 days
Standard Deviation	2.83
Min/Max	131 days/173 days
Sample Size	30 contracts

Out of the sample size of 30 contracts, BPHC took an average of 152 days to finalize Part A contracts in FY24.

Table 2. How long did it take to finalize the most recent round of budget revisions?

Sample Size	22 revisions
Average	36.32 days
Standard Deviation	31.20
Min/Max	0 days/120 days
Median	35.5

Out of a sample size of 22 revisions, BPHC spent an average of 36 days to finalize the budget revisions.

Table 2.1 Number of Days for Finalization

Less than 30 days	10	45%
More than 30 days	12	55%

45% of BPHC's budget revisions were completed in less than 30 days, and 55% were completed in more than 30 days.

Table 3. How long did it take BPHC to pay invoices in FY24?

Sample Size	754 invoices received for payment	
Min/Max	2 days/248 days	
Median	23 days	
Standard Deviation	24.28	
Average	27.95 days	

On average, it took 27.95 days to pay invoices in FY24. The minimum number of days was 2, and the maximum number of days was 248.

Table 3.1 Number of Days for Payment

Less than 30 days	489	65%
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More than 30 days	237	31%
20 days exact	27	4%

The majority of invoices were paid in less than 30 days (60%), 31% of invoices were paid in over 30 days, and 4% of invoices were paid in exactly 20 days.

4. Did RWS provide training to agencies on how to fill out an invoice correctly?

- Yes. The annual provider meeting was conducted over two days, May 1, 2024, and May 2, 2024. 32 subrecipient agencies and 127 subrecipient staff participated, with 39 being fiscal-specific staff.
- In addition to this required grant management training, Fiscal Coordinators and Contract Managers work with providers as needed for technical assistance for invoice and revision submission according to established guidelines throughout the fiscal year.

5. Did RWS provide training to agencies on how to do a budget revision?

- Yes. Subrecipient fiscal and appropriate program staff attended the required budget revision-specific session during the annual provider training (May 1, 2024 - May 2, 2024). 127 subrecipient staff from 32 subrecipient agencies participated, with 39 being fiscal-specific staff.
- In addition to this required grant management training, Fiscal Coordinators and Contract Managers work with subrecipients as needed to provide technical assistance for invoice and budget revision submission according to established guidelines throughout the fiscal year.

SPEC’s Analysis and Recommendations

During analysis, SPEC members acknowledged that it seemed that year after year, there are major variances in the efficiency of administering the Part A grant with providers, and that any issues or delays with contracts, budget revisions, or invoices do not correlate with size of agency or type of employee responding to the survey. They acknowledge that larger agencies and smaller agencies alike are struggling to get invoices paid promptly and that this is indicative of a delay within BPHC, but that SPEC members do not feel they have enough of a grasp on the internal process to comment on that. This led SPEC to develop a recommendation for the upcoming Planning Council year to understand and improve the various processing times related to the Part A grant administration and increase transparency between the fiscal team and the Planning Council.

In the new term, SPEC requests quarterly statistical updates from the BPHC RWS fiscal team on the following metrics:

- Contract execution (beginning of the year only)
- Invoice reimbursement
- Budget revisions

During these quarterly updates, SPEC and RWS staff will work together to determine expectations for when any improvements will be made as needed. SPEC also recommends that the Executive Committee of the Planning Council be invited to the quarterly update meetings if they want to attend.

This is presented on May 8th, 2025, to the Planning Council and approved on June 5th, 2025.

BPHC's Ryan White Services Response

RWS's response to SPEC's Corrective Action Plan as a result of the AAM and to improve fiscal transparency in FY26 has multiple parts. The fiscal team has been implementing changes over FY25 already, which were communicated with the Planning Council as part of this response, on June 26th. 2025. The fiscal team recently set up quarterly technical assistance sessions with subrecipients – they have hosted one so far, and it was well-attended.

In direct response to SPEC's recommendation, RWS will implement the following changes:

- RWS fiscal staff and subrecipient fiscal staff will attend monthly monitoring calls as needed to increase communication.
- RWS will provide booster training to subrecipient fiscal staff to notify contract managers to initiate a budget revision, based on invoice submission.
- RWS will conduct ongoing quality improvement with grants, including reducing invoicing time.
 - For example, invoices will only be submitted with a cover page for all reasonable, allocable, allowable expenses. Detailed backup/receipts are kept separately and reviewed during payment processing. This creates a parallel process instead of two consecutive processes.
- RWS agrees to SPEC's request for quarterly updates and will reinstate these from the Director of Subrecipient Compliance or a representative thereof, during SPEC meetings regarding contracting, payments, and spending.