TRAINING ON A BUDGET

Despite the tight budgets, staffing shortages and scarce resources many agencies have to work with, a little creativity can work wonders to expand training opportunities:

• Think outside the box. Training need not be limited to large conferences or seminars. Small in-house workshops, brown bag lunches and Peer Review while maintaining confidentiality can also be helpful. Continuum of care groups, community providers’ councils and consortiums can allot 15-20 minute time slots for member agencies to give short presentations about their issues and services.

• Create work groups to address training issues together. Sharing staff expertise is a very low-cost way to provide cross-training. Domestic violence/sexual assault programs, Tribal organizations, mental health programs, substance abuse treatment centers, criminal justice organizations and other providers can lend their own staff to provide in-house cross-training for the staff at each others’ agencies.

• Collaborate with Tribal, State and other community partners for larger events. Several agencies can pool their financial resources and staff, and work together on all phases of the planning for large conferences and seminars, thus reducing the burden on each individual program.

• Seek sponsors. Solicit local businesses or organizations to sponsor training conferences or seminars. This can be a win-win situation in which the business gets a promotion opportunity and the agency gets extra funding for the event. Ways to recognize sponsors include space for a display table, listing on conference literature and announcements during the conference thanking the sponsors.

• Don’t limit requests to funding. Business or organizational sponsors may be able to provide in-kind donations as well. These can range from free or reduced-rate meeting space to printing or copying, and refreshments.