Request for Letters of Interest:
Provider Participation in Pilot Outpatient Civil Commitment Project

Release Date: May 10, 2016
Letter Due Date: May 20, 2016

Issued by:
Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc.
One North Charles Street, Suite 1300
Baltimore, MD 21201
Pilot Outpatient Civil Commitment Project in the Baltimore Area

Purpose of this Request for Letters of Interest

For several years, various stakeholders in Maryland have been engaged in discussions to explore outpatient civil commitment (also referred to as assisted outpatient treatment) for individuals with serious mental illness who have not been engaged well by the existing behavioral health care system and, as a result, utilize high levels of inpatient care. The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) has decided to pilot an outpatient program in the Baltimore Metro Area that will allow an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) to civilly commit an individual to outpatient treatment. It is expected that individuals eligible for this pilot outpatient civil commitment process will have a history of two involuntary inpatient commitments and will be inpatient at time of referral. It is also expected that the outpatient civil commitment will follow the existing length of time for civil commitment of six months or less. The pilot project will involve developing innovative assertive outreach and engagement services as well as monitoring to assist referred individuals to engage in existing outpatient treatment services. We expect that the program will have the capacity to serve 100 individuals at any one time.

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) will be overseeing the local implementation of this pilot project, and seeks interested and eligible provider organizations to deliver outreach and engagement and possibly ongoing services to the identified population. BHSB is working with DHMH and other stakeholders to develop a grant proposal in response to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA’s) recent Funding Opportunity Announcement entitled Assisted Outpatient Treatment Grant Program for Individuals with Serious Mental Illness, which can be found here: http://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-16-011.

Through this Request for Letters of Interest (RFLOI), BHSB seeks to select 2-3 provider organizations that are interested in participating as a direct service provider under this project. Providers eligible to participate in the program must already have an Assertive Community Treatment team, a robust continuum of additional services, and be able to serve individuals residing in Baltimore City and/or Baltimore County.

Submitting a Letter of Interest in response to this RFLOI signifies your organization’s interest in providing services through this pilot project. BHSB may then select providers based on the information in their Letter of Interest. Providers will be asked to engage in some planning to learn more about the intended goals and expectations of the project. Selected providers will be asked to submit a Letter of Commitment to the project as part of the grant proposal to SAMHSA. There is no guarantee of funding associated with this RFLOI.
Overview of Outpatient Civil Commitment in Maryland

Over the past several years, DHMH has convened stakeholder workgroups to examine the development of outpatient civil commitment programs in Maryland. These workgroups have taken great care to address common concerns about these kinds of programs, including, but not limited to: identifying effective services for individuals with serious mental who are at risk for disruptions to continuity of care, respecting the civil liberties of individuals identified, and holding the behavioral health care system accountable to meeting the needs of identified individuals.

The stated goals of outpatient civil commitment programs are to promote continuity of care and improve the well-being of individuals with serious mental illness who have not been engaged well by the existing behavioral health system. In comparison to inpatient commitment, which confines an individual to a hospital setting, outpatient commitment is court-ordered treatment provided in a community setting. The goal is to allow individuals to receive much-needed treatment in a less restrictive setting. Currently in Maryland, court-mandated treatment is only being used in inpatient hospital settings and in criminal courts through probation or conditions of release. Through this pilot project, DHMH seeks to implement and evaluate civil commitment in outpatient settings, with the eventual goal of potentially making outpatient civil commitment available statewide.

Project Overview

The main goal of services provided through this project is to effectively engage individuals who have not been engaged well by other types of services. It is anticipated that these services will best be provided by organizations that have strong outreach and engagement components and have incorporated the use of peers in their service delivery. Provider organizations will help determine appropriate levels of care for individuals referred – either within their own service system or with other service providers. Provider organizations will have a responsibility to attempt to engage individuals referred, regardless of the individual’s level of motivation to engage and enroll in services. Additionally, provider organizations will be expected to work with all individuals referred. The project seeks to serve at least 100 individuals per year, and selected providers will be expected to have the capacity to quickly serve individuals as they are referred.

Another relevant aspect of this project is that all individuals who are granted outpatient commitment will have monitors, employed by BHSB, assigned to them to ensure adherence to treatment recommendations. These monitors will have regular contact with provider organizations and will be responsible for oversight to ensure that the individual is complying with the outpatient commitment as well as being able to provide technical assistance to the provider organization. The monitors will work closely with the administrative law judge who is granting the outpatient civil commitment, the individual referred, and the provider organization serving the individual.
Participating providers will also be expected to participate in process and outcome evaluations and provide feedback about how to improve and sustain the project.

**Funding**

The total estimated award amount for the pilot project is up to $1 million per grant year for up to four years, and no more than 20% of the total awarded funds may be used for expansion of services. Therefore, the award amount for the service portion of this project could be as much as $200,000 per year for up to four years. The amount awarded to each provider organization depends on the number of organizations selected through this process and other identified service needs of the pilot project.

**Eligibility**

To be eligible to submit a Letter of Interest in response to this request, a provider organization must have an existing Assertive Community Treatment team designated by the Behavioral Health Administration, a robust continuum of additional services, a history of using peer specialists or a plan to incorporate peers in their structure, have been trained or be willing to be trained in trauma responsive care, and serve individuals who reside in Baltimore City and/or Baltimore County.

**How to Submit a Letter of Interest**

A Letter of Interest should express your organization’s interest in collaboratively implementing a pilot outpatient project in the Baltimore Metro Area for individuals civilly committed. It should show your willingness to collaborate with BHSB and other relevant stakeholders to submit the grant proposal in response to SAMHSA’s Funding Opportunity Announcement.

Your letter should include at least the following:

- **Organizational Capacity**: Describe your organization’s service array, specifically including which levels of care are available within your organization, the ability to collaborate between programs/levels of care within the organization and experience with the target population. Also include in your description the following:
  - Your organization’s interest in piloting an outpatient civil commitment project, including the benefit to the individuals served as well as to the behavioral health system as a whole,
  - How your organization will organize the outreach and engagement process,
  - How your organization will incorporate peers in your structure,
  - Your organization’s involvement with trauma responsive care,
  - Identification of other evidence-based practices your organization uses and how they will be incorporated in the program,
Your organization’s capacity to take on the implementation of a new project as well as serving new clients, and

Your organization’s experience with past collaborations involving multiple stakeholders, and your investment in collaborating on this project, including service development, process and outcome evaluation activities, and sustainability planning.

- Your proposed budget for participating with brief budget narrative for assigned expenses

**Specifications and Timeframes**

Your narrative response (not including budget) is limited to 5-7 pages. The letter should be on agency letterhead and clearly identify a primary contact person and their contact information. You may submit supporting documentation such as licenses/certificates, letters of support, etc., but it is not required. The format and structure of the document is not specified through this request, but should emphasize readability and be organized in a logical way.

The authorized contact person for all matters concerning this RFLOI is:

Keisha Tatum, Director of Contracting Operations  
Behavioral Health System Baltimore  
One North Charles Street, Suite 1300, Baltimore, MD 21201  
Phone: 410-735-8530  
Email: Keisha.Tatum@BHSBaltimore.org

Letters of Interest are due no later than 3 pm EST on Friday, May 20, 2016. Letters of Interest should be submitted in hard copy with an original signature to Keisha Tatum at the address listed above.

**Conference Call**

BHSB will host a conference call to answer questions on Thursday, May 12, 2016 at 9 am. The conference call is not mandatory. Questions will only be answered during this call. Transcripts of the call will not be provided. The call-in number is 410-779-0602, passcode 0602#.

**Review process**

Letters of Interest will be evaluated based on the criteria outlined in this RFLOI. BHSB will likely request interviews with those provider organizations with strongest Letters of Interest.