



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

Strategic Communications Consultant

Release Date: October 21, 2020

Proposal Due: November 20, 2020

Anticipated Award Notification: January 1, 2021

Issued by:

Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc.
100 South Charles Street, Tower II, 8th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Overview of the Project.....	3
A. OVERVIEW OF BHSB.....	3
B. OVERVIEW OF PROJECT	3
C. SCOPE OF SERVICE.....	4
D. FOCUS POPULATION.....	4
E. STAFFING REQUIREMENTS	5
F. FUNDING AVAILABILITY	5
G. CONTRACTING WITH BHSB	5
II. Overview of RFP	7
A. PURPOSE OF RFP	7
B. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY	7
C. PROPOSAL TIMEFRAME AND SPECIFICATIONS	7
D. AWARD OF CONTRACT.....	8
E. RFP POSTPONEMENT/CANCELLATION	8
F. APPLICANT APPEAL RIGHTS.....	8
III.Format and Content of Proposal	9
A. PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS.....	9
B. PROPOSAL NARRATIVE OUTLINE AND RATING CRITERIA.....	9

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Strategic Communications Consultant

I. Overview of the Project

A. OVERVIEW OF BHSB

BHSB, the local behavioral health authority for Baltimore City, is a non-profit organization that manages the public behavioral health system. In this capacity, BHSB oversees a network of predominantly private, non-profit providers that deliver services to over 74,000 Baltimore City residents. BHSB partners closely with Baltimore City and the State of Maryland to build an efficient and responsive system that comprehensively addresses mental illness and substance use and meets the needs of the whole person.

BHSB is committed to enhancing the behavioral health and wellness of individuals, families, and communities through:

- The promotion of behavioral health and wellness prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery;
- The creation and leadership of an integrated network of providers that promotes universal access to comprehensive, data-driven services; and
- Advocacy and leadership of behavioral health-related efforts to align resources, programs, and policy.

BHSB is committed to promoting behavioral health equity in Baltimore City by ensuring that the behavioral health provider network is culturally and linguistically responsive to the diverse populations served; reducing behavioral health care access barriers for populations known to experience discrimination and marginalization; and supporting communities directly to develop services that are responsive to their unique strengths and needs.

B. OVERVIEW OF PROJECT

Through this procurement, BHSB is seeking a qualified organization to support the implementation of communications and marketing strategies that advance BHSB's organizational mission and values.

BHSB utilizes the support of an experienced communications firm to support media relations, design of digital and print materials, organizational messaging and branding, and the development of behavioral health awareness campaigns. The communications firm that is selected for this award will also be responsible for helping to manage BHSB's paid marketing funding to promote the city's 24/7 Here2Help Hotline.

BHSB has historically not procured funding for strategic communications services and is doing so to identify a firm to work with BHSB for the next year with options to renew for up to five years.

C. SCOPE OF SERVICE

The selected applicant will work to ensure BHSB's communications efforts meet organization style guide standards that reflects the mission and values. To learn more about BHSB, visit the website at www.bhsbaltimore.org.

Applicants must have the ability to support the following:

Media relations:

1. Pitching media outlets for interest in reporting on BHSB's priority issues
2. Supporting BHSB to respond to media inquiries and requests for information
3. Promoting BHSB as a leading expert and resource for behavioral health to media outlets
4. Drafting press releases, op-eds, letters to the editor

Design digital and print materials:

1. Design materials to help promote the city's 24/7 Here2Help Hotline
2. Design BHSB's annual Impact Report for digital and print
3. Design graphics for social media, the website or documents

Website changes and updates to www.bhsbaltimore.org:

1. Provide technical assistance with the design of new web pages or features
2. Help BHSB troubleshoot issues with the website

Public Awareness Campaigns:

1. Support BHSB to promote National Recovery Month, Mental Health Awareness Month, and other educational and awareness initiatives
2. Ad buy to promote the city's Here2Help Hotline or other behavioral health public awareness campaigns
3. Support BHSB in the development of and implementation of public health campaigns

Deliverables would include, but not limited to:

1. Complete the layout, design, photography and content development for BHSB's Annual Impact Report by December 1 each year.
2. Complete ad buy of paid marketing to promote the Here2Help Hotline (funding for ad buy would be in addition to the annual consulting contract)
3. Design graphics for BHSB's communications materials, as requested
4. Design new webpages or features for BHSB's website, as requested

D. FOCUS POPULATION

The selected applicant must have experience developing communications and marketing strategies for a broad range of audiences, including but not limited to people with relevant experience within behavioral health care which is usually referred to as a person with a behavioral health disorder or a family member. Other audiences could include behavioral health professionals (e.g., nurses, therapists, peer recovery specialists), elected officials, media outlets, and faith-based leaders.

E. STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

There are no staffing requirements for this RFP.

F. FUNDING AVAILABILITY

There is approximately \$54,000 available for communications work. The fee structure will be based on the applicants' hourly rate in accordance to the various projects they are requested to complete. The selected applicant will receive a one-year award with the option to renew for up to five years, pending satisfactory performance.

G. CONTRACTING WITH BHSB

Applicants selected through this process will enter into a contractual agreement with BHSB. Following a notification of selection, BHSB will issue a Letter of Award that provides details about the contract and the process for executing it.

Please note that applicants may be asked to change their budgets and/or details of their proposals even if the proposal were selected for funding. Applicants new to BHSB's contract process are encouraged to review relevant forms available on our website here: <https://www.bhsbaltimore.org/for-providers/forms-for-providers>.

Contract Type and Payment

BHSB issues several types of contracts with different payment mechanisms based on the requirements of the funding source. The contract that will result from this procurement is described below. Applicants are encouraged to consider whether their organization will be able to operate with this payment mechanism before applying for these funds.

- Consultant
 - Issued to a person or entity engaged in independent work as outlined in the contract. The total cost of the contract is based on a calculation that includes an hourly consultant rate and the estimated number of hours it will take to complete the scope of work.

- Payment is based on the costs reported for a specific period (e.g., hourly rate x # of hours worked that month).

BHSB issues payments once per month. Applicants should note that submitting required documents and reports late can result in delayed payment.

Contract Monitoring and Technical Assistance

Selected applicants will be required to submit regular Financial reports to BHSB using an electronic contract management application. BHSB will review these reports to monitor progress and contract compliance throughout the contract term.

Financial Reports are required to generate payment and involve submitting actual expenditures or invoices (depending on the contract type) and to monitor spending compared to the budget or award amount. If organizations are spending more or less than expected awarded throughout the contract term, BHSB may offer technical assistance and support to ensure the funding covers the contract term fully and may reduce funding if all funds are not likely to be expended by the end of the contract term.

Please note that submitting Financial Reports late can result in delayed payment.

Verification of Services

BHSB audits all contracts to review whether the requirements set forth in the contract were completed as reported and that relevant federal, state, and local regulations were followed. This generally occurs after the conclusion of the contract period. Audits may be conducted remotely through a review of documents submitted to BHSB or on-site at the organization's location.

Applicants should be aware of best practices in documenting financial activities to aid in an efficient audit.

II. Overview of RFP

A. PURPOSE OF RFP

The purpose of this RFP is to select a qualified organization to support the implementation of communications and marketing strategies that advance BHSB's organizational mission and values.

B. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must meet all of the criteria outlined below to be considered eligible to be selected through this RFP process:

Clear demonstratable experience working with non-profit health and wellness organizations. Experience managing media relations, creating public health or public awareness campaigns.

C. PROPOSAL TIMEFRAME AND SPECIFICATIONS

1. Timeline

Release Date:	October 21, 2020
Proposal Due:	November 20, 2020
Anticipated Contract Start:	January 1, 2021

2. Pre-Proposal Conference

There will be no pre-proposal conference for this procurement. Applicants may submit questions to Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org by November 4, 2020. All questions received by the close of business November 4, 2020 will be answered and posted on BHSB's website with the RFP document by November 10, 2020. Substantive questions received after this date cannot be answered.

3. Proposal Due Date, Time, and Location

BHSB uses Survey Monkey Apply (SM Apply) to manage applications. All proposals must be submitted through this system. Applicants must register with the system ahead of time and submit narrative and supporting documents directly through the system. You are able to save your application and continuing working on it before submitting it. BHSB encourages all applicants to test this system well in advance of submitting proposals.

Applicants can access SM Apply here: <https://bhsb.smapply.org/>

All proposals must be received no later than **12:00 pm (noon) EST on November 20, 2020**. All submitted proposals become the property of BHSB. If you are having

technical troubles related to submitting your proposal, contact BHSB before the due date/time at Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org

Proposals submitted after the due date/time will not be considered.

4. Authorized Contact

Applicants are advised that the authorized contact person for all matters concerning this RFP is Jennifer Glassman whose contact information is listed below.

Jennifer Glassman, Procurement Lead/ Special Projects Coordinator
Behavioral Health System Baltimore
100 South Charles Street, Tower II, 8th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21201
Email: Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org

5. Anticipated Service Term: January 1, 2021- December 31, 2022 with options to renew for up to five years.

D. AWARD OF CONTRACT

The submission of a proposal does not, in any way, guarantee an award. BHSB is not responsible for any costs incurred related to the preparation of a proposal in response to this RFP. BHSB reserves the right to withdraw an award prior to execution of a contract with a selected applicant in BHSB's sole and absolute discretion.

BHSB will select the most qualified and responsive applicants through this RFP process. BHSB will enter into a contract with selected applicants following the notification of award. All selected applicants must comply with all terms and conditions applicable to contracts executed by BHSB.

E. RFP POSTPONEMENT/CANCELLATION

BHSB reserves the right to postpone or cancel this RFP, in whole or in part.

F. APPLICANT APPEAL RIGHTS

Applicants may file an appeal to the Procurement Lead within five days of notification of non-award. The Procurement Lead will review the appeal, examine any additional information provided by the protesting party, and respond to the protestor within ten working days of receipt of the appeal.

III. Format and Content of Proposal

A. PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants must submit all required information using Survey Monkey Apply (SM Apply) accessible here: <https://bhsb.smapply.org/>. See the instructions for more information about this

Late proposals will not be considered.

It is the policy of BHSB to adhere to the rules and regulations in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). We do not anticipate that any proposal submitted in response to this RFP would include individually identifiable health information. However, if it does, please remember that protected health information (PHI) needs to be secured via encryption and should adhere to the Guide to IT Privacy and Security of Electronic Health Information:

<https://www.healthit.gov/topic/privacy-security-and-hipaa/health-it-privacy-and-security-resources-providers>.

B. PROPOSAL NARRATIVE OUTLINE AND RATING CRITERIA

The outline below shows the information being requested for applications and how points will be awarded during the review. Use SM Apply to submit your responses. See the instructions for more information about how to submit proposals.

1. Organizational Background and Capacity (15 points)

- a. Provide an overview of your organization, including its history, mission, and areas of service or expertise.
- b. Provide an overview of your organization's experience in the last three years providing strategic communications, marketing, and media relations services. Attach three examples of your work. Examples include, a press release, crisis communications plan, website designed/developed by your organization, marketing materials for health campaign, etc.
- c. BHSB awards additional points to organizations owned or led by marginalized and oppressed groups to help address systemic barriers that have led to inequity in funding. Describe whether your organization is owned and/or led by members of historically marginalized or oppressed groups, including racial and ethnic groups (i.e., Black/African American, Latinx), LGBTQ communities, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), etc.

2. Principles and Values (10 points)

- a. Describe your organization's commitment to racial and social justice and health equity. Include specific examples of what your organization does to illustrate this commitment.
- b. Describe how you will integrate principles of equity and anti-racism into this work.

3. Service Delivery (15 points)

- a. Describe your organization's plan to provide all services as outlined in the Scope of Service section of this RFP (see Section C).
- b. Describe your approach to developing a public awareness campaign to raise awareness about behavioral health services or other health-related services. Attach an example of a public awareness campaign you have previously developed.
- c. Describe your approach to media relations. How do you maintain relationships with media outlets? How do work with clients to plan for press announcements? What national and local media outlets to you engage with?

4. Staffing (5 points)

- a. Describe the staff that will be working on this project, including their experience. Submit their CV/Resume as an attachment.

5. Fee Structure (5 points)

- a. Provide your fee structure and an hourly rate for your services. Provide estimates for other anticipated expenditures. Include a narrative that explains how time is allocated.