



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

GBRICS Community Engagement & Communications

Release Date: April 14, 2021

Pre-Proposal Conference: April 26, 2021

Proposal Due: May 14, 2021

Anticipated Award Notification: June 28, 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	6
E. STAFFING REQUIREMENTS	7
F. FUNDING AVAILABILITY	7
G. CONTRACTING WITH BHSB	7
II. Overview of RFP	9
A. PURPOSE OF RFP	9
B. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY	9
C. PROPOSAL TIMEFRAME AND SPECIFICATIONS	9
D. AWARD OF CONTRACT	10
E. RFP POSTPONEMENT/CANCELLATION	11
F. APPLICANT APPEAL RIGHTS	11
III. Format and Content of Proposal	12
A. PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS	12
B. PROPOSAL NARRATIVE OUTLINE AND RATING CRITERIA	12

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

GBRICS Community Engagement

I. Overview of the Project

A. OVERVIEW OF BHSB

Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc. (BHSB) is a non-profit organization tasked by Baltimore City to manage the city's public behavioral health system. As such, BHSB serves as the local behavioral health authority for Baltimore City. In this role, BHSB envisions a city where people live and thrive in communities that promote and support behavioral health and wellness.

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 Request for Proposals (RFP), BHSB is seeking a qualified full-service communications and marketing firm to assist with the development and implementation of a robust community engagement and communications campaign to increase awareness and use of emergency behavioral health (mental health and substance use) services. This campaign should motivate residents and stakeholders in the central Maryland region to change their current behavior (i.e., who they personally call for help or refer others to call for help in the event of a mental health or substance use emergency or other distressing situation). This procurement is part of the Greater Baltimore Regional Integrated Crisis System (GBRICS) Regional Partnership. More information is available here:

<https://www.bhsbaltimore.org/learn/gbrics-partnership/>.

The GBRICS Regional Partnership will be investing \$45 million over five years (2021-2025) in behavioral health emergency response infrastructure and services in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, and Howard County. As a result of this work, there will be alternatives to calling 911, involving the police, or using the emergency department for behavioral health emergencies. These resources include a regional 24/7 behavioral health hotline staffed by behavioral health specialists and a network of mental health/substance use urgent care services in the community.

C. SCOPE OF SERVICE

Market Research/Message Testing

The selected firm should:

- Use qualitative and/or quantitative methods to determine the most powerful and effective messages to encourage:
 - residents in the GBRICS region to use community-based, emergency behavioral health services (i.e., hotline, mental health or substance use urgent care services, etc.) when in need of urgent behavioral health support rather than calling 911, the police, or using hospital emergency departments.
 - referral sources (e.g., physician practices, hospitals, mental health/substance abuse providers, schools, community organizations, etc.) in the GBRICS region to refer individuals in need to community-based emergency behavioral health services rather than having them call 911, the police, or access hospital emergency departments.
- Determine which media sources are most effective for communicating these messages to both residents and referral sources (e.g., television, radio, direct mail, streaming, digital, social media and/or influencers, etc.)
- Conduct all resident-related research with a representative sample of residents by age, race, ethnicity, gender, and characteristics of groups known to be at higher risk of needing behavioral health support, based on the county population of origin rather than the region population as a whole.
- Disaggregate all market research and message testing data by at least race, ethnicity, income, and geography (i.e., what resonates in Baltimore City may be different from what resonates in Carroll County). Language interpretation/translation for market research activities should be included when appropriate.
- Review past market research done by BHSB for the city's 24/7 Here2Help Hotline.

Campaign Development

Assume that the selected firm may eventually have \$3 million over four years available to implement a sound campaign. The first year's contract of \$250,000 covers planning services. BHSB thinks that a comprehensive, behavior change oriented, social marketing plan may include at least the following components. Please detail in your response how you would propose completing the following:

- Overall Campaign Research
 - Learn from existing and past behavioral health public awareness campaigns and hotline campaigns, such as Baltimore City's Here2Help Hotline campaign and others from around the country.
 - Develop a campaign theme, brand, and simple, concise messaging.
 - Determine targeted messaging and strategies for specific geographic and cultural communities to ensure campaign resonates with residents across the region.
 - Develop a process for incorporating community input into campaign development, such as collaborating directly with members of impacted communities on message development or testing messages in communities and incorporating feedback (the GBRICS Council Community Engagement Committee will be a resource to assist with this activity).
- Paid Media
 - Develop a paid media strategy that includes, as appropriate, the development and purchase of traditional mass media (e.g., broadcast and/or cable TV, radio, streaming, etc.), sponsored social media posts, digital ads (video and static), out of home advertising, etc.
- Earned Media
 - Design an earned media strategy that includes, as appropriate, regional media events, radio interviews, feature articles, editorial board visits, etc.
- Social Media
 - Craft a social media strategy based on the market research and message testing you conduct. The strategy should include information on which social media outlets you recommend for the campaign, how to target messaging, and if social media influencers can be utilized.
- Collateral Materials
 - Create and make available compelling print materials such as posters, rack cards, specialized materials for libraries, medical and behavioral health provider offices, hospitals, faith communities and other locations. Campaign materials should include likenesses of people representative of the communities we strive to reach.

- Community Engagement Strategies
 - Assist BHSB staff and the GBRICS Partnership to implement community engagement strategies that effectively reach the target population across the four-jurisdiction region. In your response, please include how you might:
 - Engage residents in the community through the use of paid community engagement, such as street outreach teams.
 - Work with GBRICS partners to distribute messages, social media posts, and print collateral.
- Evaluation
 - Outline an evaluation plan to assess the effectiveness of the campaign, including establishing baselines for comparison and how to use the data gathered during the campaign to adapt the campaign in real time to improve effectiveness.

Deliverables

1. Submit final Market Research/Message Testing Plan to BHSB within an agreed upon timeframe
2. Deliver a Market Research/Message Testing Report analyzing all data collected by a date TBD by BHSB and selected firm
3. Develop a full campaign plan by March 31, 2022, that includes a paid marketing and community engagement budget for 2022 that fits within the allocated budget for that year

D. FOCUS POPULATION

The GBRICS Partnership focuses on all people (children and adults) who experience a behavioral health emergency in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, and Howard County. The four jurisdictions have a combined population of 1.94 million residents. Overall, residents of these jurisdictions, who account for 30% of Maryland's total population, account for 45% of statewide Emergency Department (ED) behavioral health visits. For the 65-80% of behavioral health ED visits that do not have a co-occurring medical issue (totaling more than 25,000 annual ED visits across the four jurisdictions), the ED is likely not the most appropriate care setting to treat their needs.

The selected marketing firm will need to reach the above population as well as potential referral sources for them, including physician practices, hospitals, behavioral health providers, schools, community organizations, etc. as described in the Scope of Service.

E. STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

Funds for at least one full time equivalent (FTE) account manager must be included in the budget.

F. FUNDING AVAILABILITY

BHSB has budgeted \$250,000 for the first year of work as described in the Scope of Work section of this RFP. If the selected firm delivers on-time, high quality work during this planning period, additional funding of approximately \$3 million divided over the subsequent four years will be available for execution of the social marketing and engagement plan.

BHSB prefers to select one vendor for this project; however, applicants may partner with other firms to develop their proposals if they are unable to meet all the requirements in this RFP on their own. In this case, one firm should be identified as the lead that will sub-contract with other firms. Be as clear in possible which firm will be completing which parts of the Scope of Service. If none of the proposals meet all the requirements for this project, BHSB may select more than one firm.

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. The selected firm will be required to submit a new budget on BHSB's budget form, which will be reviewed for allowable costs under the grant.

Please note that applicants may be asked to change their budgets and/or details of their proposals to align with the requirements of the grant, even if the proposal is 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.

- **Cost Reimbursement – Actual Expenditures**
 - Vendor receives payment after costs are incurred and reported. Payment is based on the costs reported for a specific period.

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 Progress and Financial reports to BHSB using an electronic contract management system. BHSB will review these reports to monitor implementation and contract compliance throughout the contract term.

Progress Reporting includes an update on implementation of deliverables (e.g., market research reports, message testing results, etc.). Some progress reports may also require organizations to attach a data report with additional information (e.g., consumer demographic information, process and/or outcomes data, etc.). BHSB monitors implementation with this reporting throughout the contract term and may offer technical assistance and support if deliverables are not being met.

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 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 Progress or 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. This generally occurs after the conclusion of the contract period. Contract Compliance Audits may be conducted remotely through a review of documents submitted to BHSB or on-site at the organization's location.

II. Overview of RFP

A. PURPOSE OF RFP

The purpose of this RFP is to select a qualified full-service marketing firm to assist with the development and implementation of a robust community engagement and outreach campaign to increase awareness of emergency behavioral health services.

B. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

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

- Experience with at least three behavioral health awareness and/or public health behavior change campaigns

C. PROPOSAL TIMEFRAME AND SPECIFICATIONS

1. Timeline

Release Date:	April 14, 2021
Pre-Proposal Conference:	April 26, 2021
Proposal Due:	May 14, 2021
Notification of Interview:	June 14, 2021
Anticipated Award Notification:	June 28, 2021
Anticipated Contract Start:	July 15, 2021

2. Pre-Proposal Conference

Date: 04/26/21

Time: 1:00 pm

Location: Microsoft Teams meeting - Join on your computer or mobile app

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only): 443-819-0973

Phone Conference ID: 968 454 961#

If you have any problems accessing the meeting, please contact Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org.

All questions related to this RFP should be submitted in advance to Procurements@BHSBatlimore.org no later than the close of business on **Friday, April 23, 2021**. There may be time at the end of the meeting to ask additional questions, depending on the number of questions submitted.

Questions posed prior to or during the Pre-Proposal Conference and BHSB's responses will be posted on BHSB's website at <https://www.bhsbaltimore.org/providers/funding-opportunities/> by **May 3, 2021**.

The questions and answers will also be emailed to all individuals who submitted questions. If you would like to be emailed this document but do not have a question, please let the Procurement Lead know by emailing Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org.

Questions received after this conference 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 continue 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 May 14, 2021**. If you are having technical difficulties 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 Shanna Borell whose contact information is listed below.

Shanna Borell, Procurement Lead/ Special Projects Manager

Email: Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org

5. Anticipated Service Term: July 15, 2021 – June 30, 2022, with options to renew annually pending availability of funding and performance

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 applicant(s) through this RFP process. BHSB will enter into a contract with selected applicant(s) 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-selection. BHSB 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/>.

Late proposals cannot be considered.

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.

1. Organizational Background and Capacity (20 points)

- a. Provide an overview of your organization and relevant experience, including conducting market research with diverse groups of people, utilizing multiple communications platforms, and managing paid community engagement strategies for public health campaigns (i.e., street marketing). If this proposal includes more than one organization, also describe which organization will serve as the lead, how long you have worked together, is your availability similar, and how you plan to work together (e.g., orchestrating hand-offs, etc.).
- b. Describe your organization's experience managing projects similar to this one, meeting deliverables and obligations on time and on budget, and your capacity to submit reports required by this grant. If there have been times when expectations were not being met, how did your organization respond to concerns?
- c. Describe whether your organization is owned and/or led by members of historically marginalized or oppressed groups, including racial and ethnic groups (i.e., African American/Black, Latinx), LGBTQ+ communities, women, etc. BHSB awards additional points to help address systemic barriers that have led to inequity in access to funding.
- d. Attach three professional references from clients, including their contact information and the role of the reference.

2. Principles and Values (5 points)

- a. Describe how your organization will integrate principles of equity and antiracism into this work.

3. Service Delivery (40 points)

- a. Describe your organization's proposal to provide all services as outlined in the Scope of Service for the first year and plan for implementation of the subsequent four years of the project. (25 points)

- b. Describe your organization's past experience implementing behavioral health awareness and/or health behavior change campaigns. Attach three examples of these campaigns. (5 points)
- c. Describe an example of a public health or other related campaign you implemented that did not initially achieve the behavioral change you were hoping, what you learned, and how you adjusted the campaign accordingly. (5 points)
- d. Describe your experience implementing a campaign across a wide geographic region with differences across the communities. Describe your approach to this kind of campaign. (5 points)

4. Staffing Plan (10 points)

- a. Describe your proposed staffing pattern, including supervisors, and how it will fulfill the staffing requirements in this RFP. Attach an organizational chart that shows how this program will fit into your organization's overall structure.
- b. Identify any services that would be sub-contracted, with the specific responsibilities and a brief background of the sub-contractor(s). Attach supporting documentation that shows the roles and experience of identified sub-contractors.

5. Effectively Reaching the Focus Population (10 points)

- a. Describe your organization's history and expertise reaching the focus population of this RFP.
- b. Describe how your organization would strive to recruit, hire, and train people from the focus populations for paid community engagement work (i.e., street team outreach).

6. Evaluation and Quality Assurance (5 points)

- a. Describe what data you would propose using to inform the planning process, and how you will collect, analyze, and present the data.

7. Proposed Budget (5 points)

- a. Attach a line-item budget and budget narrative for the first year of work, aligning it with the staffing requirements and proposed activities. If applicants are submitting proposals with other organizations, note how funding will be split and for what activities.

8. Implementation Timeline (5 points)

- a. Provide a detailed timeline for the first year that includes all of the activities in this proposal. Attach an outline of all the steps necessary to fully operationalize this project and by when each step would be completed.

9. Appendices – attach in Survey Monkey Apply

- o Organizational Chart

- Three examples of campaigns that facilitated behavior change in the health space and/or promoted access to behavioral health treatment and/or health services.
- Subcontractor Support Documentation (e.g., names, bios, roles for individuals/subcontractors working on the project)
- Line-Item Budget
- A list of all activities or work with or for health care organizations within the past five years, including managed care organizations, hospital systems, behavioral health organizations, public health agencies, etc.
- Documentation about your firm's financial strength (e.g., an audited financial statement, a letter from your accountant or bank, etc.)
- Certificate of Good Standing from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation