



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP): *GBRICS Community Engagement & Communications***

Pre-Proposal Conference Held: April 26, 2021 | 1:00 – 2:00 pm  
Via MS Teams and Conference Call

### **BHSB Facilitators:**

Shanna Borell, Procurement Lead  
Jennifer Glassman, Special Projects Coordinator  
Adrienne Breidenstine, Vice President, Policy & Communications  
Daniel Rabbitt, Policy Director GBRICS  
Elizabeth Unger, Communications Manager  
Chauna Brocht, Director, GBRICS Project Implementation  
Kristen Emerson, Operations Specialist

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Posted: May 3, 2021

BHSB procurement staff provided an overview of BHSB’s role in the public behavioral health system in Baltimore City, the procurement process, and some contracting details related to this project.

BHSB program staff provided an overview of the project.

### **Procurement Process Questions**

**Please provide guidance and specific instructions about the proposal format and the length of the technical proposal?**

**Can you please provide guidance on page limits, format, font requirements, and page/word/character limits for the proposal submission?**

**Can you please confirm there is no word count limit for the point-based questions and/or page count limits for the work sample attachments within the online application portal?**

**Is there a page limit to the proposal submission?**

**Do the response fields in Survey Monkey have character limits?**

Applicants will use Survey Monkey Apply to enter answers directly into text boxes that correspond to each item in the Proposal Narrative Outline and Rating Criteria section of the RFP that starts on page 12. You will be able to attach specific documents as required by the RFP, but no additional narrative should be attached. There are no character or word limits for the narrative portions of your proposal, nor are there page limits for the sample work.



Applicants are encouraged to provide clear and concise answers so that the Review Committee can easily assess your experience and understanding of the requirements in the RFP.

### **What kind of narrative would you like to see in the budget section?**

The budget narrative should provide a brief explanation of and justification for the line items in the budget. The Review Committee should be able to look at the line-item budget and refer to the narrative to have a strong understanding of how your organization proposes using the funding.

## **Project Questions**

### **Overview/Scope of Service**

**Will BHSB make available to RFP respondents the market research it conducted for the 24/7 Here2Help Hotline before the project is awarded?**

**Can the BHSB provide the past market research done by BHSB for the city's Here2Help Hotline as background information to bidders to support proposal development?**

**You mentioned existing research tied to Baltimore City's Here2Help Hotline campaign. Can you please share what existing research exists among the groups known to be at the highest risk of needing behavioral health support across four jurisdiction regions?**

Yes, the Here2Help Hotline Market Research Report will be posted on our website here: <https://www.bhsbaltimore.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/BHSB-Baltimore-Crisis-Information-Referral-Line-Focus-Groups-Final-Report-1-6-20-compressed.pdf>

**Can the resident-related research with a representative sample of residents be conducted in a virtual (not in-person) format?**

Yes, BHSB is open to virtual focus groups.

**What languages other than English should be used to conduct the resident-related research?**

**Beyond Spanish, are there any additional languages that should be included in the research and messaging?**

Understanding the demographics of the region is a critical aspect of the market research and campaign planning and to the extent languages other than English will be used to conduct research will depend on the overall research plan proposed by the firm.

**For the market research and message testing, will the GBRICS Council Community Engagement Committee and/or BHSB be able to assist with recruiting participants for the focus groups? Will the**



**expectation be that the focus groups be in person or virtual, or dependent upon the current situation with COVID-19?**

BHSB and the GBRICS Community Engagement Committee can assist with the strategy for recruitment. We can provide guidance on the types of people that should be recruited for focus groups and message testing. The Community Engagement Committee will also provide feedback on messaging.

Focus groups can be in person or virtual or both.

**Please share the purpose and past work of the GBRICS Council Community Engagement Committee and how they could be a resource/partner in this work.**

The GBRICS Council Community Engagement Committee is a newly formed group responsible for high-level implementation of the project. They can be a resource with providing feedback on market research approach and strategic guidance on campaign development and implementation. BHSB provides staff support to the Committee. It is not the expectation that the vendor be responsible for managing this Committee.

**Diversity, equity & inclusion in the research: Please share any stated goals as part of GBRICS Partnership as it relates to diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI)? What are your aspirations for incorporating DEI into this work?**

One goal would be to help build trust in behavioral health emergency services among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). We know that BIPOC are less likely to trust health care systems, as these systems have historically caused harm to these communities. Part of this work will include understanding community concerns so that they can be addressed through communications strategies, community engagement efforts, and the service delivery aspects of the GBRICS project.

**How with the COVID-19 pandemic and racial justice imperative in this country affect the strategies of this work and subsequent campaign?**

BHSB believes that addressing racism and health inequities is a critical component of this work and are looking for applicants to show how they plan to incorporate these principles into their proposals in a meaningful way.

**Can BHSB identify the staff who will be working directly with the winning firm?**

Vice President, Policy & Communications  
GBRICS Policy Director  
Communications Manager



**Is the BHSB currently working with a contractor on any of the campaign components described in the SOW? If so, please provide their names.**

**Is there an incumbent firm bidding on this work? And are you able to tell us how many firms are responding to your RFP (or were approached)?**

**Is there an incumbent to this work?**

BHSB is not working with any other communications firm on the GBRICS Project, as this is a new area of work for our organization.

**Are you just looking for one firm to provide all services, or could one firm sub-contract or respond with partners for specified deliverables?**

BHSB would prefer to work with one firm for all services. It is acceptable for a firm to sub-contract or co-respond for certain services. If this is the approach you plan to take, BHSB requests that you indicate which services would be sub-contracted or that the partnering firm would provide.

### **Focus Population**

**Can you name the subgroups you'd like to target with the campaign? That is, would those groups include people who are vulnerable and may need emergency behavioral health services), their caregivers and loved ones, others?**

The campaign should try to reach anyone (users of services and their caregivers); however, low-income Marylanders are who use public behavioral health system services are the focus population. The broader GBRICS Project is expanding behavioral health crisis services within this public system.

**Do you have demographic breakdowns of the focus population? Would performing a demographic analysis be part of this project? Do you have any specific demographics you could share for specific priority populations within in the identified audiences?**

A demographic analysis would need to be completed as part of the planning year because understanding the demographics of the region is a critical aspect of the market research and campaign planning.

**Is the expectation that the selected firm will recruit, hire, train, and manage people from the focus populations for paid community engagement work (i.e., street team outreach), or will the firm work with street outreach teams managed by BHSB (e.g., create and provide campaign collateral for Bmore Power)?**



The expectation is that the firm will recruit, hire, train, and manage the paid community engagement. BHSB can assist with strategy and overall guidance for all of this but the firm needs to manage day-to-day work for this activity.

### **Staffing Requirements**

**Can the staffing requirement for at least one full-time account manager be met through a mix of several staff who offer diverse skill sets to address the scope of work?**

Yes, however, BHSB would like to have a primary point of contact at the firm who would be the lead for coordinating across the firm for the various staff and services.

### **Funding Availability**

**Does the \$250,000 budget for Year 1 include the full-time account manager?**

The \$250,000 for year 1 includes all costs for the firm and the market research.

**Is the \$250,000 budget inclusive of all costs, or is there an additional budget available for related expenses such as to provide incentives to research participants, provide translation of research methods or materials, etc.?**

The \$250,000 for year 1 includes all costs for the firm's labor and the market research and message testing.

**Does BHSB honor Federally-established indirect rates? In lieu, of separating out our overhead costs as direct items, we have a negotiated indirect rate agreement with the Federal government that we would apply.**

BHSB will allow an indirect rate of 10% of salary and fringe for this budget to cover overhead costs.

**In terms of funding availability, the RFP states that 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. Does this \$3 million include both labor and other direct costs for advertising over the three years? Do you have any sense of how much you might want the advertising portion of that budget to be during that time?**



**Has BHSB determined a media budget range for the first year – and subsequent years – of this campaign?**

Yes, the \$3 million for Years 2-5 is for paid community engagement and advertising and does not include labor. Below is a breakout of the paid community engagement/advertising funding by year:

Year 1: \$0  
Year 2: \$735,400  
Year 3: \$753,800  
Year 4: \$772,600  
Year 5: \$791,900

**For the “Proposed Program Budget” section, do you have specific format or structure in mind for how the line item budget should be provided (e.g., a table within a Word document, an excel sheet, etc.)?**

There is no specific format or structure required for the budget. Applicants can use the format they typically use.

**Though we know the overall budget of \$250,000 for Year 1, should we prepare a line item budget of how the proposed costs will be spent? Should we assume the Year 1 work is the market research and testing?**

Yes, year one is for market research and message testing. Proposals should build their year one budget around these activities.

**Eligibility**

**Is a non-Maryland-based company eligible for this contract? Do you have any concerns about working with an organization or set of organizations not based in Maryland?**

Yes, a non-Maryland based company is eligible. We do not have any concerns working with a firm not based in Maryland.

**Our firm has recently made a number of hires to break new ground in the social design and health spaces. While our agency portfolio does not provide examples to demonstrate this, our new leadership team has deep connections with and experience developing campaigns in behavioral, public health, and social services; they will actively lead this work, including research, strategy, campaign development, and activation. That said, may we share past work our team members have done before arriving at our agency to show experience in this discipline?**



Yes, this would be acceptable. Please indicate this in the proposal.

### **Proposal Submission**

**In lieu of portfolio examples, would BHSB consider spec work to demonstrate our agency's ability to meet and exceed this RFP's goals?**

BHSB is looking to see examples of a behavioral health campaigns that were implemented. We are not looking for planning documents/materials.

**For the first requirement under "Additional Attachments," applicants are asked to provide, "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." – Can you please clarify what level of detail you are looking for? In other words, is it sufficient to include a brief description of our scope of work and client name, or are additional details requested?**

Client name and a brief description of the work is all that is needed.

**The proposal does not state whether you want bios and/or resumes of the team? Which do you prefer?  
Do you want to see resumes for key team members? Could we attach them to the org chart?**

A brief bio is all that we would like. Resumes are fine to include as attachments for additional information.

**Professional references: are these emails, letters, etc. from clients or just contact information?**

Name, organization, and contact information (email & phone number)

**Is a Certificate of Good Standing from the State of Maryland dated within the past year acceptable?**

Yes. For applications outside of Maryland, please submit your state's equivalent certification.

### **Contracting Questions**

#### **Contract Monitoring**

**Has BHSB identified an approval structure for work submitted by its selected partner throughout the engagement (e.g. how many levels of approval are needed, who is the final decision maker).**



**Please describe the approval process for potential research approaches, such as surveys, listening sessions, intercept interviews, etc.?**

The firm will be expected to submit monthly invoices through BHSB's Contract Management System (CMS) and those invoices will be reviewed and approved by BHSB staff.

BHSB would ask for the market research plan to be presented to the GBRICS Community Engagement Committee for feedback, however, BHSB will approve the final plan.

### **Open Question & Answer Period**

#### **What would success look like in Year 4?**

BHSB would hope to see measurable changes in behavior related to accessing the behavioral health crisis hotline and related crisis services. Changes that happen through this project have the potential to be replicated throughout the state, so success in this region could have a bigger impact statewide.

#### **What are the key demographics for referral sources? Is that in focus group research or how do we approach paid media or community outreach?**

It is a little bit of both. Our market research budget is small, but referrals will increase call volume. You could use primary care or hospitals or other types of health care providers.

#### **You spoke of EDI project Goals in terms of building trust with BIPOC Communities, can you speak to how that aligns with your internal Equity and anti-racism practice in your mission, vision, values around: Integrity, Equity, Innovation, Collaboration, Quality and how that relates to scoring and selection of contractors in addition to excellence and experience?**

As an organization, BHSB is working toward becoming more antiracist. We understand that racism and intergenerational trauma is a serious threat to the behavioral health and wellbeing of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities and that the behavioral healthcare system has a history of harming these communities. Through this project, we want to work on shifting the behavioral health crisis system so that it is culturally competent and affirming of people's identities so that we can also begin to rebuild trust in these systems. The GBRICS Project also has an advocacy and policy component that will also be working to address inequities that exist in accessing care.





In terms of scoring and selection, BHSB does award additional points to organizations that are owned and/or led by members of historically marginalized or oppressed groups in an effort to address systemic barriers that have led to inequity in access to funding. This is part of our standard procurement process. Additionally, we ask applicants to describe how they will integrate principles of equity and antiracism into the work in a meaningful way.

**Can you clarify that in Years 2-5, the \$3 million is for ad buy and not labor?**

Yes, in Years 2-5, the \$3 million noted in the RFP does not include costs associated with your organization's labor. This is just for the paid communications aspect of the project.

**It seems like POC and FTE are being used interchangeably can you clarify?**

BHSB noted that proposals can include multiple people on their budget to meet the staffing requirement that there be at least one full-time equivalent (FTE) account manager. However, we want there to be one person identified as the main point of contact (POC) for BHSB staff to work with.

**Can you elaborate on recruit and community engagement?**

Paid community engagement is an activity for this project. What that means is we are looking for people who live and work in the communities we are trying to reach. You can subcontract or hire for this work. Your firm will be responsible for managing this. There may be some training needed for outreach workers to communicate the campaign messaging. BHSB can be a partner for support but we expect the firm to manage day-to-day activities related to community engagement.

**Proposals are due May 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**End of Questions and Answers**