



# **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:**

## ***Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) Peer Workforce Expansion***

**Release Date: September 15, 2021**

**Pre-Proposal Conference: September 30, 2021, 11 am**

**Proposal Due: October 13, 2021, 12 pm**

**Anticipated Award Notification: November 29, 2021**

**Anticipated Service Start: January 2022**

### **Issued by:**

Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc.  
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# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## ***Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) Peer Workforce Expansion***

### **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 up to ten Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) that are interested in and demonstrate the capacity to integrate peer recovery support services within their current organizational structure. Only OTPs that do not currently employ peer specialists are eligible to apply. Peers play an important role in recovery, and BHSB supports the expansion of peer support services throughout the behavioral health workforce in Baltimore

City. There is strong evidence that shows peer support in treatment increases treatment adherence and improved consumer's overall health outcomes.<sup>12</sup>

Peer Recovery Specialists (PRS) have received specialized training, use their personal experiences of recovery from trauma, substance use, and/or mental illness to help others make their own journey to recovery. Peer specialists' personal experiences make them uniquely capable of authentically engaging with people, building trust, and instilling a sense of hope that treatment works and recovery is possible. State-credentialed Certified Peer Recovery Specialists receive training on ethics, advocacy, self-care, mentoring, and other topics and must pass an exam to become certified.

### **C. SCOPE OF SERVICE**

Selected OTPs will employ one full-time equivalent (FTE) Peer Recovery Specialist to function as a member of the treatment team. Peer Recovery Specialists will be responsible for engaging participants in peer support services, providing coaching based on their personal experience of recovery, gathering data to inform quality improvement efforts within the OTP, and integrating a peer perspective into OTP treatment. Each OTP will be expected to provide peer support services to 150 unduplicated consumers annually.

Selected applicants will be responsible for ensuring Peer Recovery Specialists use best practices to initiate and maintain relationships with consumers, including motivational interviewing techniques and non-confrontational and non-judgmental methods to engage consumers in drug education, harm reduction principles, and the benefits of Medication Supported Recovery (MSR).

Selected OTPs will be required to have Peer Recovery Specialists participate in a weeklong training academy organized by the Maryland Behavioral Health Administration. More details will be made available as this training is finalized.

Selected OTPs will be required to submit a quarterly data report that includes at least the following:

- Number of unduplicated people served by the Peer Recovery Specialist
- Types of Recovery Support Services linked to, such as:
  - Education, Employment, Financial Assistance, Housing, Medical/Dental Services, Nutrition, Transportation, Other

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<sup>1</sup> [Treatment and Prevention Strategies to Reduce Opioid Misuse | SAMHSA](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Integrating Peer-support Services | SAMHSA](#)

## D. FOCUS POPULATION

The focus population for these services are adults (18 or older) with opioid use disorders, mental illness, and/or trauma who have not been served well through the traditional system of behavioral health care, are at a higher risk of overdose, and/or would benefit from additional support to engage in services.

## E. STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

Selected OTPs will employ 1.0 FTE Certified Peer Recovery Specialist. This position should be filled by one person working full time. If peers are not certified at hire, they must be certified within 18 months of their hire date.

Selected OTPs are required to ensure there is a Registered Peer Supervisor on staff to provide supervision for the Peer Recovery Specialist. To become a Peer Supervisor, the staff must complete a six-hour Maryland Addiction & Behavioral Health Professionals Certification Board (MABPCB) Registered Peer Supervisor class and then within two years complete the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) online six-hour Coachervision training. More information about training can be found here: <https://mapcb.wordpress.com/cprs/>.

Peer Recovery Specialist duties in OTPs will include but not be limited to:

- Engage consumers in the following activities based on the needs and interests of each consumer:
  - One-on-one meetings
  - Peer support groups
  - Activities that reduce isolation
  - Recovery plan development
  - Accessing entitlements and other social services
  - Recovery advocacy work
  - Vocational/educational activities
  - Connection to treatment-based support
  - Community outreach to provide education and referrals to increase awareness and understanding of enrollment in recovery support services for opioid use disorders
  - Resource connection activities
- Help consumers and team members identify and understand stigma and discrimination associated with behavioral health disorders and develop strategies to reduce self-stigma among consumers and stigma within the treatment team
- Collaborate with the treatment team to promote a culture in which consumers' point of view, experiences, and preferences are recognized, understood, and respected

- Provide consultation concerning consumers’ experiences with symptoms, effects/side effects of medication, and responses to treatment and recovery
- Provide space for the Peer Recovery Specialist to meet with individuals that is comfortable and private for the individual seeking support
- Ensure that all peer-to-peer services are offered and conducted on a voluntary basis and are guided by a recovery plan which is created and maintained by the individual receiving the support

## **F. FUNDING AVAILABILITY**

The total available funding through this procurement is \$500,000 annually for two years: Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023.<sup>3</sup> There will be a total of up to ten awards, each with a maximum award of \$50,000. The first award will be pro-rated for the second six months of FY 22 at \$25,000.

Expected minimum hourly rates are:

- \$15 for non-certified Peer Recovery Specialists
- \$16-18 for Certified Peer Recovery Specialists

Funding can cover the Peer Recovery Specialist’s salary, training costs, supplies, IT equipment, administrative costs, and other related expenses for employing Peer Recovery Specialist, including the Registered Peer Supervisor.

## **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. Selected organizations 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 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

The contract and payment type 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 – Advance Basis**

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<sup>3</sup> FY 2022: July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022; FY 2023: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

- Sub-vendor receives payment in advance of incurring and reporting costs based on a pro-rated budget (e.g., 1/12<sup>th</sup> of budget each month). Payments are adjusted based on subsequent financial reports.

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 Program and Financial Reports to BHSB using an online contract management system. BHSB will review these reports to monitor progress and contract compliance throughout the contract term.

**Program Reports** include an update on progress toward deliverables (e.g., number of people served, number of services delivered, etc.). Some program 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 progress on these reports 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 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 Program 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 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 both programmatic and financial activities to aid in an efficient audit.

## II. Overview of RFP

### A. PURPOSE OF RFP

The purpose of this RFP is to select up to ten Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) to employ a Peer Recovery Specialist for two fiscal years.

### B. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

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

- Licensed and Accredited Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) in Baltimore City
- In Good Standing with the State of Maryland

### C. PROPOSAL TIMEFRAME AND SPECIFICATIONS

#### 1. Timeline

Release Date:	September 15, 2021
Pre-Proposal Conference:	September 30, 2021, 11 am
Proposal Due:	October 13, 2021, 12 pm
Anticipated Award Notification:	November 29, 2021
Anticipated Service Start:	January 1, 2022

#### 2. Pre-Proposal Conference

**Date:** Thursday, September 30, 2021

**Time:** 11:00 am

**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: 318 845 445#

*Please join five minutes early to leave time to troubleshoot. If you have any problems accessing the meeting, please contact*

[Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org](mailto:Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org).

All questions related to this RFP should be submitted in advance to [Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org](mailto:Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org) no later than the close of business on **Tuesday, September 28, 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/for-providers/funding-opportunities/> by **October 6, 2021**.

The questions and answers will also be emailed to all individuals who submitted questions or attended the Pre-Proposal Conference. 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](mailto: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 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) EDT on October 13, 2021**. 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](mailto:Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org)

*Proposals submitted after the due date/time cannot 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

Email: [Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org](mailto:Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org)

**5. Anticipated Service Term:** July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022\*, with an option to renew for one additional fiscal year pending availability of funding and performance

\*Due to a delay in receiving this funding, the start date for the first service term will be January 3, 2022.

### **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 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.*

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 how long it has operated as a licensed and accredited Opioid Treatment Program. Attach all relevant licenses and accreditation certificates.
- b. Describe your organization's experience managing programs similar to this project, meeting contractual deliverables and obligations (including any contracts with BHSB), and your capacity to manage the programmatic and financial requirements of this grant.
- c. Describe whether your organization is owned and/or led by members of historically marginalized or oppressed groups, including racial and ethnic groups (e.g., Black/African American, Latinx, etc.); LGBTQIA communities; people with disabilities, including behavioral health disorders; etc. BHSB awards additional points to help address systemic barriers that have led to inequity in access to funding.

##### 2. Principles and Values (15 points)

- a. Describe your organization's commitment to and understanding of the principles of a Recovery-Oriented System of Care (ROSC) that supports consumers self-determination and multiple pathways of recovery.

- b. This project seeks to empower and promote the important role of Peer Recovery Specialists. Describe how your organization will involve the Peer Recovery Specialist in the planning and implementation of your proposed activities.
- c. Describe your organization's commitment to providing services that are: recovery oriented, trauma informed, and person centered. Describe how you promote equity in a way that alleviates the stigma of people receiving medication assisted treatment.

**3. Service Delivery (25 points)**

- a. Describe your organization's plan to provide all services as outlined in the Scope of Service section of this RFP.
- b. Describe how your organization will identify and engage individuals in need of services and ensure that all individuals referred will, with consent, be linked to and/or receive needed services.
- c. Describe your approach to providing a competent, integrated, and holistic "whole health" approach to addressing substance use, mental health, and medical health services.
- d. Describe how the proposed program would be responsive to the needs of Baltimore City as a whole as well as the local neighborhood surrounding the program.
- e. Describe how the proposed program would handle overdoses, suicide risk, and behavioral health crises when they occur onsite, giving examples of how your organization has managed these in the recent past.

**4. Staffing Plan (10 points)**

- a. Describe your proposed staffing pattern, including supervisors, and how it will fulfill the staffing requirements in this RFP. Include an organizational chart that shows how this program will fit into your organization's overall structure.
- b. Describe your plan to ensure adequate support and peer support supervision.

**5. Effectively Serving the Focus Population (5 points)**

- a. Describe how your organization is uniquely qualified and designed to address known disparities experienced by this population.

**6. Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance (5 points)**

- a. Describe how your organization obtains and incorporates feedback from people served and other stakeholders into the development, implementation, operation, and improvement of program services.

## **7. Proposed Program Budget (10 points)**

- a. Attach a line-item budget for a full fiscal year that includes anticipated revenue from grant funding and all expenses. BHSB has budget forms on its website that can be used but are not required for this submission.
- b. Provide a budget narrative/justification that explains the projected revenue and expenses in more detail.

## **8. Implementation Timeline (5 points)**

- a. Provide a detailed timeline for implementation that includes all of the activities that you have committed to perform in your proposal. Show an outline of all the steps necessary to fully operationalize this project and by when each step would be completed. Services are expected to start in January 2022.

## **9. Appendices**

- All relevant licenses and certifications, including accreditation certificates
- Most recent Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) Site Visit Report, Administrative Services Organization (ASO) Audit, and/or Accrediting Organization Site Visit Report/Audit, including any Program Improvement Plans and all Statement of Deficiencies
- Organizational chart
- Line-Item Budget
- Most recent Financial Audit and Management Letter or an explanation if this is not applicable
- Most recent IRS 990 – Return of Organization Exempt from Income Taxes, or an explanation if this is not applicable
- Certificate of Good Standing from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation