



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

Peer Respite Study

Release Date: September 1, 2022

Pre-Proposal Conference: September 12, 2022 11 a.m.

Proposal Due: October 4, 2022 at noon

Anticipated Award Notification: Late November 2022

Anticipated Contract Start: December 2022

Issued by:

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Peer Respite Study

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

BHSB is seeking an experienced consultant or team of consultants to conduct a needs assessment to consider the viability and benefits of different peer respite models and provide recommendations to implement a peer respite program in the Central Maryland region of Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, and Howard County. Peer respite programs help to prevent and resolve behavioral health crises through peer support and community connection. Such models are effective but further information is needed to understand how to implement and support the integration of peer respite programs within the behavioral health crisis response system.

This project supports the Greater Regional Integrated Crisis System (GBRICS) Partnership. The GBRICS Partnership is a public private partnership that invests \$45 million over five years in behavioral health infrastructure and services in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, and Howard County. The overall goal is to reduce unnecessary Emergency Department (ED) use and police interaction for people in need of immediate access to behavioral health care. The four components of GBRICS are a new regional, no-wrong door Behavioral Health Call Center, expansion of Mobile Crisis Teams, increasing the availability of Open Access behavioral health services, and community engagement. BHSB serves as the Regional Administrative Manager for the GBRICS Partnership.

The vendor will be expected to evaluate how different peer respite program models can help the region in reducing its reliance on law enforcement, 911, and EDs for behavioral health crisis response. Some program models are designed to prevent crises before they happen while others are designed as alternative crisis stabilization options. The assessment will need to determine how these models will impact behavioral health crisis response across the region and provide a recommendation on how best to leverage these approaches. This recommendation must be justified by an analysis of regional data and by a stakeholder input process that engages peers throughout the region. Lastly, a model business plan must be developed to assist community-based organizations in establishing viable and effective peer respite programs.

C. SCOPE OF SERVICE

This project will revolve around a needs assessment and a set of recommendations to establish effective peer respite programs in Central Maryland. The assessment will be based on estimates of current behavioral health crisis episodes in the region and current service capacity. This analysis will serve as an important foundation for determining the impact of different peer respite program models. This initial assessment must also include stakeholder input regarding current needs and benefits of the various peer respite program models, with an emphasis on engaging peers and others who use the behavioral health crisis response system. The stakeholder input process could include peer focus groups, key informant interviews, surveys, or other methods of engaging peers.

This report will also include an environmental scan of different models currently in place across the country and other proposed approaches not yet implemented. This will require secondary research as well as strong connections to peer respite program leadership, staff, and participants. Peer respite programs can vary significantly in their governance structure, admission criteria, staffing patterns, referral sources, and level of integration into the broader public behavioral health

system. The needs assessment must analyze the benefits and drawbacks of these different approaches.

Based on this needs assessment and environmental scan, the report will provide recommendations on how best to establish effective peer respite programs in the region. These recommendations should build upon the data analysis and stakeholder input conducted by the vendor with the goals of reducing the region's reliance on law enforcement, 911, and EDs for behavioral health crisis response. The recommendations should address different peer respite program components and include justifications for the conclusions reached. The recommendations must be actionable and should be accompanied by a detailed implementation plan, potential funding sources, and a proposed timeline.

The vendor will also be expected to develop a model business plan to provide guidance to community-based organizations seeking to establish the recommended peer respite program services. This business plan will be drafted from the perspective of a community-based organization and will serve as a tool for a potential organization to provide peer respite services. This business plan must address staffing, funding, safety, accountability and quality assurance, physical and technical infrastructure, and service delivery methods. The goal is for the business plan to be comprehensive and provide all guidance needed to establish the recommended program.

Deliverables

- Conduct a peer respite program needs assessment for the Central Maryland region of Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, and Howard County including but not limited to:
 - An review of current behavioral health crisis response services, service utilization, and any unmet need in the region
 - A stakeholder engagement process to obtain the perspectives of peers and other stakeholders regarding the benefits and drawbacks of different peer respite program models
 - An analysis of the impact of peer respite programs that are peer-led or peer-run and only employ peers compared to programs that employ other behavioral health professionals
 - An analysis of the impact of peer respite programs with different referral sources including EDs, law enforcement, the homeless system, and existing peer networks
 - A review of funding models that rely on different combinations of insurance reimbursement and grant funding
 - A set of recommendations for the peer respite program models that would best further the goals of the GBRICS Partnership

- Justifications for the recommendations including but limited to quantitative data, cost savings, and key informant interviews
- An implementation plan for the recommendations including potential funding sources and cost savings
- Develop a model business plan for the recommended peer respite program model that includes but is not limited to:
 - Estimates of program revenue, costs, and potential funding sources
 - Recommended staffing pattern
 - Recommended program admission criteria and referral sources
 - Recommended program location, size, and scope
 - Recommended partnerships and integration within the public behavioral health system
 - Any safety or legal considerations for the program

D. FOCUS POPULATION

The vendor is expected to work with stakeholders in the GBRICS Partnership and the Central Maryland region of Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, and Howard County, especially peers and others with lived behavioral health experience. The vendor may also choose to consult with peer respite experts across the country.

The Central Maryland region (Baltimore City and Baltimore, Howard, and Carroll Counties) has a combined population of 1.94 million residents, 30% of the state's population. The region includes urban, suburban, and rural areas, and is racially and economically diverse.

E. STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

Funds for at least one senior FTE project manager must be included in the budget.

F. FUNDING AVAILABILITY

This is a one-year contract of up to \$250,000 for all work associated with the project including staff time for the consultant and any travel, research, or other direct costs needed to be successful. BHSB may select more than one firm to work on the project if no one vendor can meet all the requirements of the RFP. There is no opportunity to renew at this time.

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.

- 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 Program and Financial reports to BHSB using an electronic 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 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 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 a consultant to conduct a needs assessment to consider the viability and benefits of different peer respite models and provide recommendations to implement a peer respite program in the Central Maryland region of Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, and Howard County.

B. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

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

- Must be a peer-led organization that is a non-profit with at least 51% of their Board of Directors made up of peers OR must subcontract with a peer-led organization as an advisory partner in the project
- Must demonstrate connections within the organization’s professional network
Must have experience conducting at least two secondary research and drafting system-level reports

C. PROPOSAL TIMEFRAME AND SPECIFICATIONS

1. Timeline

Release Date:	September 1, 2022
Pre-Proposal Conference:	September 12, 2022
Proposal Due:	October 4, 2022
Anticipated Award Notification:	Late November 2022
Anticipated Contract Start:	December 2022

2. Pre-Proposal Conference

Date: September 12, 2022

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): +1 443-819-0973,,946554785#

Phone Conference ID: 946 554 785#

Please join five minutes early to leave time to troubleshoot. 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@BHSBaltimore.org no later than the close of business on September 9, 2022. 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 September 19, 2022.

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 October 4, 2022**. 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 cannot be considered.

4. Authorized Contact

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

Kelsi Loos, Procurement Lead
Email: Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org

5. Anticipated Service Term: December 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

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.

G. GOVERNING LAW AND VACCINATION MANDATES

The applicant acknowledges and agrees that BHSB is a federal contractor for purposes of Executive Order 14042, Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors (the "Order"). The applicant and its subcontractors shall comply with the Order and all other applicable mandates, rules, laws, and regulations (collectively, the "Requirements"). Upon request by BHSB, selected applicants shall promptly provide evidence of compliance with the Requirements and shall promptly take such further actions as may be requested by BHSB with respect to the Requirements and/or the resulting Contract. The applicant and all of its subcontractors shall, for the duration of the resulting Contract, comply with all guidance for contractor and subcontractor workplace locations published by the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force. These requirements shall be incorporated into all subcontracts of Sub-Vendor.

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 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 (20 points)

- a. Provide an overview of your organization, including its history, mission, overall purpose, and whether your organization is peer-led or peer-run. Describe if you are a peer-led organization or if you would be contracting with a peer-led organization.
- b. Describe your organization's experience managing projects similar to this one, meeting contractual deliverables and obligations (including any contracts with BHSB), and your capacity to manage the programmatic and financial requirements of this grant. Please include the number of similar projects you have completed.
- c. Briefly describe your agency/firm's ability to complete our project on time and on budget (e.g. staffing, infrastructure, travel, timeframe, etc.)
- d. 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), 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 how your organization's current practices have ensured cultural and linguistic competency and responsiveness to diverse communities in previous projects.
- b. 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.
- c. Describe how your organization will involve peers in the planning and implementation of your proposed activities.

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. Provide key milestones to be achieved.
- b. Describe your experience conducting secondary research and drafting system-level analysis and reports
- c. Describe your organization's knowledge and experience working with peer respite programs and other peer-led or peer-run programs and how you would leverage those past experiences to achieve the goals of this project

4. Staffing Plan (5 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.

5. Effectively Serving the Focus Population (5 points)

- a. Describe how your organization is uniquely qualified to work with the local/state governmental agencies, peer-led and peer-run organizations, and other community-based organizations in the four-jurisdiction region of Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, and Howard County.

6. Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance (10 points)

- a. Describe how your organization will obtain and incorporate feedback from peers and other people served by the behavioral health crisis response system in the four-jurisdiction region of Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, and Howard County, including providing compensation for their time.
- b. Describe what data you propose using to inform the planning process, and how you will collect, analyze and present data.

7. Proposed Program Budget (15 points)

- a. Provide a line-item budget and budget narrative broken down by the scope of services and deliverables described above for this 7-month contract term of up to \$250,000.

8. Implementation Timeline (15 points)

- a. Provide a work plan for implementation that includes all 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. Contracts are expected to start ASAP.

9. Appendices

- Organizational chart
- Line-Item Budget
- Certificate of Good Standing from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (screenshots from the MDAT website will not be accepted)
- Names/Bios/Roles for all individuals/subcontractors working on this project
- Submit documentation about your firm's financial strength (e.g., an audited financial statement, a letter from your accountant or bank, etc.)
- At least three complete professional references from clients including contact info.