



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:**

### ***988 Helpline Behavioral Health Call Triage and Mobile Response Team Dispatch***

**Release Date: August 31, 2022**

**Pre-Proposal Conference: September 13, 2022 (2:00 p.m.)**

**Proposal Due: September 30, 2022 (12:00 p.m. noon)**

**Anticipated Award Notification: late November 2022**

**Anticipated Contract Start: December 2022**

**Issued by:**

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

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# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## ***988 Helpline Call Triage and Mobile Response Team Dispatch***

### **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 one or more qualified organizations to develop and implement behavioral health call triage and mobile response team dispatch protocols for the new Regional 988 Helpline supported by the Greater Baltimore Regional Integrated Crisis System (GBRICS) Partnership. These protocols will provide standardization by applying them to all callers of the 988 Helpline of all ages and across Baltimore City and Baltimore, Carroll and Howard Counties. Designing the protocols will require close collaboration with various local governmental entities and community-based providers across the four-jurisdiction region served by the new Regional 988 Helpline. This will likely include local law enforcement, emergency medical services (EMS), hospital

emergency departments (EDs), 911 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), mobile response teams (MRTs) providers, and other behavioral health services in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, and Howard County.

This effort will require coordination across local governmental agencies. Local law enforcement, 911 PSAPs, and the public behavioral health system have distinct staffing patterns, regulatory requirements, technological systems, and cultures. It is essential that the vendor effectively bridge these differences to build trust and a shared commitment to the new triage and dispatch protocols. Designing the protocols will require significant system engineering expertise to meet the varied demands of the region. The consultant must also provide technical assistance to local governmental entities to assist in the implementation of the new protocols by staff on the ground. This will require developing training materials and processes to ensure consistent application by all stakeholders.

The goal of designing and implementing the new triage and dispatch protocol is to provide standardization and ensure a safe, efficient, and clinically effective allocation of the region's emergency response resources, including MRTs, law enforcement, and EMS. The protocols must also help achieve the goals set out by the GBRICS Partnership of reducing the region's reliance on EDs, 911, and law enforcement interventions when responding to behavioral health crises.

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

Developing and implementing behavioral health call triage and MRT dispatch protocols for the Regional 988 Helpline will require an assessment of the current policies and practices across the four jurisdictions. The vendor must use knowledge of relevant regulatory requirements for different local entities like law enforcement, EMS, EDs, and 911 PSAPs along with key informant interviews to build the understanding of each intersecting system needed for the assessment. This assessment shall include a system engineering process map along with an inventory of all relevant emergency response resources.

Early on, the vendor must also establish regular communication and collaboration processes across the different local governmental agencies and community providers. Project success will depend in part on building trust and credibility with key stakeholders throughout the region. System change and change management will not be effective if entities are skeptical or resistant to the goals of reducing system reliance on EDs, 911, and law enforcement. The vendor must facilitate a commitment to shared principles, effective lines of communication, and good faith problem-solving.

These foundational activities will allow for a well-informed process for developing triage and dispatch protocols for the Regional 988 Helpline and related system

partners. The protocols should describe when and how different emergency response resources should be dispatched based on an assessment of caller circumstances. The protocols may include call/contact transfer protocols, risk assessment procedures, co-notification and co-response policies, other required communication, and field dispatch protocols for all available emergency resources. A decision matrix and/or decision tree model should be used to describe the protocol.

The rationale behind the protocols must be made clear. Stakeholders across the region have varied attitudes and perspectives about 911 and 988 triage and dispatch. The vendor must devote time to obtaining the perspectives of stakeholders across the region, and in assisting BHSB in responding to concerns.

Once the triage and dispatch protocol is developed, the vendor will devise an implementation plan. The plan must take into consideration existing technology, staffing patterns, training demands, and other system infrastructure used by governmental entities and community providers across the region. The vendor shall identify any needed investments in system upgrades such as improving interoperability across the Regional 988 Helpline and 911 PSAPs, integrating communication platforms, and enhancing computer assisted dispatch systems. The vendor shall also provide training and technical assistance needed for implementation and create any procedures that are necessary to continue implementation after the conclusion of this contract.

#### Deliverables:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the current emergency response and behavioral health crisis response systems including:
  - A system engineering map of current protocols in each jurisdiction
  - A review of the requirements dictated by regulatory policies and practices of each local entity
  - A review of current and future behavioral health crisis response resources in each jurisdiction
  - A review of current and future 911 PSAP and law enforcement behavioral health triage and diversion programs in each jurisdiction
- Develop a triage and dispatch protocol for the 988 Regional Helpline and the four 911 PSAPs in the region that is informed by a shared decision-making process across the relevant local governmental entities in the region. The triage and dispatch protocol must include a decision matrix and/or decision tree for use by 911 and 988 staff in dispatching and co-notifying local law enforcement, EMS, EDs, MRTs, and other behavioral health entities.

- Create an implementation plan for the new triage and dispatch protocols across all relevant local governmental entities and behavioral health service providers including:
  - Recommendations for any needed infrastructure enhancements
  - Required changes to system policies and procedures
  - New training protocols for relevant staff
  - A timeline for training and implementation
- Provide needed training and technical assistance to local governmental entities and service providers.

#### **D. FOCUS POPULATION**

The vendor is expected to work with the Regional 988 Helpline and local governmental entities from Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, and Howard County. These local governmental entities include but are not limited to 911 PSAPs, local law enforcement, EMS, EDs, and local behavioral health authorities. The vendor will need to work across disciplines and agencies to foster effective shared decision-making and build consensus across these groups.

This region 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 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) project manager must be included in the budget.

#### **F. FUNDING AVAILABILITY**

This is a one-year contract of up to \$1,250,000 for all work associated with the project including staff time for the consultant and any technology, training, or technical assistance needed to implement the triage and dispatch protocol. BHSB may select more than one firm to work on the project if no single vendor can meet all the requirements of the RFP.

There is no opportunity to renew currently. BHSB recognizes that this scope of service may be difficult to achieve in one year and will consider other funding options should additional time be needed to achieve the deliverables.

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

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 one or more consultants to develop and implement behavioral health call triage and MRT dispatch protocols for the new Regional 988 Helpline. This involves designing the protocols in close collaboration with local governmental entities and community-based providers and training relevant partners in procedures.

### B. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

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

- Staff with at least 20 years of combined experience providing consultation to local governmental entities to facilitate system change and promote effective change management.
- Direct experience working on at least two projects with at least two of the following emergency response systems: behavioral health crisis response, 911, law enforcement, EMS, and/or hospital EDs. (Please provide an explanation of these projects in your proposal narrative.)
- Experience with multi-stakeholder engagement, shared decision-making, and cross-agency collaboration involving law enforcement and other key stakeholders. (Please provide details of this experience in your proposal narrative.)
- Experience with providing training and technical assistance to local governmental entities and community-based organizations. (Please provide details of this experience in your proposal narrative.)

### ○ PROPOSAL TIMEFRAME AND SPECIFICATIONS

#### 1. Timeline

Release Date:	August 31, 2022
Pre-Proposal Conference:	September 13, 2022 (2:00 p.m.)
Proposal Due:	September 30, 2022 (12:00 p.m. noon)
Anticipated Award Notification:	Late November 2022
Anticipated Contract Start:	December 2022

## 2. Pre-Proposal Conference

**Date:** September 13, 2022

**Time:** 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

**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,,101568605#  
Phone Conference ID: 101 568 605#

*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 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 20, 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](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 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 September 30, 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](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 Kelsi Loos whose contact information is listed below.

Kelsi Loos, Procurement Lead

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

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

### **C. 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.

### **D. RFP POSTPONEMENT/CANCELLATION**

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

### **E. 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.

### **F. 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, and overall purpose.
- b. Describe your organization's experience managing large scale system change projects similar to this, meeting contractual deliverables and obligations (including any contracts with BHSB), and your capacity to manage the programmatic and financial requirements of this grant. Be sure to address the eligibility requirement outlined above to demonstrate experience with providing training and technical assistance to local governmental entities and community-based organizations.
- 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 your organization's commitment to racial and social justice and health equity. Include specific examples of what your organization does to illustrate this commitment.

## **3. Service Delivery (20 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 organization's experience working with emergency response systems such as behavioral health crisis response, 911, EMS, and law enforcement. **Provide two examples of projects that address the eligibility requirements listed above.**
- c. Describe your experience working across agencies with differing historical and cultural approaches to their mission. Be sure to address experience with multi-stakeholder engagement, shared decision-making, and cross-agency collaboration involving law enforcement and other key stakeholders.
- d. Provide an example of a time when a system change project was initially unsuccessful. What changes in your approach did you make and what were the results? What did you learn?

## **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. **Be sure to describe how this pattern will meet the eligibility requirement of at least 20 years of combined experience providing consultation to local governmental entities to facilitate system change and promote effective change management.**
- b. Identify any functions that would be subcontracted with a brief description of the subcontractor and their specific responsibilities. Please state that this is not applicable if you will not be subcontracting services.

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

- a. Describe how your organization is uniquely qualified to work with the local governmental entities and the diverse communities of the four-jurisdiction region of Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, and Howard County.

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

- a. 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 up to \$1,250,000 and budget narrative broken down by the scope of services and deliverables described above for this ~~12-month~~ 7-month contract term.

## **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 as soon as possible after award selection.

## **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., the most recent final Financial Audit package including Findings and Management Letter from an independent auditor (preferred) OR a recent unaudited Income Statement AND Balance Sheet, if an audit is not available.)
- At least three complete professional references from clients including contact info.