



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

911 Diversion-Call Center Clinician

Release Date: October 12, 2022

Pre-Proposal Conference: October 26, 2022

Proposal Due: November 9, 2022

Anticipated Award Notification: December 27, 2022

Anticipated Contract Start: February 1, 2023

Issued by:

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

911 Diversion – Call Center Clinician

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 behavioral health program (also called sub-grantee) to hire and incorporate 1.4 FTE licensed behavioral health clinicians into the Baltimore City 911 Call Center for one 8-hour shift (11am-7pm, but subject to change) per day, 7 days a week. The funding will also support 0.2 FTE of a supervisor’s time. The clinicians will collaborate with BHSB and the Behavioral Health 911 Diversion Pilot Program partnering organizations to develop, implement, monitor, and improve protocols for responding to callers to 911 with behavioral health crises.

In June 2021, the Baltimore City Fire Department, in conjunction with other city-affiliated agencies including BHSB, Baltimore Crisis Response, Inc. (BCRI),

Baltimore City Police Department (BPD), Fire Communications, and 911 Communications worked collaboratively to launch the Behavioral Health 911 Diversion Pilot Program. The central mission of the program is to match individuals to the most appropriate and available resource. Individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis are connected to a crisis hotline staffed 24/7 by trained mental health professionals. Secondary outcomes of the behavioral health 911 diversion pilot program include:

- Reduced police response
- Reduced utilization of 911 resources (fire and EMS)
- Matching the “right” individual to the “right resource” at the “right time” and via the “right resource”
- Raising awareness about available behavioral health resources and promoting linkage between Emergency Medical Services (EMS), crisis providers, and other crisis-oriented resources (stabilization center, de-escalation training, etc.)

The primary partners, as well as other community stakeholders, participate in a weekly Quality Assurance (QA) review and planning workgroup to evaluate all attempted diversion calls, to identify individual call successes and areas for improvement as well as to make general recommendations for improving this process. One of the primary recommendations that has been made by this group is the need for additional support in appropriately routing specific calls. Given the complexity of these calls, the high-pressure nature of handling 911 calls, and the limited training call-takers receive in behavioral health, there is a need for real-time support to call-takers with making the appropriate classification and linking callers to the necessary resources.

Co-locating a behavioral health clinician in the 9-1-1 call center is a practice that has been adopted in several communities across the country. There are several models for implementing this intervention and the model employed by Baltimore City would be specifically tailored to fit within its unique structure of emergency triage and dispatch. The primary role of the clinicians will be to support 911 call takers in de-escalating crises and conducting screening to determine the most appropriate response.

The QA and planning workgroup in place for the current Behavioral Health 911 Diversion Pilot Program, comprised of the entities mentioned above with a well-established effective working partnership, will review data to determine which calls the partners would consider appropriate for the behavioral health clinicians to manage. The selected sub-grantee will work closely with diversion partners to gain a full understanding of the current processes and call protocols in place and then

lead a comprehensive planning process to establish a co-location implementation model.

Depending on the outcome of this process, implementation options could include:

- Clinician is connected into a live call involving behavioral health by call-taker to listen and assist with de-escalation and disposition decision.
- Clinician has access to database to track live calls and can connect to calls flagged as behavioral health to assist with de-escalation and disposition decision.
- Clinician is connected into a live call involving behavioral health by call-taker where there is potential risk for violence to provide an additional safety and risk assessment to determine eligibility for diversion to behavioral health services.
- Clinician has capacity to receive calls from Law Enforcement and EMS on-scene to provide additional support and advice.
- Clinician assists with follow-up to individual calls and individuals identified as high utilizers.

C. SCOPE OF SERVICE

The selected sub-grantee will demonstrate the ability to hire, train, retain and supervise licensed mental health clinicians at an advanced clinical level (e.g., LCSW-C, LCPC).

The sub-grantee will work closely with diversion partners to gain a full understanding of the current processes and call protocols in place and then lead a comprehensive planning process to establish a clinician co-location implementation model.

The sub-grantee will create written protocols in partnership with diversion program partners and submit the protocols to BHSB for approval.

The sub-grantee will implement the BHSB-approved protocols with fidelity and alert BHSB and diversion program partners when protocol changes are needed. The sub-grantee will periodically re-evaluate and revise protocols, when necessary, in collaboration with diversion program partners and with BHSB's review and approval.

At least one qualified representative of the sub-grantee organization will attend weekly Quality Assurance calls to participate in these reviews.

Interventions provided by the clinicians under this contract will:

- Seek to reduce harm for the individual, family, and community
- Be trauma-responsive and trauma-informed
- Be culturally aware and competent
- Promote voluntary engagement of consumers
- Seek to prevent unnecessary Emergency Department utilization and hospital admissions
- Promote easy access with low barriers to care
- Be person-centered
- Be family-centered
- Focus on recovery-oriented care

The sub-grantee will maintain compliance with all federal and state regulations for behavioral health to include, but not be limited to HIPAA, 42CFR, ADA.

Deliverables include:

- Collaborate with Behavioral Health 911 Diversion Pilot Program partnering entities to develop written protocols for clinician’s role in diversion process within six months of the start of contract.
- Maintain the required staffing pattern with little to no absence or vacancy rate. The sub-grantee will ensure clinician presence at the 911 Call Center at all required times including weekdays, weekends, holidays; this includes having a plan in place to ensure coverage when any program clinician is out for vacation, sick or personal leave.
- Participate in scheduled Quality Assurance meetings every Friday at 1PM or as scheduled

D. FOCUS POPULATION

The focus population will be callers to 911 who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis without the presence of an acute medical complaint. Specific eligibility criteria for callers to be managed by clinicians will be established in the protocols created in partnership with the diversion partner entities.

E. STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

The sub-grantee will hire 1.4 FTE licensed mental health clinicians to work at the Baltimore City 9-1-1 Call Center. Clinicians must have, at minimum, Maryland licensure of Licensed Clinical Social Worker–Clinical (LCSW-C) or Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC).

The sub-grantee will provide 0.2 FTE supervision by a licensed mental health clinician with, at minimum, Maryland licensure of Licensed Clinical Social Worker–Clinical (LCSW-C) or Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC).

F. FUNDING AVAILABILITY

Funding up to \$124,412 is available from February 1, 2023-September 30, 2023, to provide these services.

If the selected sub-grantee meets all required deliverables on-time during the initial contract, the sub-grantee can apply for continuation of funding that is expected in future years: up to \$165,882 from October 1, 2023-September 30, 2024, and up to \$165,882 from October 1, 2024-September 30, 2025.

Allowable expenses include staffing, fringe, equipment, supplies, phone, and indirect costs of up to 10% of salaries and fringe.

G. CONTRACTING WITH BHSB

The applicant 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 organization will be required to submit a new budget on BHSB's budget forms, 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
 - Vendor receives payment in advance of incurring and reporting costs based on a pro-rated budget (e.g., 1/12th of budget each 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 licensed behavioral health program to hire, incorporate and supervise 1.4 FTE licensed behavioral health clinicians into the Baltimore City 911 Call Center. Clinicians will collaborate with Behavioral Health 911 Diversion Pilot Program partners to develop, implement, monitor, and improve protocols for responding to callers to 911 with behavioral health crises.

B. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

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

- Behavioral health program licensed in Maryland for at least 2 years and located in Baltimore City
- 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 emergency departments
- Hold a Certificate of Good Standing from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation
- Eligible to receive Federal contracts (Not be listed in SAM.gov excluded providers [SAM.gov | Exclusions](#))

C. PROPOSAL TIMEFRAME AND SPECIFICATIONS

1. Timeline

RFP Release Date:	October 12, 2022
Pre-Proposal Conference:	October 26, 2022
Proposal Due:	November 9, 2022
Anticipated Award Notification:	December 27, 2023
Anticipated Contract Start:	February 1, 2023

2. Pre-Proposal Conference

Date: October 26, 2022

Time: 1:00pm

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

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 240 820 025 416

Passcode: 4HdubR

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 443-819-0973,,665908889#](#) United States, Baltimore

Phone Conference ID: 665 908 889#

[Find a local number](#) | [Reset PIN](#)

Connect to Teams Video conference by clicking "Join online meeting".

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 **Tuesday, September 25, 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 **November 2, 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 November 9, 2020**. 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. Interviews

Applicants whose proposals are ranked highest by a Review Committee may be asked to participate in an interview. Interviews are expected to take place the first and second weeks of December 2022.

5. Authorized Contact

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

Bonnie Campbell, Procurement Lead
Email: Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org

6. Anticipated Service Term: February 1, 2023-September 30, 2023, 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.

Prior to selection, BHSB will conduct a risk assessment process that includes a review of financial and quality/compliance documentation.

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. Describe the organization's history and experience, including the number of years serving as a licensed behavioral health program, and experience delivering behavioral health treatment and support services, including evidence-based practices used.
- b. List and describe your organization's direct experience collaborating with and 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 emergency departments. Attach two letters of support from emergency response entities with which your program has collaborated in the past.
- c. Describe the organization's experience managing programs that are similar to this project, meeting contractual deliverables and obligations (including any contracts with BHSB), and your capacity to manage the programmatic and financial reporting requirements of this grant.
- 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 (10 points)

- a. Describe how you will integrate principles of equity and antiracism into this work.
- b. Describe your organization's commitment to a trauma-informed and trauma-responsive approach and any trauma-specific interventions your organization currently offers or would implement if awarded this grant.

3. Service Delivery (20 points)

- a. Describe your organization's plan to provide all services and deliverables outlined in the Scope of Service section of this RFP.
- b. Describe how your organization would participate in planning efforts to address issues related to 911 diversion, giving specific examples of how your organization has engaged in related work in the recent past.

4. Staffing Plan (20 points)

- a. Describe your proposed staffing pattern, including the number of individuals (and names if available) and their credentials who will fill the 1.4 FTE clinician positions and the 0.2 supervisor positions. Attach an organizational chart that shows how this program will fit into your organization's overall structure.
- b. Describe how you will ensure coverage of all required work shifts.
- c. Describe your plan to ensure adequate support and clinical supervision for staff hired for this program who will be independently working at the 911 call center.
- d. Describe your proposed training plan for staff assigned to this program and indicate any relevant expertise, training, and/or skills staff will already possess.

5. Effectively Serving the Focus Population (15 points)

- a. Describe your organization's history and expertise in providing crisis management and de-escalation services.

6. Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance (5 points)

- a. Describe your organization's practices regarding how consumers' Protected Health Information will be collected, maintained, used, and disclosed in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA); Title 42, Part 2 of the Code of

Federal Regulations governing the confidentiality of Substance Use Disorder Patient Records (42 CFR Part 2); and the Maryland Confidentiality of Medical Records Act (Md. Code Ann. Health-General Section 4-301 et seq.) as amended.

7. Proposed Program Budget (5 points)

- a. Attach a line-item budget for 12-months of operation of this project that totals up to \$165,882 and 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.

8. Implementation Timeline (5 points)

- a. Provide a detailed timeline for implementation that includes all the activities that you have committed to perform to fully operationalize this project and by when each step would be completed, including dates for hiring staff. Contracts are expected to start on February 1, 2023.

9. Appendices

- Copies of all relevant licenses/certifications including accreditation certificates, and any licenses issued by the Maryland Department of Health (BHA and OHCQ) held by the organization and individual staff (such as the proposed supervisor)
- Letters of support
- Organizational chart
- Line-Item Budget
- 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
- 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
- Most recent IRS 990–Return of Organization Exempt from Income Taxes or Business Tax Return
- Certificate of Good Standing from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (screenshots from the MDAT website will not be accepted)