



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

Expanded School Behavioral Health Program

Release Date: Friday, November 1, 2024

Pre-Proposal Conference: Wednesday, November 6, 2024 at 2 pm

Proposal Due: Friday, January 10, 2025 at 5 pm

Anticipated Award Notification: April 18, 2025

Anticipated Contract Start: July 1, 2025

Issued by:

Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc.
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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Expanded School Behavioral Health Program

II. 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 and the Baltimore City Public School System are seeking a minimum of seven (7) qualified organizations to implement behavioral health services at a minimum of ten (10) Baltimore City public schools.

BHSB and Baltimore City Schools will contract with behavioral health provider organizations to offer a continuum of behavioral health services with a strong emphasis on behavioral health promotion and prevention. Qualified behavioral health professionals assigned to work in city schools will promote positive social-emotional development and positive learning environments by implementing a comprehensive and integrated model of prevention and direct treatment services. Services delivered will include prevention, early intervention, crisis response, and treatment services.

C. Scope of Service

BHSB and Baltimore City Schools will contract with a minimum of (7) seven behavioral health organizations to offer a continuum of behavioral health services with a strong emphasis on behavioral health promotion and prevention to at least ten (10) Baltimore City Public Schools, including at a minimum three (3) BHSB funded school. The Qualified behavioral health professionals assigned to work in city schools will promote positive social-emotional development and positive learning environments by implementing a comprehensive and integrated model of prevention and direct treatment services. Licensed clinicians will provide prevention, early intervention, and treatment services.

The selected applicants who receive this funding will participate in the implementation and planning of the Expanded School Behavioral Health (ESBH) program, which will meet the overall goals of the ESBH program to improve school readiness, improve student academic success, and help students foster healthy relationships. The Baltimore City Public School System is responsible for selecting participating schools, and BHSB is responsible for identifying the qualified provider organization to participate in this portfolio of services. The selected applicants will need to understand the importance of a shared school-family-community system designed to build a full continuum of behavioral health promotion for students enrolled in general education programs and their families through participation in Student Wellness Support Teams.

Expanded School Behavioral Health program promotes school readiness, address barriers to learning, enable children and youth to make better use of educational programs, foster positive interpersonal relationships, and provides an alternative to behavioral health services within the structure of special education programs. The selected applicant must have a documented history of providing trauma-informed,

culturally competent, and comprehensive behavioral health services to a diverse array of students. The selected applicants must be willing to provide evidence-based practices which best serve youth and families with multicultural, LGBTQ+, and limited English proficiency identities.

Services include prevention, early intervention, crisis response, and treatment services. Prevention services will include participation in school-wide activities with students, families and caregivers, and school staff on a variety of topics and issues. Behavioral health treatment services can include but are not limited to, individual, group, and family therapy.

Contracting with City Schools

Applicants selected through this process will enter into a three-year contractual agreement with City Schools. Following a notification of selection, City Schools will provide details about the contract and the process for executing it. Applicants new to City School's contract process are encouraged to review relevant forms available on our website here:

<https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/o/inside/page/procurement-guidelines-processes-and-forms>

Lastly, all selected applicants will need to pass the Baltimore City Public School background check.

Project Deliverables

- Provide behavioral health services to students enrolled in Baltimore City Public Schools General Education programs (approx. 60 per 0.5 FTE).
- Adhere to the Performance Standards for Mental Health Professionals in City Schools. (see attached Addendum)
- Provide mental health consultations for school staff, including classroom observations of students at risk (50 per 0.5 FTE).
- Conduct prevention group activities for students (25 per 0.5 FTE).
- Participate in school Student Wellness Support Team meetings
- Facilitate family outreach activities (at least one per 0.5 FTE).
- Provide in-service presentations on relevant mental health topics to school staff (two per 0.5 FTE).
- Support the school community for crisis intervention as needed.
- Submit complete and accurate program data information in BHSB's web-based data platform.
- Participate in the Evidence-Based Assessment (EBA) Initiative. This initiative involves the use of assessments that are reliable, valid, and clinically useful for the intended population; data collection at regular intervals throughout treatment; informing diagnosis, treatment planning, and outcome; and ongoing progress monitoring to inform changes in treatment.

- Maintain clinical records in accordance with the BHSB contracting agreement, Maryland Health General Article 4-403. Section 4-403(c), COMAR 10.63.01.05, and any other Federal or State regulation that applies under the program’s licensure status. These records should include but are not limited to the following:
 - Consent to Treatment
 - Behavioral Health Assessment with diagnosis
 - Individualized Treatment Plan
 - Coordination of Care documentation (referrals and/or collaboration notes)
 - Treatment/Progress Notes
 - Discharge Summary (if applicable)
- Attend monthly Expanded School Behavioral Health Program (ESBH) Meetings.

D. Focus Population

Baltimore City students and their families that attend one of the ESBH participating schools.

E. Staffing Requirements

The selected applicants must have the capacity to staff at a minimum of (10) schools at 0.5 Full Time Equivalent (at least 0.5 FTE per school). All clinicians hired for this program must be licensed or certified at the appropriate level to practice in Maryland.

Additionally, it is expected that clinicians will be able to demonstrate at least two years of relevant experience and knowledge of the population to be served. Professionals must have experience in treatment strategies in child behavior management and family crisis intervention, the ability to work with families in a supportive manner throughout the diagnostic and referral processes, and the ability to provide treatment for children and adolescents. The selected applicant is expected to have robust staff training plans and provide adequate supervision. Supervision must support the implementation of policies and practices that promote resilience and prevent and mitigate the negative effects of adversity and trauma. All clinicians must adhere to Baltimore City Public School’s board policy requirements around criminal background checks and identification badges.

F. Funding Availability

This project has three (3) funding sources. They are funding from BHSB, Baltimore City Public School System, and Fee for service. This RFP is only for BHSB funding. The total amount of funding available from BHSB is \$1,091,597 to be split among

chosen providers based on the number of FTEs per school. Each organization can be awarded at a minimum \$60,000 from BHSB for staffing 3 schools at .5 FTE. The remaining seven (7) schools may be funded by either BHSB or City Schools. Providers may be awarded a minimum of \$200,000 in total funding for serving ten (10) schools by contracting with BHSB and City Schools.

The BHSB award funding is available to support non-billable activities conducted by clinicians in the amount of \$20,000 for a licensed mental health clinician at 0.5 FTE. This award amount also includes indirect costs, which cannot exceed 10% of salary and fringe expenses. Funding is provided for prevention services and other services not otherwise reimbursable through the public behavioral health system. Line-item budgets should detail these expenses separately, and proposed grant award amounts cannot exceed these limits per FTE proposed clinician (e.g., for 6.5 FTE clinicians, grant funds cannot exceed \$260,000).

Additional costs are expected to be offset by fee-for-service revenue billed through the public behavioral health system. All revenue sources should be reflected in both the budget and budget narrative sections of the submitted proposal. Funding also supports the prevention services and uninsured youth, which are not currently Medicaid reimbursable.

G. Quality and Financial Review

As part of BHSB's procurement process, internal quality and financial reviews are completed to ensure there are no significant concerns with the organization(s) being selected. Applicants should be sure to provide the most recent available versions of all requested documentation with their RFP application in order to ensure this is a smooth process.

H. Contracting with BHSB

Applicants selected through this process will enter into a contractual agreement with BHSB. Following 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 was 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 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 BHSB 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. Failure by vendors to comply with the terms of any contract with BHSB may result in denial of future contracts with BHSB.

Applicants should be aware of best practices in documenting both programmatic and financial activities to aid in an efficient audit

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 – Actual Expenditures
 - Sub-vendor receives payment after costs are incurred and reported. Payment is based on the costs reported for a specific period.

BHSB issues payments once per month. Applicants should note that submitting required documents and reports late can result in delayed payment.

III. Overview of RFP

A. Purpose of RFP

The purpose of this RFP is to select a behavioral health provider organization to contract with BHSB and Baltimore City Schools to offer a continuum of behavioral health services with a strong emphasis on behavioral health promotion and prevention. Qualified behavioral health professionals assigned to work in city schools will promote positive social-emotional development and positive learning environments by implementing a comprehensive and integrated model of prevention and direct treatment services. Services delivered will include prevention, early intervention, crisis response, and treatment services.

B. Applicant Eligibility

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

- Licensure as an Outpatient Mental Health Center (OMHC) for a minimum of two years with the ability to access reimbursement through The Administrative Services Organization (ASO) for Maryland’s Public Behavioral Health System.
- A minimum of two years experience providing therapy/prevention services to students and/or youth.

C. Proposal Timeline and Specifications

1. Timeline

Release Date:	Friday, November 1, 2024
Pre-Proposal Conference:	Wednesday, November 6, 2024 @ 2 pm
Proposal Due:	Friday, January 10, 2025, at 5 pm
Anticipated Award Notification:	April 18, 2025
Anticipated Contract Start:	July 1, 2025
Anticipated Service Start:	July 1, 2025

2. Pre-Proposal Conference

Date: Wednesday, November 6, 2024

Time: 2 pm

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

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 229 838 592 429

Passcode: KNzU2e

Dial in by phone

[+1 443-819-0973](tel:+14438190973),101602346# United States, Baltimore

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 101 602 346#

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 **Wednesday, November 6, 2024, @ 2pm**. 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.bhsbbaltimore.org/providers/funding-opportunities/> by **November 13, 2024**

Individuals who submitted questions and/or attended the Pre-Proposal Conference will be notified by email when questions and answers are posted on BHSB's website.

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 **5 pm EST on Friday, January 10, 2025**. 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 (if applicable) N/A

5. Authorized Contact

Applicants are advised that the authorized contact person for all matters concerning this RFP is Kisha Winston-Watkins, whose contact information is listed below.

Kisha Winston-Watkins, Procurement Lead
Email: Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org

6. Anticipated Service Term: July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, 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.

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 Process

Applications must be complete and fully responsive to the below Proposal Narrative Outline and must include all required appendices. Applicants may file an appeal within five days of notification of non-selection. BHSB will not review new proposal materials that were not included in the application. BHSB will review the appeal letter and respond to the non-selected applicant 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-19 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 the sub-vendor.

IV. 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/>. We recommend you start your application early, so you know what to expect with the system.

Late proposals will not be considered.

- Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are becoming increasingly prevalent. While AI is a helpful administrative tool, it is important to ensure that proposals reflect authentic responses and realistic service delivery plans.
- It is the policy of BHSB to adhere to the rules and regulations in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), which require appropriate safeguards to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and security of all protected health information. No proposals submitted in response to this RFP should include individually identifiable health information.

For more information, please refer 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 (25 points)

- a. Provide an overview of your organization, including how long it has operated and became licensed as an Outpatient Mental Health Center (OMHC) and when it received or expects to receive accreditation. Attach as an appendix all relevant licenses and certifications.
- b. Describe your organization's ability to access third-party reimbursement, particularly Medicaid, for behavioral health services.
- c. 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.

- d. Provide an overview of your organization's experience in the last three years providing school-based services.
- e. 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 ensure services are delivered in a culturally and linguistically competent manner, responsive to the diverse communities served, including individuals for whom English is a second language.
- b. Describe how you will integrate principles of equity and anti-racism into this work.
- c. Describe your organization's commitment to a trauma-informed and 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 as outlined in the Scope of Service section of this RFP.
- b. Describe your organization's ability to successfully implement evidence-based trauma-responsive services, how you will use these interventions within the program, and maintain fidelity to the standards model.
- c. 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.
- d. Describe how your organization will collaborate with Baltimore City Public Schools staff to 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.

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 clinical supervision for staff, particularly staff who work independently/ off-site.

5. Effectively Serving the Focus Population (5 points)

- a. Describe your organization's history and expertise in collaborating with community partners to provide the best quality of care to youth and families; please share specific examples.

6. Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance (10 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.
- b. Describe how your organization would address any staff vacancies and turnover for the ESBH program should they occur

7. Proposed Program Budget (10 points)

- a. Attach a line-item budget for the grant period in the RFP that includes anticipated revenue from grant funding and fee-for-service reimbursement and all expenses as an appendix.
- b. Provide a budget narrative/justification that explains revenue and expense projections in more detail. The budget narrative should be included in the body of your proposal, not as an appendix.

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. Contracts are expected to start on July 1, 2025.

9. Appendices

- o Copies of all relevant licenses/certifications including any licenses issued by Maryland Department of Health (BHA and OHCQ).
- o 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 the most recent Business or Personal Tax Return if an IRS 990 form is not required to be filed
- Certificate of Good Standing from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (screenshots from the MDAT website will not be accepted) - the certificate must be dated within one year of the RFP submission due date.