



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

School-Based Substance Use Services

Release Date: May 1, 2026

Pre-Proposal Conference: May 6, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.

Proposals Due: June 1, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

Anticipated Award Notification: June 22, 2026

Anticipated Contract Start: July 1, 2026

Issued by:

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

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OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

Overview of BHSB

Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc. (BHSB) is a non-profit organization that serves as the Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) on behalf of Baltimore City and operates in this role under the authority of the Maryland Department of Health (MDH). BHSB is responsible for planning, managing, and monitoring resources, programs, and policies within the larger Medicaid fee-for-service system, as well as services directly funded by BHSB through private and public grants. We use our knowledge of what services are available and how to structure system resources to meet the unique needs of the communities we serve.

BHSB envisions a city where people live and thrive in communities that promote and support behavioral health and wellness. We are committed to building a system of care that serves all community members in need of services. We work to ensure that the most appropriate care is provided, taking into consideration individual, family, and community differences.

Description of Project

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) will contract for the provisions of 7.5 FTEs licensed or certified substance use disorder (SUD) clinicians to deliver school-based substance use services in selected Baltimore City Public Schools as part of the Expanded School Behavioral Health (ESBH) framework. This framework promotes student wellness, addresses barriers to learning such as mental health and substance use challenges, reduces substance use risks, fosters positive interpersonal relationships, and improves academic outcomes. The selected organizations will partner with Baltimore City Public Schools to offer a continuum of evidence-based prevention, early intervention, and treatment services for adolescents at risk of or experiencing substance use concerns.

All selected applicants will establish and maintain a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) to ensure the organization has access to perform all the services outlined in the scope of services at each assigned school.

Scope of Service

The selected organizations will deliver evidence-based substance use prevention, early intervention, and treatment services in assigned schools. Each organization will coordinate with the school administrators to determine the level, type, and frequency of services that will be provided. Services include:

Prevention and Early Intervention Services

Prevention and early intervention services are evidence-based approaches designed to prevent the initiation of substance use and address early risk factors before substance use becomes problematic or requires treatment. These services aim to:

- Reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors
- Promote healthy decision-making and coping skills
- Identify and address early signs of substance use or related behaviors
- Prevent escalation to substance use disorders

Prevention activities may include school-wide programming, classroom instruction, and small-group interventions involving students, families, and school staff.

Substance Use Treatment Services

Substance use treatment services are structured, evidence-based clinical interventions designed to assess, treat, and reduce substance use disorders and related behavioral, social, and functional impairments. These services are provided when substance use has progressed beyond early intervention and requires formal, individualized care. This includes:

- Comprehensive assessments
- Individualized evidence-based interventions
- Referral to assessed appropriate level of treatment

Treatment services may include individual, group, and family counseling that is consistent with Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC) principles. ROSC principles emphasize:

- Strength-based support
- Person-centered care
- Family and community support
- Long-term wellness, not just symptom reduction

The selected applicants must have the infrastructure to refer to appropriate services when necessary.

Staff Training and Supervision

The selected applicants must:

- Maintain a comprehensive training plan that prepares staff to deliver prevention, early intervention, and treatment services in school settings
- Ensure ongoing, appropriate clinical supervision

Other Project Activities

Each 0.5 FTE clinician will be required to complete the following activities each school year:

- Deliver a minimum of 25 prevention group activities at each participating school.

- Attend, participate, or coordinate four (4) school team/committee meetings, such as Student Wellness Support Team meetings and professional development days.
- Provide two (2) staff trainings per year relevant to adolescent SUD and school-based service delivery.
- Participate in a minimum of six (6) family outreach activities.
- The selected applicant will provide Medicaid eligibility screening and support families through the Medicaid application process. If supports are needed beyond the provider's scope, the provider will collaborate with and refer families to community-based organizations that offer Medicaid eligibility screening and application assistance.
- Collect and submit all required BHSB data.

Project Deliverables

Each reporting period, selected applicants will report for each school:

- # of students referred for assessments for the appropriate level of treatment for SUD services
- # of students who were assessed for the appropriate level of treatment for SUD services (Target 100% of unduplicated students referred)
- # of evidence-based prevention group activities provided (Target: minimum 25 groups per 0.5 FTE per school year)
- # staff trainings relevant to adolescent SUD and school-based service delivery provided (Target: 2 per 0.5 FTE per school year)
- # school team meetings attended, participated in, or coordinated (Target: minimum 4 school team meetings per 0.5 FTE per school year)
- # family outreach activities participated in (Target: minimum 6 family outreach activities per 0.5 FTE per school year)
- # FTE per school (Target: total 7.5 FTE across all schools)

Focus Population

This project will serve children and youth who attend Baltimore City Public Schools.

Staffing Requirements

All staff working on this project must have relevant experience and knowledge to meet the needs of the people who will be served within the scope of the project.

Selected applicants will coordinate with each assigned school's administrators to determine the level, type, and frequency of services that will be provided per 0.5 FTE clinician staff. Clinical staff can include:

- Independently Licensed Advanced Clinical Mental Health Professionals:
 - Licensed Certified Social Worker–Clinical (LCSW-C)
 - Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC)
- Master’s-Level Licensed Mental Health Professionals
 - Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW)
 - Licensed Graduate Professional Counselor (LGPC)
- Maryland Addictions Counselors
 - Alcohol and Drug Trainee (ADT) Certified Supervised Counselor
 - Alcohol and Drug (CSC-AD) Certified Associate Counselor –
 - Alcohol and Drug (CAC-AD)
 - Licensed Clinical Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LCADC) –

Selected applicants must provide ongoing clinical supervision and training in accordance with each staff member’s licensure board requirements.

Funding Availability

The total funding availability for this RFP is \$583,417. Awards will be \$38,894 per 0.5 FTE.

The selected applicants must ensure that all services eligible for Medicaid reimbursement are billed through Medicaid, and grant funds are used solely for services that are not reimbursable by Medicaid. Examples of Medicaid non-reimbursement services include educational/prevention services, consultation with schools and staff, etc.

Risk Assessment

BHSB completes a risk assessment as part of the procurement process. Applicants should be sure to submit the most recent versions of all required documentation.

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. The selected applicants 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 Type and Payment

The contract and payment type that will result from this procurement are 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 contract:

- 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.

Contract Monitoring and Technical Assistance

The 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 on track to be 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 of their award amount 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 the 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.

OVERVIEW OF RFP

Purpose of RFP

Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) will contract for the provisions of 7.5 FTEs licensed or certified SUD clinicians to deliver school-based substance use services in selected Baltimore City Public Schools, as part of the Expanded School Behavioral Health (ESBH) framework. This framework promotes student wellness, addresses barriers to learning such as mental health and substance use challenges, reduces substance use risks, fosters positive interpersonal relationships, and improves academic outcomes.

The selected organizations will partner with Baltimore City Public Schools to offer a continuum of evidence-based prevention, early intervention, and treatment services for adolescents at risk of or experiencing substance use concerns.

Applicant Eligibility

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

- Licensure as a Maryland COMAR 10.63 substance use disorder provider at the following levels:
 - Level 0.5 Early Intervention Services
 - Level 1 Outpatient Service
- Able to bill and receive reimbursement from Medicaid.
- Submission of a Certificate of Good Standing from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation
 - The certificate **must be dated within one year** of the RFP submission due date.
 - **Screenshots from the MDAT website will not be accepted.**
- Applicants that currently receive grant funds from BHSB or did receive grant funds in prior years must have:
 - No outstanding financial audits
 - No late payments owed to BHSB
 - No current Corrective Action Plans (CAP) for which the applicant has not met identified targets more than two years beyond the date the CAP was issued.
 - No more than one (1) Accountability Compliance Audit in the two fiscal years preceding the current fiscal year that reflects unresolved deficiencies.

Proposal Timeline and Specifications

1. Timeline

Release Date:	May 1, 2026
Pre-Proposal Conference:	May 6, 2026, at 3 p.m.
Proposal Due:	June 1, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.
Anticipated Award Notification:	June 22, 2026
Anticipated Contract Start:	July 1, 2026

2. Pre-Proposal Conference

Date: May 6, 2026

Time: 3:00 pm

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

Click here to join the meeting [School-Based Substance Use Services Pre-Proposal Conference](#)

Or call in (audio only): [+1 443-819-0973,,521258214#](#)

Phone Conference ID: 521 258 214#

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

Questions related to this RFP will be answered at the Pre-Proposal Conference. Questions posed during the conference and BHSB's responses will be posted on BHSB's website at <https://www.bhsbaltimore.org/for-providers/funding-opportunities/> by **May 13, 2026**.

Individuals who 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

All proposals must be submitted through BHSB's online portal. Applicants must register with the system ahead of time. You will be 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.

Click [here](#) to access BHSB's online application portal, or copy and paste the following URL into your browser:

<https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=bhsbaltimore>

All proposals must be received no later than **5:00 pm ET on June 1, 2026**. 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 will not be accepted.

4. Authorized Contact

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

Ashley Coston, Procurement Lead

Email: Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org

5. Anticipated Service Term: July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027, with options to renew annually pending availability of funding and performance.

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.

RFP Postponement/Cancellation

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

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 business days of receipt of the appeal.

FORMAT AND CONTENT OF PROPOSAL

Proposal Instructions

- Applications must be submitted through BHSB's [online portal](https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=bhsbaltimore): <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=bhsbaltimore>. We recommend you start your application early.

Late proposals will not be accepted.

- Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are becoming increasingly prevalent. While AI is a helpful 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>.

Proposal Narrative Outline and Rating Criteria

Applicants must respond to the questions below and submit all documents listed in the Required Documents section. The following outline describes the information requested and the assigned possible point values for each question.

1. This project will staff a total of 7.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) substance use disorder clinicians. If selected through this RFP, what is your preferred number of FTEs? What is the minimum you would accept? What is the maximum? (Unscored)
2. **Organizational Background and Capacity**
 - a. Provide an overview of your organization, including its history, mission, and overall purpose. **(5 points)**
 - b. Describe your organization's history and experience, including the length of time delivering services, serving youth and families affected by substance abuse, and any evidence-based practices used. **(5 points)**
 - c. Describe your organization's access to, experience working with, and continued capacity to work with youth and families affected by substance use. **(5 points)**

3. Principles and Values

- a. Describe your organization's commitment to overdose education, consumer self-determination, addressing stigma in behavioral health, and providing multiple pathways to recovery. How do you operationalize these principles and practices? **(5 points)**
- b. Describe your organization's commitment to serving all people and being responsive to individual, family, and community differences. How do you operationalize this commitment? **(5 points)**

4. Service Delivery

- a. Describe your approach to providing a competent, integrated, holistic "whole health" approach to addressing substance use, mental health, and somatic health. **(10 points)**
- b. Describe how your organization provides services to individuals with communication/language differences, including individuals with limited English proficiency and those who are Deaf or hard of hearing and blind or have low vision. **(10 points)**
- c. Describe how your organization will collaborate with Baltimore City Public Schools 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. **(10 points)**

5. Staffing Plan

- a. Describe your proposed staffing pattern, including staff's substance use experience, 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 points)**
- b. Describe your plan to ensure adequate support and clinical supervision for staff, particularly staff who work independently and/or off-site. **(5 points)**

6. Effectively Serving the Focus Population

- a. Describe how your organization is uniquely qualified to address the needs of each person served through this project. How will you take into consideration individual, family, and community differences experienced by the focus population? How will you maintain a high level of quality and person-centered care? **(20 points)**

7. Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance

- a. Describe how your organization obtains and incorporates feedback from people served and other stakeholders. How do you use feedback to develop, implement, operationalize, and/or improve program services? **(5 points)**
- b. Specify how consumers' protected health information (PHI) and other confidential information will be collected, maintained, used, and

disclosed in compliance with (i) the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. 1320d et seq. and implementing regulations at 45 CFR parts 160 and 164) as amended, (ii) the Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Records (42 U.S.C. 290dd-2, as implemented by 42 CFR part 2) as amended; and (iii) the Maryland Confidentiality of Medical Records Act (Md. Code Ann. Health-General Section 4-301 et seq.) as amended. **(5 points)**

8. Implementation Timeline

- a. Provide a detailed timeline for implementation that includes all of the activities you have committed to perform in your proposal. Show an outline of all the steps necessary to operationalize this project fully, and by when each step would be completed. Contracts are expected to start on July 1, 2026. **(5 points)**

9. Proposed Program Budget- Not weighed in the scoring

- 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.

10. Required Documents

- Copies of all relevant licenses/certifications, including any licenses issued by the Maryland Department of Health (BHA and OHCQ). BHSB is aware that BHA is experiencing delays with license applications. Please upload a copy of the letter from BHA acknowledging receipt of the application, if applicable, a letter of extension from BHA, along with a copy of the most recent license.
- Most recent site visit report from the Administrative Services Organization (ASO) for Maryland's fee-for-service public behavioral health system, accrediting organization, and/or the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ), including any statements of deficiencies and program improvement plans
- Organizational chart
- Resume or curriculum vitae for staff working on this project
- Verification of ability to bill and receive reimbursement from the Administrative Services Organization (ASO) for Maryland Medicaid's public behavioral health system [and/or Maryland Medicaid], which may be one of the following:
 - Medicaid Provider Enrollment Letter or Certificate
 - Medicaid Provider Number/ID Confirmation
 - Medicaid Participation Agreement
- 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, please upload a statement detailing why.

- Most recent IRS 990 – Return of Organization Exempt from Income Taxes, **OR** if an IRS 990 form is not required to be filed, the most recent Business Tax Return, OR the Schedule C only of the most recent Personal Tax Return. (Please redact any social security numbers on the Schedule C.)
- Completed and signed [Organizational Capacity Assessment](#). (This form is available on BHSB’s website. Click on For Providers, select Forms for Providers, then scroll down to Key Information for Contracts.)
- Certificate of Good Standing from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation. (If the selected applicant’s business is registered in a state other than Maryland, they will be required to register in Maryland as part of the contracting process.)
 - The certificate **must be dated within one year** of the RFP submission due date.
 - **Screenshots from the MDAT website will not be accepted.**