



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

Behavioral Health Advocacy Campaign

Release Date: September 16, 2026

Pre-Proposal Conference: September 23, 2026 at 2 pm

Proposals Due: October 9, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

Anticipated Award Notification: October 26, 2026

Anticipated Contract Start: November 1, 2026

Issued by:

Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc.
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Baltimore, Maryland 21201

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OVERVIEW OF RFP PROCESS

BHSB's Role

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.

In its role as the LBHA, BHSB administers grant funds designated to address needs, gaps, and barriers to a comprehensive and accessible public behavioral health system in Baltimore City. As a steward of public dollars, BHSB is committed to ensuring that all funds entrusted to the organization are appropriately allocated using fair, consistent, and transparent practices that demonstrate integrity and foster competition.

Authorized Contact

All matters concerning any Request for Proposals should be directed to Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org.

Risk Assessment

BHSB completes a risk assessment as part of the procurement process. Applicants should be sure to provide the most recent available versions of all requested documentation with their RFP application.

Proposal Submission and Award Conditions

Online Application Portal

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. In addition, applicants are encouraged to regularly monitor their email inboxes, including junk and spam folders, throughout the procurement process to ensure timely receipt of communications from BHSB.

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>

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

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>.

Submitted Proposals

All submitted proposals become the property of BHSB.

Proposals submitted after the due date/time will not be accepted. Applicants must contact BHSB before the due date/time at Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org if they experience technical difficulties related to submitting your proposal.

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.

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 applicant 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 selected applicants may be asked to change their budgets and/or service delivery 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>.

Payments

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

Contract Monitoring

Selected applicants are 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.). 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 require the submission of actual expenditures or invoices (depending on the contract type). They are used 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.

Verification of Services

BHSB conducts a retrospective audit of all contracts to verify that the requirements set forth in the contract were completed as reported and that relevant federal, state, and local regulations were followed. 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.

Vendors are expected to maintain clear and accurate documentation of programmatic and financial activities to aid in an efficient audit.

RFP Postponement/Cancellation

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

Applicant Appeal Process

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.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

Project Timeline

RFP Release Date:	September 16, 2026
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Proposal Due Date:	October 9, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.
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Anticipated Contract Start:	November 1, 2026

Pre-Proposal Conference

The date and time of the Pre-Proposal Conference are noted above. It will be a virtual Microsoft Teams meeting that you can join via your computer or mobile device.

Click here to join the Microsoft Teams meeting

Join:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/212536455944203?p=B3ZOHChdUwzCazfIMj>

Meeting ID: 212 536 455 944 203

Passcode: Sf3rA9AQ

Dial in by phone

[+1 443-819-0973](tel:+14438190973), [4034366](tel:+14034366)# United States, Bel Air

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 403 436 6#

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 and answers will be posted on BHSB's website at <https://www.bhsbaltimore.org/for-providers/funding-opportunities/> within five business days of the conference.

Individuals who attend the Pre-Proposal Conference and sign in with their name and email address will be notified by email when the questions and answers are posted on BHSB's website.

Questions received after the Pre-Proposal Conference will not be answered.

Description of Project

Through the Request for Proposals, BHSB seeks one (1) qualified communications firm to develop and implement a comprehensive grassroots advocacy campaign that supports and enhances BHSB's legislative advocacy efforts. The mission of the Behavioral Health Advocacy campaign is to increase the visibility of BHSB's policy and funding priorities among policymakers and reinforce the critical need for continued investment in Maryland's behavioral health system during the 2027 legislative session. Through targeted communications and advertising strategies, this campaign will increase awareness of behavioral health funding needs during a key period of legislative and budget decision-making.

The selected vendor will provide strategic communications, grassroots and digital advocacy, media relations, and paid advertising services from November 1, 2026, through April 30, 2027.

Scope of Service

BHSB works in partnership with behavioral health advocates to advance a coordinated legislative agenda by educating policymakers on behavioral health issues and building support for key priorities, including the preservation and expansion of state funding for behavioral health services.

BHSB seeks a qualified communications firm to develop and implement a strategic advocacy communications campaign that elevates the visibility of behavioral health funding and legislative priorities during Maryland's 2027 legislative session.

The selected applicant will be responsible for providing BHSB with communications support, digital ad promotion, and media engagement.

- **Communications Support:** Partner with BHSB to develop clear, concise messaging, a campaign webpage, and communications tools. This includes digital ads to be used for promotion and a social media toolkit that can be used by advocates to amplify BHSB's campaign priorities and message.
- **Digital ad promotion:** Purchase digital ads to increase awareness and urgency among policymakers to influence funding decisions during budget decision-making time.
- **Media Engagement:** Partner with BHSB to help organize press events to promote funding priorities and place targeted stories in various media outlets across the state of Maryland.

Project Deliverables

The selected applicant shall submit a final campaign report that summarizes campaign activities, outcomes, media coverage, digital performance metrics, lessons learned, and recommendations for future advocacy and communications efforts.

Staffing Requirements

The selected applicant must have:

- Experience developing and implementing advocacy communications strategies and campaigns.
- Experience managing issue-based advocacy campaigns.
- Experience providing advocacy communications services in Maryland.
- Knowledge of Maryland's legislative and policy environment.
- Experience utilizing media relations, digital advocacy, and paid advertising to advance advocacy objectives.

Funding and Anticipated Contract Term

The total award for this procurement is \$36,850.

The anticipated contract term is November 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. The selected applicant may be eligible for renewal, contingent on funding availability and performance.

Contract Type

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.

Consultant contract

- Issued to a person or entity engaged in independent work as outlined in the contract. The total cost of the contract is based on a calculation that includes an hourly consultant rate and the estimated number of hours it will take to complete the scope of work.
- Payment is based on the costs reported for a specific period (e.g., hourly rate x # of hours worked that month).

Eligibility Requirements

The project seeks to contract with a communications firm. Universities, colleges, and research institutions are not eligible for consideration.

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

- Submission of a 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.**
- 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 SUBMISSION

Reminder: Late proposals will not be accepted. Please refer to the Project Timeline section of this document for the proposal due date.

Online Application Portal

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>

Proposal Questions

Applicants must respond to the following questions. The maximum point value for each question is indicated.

1. Organizational Background and Capacity

Describe your firm's history, mission, and overall purpose. Include the number of years the firm has been in operation, its experience providing strategic communications and advocacy campaign services, experience supporting policy or legislative initiatives, and any experience conducting advocacy communications campaigns in Maryland. **(30 Points)**

2. Service Delivery

Describe your organization's plan to provide all services as outlined in the Scope of Service section of this RFP. **(10 points)**

Provide examples of advocacy communications campaigns your firm has implemented that achieved the intended goals and objectives. Include the campaign purpose, target audience, key activities, and results. Experience with advocacy campaigns in Maryland is preferred. **(20 points)**

3. Staffing Plan

Describe your approach to managing this project and identify the staff member who will serve as the primary point of contact for BHSB. **(10 points)**

4. Effectively Serving the Focus Population

Describe your firm's experience and expertise supporting behavioral health advocacy, public awareness, and policy-focused communications efforts. Please highlight any relevant work conducted in Maryland. Provide sample creative assets for any campaigns referenced in the proposal narrative. **(20 points)**

5. Implementation Timeline

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 November 1, 2026 **(10 points)**

Proposed Program Budget

Provide a line-item budget for labor, including hourly rate, ad buy, and any other costs.

Required Documents

- Organizational chart
- Resume or curriculum vitae for individuals/consultants working on this project
- 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.**
- 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 Form](#)

(This form is available on BHSB's website. Click on For Providers, select Forms for Providers, then scroll down to Key Information for Contracts.)