

**New York State (NYS) Office of Mental Health (OMH)**

**Statewide Suicide Prevention Initiatives for Local Communities**

**Request for Proposals (RFP)**

**Released October 28, 2011**

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## **I. Introduction and Background**

### **1.1 Purpose of the Request for Proposals**

The New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to invite eligible applicants to submit proposals to coordinate and monitor the implementation of community based suicide prevention initiatives throughout New York State. These initiatives are critical for the health and safety of the citizens of New York to support suicide prevention activities in local communities. The prospective contractor must work with local coalitions, community agencies, New York State Office of Mental Health Suicide Prevention Initiative and the Suicide Prevention Center, and stakeholders to determine the most critically needed suicide prevention services (training, coalition building, public awareness and education and prevention outreach) in local communities, and throughout New York State. Partnerships with local coalitions will ensure local oversight and monitoring of the success of each of these activities.

Research has shown that suicide prevention and early intervention efforts are successful at saving lives. OMH's mission is to reduce the number of suicides in New York State through the dissemination of scientific knowledge to promote awareness of the risks and warning signs of suicide as well as effective means of intervention. The suicide prevention initiative, sponsored by New York State Office of Mental Health is multidimensional and seeks to involve stakeholders at all levels of government, as well as health care and every community within the State.

OMH suicide prevention efforts are structured by the OMH Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan (hereafter identified as 'the Plan') as developed by the OMH Statewide Program Manager, regional stakeholders and existing coalitions<sup>1</sup>, in addition to expert consultation with nationally recognized experts in Suicidology and behavioral health care. One of the main tenants of this Plan is to develop a comprehensive course of action for reducing suicide in NYS so that prevention efforts are applied equally throughout the State. As the emphasis of this Plan focuses on a statewide approach, OMH believes that organizing the prevention activities and leadership under one entity is the best approach for suicide prevention in NYS.

## **II. Proposal Submission**

### **2.1 Issuing Officer/Designated Contact**

Pursuant to State Finance Law §§ 139-j and 139-k, OMH has assigned an Issuing Officer for this project. The Issuing Officer or a designee shall be the sole point of contact regarding the RFP from the date of issuance of the RFP until the issuance of the Notice of Conditional Award. An offerer/bidder is restricted from making contact with any other personnel of OMH regarding the RFP to avoid violating these laws or be deemed non responsible. Certain findings of non-responsibility can result in rejection for a contract award.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/statewideplan/2005/chapter9.htm>

The Issuing Officer for this RFP is:

[Laurie Danforth](#)

New York State Office of Mental Health  
Contract and Claims Unit, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
44 Holland Avenue  
Albany, New York 12229

## 2.2 Key Events/Time Line

Event	Date
RFP Release .....	10/28/2011
Mandatory Bidders Conference .....	11/10/2011
Deadline for Submission of Questions .....	11/15/2011
Questions and Answers Posted on OMH Website .....	11/21/2011
Latest Date OMH will post any/all addendums .....	11/21/2011
Proposals Due .....	11/23/2011
Notice of Conditional Award .....	12/26/2011Est
Estimated Contract Start Date .....	03/01/2012

## 2.3 Mandatory Bidders' Conference

A mandatory bidders' conference will be held on 11/10/2011 in the Law Library on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor from 2:30 to 4:30pm at the Office of Mental Health, 44 Holland Ave, Albany, New York 12229. Proposals will be accepted only from organizations that attend and sign in at the mandatory bidders' conference.

## 2.4 RFP Questions and Clarifications

All questions or requests for clarification concerning the RFP shall be submitted in writing by email to the Issuing Officer at [Laurie Danforth](#) or by fax at (518) 402-2529 by 5 p.m. on 11/15/2011. Please reference the name of the RFP in correspondence. Questions and answers will be posted on the OMH website by 5 p.m. on 11/21/2011 and will be limited to addressing only those questions submitted by the deadline. No questions will be answered by telephone.

## 2.5 Addenda to the Request for Proposals

In the event that it becomes necessary to revise any part of the RFP prior to the scheduled submission date for proposals, an addendum will be posted on the OMH website. It is the bidder's responsibility to periodically review the OMH website to learn of revisions or addendums to this RFP, as well as to view the official questions and answers. Changes to the RFP will also be posted in the NYS Contract Reporter. No other notification will be given.

## 2.6 Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are State wide, non-profit organizations that have a background in mental health service delivery, a presence in communities statewide, and knowledge of the current trends in suicide prevention and postvention service and training. The applicant must

demonstrate their ability to facilitate coalition building and collaborative efforts among the many stakeholders in suicide prevention in each local community.

Eligible applicants must be fiscally viable and in good standing with their local government unit and/or OMH.

## **2.7 Disqualification Factors**

Following the opening of bids, a preliminary review of all proposals will be conducted by the Issuing Officer or a designee to review each proposal's submission for completeness (see Section II, 2.8) and verify that all eligibility criteria have been met. Proposals that do not meet basic participation standards will be disqualified, specifically:

- Proposals that do not comply with the RFP required format as specified in Section II, 2.8; or
- Proposals from applicants with OMH licensed programs that are in Tier 3 or the equivalent status; or
- Bidders that did not submit a complete Proposal; or
- Proposals with administrative overhead costs greater than 15%

## **2.8 Instructions for Bid Submission and Required Format**

Each proposal is required to contain:

1. Agency Transmittal Form
2. Project Summary
3. Four-part Program Narrative
4. Operating Budgets for Years 1, 2,3,4, and 5
5. Complete Budget Narratives

The Operating Budget Form (Appendix B) for Years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and the Budget Narrative Form (Appendix B1) are separate documents that appear in the RFP section of the OMH website and can be downloaded in Excel format or Portable Document Format (PDF). Bidders must ***not*** substitute their own budget format. **Failure to use the provided Operating Budget and Budget Narrative formats will result in disqualification for non-responsiveness.**

For the Summary and Project Narrative page limits (see Section V, 5.3), a page is 8.5" x 11" in size and printed only on one side with a Times Roman or equivalent font size of not less than 12 and 1 inch margins. Font size may be smaller in charts, tables, and graphs. Proposals that do not meet these formatting requirements will be screened out and returned without review. If a proposal includes appendices or attachments used to extend or replace any part of the Summary or Project Narrative, those appendices or attachments will be disregarded. Agency name must appear on all pages of proposal including budget forms.

Bidders must submit seven (7) copies of the full proposal package by mail, delivery service, or hand delivery to be received by 5 p.m. on 11/23/2011; each package must include the required proposal components cited above in Section II, 2.8.

Bidders mailing proposals should allow a sufficient mail delivery period to ensure timely arrival of their proposals. Proposals cannot be submitted via email or fax. All proposals received after the due date and time cannot be accepted and will be returned unopened.

## **2.9 Packaging of RFP Responses**

Proposals should be sealed in an envelope or boxed and sent to:

Laurie Danforth  
New York State Office of Mental Health  
Contracts and Claims Unit, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
44 Holland Avenue  
Albany, New York 12229

**Attn: RFP for Statewide Suicide Prevention Initiative for Local Communities**

### **III. Administrative Information**

#### **3.1 Term of Contract**

Contracts will be written for a total of (5) years, with an initial period of (1) year with four (4) annual renewals, dependent upon appropriate funding. OMH reserves the right to change the contract term for the first or second year so that it is more or less than 12 months in order to align the contract dates with OMH's New York City contract Cycle (July 1 through June 30) or OMH's Upstate contract cycle (January 1 through December 31).

#### **3.2 Reserved Rights**

The Office of Mental Health reserves the right to:

- Withdraw the RFP at any time, at the agency's sole discretion;
- Make an award under the RFP in whole or in part;
- Disqualify a bidder whose conduct and/or proposal fails to conform to the requirements of the RFP;
- Seek clarifications and revisions of proposals;
- Use proposal information obtained through the State's investigation of a bidder's qualifications, experience, ability or financial standing, and any material or information submitted by the bidder in response to the agency's request for clarifying information in the course of evaluation and/or selection under the RFP;
- Prior to the bid opening, direct bidders to submit proposal modifications addressing subsequent RFP amendments;
- Prior to bid opening, amend the RFP specifications to correct errors or oversight, supply additional information, or extend any of the scheduled dates or requirements and provide notification to potential bidders via the OMH website and the NYS Contract Reporter;
- Eliminate any mandatory, non-material specifications that cannot be complied with by all of the prospective bidders;
- Waive any requirements that are not material;
- Negotiate with the successful bidder within the scope of the RFP in the best interests of the State;
- Conduct contract negotiations with the next responsible bidder, should the agency be unsuccessful in negotiating with the selected bidder;

- Require clarification at any time during the procurement process and/or require correction of arithmetic or other apparent errors for the purpose of assuring a full and complete understanding of an offerer's proposal and/or to determine an offerer's compliance with the requirements of the solicitation; and
- Cancel or modify contracts due to the insufficiency of appropriations.

### **3.3 Debriefing Process**

The Office of Mental Health will issue award and non-award notifications to all bidders. Non-awarded bidders may request a debriefing in writing regarding the reasons that their own proposal was not selected and/or disqualified within 15 business days of the OMH dated letter. OMH will not offer ranking, statistical, or cost information of other proposals until after the NYS Office of the State Comptroller has approved all awards under this RFP. Debriefing requests must be made in writing (fax and e-mail is acceptable) and sent to the Designated Contact, as defined in Section II, 2.1 of this RFP.

### **3.4 Protests of Award Outcome**

Protests of an award decision must be filed within twenty (20) business days after the date of the notice of non-award, or 5 business days from the date of a completed debriefing. The Commissioner or his designee will review the matter and issue a written decision within twenty (20) business days of receipt of protest.

All protests must be in writing and must clearly and fully state the legal and factual grounds for the protest and include all relevant documentation. The written documentation should clearly state reference to the RFP title and due date. Such protests must be submitted to:

Michael F. Hogan, Ph.D.  
Commissioner  
New York State Office of Mental Health  
44 Holland Avenue  
Albany, New York 12229

## **IV. Evaluation Factors for Awards**

### **4.1 Evaluation Criteria**

Evaluation of proposals will be conducted in two parts: Technical Evaluation and Financial Assessment (Cost). An independent evaluator will compute the Financial Assessment score and a committee consisting of at least three technical evaluators will complete the Technical Evaluation.

Each technical evaluator will independently review the technical portion of each proposal and compute a technical score. Evaluators of the Technical Evaluation component may then meet to provide clarity or review any questions an evaluator has about a particular section of a proposal. Following any such discussion, evaluators may independently revise their original score in any section, and will note changes on the evaluation sheet. Once completed, final Technical Evaluation scores will then be calculated, averaged, and applied to the final Financial Assessment score to arrive at final scores.

Component	Maximum Points
Section C Project Narrative	
Qualifications	20
Content Area	60
Total Technical Score	80
Financial Assessment (Cost)	20
Total Proposal Score	100

## 4.2 Proposal Evaluation

### 4.2.1 Technical Evaluation

Points are applied in the evaluation of proposal responses to required descriptions and questions for the Summary and Project Narrative in Section V: Scope of Work.

### 4.2.2 Financial Assessment

Points are calculated by dividing the five-year funding request of the lowest bid received by the five-year funding request of the proposal being assessed and then multiplying the result by 20.

## 4.3 Agency Recommended Award and Notification

One award will be made through this RFP to the applicant with the highest technical and cost score combined. In case of a tie Applicant with highest content area score will be awarded the contract.

Upon completion of the evaluation process, notification of conditional award and non- award letters will be sent to all applicants. The award is subject to approval by the New York State Attorney General's Office and the New York State Office of State Comptroller before the contract is finalized.

OMH reserves the right to conduct a readiness review of the selected bidder prior to the execution of the contract. The purpose of this review is to verify that the bidder is able to comply with all participation standards and meets the conditions detailed in its proposal.

## V. Scope of Work

### 5.1 Introduction

The NYS OMH has developed a statewide coordinated strategy that imbeds suicide prevention into the fabric of NYS communities. Over the past two years OMH has been allocated four million dollars to fund an array of projects. Historically, the Office of Mental Health allocated money for suicide prevention activities within five regions throughout the State. These initiatives were largely unconnected and there was no ability to monitor the success of these local projects or ensure that there existed collaboration among coalitions and agencies in each community. While the target of this funding has been local based activities, many suicide prevention initiatives have gone unrecognized, and therefore unfunded. The OMH Suicide Prevention staff at the Office of Mental Health sought to find a more efficient method for

prioritizing local suicide prevention activities, while at the same time, gain access to local communities to strengthen the collaborative efforts within the communities to implement suicide prevention programs. OMH currently funds suicide prevention activities in five regions (Western, Central, Hudson River, New York City and Long Island). OMH is seeking an organization that is well versed in suicide prevention knowledge, but not necessarily identified as “a suicide prevention advocacy group.” This would allow for a non-biased involvement in each community and eliminate any potential perceived pre-agenda.

The Contractor awarded by this RFP will encourage local agencies to participate in local forums and activities designed to determine the most pressing suicide prevention needs in each community. The goals for the awardee will include:

- Coalition building among local groups around suicide prevention efforts;
- Provide technical assistance to communities in the areas of public education and awareness activities;
- Create a process for targeting each region’s needs and create a selection of programs, education and training based on these needs, i.e., certain populations appear to be more vulnerable to suicide than others; certain environmental factors are more prevalent in one region than another;
- Creation of a base of agencies to address and react to emergent suicide issues in communities (post-vention activities); and
- Provide technical support to agencies for the development of grant proposals as well as do outreach to increase the number of proposal submissions.

As a result of bringing a variety of community agencies together, the OMH Suicide Prevention program hopes to address a number of pressing suicide-related issues across New York State including:

- Gatekeeper training for communities;
- Local law enforcement and jail personnel suicide prevention training;
- Evidence Based Intervention Training;
- Suicide prevention outreach to schools;
- Suicide prevention outreach to business and other state agencies;
- Suicide prevention outreach to primary care physicians and emergency rooms, insurance plans;
- Suicide prevention outreach to specific targeted groups including but not limited to: veterans, tribal nations and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered support groups for both teens and adult and other identified at risk groups;
- Interface Primary Care with Behavioral Health to provide a more efficient Continuum of Care. i.e., providing training for primary care physicians to assess any psychiatric disorders and accompanying suicidal ideation;
- Engagement of families and communities in prevention programs;
- Increase peer support programs i.e., SAVE<sup>2</sup> which provide role models and logistical information about how to move past suicide crises; and
- Development of Behavioral Action Plans that are designed to make a willing or ambivalent suicidal person more open to accepting a referral for a professional evaluation and/or treatment.

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<sup>2</sup> SAVE-Know the **S**igns of suicidal thinking, **A**sk questions, **V**alidate the persons experience and **E**ncourage treatment and expedite help seeking.

The contractor will work closely with the local coalitions to develop annual plans for OMH to prioritize suicide prevention activities in each community. Stakeholders within each region will be given an annual opportunity to submit an application, based on a list of previously developed priorities for each region. Applications will be rated and scored with a statewide tool, and highest scoring applicants will be awarded funds in each community to implement the priority activities. OMH fiscal staff will review and assure cost reasonableness for each local suicide prevention project being advanced.

OMH has begun to build stronger coalitions of suicide prevention programs to meet the specific needs of each local community. Working with an independent, recognized statewide expert on both mental health and suicide prevention will greatly enhanced OMH's ability to attain its goal.

Each year, OMH suicide prevention staff will produce guidelines to identify the priorities for suicide prevention funds. The contractor will use the OMH guidelines to liaise with local coalitions, community agencies and stakeholders to build a unique suicide prevention agenda for that area based upon the OMH guidelines.

The contractor will submit resumes of their key staff personnel. The preferred minimum qualifications of the staff are individuals that have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in a human service field or 2 years experience in implementing suicide prevention programs.

## **5.2 Objectives and Responsibilities**

As noted in Section I, 1.1, the aim of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Initiatives for Local Communities to invite eligible applicants to submit agendas to coordinate and monitor community based suicide prevention regional activities based upon OMH guidelines and direction.

### **A. Proposal Requirements**

Each proposal is to include the following components in the following order:

- Define the duties of the personnel who will coordinate and monitor the planned community based suicide prevention regional activities, include what the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) for this position will be in the budget and budget narrative.
- Show that your agency has proven fiscal competency to mobilize this effort.
- Describe how your agency provides services and has a presence in all communities across the state.
- Describe how your agency will develop innovative approaches to address mental health needs throughout New York State, allowing for a non-biased involvement in each community and eliminating any potential perceived pre-agenda.
- Define the process that will be utilized to select agencies that have developed plans to prioritize suicide prevention activities
- Define how your agency will liaise with local coalitions, community agencies and stakeholders to determine the most critically needed suicide prevention services

(training, coalition building, public awareness and education and prevention outreach) and build unique suicide prevention agendas for each area.

- Describe how your agency will incorporate special projects for a particular population as warranted in a particular area and how your agency will address prevalent suicide issues ie. Perfect Depression Care (depression case managers), making primary care physicians partners in suicide prevention, and suicide prevention activities for the most at risk boundary groups (Latina adolescents, elderly people, Asian women, college students, and the military) utilizing Evidenced Based Treatment practices.
- Describe how your agency will increase the opportunity for public education and awareness throughout New York State.
- Describe how your agency will create a base of agencies to address and react to emergent suicide issues in communities (postvention activities).
- Include 6 letters of support (two each) from local coalitions, community agencies and stakeholders that describes the nature of the relationship and how they intend to partner with your organization.
- Submit resumes of proposed staff for this project. Describe staff persons that you foresee doing this project and how their qualifications will contribute to the success of this initiative.

### **5.3 Requirements for Submission**

Proposals submitted for funding under this RFP must include all of the following components in the following order. Proposals missing any of the required proposal components will not be considered. See Section II, 2.8 for additional information on proposal format and content.

#### **A. Agency Transmittal Form**

#### **B. Summary** (no longer than three pages)

Describe the proposed program concisely; include its goals, objectives, overall approach, anticipated outcomes, and deliverables.

#### **C. Project Narrative** (no longer than a total of ten pages, please number 1 of 10, 2 of 10 etc.)

Address all required components as defined in Section V 5.2A, in the order in which they are listed.

#### **D. Operating Budgets and Budget Narratives**

Be sure to use the required budget formats (see Appendix B and B1) to develop the yearly Operating Budgets and Budget Narratives. Do not substitute your own budget formats.

- Develop yearly Operating Budgets for Year 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 the five-year grant period. OMH will award the successful applicant a grant of up to \$680,000 in the first year and \$695,000 annually thereafter. These budgets will be used to assess

proposal cost (see Section IV, 4.2.2). Note that administrative costs cannot be more than 15 %. Any travel costs included in the Budget must conform to New York State rates for travel reimbursement.

- Complete Budget Narratives for all of the detailed expense components that make up total operating expenses in each budget and include the calculation or logic that supports the budgeted value of each category.

## **VI. Appendices**

[Appendix A Agency Transmittal Form](#)

[Appendix B Operating Budget Form for Years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5](#)

[Appendix B1 Budget Narrative Form](#)

[Appendix C Direct Contract Forms and Instructions](#)