

New York State Office of Mental Health



**Statewide Network for  
Youth Engagement and Involvement**

Request for Proposals (RFP)

**August 2012**

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## **1 Introduction and Background**

### **1.1 Purpose of Request for Proposal**

The New York State Office of Mental Health is pleased to announce the availability of funds for the development of a Statewide Network for Youth Engagement and Involvement. The primary goal of the funding is to support a statewide effort to empower young people towards personal recovery in their treatment, to know their rights and use their voice to influence policy and practice. The awardee would promote and provide peer-to-peer mentoring for young people with disabilities and/or cross system experiences in the children's service system. The focus of these efforts would be to support and empower young people with social and emotional challenges.

In addition to working collaboratively with the NYS Office of Mental Health at a State-level to provide input and feedback into agency policy and program development, the awardee would also work at the regional and local levels to empower young people and build capacity in the community to increase youth involvement and peer support activities. This would be accomplished through technical assistance and support to local counties and regions, and the development and maintenance of a statewide youth network.

Approximately, \$500,000 will be available annually to one contractor, who will be subject to annual performance reviews by OMH.

## **2 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. A bidder is restricted from making contact with any other personnel of OMH regarding the RFP to avoid violating these laws or being deemed non-responsible. Certain findings of non-responsibility can result in rejection for a contract award. The Issuing Officer for this RFP is:

[Meredith Ray-LaBatt](#)

New York State Office of Mental Health  
44 Holland Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Albany, NY 12229

## 2.2 Key Events/Time Line

Event	Date
RFP Release Date	August 6, 2012
Questions Due	August 17, 2012
Questions & Answers Posted on Website*	August 31, 2012
Proposals Due	September 28, 2012
Conditional Award Notification*	November 16, 2012
Anticipated Start Date*	January 1, 2013

### \*Estimated Dates

## 2.3 RFP Questions and Clarifications

All questions or requests for clarification concerning the RFP shall be submitted in writing (by fax or email) to the Issuing Officer by 5:00 pm on August 17, 2012. The questions and answers will be posted on the OMH website by 5:00 PM on August 31, 2012\* and will be limited to addressing only those questions submitted by the deadline. No questions will be answered by telephone.

## 2.4 Addenda to the Request for Proposals

In the event that it becomes necessary to revise any part of the RFP, 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. Changes to the RFP will also be posted in the NYS Contract Reporter. No other notification will be given.**

## 2.5 Eligible Organizations

Eligible bidders are not-for-profit organizations in which youth/peer-oriented services are managed and provided by peers. OMH defines youth/peer-run services as those that are led and staffed predominantly by young people, under the age of 30 years old, who have been labeled and have/had first-hand personal experience receiving mental health services in a child-serving system. The organization must have proven knowledge and expertise in youth/peer engagement, involvement and mentoring and have the capacity to fulfill all required activities on a statewide basis (as outlined in Sections 5.3.1.A and B).

## 2.6 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 (as defined in Section 2.7) and verify that all eligibility criteria (as defined in Section 2.5) 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 defined in Section 2.7.

## **2.7 Proposal Format and Content**

Each proposal is required to contain:

1. Agency Transmittal Form: [Appendix A](#)
2. Proposal Narrative
3. Operating Budget: [Appendix B](#)
4. Budget Narrative: [Appendix B1](#)

The Proposal Narrative must respond to the criteria in the sequence as outlined in Section 5.3 should be concise (no more than 20 pages, not including attachments), one-sided 12-point font. Please number pages “1 of 20”, “2 of 20” etc. The Operating Budget and Budget Narrative (Appendix B and B1) are separate documentations that appear in the RFP section of the OMH website and can be downloaded in PDF format. 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.**

Bidders must submit six (6) unstapled copies of the complete proposal package by mail or hand delivery to be received by 5:00 PM on September 28, 2012; each package must include the Provider Agency Contact Form, the Program Narrative, the Budget Worksheets (Personal Service, Budget Summary) and the Projected Deliverables Worksheet. Proposals that are incomplete and/or proposals that exceed the page limitations will be excluded from evaluation.

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

## **2.8 Packaging of RFP Responses**

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

[Meredith Ray-LaBatt](#)

New York State Office of Mental Health  
44 Holland Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Albany, NY 12229

**ATTN: RFP Statewide Network for Youth Proposal Enclosed**

### **3 Administrative Information**

#### **3.1. Executive Order #38**

Pursuant to Executive Order #38 (<http://www.governor.ny.gov/executiveorder/38> <sup>↗</sup>), dated January 18, 2012, State agencies are required to promulgate regulations and take any other actions within the agency's authority, including amending agreements with providers, to limit provider administrative costs and executive compensation. Any contract awarded through this RFP will be subject to such regulations and to related requirements. Once established, the requirements will be posted to OMH's website."

#### **3.2 Term of Contract**

One Contract will be written for a total period of five (5) years, with an initial period of one (1) year and four (4) optional annual renewals, contingent on demonstrated performance and funding appropriations. 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 Upstate contract cycle (January 1 through December 31), or Downstate contract cycle (July 1 through June 30)

The OMH Direct Contract Form is available at <http://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/spguidelines/PDF/DirectContractFormsandInstructions.pdf>

#### **3.3 Reserved Rights**

The Office of Mental Health reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals received in response to the RFP that are deemed non-responsive or do not meet the minimum requirements;
- 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 fails to conform to the requirements of the RFP;
- Seek clarifications of proposals for the purposes of assuring a full understanding of the responsiveness to the solicitation requirements;
- 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 the bid opening, amend the RFP specifications to correct errors or oversights, supply additional information, or extend any of the scheduled

- dates or requirements and provide notification to potential bidders via the OMH website and the New York State (NYS) Contract Reporter;
- Eliminate any non-material specifications that cannot be complied with by all of the prospective bidders;
  - Waive any requirements that are not material;
  - Negotiate any aspect of the proposal in order to assure that the final agreement meets OMH objectives;
  - 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 mathematical or other apparent errors for the purpose of assuring a full and complete understanding of a bidder's proposal and/or to determine a bidder's compliance with the requirements of the solicitation;
  - Conduct a readiness review of each selected bidder prior to the execution of the contract as set forth in Section 4.2;
  - Cancel or modify contracts due to the lack of fiscal appropriations.

### **3.4 Debriefing**

OMH will issue award and non-award notifications to all bidders. Bidders that do not receive an award may request a debriefing in writing, regarding the reasons that their own proposal was not selected or disqualified, within 15 business days of the dated OMH notification letter. Written debriefing requests may be sent to the Designated Contact, as defined in Section 2.2 of this RFP.

### **3.5 Protests Related to the Solicitation Process**

Protests of an award decision must be filed within twenty (20) business days after the notice of conditional award or 5 business days after 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:

NYS Office of Mental Health  
Commissioner Michael Hogan  
44 Holland Avenue  
Albany, NY 12229

## **4 Evaluation Factors for Awards**

### **4.1 Method of Evaluating Proposals**

Designated staff will review each proposal for completeness and verify that all eligibility criteria are met. A complete proposal shall include all required components as described in Section 2.7. If a proposal is not complete or does not meet the basic eligibility and participation standards as outlined in Sections 2.5 and 2.7, the proposal will be eliminated from further review. The agency will be notified of the rejection of its proposal within 15 business days from the proposal due date.

Proposals that meet the criteria as defined in section 2.5 and 2.7 will be reviewed comprehensively to assess the bidder's commitment and ability to accomplish the objectives outlined in this RFP.

Evaluation of proposals will be conducted in two parts: Technical Evaluation and Cost Assessment. An independent evaluator will compute the Cost Assessment score using a weighted formula, and a committee consisting of at least three evaluators will complete the Technical Evaluation.

Each 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 recalculated, averaged, and applied to the Cost Assessment score to arrive at final scores.

One award will be made to the vendor proposing the best value. Best value means the basis for awarding contracts for services to the bidder, which optimizes quality, cost, and efficiency, among responsive and responsible bidders. The proposal with the best value will be deemed the proposal with the highest final evaluation score. Pursuant to NYS Finance Law, if there is a tie score the award will go to the bidder who scored highest in the Budget section of their proposal.

## 4.2 Scoring

Scoring will be as follows:

Knowledge and Expertise in Youth Engagement and Involvement	10 points
Provision of Peer Run Services and Activities	10 points
Youth Voice in State Policies and Programs	15 points
Youth Involvement in Communities	15 points
Youth Empowerment	15 points
Statewide Youth Network	15 points
<b>Technical Score =</b>	<b>80 points</b>
Budget	20 points
<b>Total Proposal Score =</b>	<b>100 points</b>

## 4.3 Technical Evaluation

The technical evaluation will apply points to each narrative question addressed in Section 5 Scope of Work.

## 4.4 Budget Evaluation

Final Number of Points = (Lowest Cost bid received divided by the bid being evaluated) x 20 points

## 4.5 Process for Awarding Contract

At the conclusion of the procurement, notification will be sent to the successful and non-successful bidders. The award is subject to approval by the NYS Attorney General and The Office of State Comptroller before a contract can be fully executed.

OMH reserves the right to negotiate special terms and conditions with the selected bidder when making the award. The bidder must accept such terms and conditions for the award to take effect.

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 aspects of the Scope of Work as detailed in its proposal.

## **5 Scope of Work**

### **5.1 Introduction and Vision**

#### **Introduction**

The Office of Mental Health initiated efforts to increase youth voice at the state level in 1999 with the creation of a Statewide Youth Advisory Council. In 2005, OMH contracted for a Statewide Youth Coordinator in hopes to expand youth voice to reflect a wider array of young people at the regional and local level. Since that time, OMH has increased funding and the scope of its efforts to support the development of an infrastructure for a Statewide Network for Youth Engagement and Involvement. One goal is to help guide providers, local governments, and organizations in empowering youth to become active participants in their own treatment and to ensure youth voice is being solicited to inform agency policies and practices. The other goal is to directly empower and connect young people to a statewide network and engage them in activities that inform state-level policies and the development of programs. Applicants will be expected to continue these efforts and accomplish these goals.

#### **Vision**

Similar to the peer movement in the adult mental health system, youth peers can also play an important role in recovery within the children's mental health system. Young people who have had personal experiences with children's mental health services can be a significant support to those currently receiving services and struggling with recovery. In addition, youth/peer advocates can help to inform agencies and systems in creating services that better meet the needs of children and adolescents. By providing insights based on their own experiences, youth advocates can help to guide policy and program development towards being more youth-guided and recovery-oriented.

Since young people can receive mental health or other support services through a variety of child-serving systems, it is important to understand and work collaboratively across multiple agencies to support youth engagement and involvement. For example, young people in the foster care or juvenile justice system often struggle with social and emotional challenges and would benefit from being engaged and empowered to have a voice in their own services and in guiding program and policy directions.

As the understanding of the importance and value of using youth advocates and youth peers in children's services systems grows, the need for an organization with the expertise and knowledge of youth engagement and involvement increases. Agencies, services providers and government entities who are interested in enhancing youth voice and informing their policies and programs would benefit from technical assistance and support from an organization who understands how to truly partner with young people.

The outcomes of stronger partnerships with young people would ideally lead to more youth-driven, person-centered treatment planning; increased buy-in and involvement in services; greater availability of peer support; the creation of more mechanisms to solicit youth input and a system more informed and guided by what youth want and need in their recovery.

## **5.2 Objectives and Responsibilities**

The selected bidder would work in collaboration with the OMH Central Office Youth Voice Liaison and the designated Regional Office Liaisons in each of the five OMH regions. The selected bidder(s) will advance the Statewide Network for Youth Engagement and Involvement by addressing the following program components:

**A) Youth Voice in State Policies and Programs:** Work collaboratively with the Office of Mental Health to provide youth voice to agency program and policy development, through, but not limited to, the following:

- Bring concerns of youth in the Network to the Office of Mental Health on at least a quarterly basis
- Host youth focus groups, at the request of the Office of Mental Health, for feedback on programs and policy directions
- Assist in increasing youth voice in State cross-systems coordination efforts, oversight committees, councils, taskforces, workgroups, etc. as determined in collaboration with the Office of Mental Health

**B) Youth Involvement in Communities:** Create the capacity to increase youth involvement and youth voice at the regional and local/county levels through, but not limited to, the following:

- Provide technical assistance and support to regions, counties and/or providers on how to build and sustain meaningful youth peer support systems
- Assist regions, counties and/or providers in the development of youth advisory councils, youth-led youth groups, and other structures to support local youth input into policy and program development
- Provide training to adults partners (those working directly with youth advocates/leaders) and allies (those in positions to support and assist youth advocates/leaders) on how to work effectively with youth
- Create opportunities for youth to network at a local or regional level through meetings, technology, conference calls, etc.

**C) Youth Empowerment:** Support peer to peer mentoring and empower young people to know their rights and use their voice to influence policy and practice through, but not limited to, the following:

- Host a regional event, such as a youth forum, in each region, at least annually, to empower youth, build advocacy skills and gain input and insight into current issues for youth

- Provide statewide empowerment and/or educational opportunities for youth to learn about advocacy and youth involvement
- Provide training for young people and youth peer advocates on advocacy, leadership and peer mentoring to empower youth to engage in civic affairs

**D) Statewide Youth Network:** Support a statewide network of young people with disabilities and/or involvement in child-serving systems to facilitate youth voice and involvement at the state and local levels through, but not limited to, the following:

- Outreach to young people regionally, locally and on a statewide basis using various strategies, such as technology and peer-to-peer mentoring
- Produce regular outreach materials and communications, such as emails, newsletters, social networking outreach, etc.
- Engage network members in activities to support youth involvement and youth voice
- Utilize youth members to guide activities, plan special events, provide input to state and local programs and policies, and engage other youth in participating in the network

## **E) Reporting and Accountability**

The following data elements will be required in a quarterly report to the Office of Mental Health. These data elements must be provided in a statewide summary, as well as detailed by region:

- (1) Number of contacts/outreach with/to individual young people
- (2) Number of contacts or visits with local youth groups or groups of young people
- (3) Number of outreach efforts to local, regional or community agencies, providers or government entities
- (4) Number and descriptions of requests for technical assistance and support, including, (a) name; (b) request and (c) follow up
- (5) Number of trainings conducted, including (a) location(s); (b) audience; (c) number in attendance and (d) topic
- (6) Number and names of regularly scheduled committees, workgroups, or meetings that were attended
- (7) Number of focus groups conducted, including (a) location(s); (b) audience; (c) number in attendance and (d) topic
- (8) Number of events, including (a) type; (b) purpose; (c) audience; (d) number in attendance
- (9) Number of contacts with other state or local child-serving agencies, including (a) name and (b) purpose
- (10) Copies of all state, regional or local newsletters and/or e-mail blasts

The following reports are required for submission to the Office of Mental Health annually.

- (1) Copies of summary reports for each regional event – forum or focus group – focused on gathering youth feedback on various topics and issues
- (2) A summary report of all data and activities, including those listed above, with a narrative report on goals and objectives for the following year.

### **5.3 Requirements for Submission**

#### **5.3.1 Proposal Components**

Proposals submitted for funding under this RFP must include all of the following components in the following order:

##### **A. Knowledge and Expertise in Youth Engagement and Involvement**

It is important that applicants have knowledge and expertise in how to effectively engage and involve young people in their own treatment decisions and in activities that impact program and policy development. This includes understanding the varying degrees at which youth can or should be involved and how best to achieve a strong working partnership with young people.

The applicant must:

- Describe the applicant's experience with youth engagement and involvement, including the strategies and approaches employed to effectively engage and involve youth in their treatment planning and in the provision of input into policy and program development and/or evaluation.
- Describe the applicant's understanding of the varying types of youth involvement and how to ensure youth are engaged at the highest levels of participation. Reference applicable literature.

##### **B. Provision of Peer-Run Services and Activities**

An important value of peer-to-peer mentoring is that the direct provision of such services be provided by other young people who have personal experience receiving the same services themselves. An organization that provides "peer-run" services does so with leadership and staff who themselves have received mental health services from the children's mental health system.

The applicant must:

- Describe the staffing plan, including leadership and any oversight body, to achieve the objectives and responsibilities outlined above.
- Provide a job description including a list of required qualifications for each staff position identified in the plan.
- Describe the member composition of the oversight body (denote whether it is existing or to be developed) and any professional or personal requirements for participation.

### **C. Youth Voice in State Policies and Programs**

An integral responsibility of the Statewide Network will be to provide input and feedback to the Office of Mental Health regarding the efficacy and appropriateness of their services, access to and broad array of services in their continuum of care and their extent and capacity for cross-system collaboration.

The applicant must:

- Describe the applicant's experience working with state agencies to provide input and feedback into statewide programs and policy development.
- Describe the applicant's experience in soliciting, gathering, and presenting feedback from large stakeholder groups and how it was shared with state/local agencies to inform their practice.
- Describe the applicant's plan for collecting and providing ongoing feedback and input from the Statewide Youth Network to the Office of Mental Health, including approaches for collection, means of presenting the information and the frequency for sharing.

### **D. Youth Involvement in Communities**

In addition to state agencies needing to develop services and programs based on the guidance and input of young people who receive them, local regions, counties and providers need to do the same. Through technical assistance and support, local communities will be better equipped to actively involve youth in their treatment, in direct practice and in the provision of feedback on agency programs.

The applicant must:

- Describe the applicant's experience providing on-site technical assistance and support to local providers or agencies on how to foster youth involvement in individual treatment or in the creation of mechanisms that solicit youth feedback.
- Describe the applicant's experience in providing training and education to adults on how to engage and involve youth, including who developed the training material and a summary of the training content.
- Describe the applicant's plan for how technical assistance, support and training will be made available to local counties, regions or communities statewide and who in the staffing plan will provide the support.

### **E. Youth Empowerment**

In order for young people to provide feedback and input into policies and programs, they need to be empowered to do so through education and engagement. Realizing there is hope for recovery, having the opportunity to meet other young people who have recovered and learning their experiences and ideas are valuable to others, are all critical components to being empowered.

The applicant must:

- Describe the applicant's experience with providing peer- to-peer mentoring and empowering young people to be active participants in their treatment and/or in providing input into program development and/or evaluation.
- Describe the applicant's experience in educating and/or providing training to young people on how to become an active participant, a youth advocate, or a youth peer support provider, including who developed the training material and a summary of the training content.
- Describe the applicant's plan for empowering, training, and mentoring youth statewide, including activities, events and trainings, and who in the staffing plan will provide the support.

## **F. Statewide Youth Network**

In order to have a diverse pool of young people statewide with a variety of experiences in all levels of care contributing their voice, a comprehensive outreach strategy is needed. The goal of this effort is to increase youth engagement and involvement throughout the State, to do so, requires a multi-faceted approach to reaching out to and empowering young people.

The applicant must:

- Describe the applicant's plan to outreach to and engage young people on a local, regional and statewide basis. Detail the methods and strategies that will be employed to facilitate youth voice and involvement.
- Describe the various activities and events that will take place on a local, regional and statewide level to engage, empower, educate and involve young people in their personal recovery and in systems advocacy.
- Describe how the members of the youth network will be actively engaged and directly involved in planning, facilitating, and guiding activities at a local, regional and statewide level and are ensuring all efforts are peer-run.

## **5.4 Budget**

You must use the required budget formats (Appendix B and B1) to develop the yearly budget form and budget narratives. Do NOT substitute your own budget format. Failure to complete your proposal budget in the required format will result in disqualification. Budgets may include travel costs but must adhere to State per diem rates (found at <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/agencies/travel/reimbrate.htm> ).

- Develop a yearly budget for year 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.  
The maximum award amount anticipated for each year of the contract is \$500,000 (includes salary, fringe, A & O, OTPS).
- Complete Budget Narrative for all of the detailed expense components that make up total expenses in each budget year.

**The Budget Worksheets (Personal Service & Budget Summary)  
(Appendix B and B1) are a separate document on the RFP Website.**