

Department of Mental Health

166 Horseshoe Drive | Weeks Building | Waterbury, VT 05671-2010 802-241-0090 phone |802-241-0100 fax | 800-253-0191 tty https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/

REQUEST FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS (RFGA113)

ACT 264 REQUIRED PARENT VOICE ACTIVITIES: Local Interagency Teams, Case Review Committee, and Coordinated Services Plan Meetings

ISSUE DATE April 01, 2024

QUESTIONS DUE April 12, 2024, by 4:30PM ET APPLICATIONS DUE BY April 26, 2024, by 4:30PM ET

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT ALL NOTIFICATIONS, RELEASES, AND ADDENDUMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS WILL BE POSTED AT:

https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/RFP

THE STATE WILL MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO CONTACT INTERESTED PARTIES WITH UPDATED INFORMATION. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH APPLICATION TO PERIODICALLY CHECK THE ABOVE WEBPAGE FOR ANY AND ALL NOTIFICATIONS, RELEASES AND ADDENDUMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS REGA.

STATE CONTACT:

NAME: Jennifer Rowell TELEPHONE: (802) 241-0090

E-MAIL: AHS.DMHSubmissions@vermont.gov

1. OVERVIEW:

1.1 **SCOPE AND BACKGROUND:** Through this Request for Grant Applications (RFGA) the Department of Mental Health (DMH), hereinafter referred to as the "State," is seeking applications to establish subrecipient agreements with one or more non-profit entities to provide supports to parents of children and youth who are eligible for a Coordinated Services Plan based on Act 264 criteria and who have a Severe Emotional Disturbance (SED) pursuant to the goals and allowable uses of Vermont's Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG) allocation.

The MHBG program is authorized by <u>Section 1911 of Title XIX, Part B.</u>
<u>Subpart I and III of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act</u> and is administered by the United States' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
Administration's (SAMHSA) Center for Mental Health Services' (CMHS)
Division of State and Community Systems Development (DSCSD).

ACT 264, passed in 1988, requires that human services and public education work together, involve parents and coordinate services for better outcomes for children and families. The act developed a coordinated system of care so that children and adolescents with a severe emotional disturbance and their families receive appropriate educational, mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, residential, and other treatment services in accordance with an individual plan. Under the Interagency Agreement of 2005, eligibility was expanded to include all children/youth with a disability who receive services from the Agency of Education and the Agency of Human Services.

See Section 2.6 below for applicable definitions.

Additional information on the MHBG program can be found on the on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) website at https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/block-grants/mhbg.

- 1.2 **OBJECTIVE:** The purpose of this RFGA is to solicit applications from qualified non-profit organizations to provide supports to parents of children based on Act 264 criteria and addressing the following objectives:
 - 1.2.1 Provide parental peer supports to caregivers of children and youth who meet criteria through Act 264 for a Coordinated Services Plan.
 - 1.2.2 Provide a parent representative for teams established through Act 264
- 1.3 **DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION:** The Vermont Agency of Human Services (AHS) strives to improve the health and well-being of Vermonters today and

tomorrow and to protect those among us who are unable to protect themselves. The scope of AHS is profound. Through its six departments, twelve district offices, and a network of community partners and providers, it is responsible for the implementation and delivery of all human service programs within the state. Each department has a distinct area of focus and responsibility and contributes to the creation and sustenance of an entire system of human service supports.

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) resides under AHS and has the same critical mission in mind: to improve the conditions and well-being of Vermonters and protect those who cannot protect themselves. DMH continues to focus on its vision for self-determination, empowerment, recovery, and resiliency. This means being responsive to the needs of Vermonters and their families, as well as continuing to challenge ourselves to try to change society's culture, philosophy, and values, while working to fully embrace the concepts of recovery and resiliency. By improving our effectiveness and coordination of programs and services around the State, we will help Vermonters meet their needs.

The Department's collaborating on this interagency effort includes the Department of Mental Health (DMH), The Department for Children and Families' (DCF)-Family Services Division (FSD) and Child Development Division (CDD), The Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living-Developmental Disabilities Division (DAIL-DDSD), The Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA), and the Department of Health, Division of Substance Use (VDH-DSU).

DMH is the entity who will be entering into this agreement with an applicant.

- 1.4 **AGREEMENT PERIOD:** Agreements arising from this RFGA will be for the 2025 state fiscal year. The State anticipates the start date for such agreements will be July 1, 2024. Agreement term may be impacted by funding availability.
- 1.5 **SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT:** All communications concerning this RFGA are to be addressed in writing to the State Contact listed on the front page of this RFGA. Actual or attempted contact with any other individual from the State concerning this RFGA is strictly prohibited and may result in disqualification.
- 1.6 QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD: Any applicant requiring clarification of any section of this RFGA or wishing to comment on any requirement of the RFGA must submit specific questions in writing no later than the deadline for question submission indicated on the first page of this RFGA. Questions may be e-mailed to the point of contact on the front page of this RFGA. Questions or comments not raised in writing on or before the last day of the question period are thereafter waived. At the close of the question period a copy of all questions or comments and the State's responses will be posted on the State's web site https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/RFP. Every effort will be made to post this information as soon as possible after the question period ends, contingent on the number and complexity of the questions.

- 1.7 **CHANGES TO THIS:** Any modifications to this will be made in writing by the State through the issuance of an Addendum to this and posted online at https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/RFP. Modifications from any other source are not to be considered.
- 1.8 SOURCE OF FUNDS: The Department anticipates using federal and state funds for the resulting agreement. The Department may choose to modify the source of funding contingent upon the availability of funds at the time of award. Any selected organization will be subject to the requirements in State statute and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) # 93.958, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- 1.9 **PROPOSAL ASSISTANCE:** If an applicant requires assistance in preparing their proposal, registering with SAM.gov, or needs guidance on socioeconomic certifications, the applicant may contact the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), Department of Economic Development (DED), APEX Accelerator (formerly the Procurement Technical Assistance Center [PTAC]). The Vermont APEX Accelerator specializes in helping small businesses navigate the documentation associated with State and Federal procurement. There is no cost to the Applicant for assistance provided by APEX Accelerator. Their website is: https://accd.vermont.gov/economic-development/programs/ptac.

2. DETAILED REQUIREMENTS/DESIRED OUTCOMES:

The State is interested in obtaining applications to meet the following need(s) to support parents of children eligible for a Coordinated Services Plan based on Act 264 criteria in the state through use of State General Funds and the MHBG allocation.

- 2.1 General: Respondents should provide detailed proposals, containing a clearly defined approach, for unique and innovative programming or services that can improve the mental health and well-being of the Supported Populations. The approach should establish specifics about the services delivered, populations to be supported, expected outcomes, proposed performance measures, and funding proposal per the requirements of this Section.
- 2.2 **Applicability to the State's Objectives and Need Areas:** Proposals should establish a clear link between the services and/or programming proposed and meeting the specific objectives listed below:
 - 2.1.1 Provide parental peer supports to caregivers of children and youth who meet criteria through Act 264 for a Coordinated Services Plan.
 - 2.1.1.1 These peer supports will assist caregivers and guardians as they navigate the Coordinated Service Planning process.
 - 2.1.1.2 These supports will be available statewide and include training, support, and supervision for the individuals who will provide this peer support.

- 2.1.2 Provide a parent representative for teams established through Act 264 including:
 - 2.1.2.1 Each of the 12 Local Interagency Teams
 - 2.1.2.2 One parent representative to be a member of the weekly Case Review Committee, and
 - 2.1.2.3 One parent representative to be a member of the monthly State Interagency Team.
- 2.2 Reporting Requirements: Respondents shall include in their responses a reporting approach that, at a minimum, provides the State with quarterly reporting on project progress. The proposed reporting approach shall include the frequency of reporting, core data elements to be included in the periodic reporting, and a description of reporting format, timing, and other logistics. The State will consider how proposed reporting ties to proposed performance measures in evaluating responses.
- 2.3 **Performance Measures:** Responses must propose clear and measurable performance measures that will enable the State to determine the success of the services and/or programming. These performance measures should be linked to the desired impact of the services and/or programming and should, at a minimum, reflect how the project has successfully expanded care for parents of children eligible for Act 264 Coordinated Services plans. Outcomes and Performance Measures that may be used to evaluate the use of funds:
 - 2.3.1 Number of caregivers/guardians supported at Coordinated Services Plan meetings.
 - 2.3.2 Number of caregivers/guardians supported at Local Interagency Team meetings.
 - 2.3.3 Satisfaction/exit survey from caregivers/guardians who were supported.
 - 2.3.4 Annual satisfaction surveys from Local Interagency Team Members
 - 2.3.5 Annual satisfaction surveys from State Interagency Team Members
 - 2.3.6 Annual satisfaction surveys from Case Review Committee Members
 - 2.3.7 Data identifying location of supports (home/school/office)
- 2.4 **Applicant Eligibility:** To be considered eligible for an award, proposals and Applicants must meet the following criteria:
 - 2.4.1 The applicant must comply with the terms and conditions required for all State grant recipients. See Attachments and links section.
 - 2.4.2 The applicant must be a public or private Non-profit, community-based entity. Specifically, services provided with grant funds shall be provided only through appropriate, qualified community programs (which may include community mental health centers, child mental health programs, psychosocial rehabilitation programs, mental health peer support programs and mental health primary consumer-directed programs).

- 2.4.3 The applicant must be eligible to receive federal awards. See <u>CFDA 93.958</u> for specific eligibility information for MHBG funds.
- 2.4.4 Proposals must clearly demonstrate that the services proposed contribute to the comprehensive community-based mental health services for the Supported Populations as defined in Section 2.8 below.
- 2.5 **Exclusion Criteria:** In accordance with the federal MHBG requirements and other federal requirements, responses that propose any of the below unallowable activities as part of its approach will be considered noncompliant and not eligible for award:
 - 2.5.1 Provision of inpatient hospital services, which is defined as the admission of a patient to a hospital for observation, care, diagnosis, or treatment.
 - 2.5.2 Making cash payments to intended recipients of health services.
 - 2.5.3 Services that relate to the prevention or preventive intervention for those at risk of SMI or SED, but have not yet been diagnosed with an SMI or SED.
 - 2.5.4 Purchasing, constructing, or improving land (other than minor remodeling)
 - 2.5.5 Purchasing medical equipment with value in excess of \$5,000.
 - 2.5.6 Using funding to satisfy any federal program requirement for the expenditure of non-Federal funds as a condition for the receipt of Federal funds.

2.6 **Definitions**:

2.6.1 Children with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED): Persons under the age of 18 who have a diagnosable behavioral, mental, or emotional issue—as defined by the DSM that results in a functional impairment that substantially interferes with, or limits, a child's role or functioning in family, school, or community activities.

NOTE: SAMHSA's definitions of children with serious emotional disturbances was provided in a 1993 Federal Register notice (May 20, 1993; 58 FR 29422).

2.6.2 **SAMHSA:** The acronym for U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. SAMSHA administers the MHBG Program at the federal level and is responsible for establishing the regulations and guidance for the program which is reflected in these requirements.

3. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

- 3.1 **PRICING:** Applicants must price the terms of this solicitation at their best pricing. All costs that the Applicant wishes the State to consider must be submitted for consideration.
 - 3.1.1 Prices and rates shall remain firm for the term of the agreement. The pricing policy submitted by Applicant must (i) be clearly structured, accountable, and auditable and (ii) cover the full spectrum of materials and services required.
- 3.2 **STATEMENT OF RIGHTS:** The State shall have the authority to evaluate Responses and select the Applicant(s) as may be determined to be in the best

interest of the State and consistent with the goals and performance requirements outlined in this RFGA. The State of Vermont reserves the right to obtain clarification or additional information necessary to properly evaluate a proposal. Failure of Applicant to respond to a request for additional information or clarification could result in rejection of that Applicant's proposal. To secure a project that is deemed to be in the best interest of the State, the State reserves the right to accept or reject all applications, in whole or in part, with or without cause, and to waive technicalities in submissions. The State also reserves the right to make purchases outside of the awarded agreements where it is deemed in the best interest of the State.

- 3.2.1 Presentation. An in-person or webinar presentation by the Applicant may be required by the State if it will help the State's evaluation process. The State will factor information presented during presentations into the evaluation. Applicants will be responsible for all costs associated with providing the presentation.
- 3.3 **METHOD OF AWARD:** Awards will be made in the best interest of the State. The State may award one or more agreements and reserves the right to make additional awards to other compliant Applicants at any time if such award is deemed to be in the best interest of the State.
 - 3.3.1 Evaluation Criteria: Applications will be evaluated by members of the State Interagency Team and Act 264 Board members with related content knowledge. Evaluation will be based upon the applicant's responses to the sections outlined in the scoring criteria chart below. Scoring is intended to clarify strengths and weaknesses of proposals relative to one another and to provide guidance to decision-makers. The sum of the scores of the members will become the proposal's final score. The review panel will use a scoring scale of 100 total points with a maximum of 80 points awarded based on the Technical Proposal and a maximum of 20 points awarded based on the Pricing Proposal. Points are divided into categories set forth below.

CRITERIA FOR SCORING	Total possible points	Applicant Score
1. Met formatting requirements	5	
Use standard 8.5" X 11" page size.		
 Documents must be single-spaced and use not less than a twelve-point font. 		
Pages must be numbered.		
The proposal should be comprehensive, yet concise.		
 State your organization's name on each page of your program application and on any other information you are submitting. 		
2. Quality of Applicant's Experience and Capacity to Perform	35	

 Describe the Applicant's organization (if applicable) including history, structure, size, and qualifications to provide the required services including resume for key staff. Describe the Applicant's understanding, experience, and knowledge for the scope of work. Describe the Applicant's experience with conducting similar work. Describe licensures or accreditations of the individual or organization or other indicators of quality review that attest to the quality of the Applicant or organization. 		
3. Responsiveness to Specifications	40	
 Provide a description of how the Applicant will meet the goals of the scope of work including how the Applicant will assess quality of their work and report its performance accordingly. Describe how the Applicant ensures that the work remains on track for proposed period. Describe how the Applicant will work with AHS staff to ensure appropriate, timely, and accurate completion of project. 		
4. Program Cost	20	
 Budget detail addresses RFGA requirements. Method for allocating administrative costs is briefly explained in narrative form. Budget falls within funding parameters specified. 		
OVERALL TOTAL SCORE	100	

- 3.4 **AGREEMENT NEGOTIATION:** Upon completion of the evaluation process, the State may select one or more Applicants with which to negotiate an agreement, based on the evaluation findings and other criteria deemed relevant for ensuring that the decision made is in the best interest of the State.
- 3.5 **COST OF PREPARATION:** Applicant shall be solely responsible for all expenses incurred in the preparation of a response to this and shall be responsible for all expenses associated with any presentations or demonstrations associated with this request and/or any proposals made.
- 3.6 **AGREEMENT TERMS:** The selected Applicant(s) will be expected to sign an agreement with the State, including the Standard Agreement Form and other standard attachments provided with this RFGA for reference.
 - 3.6.1 **Business Registration.** To be awarded an agreement by the State of Vermont an Applicant (except an individual doing business in his/her own name) must be registered with the Vermont Secretary of State's office

https://sos.vermont.gov/corporations/registration/ and must obtain a Business Account Number issued by the Vermont Department of Taxes http://tax.vermont.gov/.

3.6.2 **Payment Terms.** Subrecipient Agreements are funded on a reimbursement basis. Awardees will need to produce backup documentation to be reimbursed for expenses incurred for the work outlined in the Agreement(s).

4. CONTENT AND FORMAT OF RESPONSES:

The content and format requirements listed below are the minimum requirements for State evaluation. Applicants should adhere to the Section page limits below. The State will not evaluate any information provided in excess of the section page limitations. All responses shall be provided in size 12 Arial font.

4.1 The application should include a Cover Letter, a Technical Response, Management Response, Price Schedule, and Risk Assessment Checklist

4.2 Cover Letter (Maximum 2 pages):

- 4.2.1 **Confidentiality:** To the extent your application contains information you consider to be proprietary and confidential, you must comply with the following requirements concerning the contents of your cover letter and the submission of a redacted copy of your application (or affected portions thereof).
- 4.2.2 All responses to this will become part of the agreement file and will become a matter of public record under the State's Public Records Act, 1 V.S.A. § 315 et seq. (the "Public Records Act"). If your response must include material that you consider to be proprietary and confidential under the Public Records Act, your cover letter must clearly identify each page or section of your response that you consider proprietary and confidential. Your cover letter must also include a written explanation for each marked section explaining why such material should be considered exempt from public disclosure in the event of a public records request, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 317(c), including the prospective harm to the competitive position of the Applicant if the identified material were to be released. Additionally, you must include a redacted copy of your response for portions that are considered proprietary and confidential. Redactions must be limited so that the reviewer may understand the nature of the information being withheld. It is typically inappropriate to redact entire pages, or to redact the titles/captions of tables and figures. Under no circumstances may your entire response be marked confidential, and the State reserves the right to disqualify responses so marked.
- 4.2.3 Exceptions to Agreement Terms and Conditions: If an Applicant wishes to propose an exception to any terms and conditions set forth in the Standard Agreement Form and its attachments, such

exceptions must be included in the cover letter to the response. Failure to note exceptions when responding to the RFGA will be deemed to be acceptance of the State terms and conditions. If exceptions are not noted in the response to this but raised during negotiations, the State reserves the right to cancel the negotiation if deemed to be in the best interests of the State. Note that exceptions to agreement terms may cause rejection of the proposal.

- 4.3 **TECHNICAL RESPONSE (Maximum 4 Pages)**. In response to this RFGA, an Applicant shall:
 - 4.3.1 Provide a clearly defined approach describing the services or programming proposed by the Applicant for parents of children eligible for a Coordinated Services Plan based on Act 264 criteria This approach should establish specifics about the services delivered, populations to be supported, expected outcomes, proposed performance measures, and funding proposal per the requirements of this Section.
 - 4.3.2 Describe your capabilities and particular experience relevant to the requirements.
 - 4.3.3 Describe the proposed reporting and performance measurement approach that is consistent with Sections 2.3 and 2.4 of this RFGA.
- 4.4 **MANAGEMENT RESPONSE (Maximum 2 Pages).** In response to this, an applicant shall:
 - 4.4.1 Provide details concerning your organization, the organization's leadership, size, capabilities, similar efforts supported, and resources.
 - 4.4.2 Address how your organization will provide the necessary resources and operational capacity to provide the expected services. This should, at a minimum, discuss staffing or resourcing strategies for achieving the proposed objectives.
 - 4.4.3 Briefly discuss quality assurance, oversight, or internal control steps that will be in place to ensure proper execution of the proposed approach.
- 4.5 **PRIOR EXPERIENCE (Maximum 2 Pages).** Please provide descriptions of two prior projects with which you have provided similar programming or services in the past. Experience may be explained through a partner's letter of support.
- 4.6 **PRICE SCHEDULE (Maximum 1 Page):** Proposals must include a funding proposal that includes the amount of funding requested and a proposed deliverable-based payment schedule consistent with the requirements of Section 4 of this RFGA. Funding proposals shall not exceed this amount. Applicants shall submit their pricing information in the Price Schedule attached to the RFGA.

4.7 **RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST:** This form **must** be completed and submitted as part of the response for the proposal to be considered valid. The <u>Risk Assessment Checklist</u> can be downloaded from the DMH Website.

5. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

- 5.1 **CLOSING DATE**: Applications must be received by the State by the due date specified on the front page of this RFGA. Late applications will not be considered. If unallocated funding is still available after timely applications are reviewed, the State may consider late submissions.
 - 5.1.1 The State may, for cause, issue an addendum to change the date and time when applications are due. If a change is made, the State will inform all Applicants by posting it on the webpage indicated on the front page of this RFGA.
- 5.2 **STATE SECURITY PROCEDURES:** Please be advised extra time will be needed when visiting or delivering information to State of Vermont offices. All individuals visiting State offices must present a valid government issued photo ID when entering the facility.
 - 5.2.1 State office buildings may be locked or otherwise closed to the public. If this RFGA permits hand delivery of applications, delivery instructions will be posted at the entrance to the State facility. Any delay caused by State Security Procedures will be at the applicant's own risk.

5.3 APPLICANT DELIVERY INSTRUCTIONS:

- 5.3.1 ELECTRONIC: Electronic applications will be accepted.
 - 5.3.1.1 E-MAIL Applications. Emailed applications will be accepted. Applications will be accepted via email submission to AHS.DMHSubmissions@vermont.gov. Applications must consist of a single email with a single, digitally searchable PDF attachment containing all components of the application. The Risk Assessment Checklist should remain in Excel format. Multiple emails will not be accepted. There is an attachment size limit of 40 MB. It is the Applicant's responsibility to compress the PDF file containing its application, if necessary, to meet this size limitation.
 - **5.3.1.2** FAX APPLICATIONS: Faxed applications will **not** be accepted.
- 5.3.2 U.S. MAIL OR EXPRESS DELIVERY OR HAND DELIVERY:
 - 5.3.2.1 All paper format applications must be addressed to the State of Vermont, Department of Mental Health, 166 Horseshoe Drive, Waterbury, VT 05671-2010. ENVELOPES MUST BE CLEARLY

MARKED 'SEALED APPILICATION' AND SHOW THE REQUISITION NUMBER AND/OR PROPOSAL TITLE, OPENING DATE AND NAME OF APPLICANT.

5.3.2.2 NUMBER OF COPIES: For applications submitted via mail, express, or in-hand, submit an unbound original (clearly marked as such) and three (3) paper copies and one digital copy in PDF. If large file transfer is needed, applicant must request secure file transfer link.

5.3.2.3 Paper Format Delivery Methods:

- **5.3.2.3.1 U.S. MAIL:** Applicants are cautioned that it is their responsibility to originate the mailing of applications in sufficient time to ensure applications are received and time stamped by the Department of Mental Health prior to the submission deadline.
- 5.3.2.3.2 EXPRESS DELIVERY: If applications are being sent via an express delivery service, be certain that the RFGA designation is clearly shown on the outside of the delivery envelope or box. Express delivery packages will not be considered received by the State until the express delivery package has been received and time stamped by the Department of Mental Health.
- 5.3.2.3.3 HAND DELIVERY: Hand carried applications shall be delivered to a representative of the Department of Mental Health at the Waterbury State Office Complex prior to the submission deadline. A Security Officer is at 280 State Drive until 4:30PM which is the normal hours. An application submitted by Hand Delivery will not be accepted after 4:30 PM.

6. APPLICATION SUBMISSION CHECKLIST:

- ✓ Required Number of Copies
- ✓ Cover Letter
- ✓ Technical Response
- ✓ Management Response
- ✓ Redacted Technical Response, if applicable
- ✓ Prior Experience
- ✓ Price Schedule
- ✓ Completed Risk Assessment Checklist
- ✓ W-9 Tax Form Signed (non-electronically) in the past 6 months.

7. ATTACHMENTS & LINKS:

- 7.1 Risk Assessment Checklist
- 7.2 Standard State Grant with its associated attachments, including but not limited to:
 - 7.2.1 <u>Grant Award Detail (GAD) Part 1</u> (1/2024)
 - 7.2.2 <u>Attachment C: Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants</u> (12/7/2023)
 - 7.2.3 Attachment E Business Associate Agreement (BAA) (5/22/2020)
 - 7.2.4 Attachment F AHS Customary Contract/Grant Provisions (5/16/2018)