



Statewide Structure and Network for Youth Support and Advocacy

Request for Proposals

Grant Procurements

(On-Line Submission Required)

March 2023

Table of Contents

1. Introduction and Background	2
1.1 Purpose of the Request for Proposal	2
1.2 Background	2
2 Proposal Submissions	3
2.1 Designated Contact/Issuing Officer	3
2.3 Key Events/Timeline	4
2.4 Disposition of Proposals	4
2.5 Eligible Agencies	4
2.6 RFP Questions and Clarifications	5
2.7 Addenda to Request for Proposals	5
2.8 Disqualification Factors	6
2.9 Grants Gateway Requirement	6
2.10 Instructions for Bid Submission and Required Format	7
2.11 Instructions for Completing the Workplan and Objectives in Gateway	9
3 Administrative Information	10
3.1 Reserved Rights	10
3.2 Debriefing	11
3.3 Protests Related to the Solicitation Process	11
3.4 Term of Contracts	12
3.5 Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises	12
3.6 Participation Opportunities for New York State Certified Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses	14
3.7 Equal Opportunity Employment	14
3.8 Sexual Harrassment Prevention Certification	16
3.9 Bid Response	16
3.10 Acceptance of Terms and Conditions	16
3.11 Freedom of Information Requirements	16
3.12 NYS and OMH Policies	17
4 Evaluation Factors for Awards	17
4.1 Evaluation Criteria	17
4.2 Method for Evaluating Proposals	18
4.3 Process for Awarding Contracts	18
4.3.1 Initial Awards and Allocations	18
4.3.2 Contract Termination and Reassignment	19
4.4 Award Notification	19
5 Scope of Work	19
5.1 Introduction	19
5.2 Objectives and Responsibilities	20
5.3 Operating Funding	24
6 Proposal Narrative	24
6.1 Objective 1	24
6.2 Objective 2	25
6.3 Objective 3	25
6.4 Objective 4	26
6.5 Objective 5	27
6.6 Objective 6	27
6.7 Objective 7	28
6.8 Financial Assessment	29

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Request for Proposal

The New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) announces the availability of funds for infrastructure development for a Statewide Structure and Network for Youth Support and Advocacy. The goal of the funding is to support a statewide effort to empower young people towards personal recovery and resiliency in their treatment, to know their rights, and to use their voice to influence youth-guided policy and practices. The awardee would promote and provide peer-to-peer mentoring for young people with social and emotional challenges and/or cross system experiences in the children's service system.

Further, this funding is available to ensure that youth peer advocates and agencies employing them, have the support they need for their professional and organizational development. This includes access to information and resources on youth peer support, as well as opportunities for networking and professional connections. By developing an infrastructure and one-stop-shop for expertise and information on youth peer support and the profession of youth peer advocacy, we can ensure the provision of youth peer services are grounded in the same values and principles throughout the field.

The awardee would work collaboratively with the NYS Office of Mental Health at a State-level to provide input and feedback into agency policy and program development as well as working on the regional and local levels to empower young people and build capacity in their communities to increase youth involvement and peer support activities. This will be accomplished through technical assistance and support to local counties and regions and the development and maintenance of a statewide youth peer support network. Such assistance and support will be made available in-person and virtually through the creation of online and virtual resources to allow for greater information sharing and networking opportunities.

1.2 Background

The Office of Mental Health has a long history of supporting youth-driven practices. In 1999, OMH initiated efforts to increase the youth peer voice at the state level with the creation of a Statewide Youth Advisory Council. In 2005, OMH contracted for a Statewide Youth Peer Coordinator 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 Peer Support and Advocacy. The goals of these efforts are to create an infrastructure that will:

- Directly empower and connect young people and youth peer advocates to a statewide network and engage them in activities that inform state-level policies and the development of programs,
- Support and promote the integration of youth guided practices into organizations and services,
- Guide providers, local governments, and organizations in empowering youth to become active participants in their own treatment,
- Ensure youth voice is being solicited to inform agency policies and practices and is provided to the State to guide policy direction and program development, and
- Promote and expand the youth peer advocate workforce and availability of youth peer support services.

Applicants will be expected to support, expand capacity, and enhance these efforts. The outcomes will lead to a service provider network more attuned to the needs of children and their families, a greater understanding of the value of youth peer support services, and a child-serving system more informed by youth guided practices.

To achieve the outcomes associated with implementation of these goals, the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) announces the availability of funds for infrastructure development of a Statewide Structure and Network for Youth Support and Advocacy.

2. Proposal Submissions

2.1 Designated Contact/Issuing Officer

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. To avoid being deemed non-responsive, an applicant is restricted from making contact with any other personnel of OMH regarding the RFP. Certain findings of non-responsibility can result in rejection for a contract award. The Issuing Officer for this RFP is:

Carol Swiderski
Contract Management Specialist 2
New York State Office of Mental Health
Contracts and Claims
44 Holland Avenue, 7th Floor
Albany, NY 12229
carol.swiderski@omh.ny.gov

2.3 Key Events/Timeline

RFP Release Date	<u>3/1/23</u>
Questions Due	<u>3/22/23</u>
Questions and Answers Posted on Website	<u>4/11/23</u>
Proposals Due by 1:00 PM EST*	<u>4/26/23</u>
Anticipated Award Notification	<u>5/17/23</u>
Anticipated Contract Start Date	<u>7/1/23</u>

*OMH strongly advises that applicants do not wait until the last day/last few hours to complete and submit applications/proposals to Grant RFPs. Exceptions will not be considered or made for an applicant who cannot complete their proposal/application by the due date and time of the RFP.

2.4 Disposition of Proposals

All proposals submitted by the due date and time become the property of OMH. Any proposals not received by the due date and time do not get reviewed and are excluded from consideration.

2.5 Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are not-for-profit organizations located in New York State, wherein in all youth/peer-oriented services are directed, managed and provided by youth peers. OMH defines youth/peer-run services as those that are led, directed and supervised by youth peers or adult peer allies who were youth peers/advocates, and staffed by young people, predominantly under the age of 30 years old, who have self-identified as a recipient of mental health services in one or more child-serving system(s), such as, but not limited to a mental health, child welfare, and/or juvenile justice.

Eligible applicants must also have:

- at least two youth/youth peer representatives on organization's Board who are currently in receipt of or have self-identified as

- having been a recipient of mental health services in one or more child-serving system(s) prior to the age of 21; and
- an organization mission which includes providing and/or promoting peer advocacy, support, and other services for children with mental health needs and their families.

Eligible applicants must also have experience and proficiency in:

- working with the NYS Office of Mental Health as well as other child-serving systems in NYS,
- working with OMH licensed and non-licensed service providers as well as providers from other child-serving systems in NYS, and
- conducting activities on a statewide basis.

The organization must have proven knowledge and expertise in youth peer support and advocacy and have the capacity to fulfill all required activities on a statewide basis as outlined in Section 5 of this RFP.

Please be advised that all questions regarding Eligibility will be responded to through the official posting of the Questions and Answers. No questions about Eligibility will be responded to either individually or prior to the posting of the Q&As.

2.6 RFP Questions and Clarifications

All questions or requests for clarification concerning the RFP shall be submitted in writing to the Issuing Officer by e-mail to carol.swiderski@omh.ny.gov by 4:00 PM EST on the “Questions Due” date indicated in section 2.3 and will be limited to addressing only those questions submitted by the deadline. No questions can be submitted or will be answered after this date. No questions will be answered by telephone or in person.

Please put “Youth Support and Advocacy RFP” in the Subject line.

The questions and official answers will be posted on the OMH website by 4/11/23.

2.7 Addenda to Request for Proposals

In the event that it becomes necessary to revise any part of the RFP during the application submission period, an addendum will be posted on the OMH website, the Grants Gateway and the NYS Contract Reporter.

It is the applicant's responsibility to periodically review the OMH website, the NYS Contract Reporter and Grants Gateway to learn of revisions or addendums to this RFP. No other notification will be given.

2.8 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 and verify that all eligibility criteria have been met. Additionally, during the proposal evaluation process, evaluators will also be reviewing eligibility criteria and confirming that they have been met. During the course of either of these review processes, proposals that do not meet basic participation standards will be disqualified, specifically:

- Proposals from applicants that do not meet the eligibility criteria as outlined in 2.5; or
- Proposals that do not comply with bid submission and/or required format instructions as specified in 2.10 or
- Proposals from eligible not-for-profit applicants who have not completed Vendor Prequalification, as described in 2.9, by the proposal due date of 1:00 PM EST on 4/26/23.

2.9 Grants Gateway Requirement

Pursuant to the New York State Division of Budget Bulletin H-1032, dated June 7, 2013, New York State has instituted key reform initiatives to the grant contract process which require not-for-profits to register in the [Grants Gateway](#) and complete the Vendor Prequalification process in order for proposals to be evaluated and any resulting contracts executed.

Proposals received from eligible not-for-profit applicants who have not been Prequalified by the proposal due date of 1:00 PM EST on 4/26/23 cannot be evaluated; therefore, such proposals will be disqualified from further consideration.

Please do not delay in beginning and completing the prequalification process. The State reserves five (5) days to review submitted prequalification applications. Prequalification applications submitted to the State for review less than 5 days prior to the RFP due date and time may not be considered. Applicants should not assume their prequalification information will be reviewed if they do not adhere to this timeframe.

2.10 Instructions for Bid Submission and Required Format

Each proposal submission through the Grants Gateway is required to contain:

- Operating Budget (Appendix B)
- Budget Narrative (Appendix B1)

All applicants must be registered with the New York State Grants Gateway System (GGS) and all Not-for-Profit agencies must be prequalified prior to proposal submission.

If you are not already registered:

Registration forms are available at the GGS website:

<https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/register-your-organization>

Include your SFS Vendor ID on the form; if you are a new vendor and do not have a SFS Vendor ID, include a Substitute for W-9 with your signed, notarized registration (also available from the website).

All registration must include an Organization Chart in order to be processed. When you receive your login information, log in and change your password.

If you are an applicant, and have problems complying with this provision, please contact the GGS help desk via email: Grantsgateway@its.ny.gov -- OR -- by telephone: 1-518-474-5595.

How to Submit a Proposal

Proposals must be submitted online via the Grants Gateway by the date and time posted on the cover of this RFP. Tutorials (training videos) for use of the Grants Gateway (and upon user log in):

You must use Microsoft Edge to access the Grants Gateway. Using Chrome or Firefox causes errors in the Work Plan section of the application.

To apply, log into the Grants Gateway as a Grantee, Grantee Contract Signatory or Grantee System Administrator and click on the View Opportunities button under View Available Opportunities. To get started, in the Search Criteria, enter the Grant Opportunity name provided on the cover page of this RFP, select the Office of Mental Health as the Funding Agency and hit the Search button. Click on the name of the Grant Opportunity from the search results grid and then

click on the APPLY FOR GRANT OPPORTUNITY button located at the bottom left of the Main page of the Grant Opportunity.

In order to access the online proposal and other required documents such as the attachments, you MUST be registered and logged into the NYS Grants Gateway system in the user role of either a “Grantee” or a “Grantee Contract Signatory” or a “Grantee System Administrator”.

The ‘Grantee’ role may ONLY Initiate and Save changes to the application such as add/update information to forms, upload documents while the user logged in as a ‘Grantee Contract Signatory’ or a ‘Grantee System Administrator’ role can perform all the tasks of Grantee role and in addition, can SUBMIT the application to the State. When the application is ready for submission, click the ‘Status Changes’ tab, then click the ‘Apply Status’ button under “APPLICATION SUBMITTED” before the due date and time.

For further information on how to apply, and other information, please refer to the Vendor User Manual document.

Reference materials and videos are available for Grantees applying to funding opportunities on the NYS Grants Gateway. Please visit the Grantee Documents section on Grants Management website.

Late proposals will not be accepted. Proposals will not be accepted via fax, e-mail, hard copy or hand delivery.

Helpful Links

Some helpful links for questions of a technical nature are below.

Grants Reform Videos (includes a document vault tutorial and an application tutorial) on

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYnWskVc7B3ajjOVfOHL6UA>

(Technical questions)

Grants Team Email (Proposal Completion, Policy and Registration questions): grantsgateway@its.ny.gov or by phone at 518-474-5595.

2.11 Instructions for completing the Workplan and Objectives in NYS Grants Gateway

The Workplan Overview Form will be used to create the Work Plan portion of the contract. Some of the information requested will be duplicative of information provided earlier in the application. Be sure to follow the guidance provided below.

The Work Plan Period should reflect the anticipated contract period. Contracts will be approved for a five-year term.

The Project Summary section should include a high-level overview of the project as instructed.

The Organizational Capacity section should include the information requested regarding staffing and relevant experience of staff and any applicable consultants to be involved in undertaking the proposed project. The Objectives and Tasks section should identify grantee-defined objectives and tasks that are relevant to the completion of the proposed project. To get started, add your first Objective Name and Description and then click the [SAVE] button at the top of the page. After hitting Save, a field for the Task Name and Task Description will show under the Objective box. Complete both fields and hit the [SAVE] button at the top of the page. After entering the Task information and clicking Save, you will now see a box for the Performance Measure information and a box to enter a second Task. Enter a Performance Measure Name and select the Performance Measure Data Capture Type from the dropdown box. The type you choose from the dropdown will show on the screen for you to complete. Once you've entered the name, data capture type and the text/integer/or date as applicable, click the [SAVE] button at the top of the page.

For Performance Measure Name restate the Objective then enter the narrative requested in the box below. Performance Measures are also grantee-defined and should reflect some measurable benchmark(s) in order to demonstrate adequate progress as required by the RFP. Once entered, click Save. You may continue to add Objectives, Tasks and Performance Measures up to and including the max amount allowed by the state.

The online Workplan is essentially an outline/summary of the work associated with the Project(s) described in the sections above. Please note that if an application is selected for award, the Workplan will be

subject to change and can be updated during the contract development/negotiation process.

Applicants should refer to Section 5.2.4 Grantee Defined Workplan of the 'Grantee User Guide' ([Click here for Grants Gateway: Vendor User Guide](#)) for detailed instructions on how to complete the Workplan.

3. Administrative Information

3.1 Reserved Rights

OMH 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 or are determined to be otherwise unacceptable, in the agency's sole discretion;
- Withdraw the RFP at any time, at the agency's sole discretion
- Make an award under the RFP in whole or in part;
- Disqualify and applicant whose conduct and/or proposal fails to conform to the requirements of the RFP;
- Seek clarifications and revisions of proposals for the purposes of assuring a full understanding of the responsiveness to this solicitation requirements;
- Use proposal information obtained through the state's investigation of an applicant's qualifications, experience, ability or financial standing, and any material or information submitted by the applicant 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 applicants to submit proposal modifications addressing subsequent RFP amendments;
- Prior to the 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, Grants Gateway and the New York State (NYS) Contract Reporter;
- Eliminate any non-material specifications that cannot be complied with by all of the prospective applicants;
- Waive any requirements that are not material;
- Negotiate any aspect of the proposal with the successful applicant in order to ensure that the final agreement meets OMH objectives and is in the best interests of the State;
- Conduct contract negotiations with the next responsible applicant,

should the agency be unsuccessful in negotiating with the selected applicant;

- 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 applicant's proposal and/or to determine an applicant's compliance with the requirements of the solicitation;
- Cancel or modify contracts due to insufficiency of appropriations, cause, convenience, mutual consent, non-responsibility, or a "force majeure";
- Change any of the scheduled dates stated in the RFP.

3.2 Debriefing

OMH will issue award and non-award notifications to all applicants. Non-awarded applicants may request a debriefing in writing requesting feedback on their own proposal, within 15 business days of the OMH dated letter. OMH will not offer debriefing to providers who are awarded a team. 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. Written debriefing requests may be sent to the Designated Contact, as defined in Section 2.1.

3.3 Protests Related to the Solicitation Process

Protests based on errors or omissions in the solicitation process, which are or should have been apparent prior to the deadline for receipt of all written questions for this RFP, must be filed prior to the deadline for questions. In the event an applicant files a timely protest based on error or omission in the solicitation process, the Commissioner of OMH or their designee will review such protest and may, as appropriate, issue a written response or addendum to the RFP to be posted on the OMH website in the RFP section. Protests of an award decision must be filed within fifteen (15) business days after the notice of conditional award or five (5) business days from the date of the debriefing. The Commissioner or their 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:

New York State Office of Mental Health

Commissioner Ann Marie T. Sullivan, M.D.
44 Holland Ave
Albany, NY 12229

3.4 Term of Contracts

The contracts awarded in response to this RFP will be for a five-year term. Selected applicants awarded a contract under this RFP will be required to adhere to all terms and conditions in OMH's Master Grant Contract.

3.5 Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises

OMH recognizes its obligation to promote opportunities for maximum feasible participation of certified minority and women-owned business enterprises (MWBEs) and the employment of minority group members and women in the performance of OMH. OMH expects that all contactors make a good-faith effort to utilize Minority and/or Women Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE), on any award resulting from this solicitation in excess of \$25,000 for commodities and services or \$100,000 for construction.

With respect to MWBEs, each award recipient must document its good faith efforts to provide meaningful opportunities for participation by MWBEs as subcontractors and suppliers in the performance of the project to be described in each grant disbursement agreement, and must agree that OMH may withhold payment pending receipt of the required MWBE documentation. The directory of MWBEs can be viewed at <https://ny.newnycontracts.com>. For guidance on how OMH will determine a contractor's "good faith efforts", refer to 5 NYCRR §142.8. In accordance with 5 NYCRR § 142.13, each award recipient acknowledges that if it is found to have willfully and intentionally failed to comply with the MWBE participation goals set forth herein and in its grant disbursement agreements, such finding constitutes a breach of contract and OMH may withhold payment from the award recipient as liquidated damages.

Such liquidated damages shall be calculated as an amount equaling the difference between: (1) all sums identified for payment to MWBEs had the award recipient achieved the contractual MWBE goals; and (2) all sums paid to MWBEs for work performed or material supplied under the grant disbursement agreement.

By applying, an Applicant agrees to demonstrate its good faith efforts to achieve its goals for the utilization of MWBEs by submitting evidence

thereof in such form as OMH shall require. Additionally, an Applicant may be required to submit the following documents and information as evidence of compliance with the foregoing:

A. An MWBE Utilization Plan, which shall be submitted in conjunction with the execution of the grant disbursement agreement except as otherwise authorized by OMH. Any modifications or changes to the MWBE Utilization Plan after the execution of the grant disbursement agreement must be reported on a revised MWBE Utilization Plan and submitted to OMH.

OMH will review the submitted MWBE Utilization Plan and advise the award recipient of OMH acceptance or issue a notice of deficiency within 30 days of receipt.

B. If a notice of deficiency is issued, the award recipient will be required to respond to the notice of deficiency within seven (7) business days of receipt by submitting to OMH, a written remedy in response to the notice of deficiency. If the written remedy that is submitted is not timely or is found by OMH to be inadequate, OMH shall notify the award recipient and direct the award recipient to submit within five (5) business days, a request for a partial or total waiver of MWBE participation goals. Failure to file the waiver form in a timely manner may be grounds for disqualification of the bid or proposal.

OMH may refuse to enter into a grant disbursement agreement, or terminate an existing grant disbursement agreement resulting from this solicitation, under the following circumstances:

- a. If an award recipient fails to submit a MWBE Utilization Plan;
- b. If an award recipient fails to submit a written remedy to a notice of deficiency;
- c. If an award recipient fails to submit a request for waiver; or,
- d. If OMH determines that the award recipient has failed to document good faith efforts

The award recipient will be required to attempt to utilize, in good faith, any MBE or WBE identified within its MWBE Utilization Plan, during the performance of the project. Requests for a partial or total waiver of established goal requirements may be made at any time during the term of the project, but must be made no later than prior to the submission of a request for final payment under the grant disbursement agreement.

Each award recipient will be required to submit a Quarterly MWBE Contractor Compliance & Payment Report to OMH over the term of the project, in such form and at such time as OMH shall require, documenting the progress made toward achievement of the MWBE goals established for the project.

3.6 Participation Opportunities for New York State Certified Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Business

Article 17-B of the New York State Executive Law provides for more meaningful participation in public procurement by certified Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business (SDVOB), thereby further integrating such businesses into New York State's economy. OMH recognizes the need to promote the employment of service-disabled veterans and to ensure that certified service-disabled veteran-owned businesses have opportunities for maximum feasible participation in the performance of OMH contracts.

In recognition of the service and sacrifices made by service-disabled veterans and in recognition of their economic activity in doing business in New York State, applicants are expected to consider SDVOBs in the fulfillment of the requirements of the Contract. Such participation may be as subcontractors or suppliers, as proteges, or in other partnering or supporting roles.

OMH hereby establishes an overall goal of 0% for SDVOB participation, based on the current availability of qualified SDVOBs. For purposes of providing meaningful participation by SDVOBs, the Applicant/Contractor would reference the directory of New York State Certified SDVOBs found at <https://ogs.ny.gov/Veterans>. Additionally, following any resulting Contract execution, Contractor would be encouraged to contact the Office of General Services' Division of Service-Disabled Veterans' Business Development to discuss additional methods of maximizing participation by SDVOBs on the Contract.

It would be required that "good faith efforts" to provide meaningful participation by SDVOBs as subcontractors or suppliers in the performance of a resulting awarded Contract as documented.

3.7 Equal Opportunity Employment

By submission of a bid or proposal in response to this solicitation, the Applicant/Contractor agrees with all terms and conditions of Master Contract for Grants, Section IV(J) – Standard Clauses for All New York

State Contracts including Clause 12 – Equal Employment Opportunities for Minorities and Women. The Contractor is required to ensure that it and any subcontractors awarded a subcontract over \$25,000 for the construction, demolition, replacement, major repair, renovation, planning or design of real property and improvements thereon (the “Work”), except where the Work is for the beneficial use of the Contractor, undertake or continue programs to ensure that minority group members and women are afforded equal employment opportunities without discrimination because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, disability or marital status. For these purposes, equal opportunity shall apply in the areas of recruitment, employment, job assignment, promotion, upgrading, demotion, transfer, layoff, termination, and rates of pay or other forms of compensation. This requirement does not apply to (i) work, goods, or services unrelated to the Contract; or (ii) employment outside New York State.

The Applicant will be required to submit a Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises and Equal Opportunity Policy Statement, o the State Contracting Agency with their bid or proposal. To ensure compliance with this Section, the Applicant will be required to submit with the bid or proposal an Equal Opportunity Staffing Plan (Form # to be supplied during contracting process) identifying the anticipated work force to be utilized on the Contract. If awarded a Contract, Contractor shall submit a Workforce Utilization Report, in such format as shall be required by the Contracting State Agency on a monthly or quarterly basis during the term of the contract. Further, pursuant to Article 15 of the Executive Law (the “Human Rights Law”), all other State and Federal statutory and constitutional and non-discrimination provisions, the Contractor and sub-contractors will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment status because of race, creed (religion), color, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, military status, age, disability, predisposing genetic characteristic, marital status, or domestic violence victim status, and shall also follow the requirements of the Human Rights Law with regard to non-discrimination on the basis of prior criminal conviction and prior arrest. Please Note: Failure to comply with the foregoing requirements may result in a finding of non-responsiveness, non-responsibility and/or a breach of the Contract, leading to the withholding of funds, suspension or termination of the Contract or such other actions or enforcement proceedings as allowed by the Contract.

3.8 Sexual Harassment Prevention Certification

State Finance Law §139-I requires applicants on state procurements to certify that they have a written policy addressing sexual harassment prevention in the workplace and provide annual sexual harassment training (that meets the Department of Labor's model policy and training standards) to all its employees. Bids that do not contain the certification may not be considered for award; provided however, that if the applicant cannot make the certification, the applicant may provide a statement with their bid detailing the reasons why the certification cannot be made. A template certification document is being provided as part of this RFP. Applicants must complete and return the certification with their bid, or provide a statement detailing why the certification cannot be made.

3.9 Bid Response

Neither the State of New York or OMH shall be responsible for the costs or expenses incurred by the applicant in preparation or presentation of the bid proposal.

3.10 Acceptance of Terms and Conditions

A bid, in order to be responsive to this solicitation, must satisfy the specifications set forth in this RFP. A detailed description of this format and content requirements is presented in Section 2.10 of this RFP.

3.11 Freedom of Information Requirements

All proposals submitted for OMH's consideration will be held in confidence. However, the resulting contract is subject to New York State Freedom of Information Law (FOIL). Therefore, if an applicant believes that any information in its bid constitutes a trade secret or should otherwise be treated as confidential and wishes such information not be disclosed if requested, pursuant to FOIL (Article 6 of Public Officer's Law), the applicant must submit with its bid, a separate letter specifically identifying the page number(s), line(s), or other appropriate designation(s) containing such information explaining in detail why such information is a trade secret and formally requesting that such information be kept confidential. Failure by an applicant to submit such a letter with its bid identifying trade secrets will constitute a waiver by the applicant of any rights it may have under Section 89(5) of the Public Officers Law relating to the protection of trade secrets. The proprietary nature of the information designated confidential by the applicant may be subject to disclosure if ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. A

request that an entire bid be kept confidential is not advisable since a bid cannot reasonably consist of all data subject to a FOIL proprietary status.

3.12 NYS and OMH Policies

The applicant/contractor must agree to comply with all applicable New York State and OMH policies, procedures, regulations and directives throughout the Term of the contract.

4. Evaluation Factors and Awards

4.1 Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be rated and ranked in order of highest score based on an evaluation of each applicant’s written submission as well as OMH internal reviews.

The Evaluation will apply points in the following categories as defined in Section 6:

Proposal Components	Maximum Points
Obj. 1: Youth Education and Empowerment	10 points
Obj. 2: Youth Involvement in Communities	10 points
Obj. 3: Youth Voice in State Policies and Programs	10 points
Obj. 4: Youth Peer Support Infrastructure and Network	15 points
Obj. 5: Youth Peer Support Workforce Support and Leadership Development	10 points
Obj. 6: Administrative Infrastructure and Staffing	15 points
Obj. 7: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	10 points
Technical Score =	80 points
Financial Assessment (Budget)	20 points
Total Proposal Score =	100 points

For a detailed description of evaluation criteria for the Technical Evaluation and the Financial Assessment components, see Section 6 (Proposal Narrative).

4.2 Method for 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 2.10. If a proposal is not complete or does not meet the basic eligibility and participation standards as outlined in Section 2.5, the proposal will be eliminated from further review. The agency will be notified of the rejection of its proposal within 10 working days of the proposal due date.

Proposals will be conducted in two parts: Technical Evaluation and Financial Assessment. The technical evaluation committee, consisting of at least three evaluators, will review the technical portion of each proposal and compute a technical score. A financial score will be computed separately based on the operating budget and budget narrative submitted.

Evaluators of the Technical Evaluation component may then meet to discuss the basis of those ratings. Following the discussion, evaluators may independently revise their original score in any section. Once completed, final Technical Evaluation scores will then be recalculated, averaged, and applied to the final Financial Assessment score to arrive at final scores.

Any proposal not receiving a minimum score of 75 will be eliminated from consideration.

In case of a tie in the scoring process, the proposal with the highest score on the **Objective 4: Youth Peer Support Infrastructure and Network (Section 6.4)** of the Proposal Narrative will be ranked higher.

4.3 Process for Awarding Contracts

4.3.1 Initial Awards and Allocations

Proposals will be ranked, and one award made to the applicant with the highest score to assume the operation of **The Statewide Structure and Network for Youth Support and Advocacy.**

4.3.2 Contract Termination and Reassignment

There are a number of factors that may result in the contract being reassigned. This includes, but is not limited to, failure to meet work plan deliverables and outcomes as outlined and agreed upon for more than two consecutive quarters. A contractor will be provided notification if there is need for reassignment.

To reassign the contract, OMH will go to the next highest ranked proposal.

4.4 Award Notification

At the conclusion of the procurement, notification will be sent to successful and non-successful applicants. All awards are subject to approval by the NYS Attorney General and the Office of the State Comptroller before an operating contract can be finalized.

5. Scope of Work

5.1 Introduction

Similar to the adult and family peer movement, youth peers play an important role in recovery within the children's behavioral 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 peers are an invaluable resource 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 peers 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 promote youth peer support and advocacy. 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 peer advocates in children's services systems grows, the need for an

organization with the expertise and knowledge of youth engagement and involvement increases. Agencies, service 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. Further, for those who want to hire youth peer advocates to provide services to children within their agencies, having an entity who is an expert in youth peer support that can offer guidance and networking opportunities will be critical for their success and sustainability.

The outcomes of stronger partnerships with young people and increased use of youth peer support advocates will 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 will be expected to work in collaboration with the OMH Central Office of Advocacy and Peer Support Service and Division of Integrated Community Services for Children and Families; as well as the OMH Regional Offices, including the Field Office Directors, Child and Family Coordinators, and Youth Peer Advocacy Specialists to advance the goals and objectives of the Statewide Structure and Network for Youth Support and Advocacy.

The awardee will be responsible for fulfilling all activities outlined in each objective to meet the goals of the funding opportunity.

Objective 1: Youth Education and Empowerment

The applicant will empower young people to know their rights and use their voice to influence policy and practice through, but not limited to, the following:

- Providing empowerment and/or educational opportunities for youth to learn about advocacy and youth involvement, and
- providing training for young people on advocacy, leadership and peer mentoring to empower youth to engage in civic affairs
- creating resources, such as trainings, documents, tools and toolkits, both physical and digital, mirroring the cultural and language needs of various NYS

populations, for youth and bring youth support principles to their interactions with systems

- creating opportunities for youth to network at a local or regional level through meetings, technology, conference calls, etc.
- hosting 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, and
- creating, as requested, media (such as videos or graphics) featuring youth on the service system to promote systems literacy and reduce stigma in accessing needed services

Objective 2: Youth Involvement and Input into Service Providers

The applicant will create the capacity to increase youth involvement and youth peer voice providers by:

- providing technical assistance and support providers on how to build and sustain meaningful youth peer support systems,
- assisting providers in the development of youth peer advisory councils, youth-led youth groups, and other structures to support local youth input into policy and program development,
- creating resources, such as trainings, documents, tools and toolkits, both physical and digital, for service providers to incorporate youth voice
- providing training to agencies, adult partners, (those working directly with youth) and allies (those in positions to support and assist youth) on how to work effectively with youth and support youth voice, and
- guide agencies and organizations on how to develop youth friendly environments and policies and ensure youth guided care, and continually solicit youth feedback

Objective 3: Youth Voice in State/Local Government Policies and Programs

The applicant will work collaboratively with the Office of Mental Health to provide youth peer voice to agency program and policy development, through, but not limited to, the following:

- host youth focus groups for feedback on identified topics or materials, programs and policy directions, and other issues at the request of OMH

- increase youth voice in State cross-systems coordination efforts, oversight committees, councils, taskforces, workgroups, etc.
- create a statewide Youth Advisory Board of children and youth with emotional and behavioral health needs who are receiving or have received mental health treatment and support services within a child-serving system
 - The Youth Advisory Board should represent the diversity of New York State and children served in the system
 - No less than half of the Youth Advisory Board must be comprised of youth members who are not professional peers or in the peer workforce; but solely youth with lived experience as outlined above
 - The Youth Advisory Board should be convened regularly but no less than quarterly
 - The Youth Advisory Board should convene with Office of Mental Health leadership regularly but no less than twice per year, as requested
 - The Youth Advisory Board should submit written recommendations to Office of Mental Health yearly on priorities
 - Representatives of the Youth Advisory Board should attend the Recipient Advisory Council convened by the Office of Mental Health

Objective 4: Youth Support Infrastructure and Network

The applicant will create an infrastructure, inclusive of a virtual and social media presence, to support promotion of mental health, youth empowerment and advocacy, a statewide network of youth, Youth Peer Advocates and youth peer support organizations and agency to facilitate information and resource sharing and distribution, opportunities for networking and mentoring.

- create online/virtual capacity for outreach and promotion of events and opportunities, resource and information center, and distributing current information to the field
- produce regular outreach materials and communications, such as emails, newsletters, social networking outreach, social media posts, etc.,
- develop mechanisms to foster networking opportunities for youth and youth peer advocates using various strategies, such as online meeting platforms and peer-to-peer mentoring, and
- utilize network 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.

Objective 5: Youth Peer Support Workforce Support and Leadership Development

Youth Peer Advocates, both provisional and professional, are critical for ensuring youth peer support services are available and can grow to meet the increasing needs of children and youth. It is important for Youth Peer Advocates (YPAs) to have a professional network to serve as a support to their profession and to ensure they are well versed in the principles and values that guide youth peer support. The applicant will assist youth peer advocates in being successful professionals in the field and provide opportunities for leadership development and networking, including but not limited to:

- hosting in-person and online events and meetings to foster professional development and networking,
- providing training and leadership development opportunities in the field of youth peer support,
- development of mechanisms for peer-to-peer outreach and mentoring between seasoned and new youth peer support advocates
- build workforce pipelines by creating and supporting initiatives that support youth to consider the YPA profession, seek and obtain certification, and seek and obtain employment, with particular focus on underrepresented groups including racial/ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, individuals with experience in multiple child-serving systems, individuals from underserved geographic regions, etc.
- collaborate strongly with current and future awardees of Peer Advancement Networks for Certified Peer Specialist and Family Peer Support Network, including joint events, creating an online job bank, information sharing, and resources, and joining with such organizations to facilitate a joint Peer Workforce Advisory Board that includes representation across family, adult, and youth peer workers.

Objective 6: Administrative Infrastructure and Staffing

To perform the objectives in this proposal an adequate and experienced workforce is essential. The Statewide Network for Youth Peer Support and Advocacy requires an infrastructure that must be able to support the execution of activities at a local, regional and statewide level. Therefore,

the necessary staffing and technical capabilities must be in place to achieve objectives at three levels.

Objective 7: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

To perform the objectives in this proposal, a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens is critical. Addressing issues of equity and inclusion require planned, purposeful and active steps to reduce disparities for marginalized and underserved populations. Agencies and organizations in the field of healthcare have an obligation to ensure equity in access to care and actively work to promote access to care and to ensure care is cultural and linguistically competent.

Required Reporting

The awardee will be required to submit quarterly reports to the OMH based on the workplan on the activities completed within the previous quarter which will be due 45 days from the end of the quarter, and an annual report of the prior year's accomplishments and outcomes as well as projected activities for the next year, due 45 days from the end year. The content and format of the report will be determined by OMH, but include the aforementioned objectives and activities outlined in the proposal and awardee contracted annual workplan.

The awardee will be required to meet with OMH regularly but no less than quarterly to discuss upcoming priorities and plans.

5.3 Operating Funding

One award will be made in the amount of \$5,000,000 for the five years. Annual funding for each of the 5 years is \$ 1,000,000.

6. Proposal Narrative

6.1 Objective 1: Youth Education and Empowerment

Based on the objective and responsibilities outlined above, the applicant must describe the:

- agency's understanding of and experience in the varying types of youth involvement and how to ensure youth are engaged at the highest levels of participation. Reference applicable literature.
- agency's experience with and plan for 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

- the agency's plan for educating and/or providing training to young people on how to become an active participant, a youth advocate, or a youth peer support provider. Demonstrate how these activities will cover the State and be offered locally, regionally, and statewide; minimally once annually in each OMH region,
- the plan for empowering, training, and mentoring youth statewide, including activities, events, and trainings, and who in the staffing plan will provide the support. Demonstrate how these activities will cover the State and be offered locally, regionally, and statewide; minimally once annually in each OMH region, and
- agency's plan for producing media and content featuring family members/caregivers on systems literacy

6.2 Objective 2: Youth Involvement and Input into Service Providers

Based on the objective and responsibilities outlined above, the applicant must describe the:

- the agency's plan for providing training and education to agencies and adults on how to engage and involve youth, including who developed the training material and a summary of the training content,
- the approach for providing training to providers and demonstrate how these activities will cover the State and be offered locally, regionally, and statewide; minimally once annually in each OMH region,
- the agency's plan for providing on-site technical assistance and support to local providers or agencies on how to engage youth, foster youth involvement in individual treatment and in the creation of mechanisms that solicit youth feedback,
- the plan for how and by whom technical assistance, support and training will be made available to providers throughout the state, including outreach promotion, and availability/frequency of activities, and
- the agency's plan to create and make materials, resources and information available to communities and providers on youth engagement, youth involvement, and youth guided care.

6.3 Objective 3: Youth Voice in State/Local Government Policies and Programs

Based on the objective and responsibilities outlined above, the applicant must describe the:

- agency's experience and plan for working with local and state

government agencies to provide input and feedback into statewide programs and policy development,

- agency's experience in and plan for soliciting, gathering, and presenting feedback from large stakeholder groups and how it was shared with state/local agencies to inform their practice,
- method for implementing youth voice activities, including cultivating a network of youth members, supporting their involvement at local and regional levels, and creating and maintaining a Youth Advisory Board,
- approach for training, preparing and managing a Youth Advisory Board, including frequency of meeting, approaches to gathering input and how topics and areas of focus will be determined; and
- plan for collecting and providing ongoing feedback and input from the Youth Advisory Board to the Office of Mental Health, including approaches for collection, means of presenting the information and the frequency for sharing.

6.4 Objective 4: Youth Support Infrastructure and Network

Based on the objective and responsibilities outlined above, the applicant must:

- describe the plan for an online and virtual presence to support the activities required, including outreach and engagement of youth and youth peers. Detail the methods and strategies that will be employed to promote, engage and guide youth to the platform(s).
- outline the information, resources and technological approaches that will be created for youth, youth peers and organizations that provide youth peer support that will further grow the material and resources available in the field
- describe what planned activities, events and approaches will be created to foster networking opportunities in the field, in person, online, and virtual. Demonstrate how the applicant will ensure that members of the youth network will be actively engaged and directly involved in planning, facilitating, and guiding all youth activities at a local, regional and statewide level and are ensuring all efforts are peer-guided and peer-run. Demonstrate how these activities will cover the State and be offered locally, regionally, and statewide; minimally annually in each OMH region, and
- describe the plan for hosting any/all statewide conference(s) and event(s) to bring together youth, youth peers and organizations to support education, information sharing and networking in the field

6.5 Objective 5: Youth Peer Support Workforce Support and Leadership Development

Based on the objective and responsibilities outlined above, the applicant must:

- outline ongoing plans and approaches for supporting professional and leadership development for Youth Peer Advocates at all levels of experience, including interested, provisional, and professional advocates. Demonstrate how these activities will cover the State and be offered locally, regionally, and statewide; minimally annually in each OMH region,
- provide the plan for how YPAs will be connected for peer-to-peer networking and resources identified to support advocates for professional development and connections and describe mechanisms and approaches to be used to foster networking opportunities, both in person and online
- describe the plan for workforce development including description of plans for workforce pipeline initiatives to grow the YPA workforce and the strategies to be undertaken to outreach to and engage diverse individuals
- describe the plan for collaborating with current and future awardees of Peer Advancement Networks for Certified Peer Specialist and Family Peer Support Network, including joint events, creating an online job bank, information sharing, and resource development for expanding resources across adult, family and youth peers

6.6 Objective 6: Administrative Infrastructure and Staffing

Based on the objective and responsibilities outlined above, the applicant must:

- provide the organizational chart and describe the staffing plan, including leadership and supervisory structures. Provide a brief narrative and description of how the organization structure meets the eligibility requirements and demonstrates the values and principles of peer-run services as outlined in Section 2.5 Eligible Applicants,
- indicate which staff or units within the organization restructure will carry out each of the aforementioned objectives in the proposal, to achieve the objectives outlined above,
- provide a job description including a list of required qualifications for each staff position identified in the plan, and
- 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 in the oversight entity. Describe and demonstrate how it meets the requirements set forth in Eligible Applicants in Section 2.5.

6.7 Objective 7: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Based on the objective and responsibilities outlined above, the applicant must:

- provide a mission statement for this project, that includes information about the intent to serve individuals from marginalized/underserved populations.
- identify the management level person focused on and responsible for coordinating/leading efforts focused on the reduction of disparities in access and service quality for marginalized populations. This includes activities related to diversity, inclusion, equity, cultural/linguistic competence. Information provided should include the individual's title, organizational positioning, education, relevant experience.
- describe the organization's experience in adapting program or service offerings to individuals from marginalized/underserved populations, including awareness of areas of the state where this attention is needed.
- describe the organization's committees/workgroups and/or ongoing activities that focus on efforts to reduce disparities in access, quality, and treatment outcomes for marginalized populations (diversity, inclusion, equity, cultural/linguistic competence). Please also describe the membership of these committees/workgroups (organizational positioning). Include:
 - how committees/workgroups review programs with respect to cultural competency issues within the entity;
 - how this group corresponds and collaborates with the quality assurance/quality improvement/compliance parts of the organization;
 - how committees/workgroups participate in planning and implementation of services within the entity;
 - how committees/workgroups transmit recommendations to an executive level of entity;
 - Note - it is important to describe membership of representatives from the most prevalent cultural groups to be served in this project.
- describe the training strategy on for topics related to diversity, inclusion, cultural competence, and the reduction of disparities in access, quality, and treatment outcomes for marginalized/underserved populations. These include trainings about implicit bias, diversity recruitment, creating inclusive work environments, and providing languages access services.
- describe program efforts to recruit, hire and retain staff from diverse cultural groups. This includes a description of:
 - a documented data driven goal to recruit, hire and retain

- direct service/clinical, supervisory and administrative level staff who are from or have had experience working with the most prevalent cultural groups of its end users;
 - current staffing levels of administrative staff members who are from or have experience working with the most prevalent cultural groups of its end users.
 - This information can also include information about employment postings on platforms and in places specifically designed to hire diversity, the use of language in employment posting(s) that illustrate that the program is seeking to recruit diverse candidates, efforts to retain diverse employees use of best practice approaches to mitigate bias in interview/hiring processes.
- describe efforts to meet the disability and language access needs of individuals addressed under this project (limited English proficient, Deaf/ASL). This information should include descriptions on the approaches to be taken to provide system/training accessibility and language access services (i.e. phone, video interpretation). Also include information about efforts to ensure all staff with direct contact with end users are knowledgeable about using these resources. Additionally, provide information about the plan to provide key documents and forms in the languages of the most prevalent cultural groups of its end users, as well as other language accessibility needs (Braille, limited reading skills).

6.8 Financial Assessment

- a. The proposal must include a 5-year Budget (Appendix B). \$1,000,000 is available annually. The indirect cost/administrative overhead rate is capped 15%. Providers must follow Consolidated Fiscal Report (CFR) Ratio-Value guidance which excludes equipment/property from the direct cost base. Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements (NICRA) are not allowable. Any travel costs included in the Budget must conform to New York State rates for travel reimbursement. Applicants should list staff by position, full-time equivalent (FTE), and salary.
- b. Describe how your agency manages its operating budget. Also, applicants must complete a Budget Narrative (Appendix B1) which should include the following:
 - 1. detailed expense components, including description of how each expense relates to proposed activities, that

make up the total operating expenses;

2. the calculation or logic that supports the budgeted value of each category; and,
3. description each staff position and role, inclusion of percentage of time/effort for each staff person devoted to proposed activities, and explanation of how salaries are adequate to attract and retain qualified employees.

The budget narrative should reflect and align with the proposal narrative submitted.