



# Office of Mental Health

## Youth Safe Spaces Program Q and A's

Q1. There are OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouses in Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Manhattan. My question is, can there be a proposed location within each of these boroughs, but in a different neighborhood? In the RFP OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse Exclusion Areas chart, the borough locations listed also includes a neighborhood Corona, Van Cortland Park, and Midtown West. Brooklyn mentions Kings which is the whole county.

A1. Yes, if the proposed location is not in the same zip code and it can justified that there is no duplication of service if in close proximity to an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse. Please see page 20 of RFP - An Option 1 Safe Space may not be established in the same zip code as an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse (see Table 1, Section 2.5, page 4).

Q2. Are mental health clinics eligible for this RFP?

A2. Eligible applicants must:

- Be a not-for-profit agency with 501(c) (3) incorporation located and doing business in New York State.
- Have at least 5 years of demonstrated experience working with underserved communities of youth and young adults ages 12-24, in a non-clinical setting.
- Attest that the proposed location of the proposed Youth Safe Spaces Program is not located in the community of an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse. Please refer to page 4.

Q3. If applying under Option 1. can some of the funding be used to pay for the participant's clinical services and or any other community service to support the participant.

A3. The Youth Safe Space initiative is grounded in a non-clinical framework and cannot fund clinical services for participants. Community services may be allowable if they align with the required service components and support the program's purpose, as outlined in Offsite Services on page 23, Table 5, and Section 5.3, Operating Funding. Please refer to those sections for additional guidance.

Q4. Is the funding already procured and stable or is it like so many other things, pending and perhaps tied to SAPT funds? I understand you may not be able to tell us for sure at the moment.

A4. The funding for the Youth Safe Spaces Program is secured and included in Governor Kathy Hochul's enacted SFY 2024-2025 Budget.

Q5. The 250 unique youth served requirement: could these include youth we serve monthly during the summer at an apartment complex and/or mobile home park as well as the youth who come to our sites? With the transportation support, we may be able to serve some of these youth again during our regular service hours but generally being out in the community with activities allows us to connect with families and build trust.

A5. Proposals choosing Option 2 are expected to serve (both on-site and off-site) a minimum of 250 unduplicated youth per year. Please refer to Section 5, Volume and Service Hours (page 20).

Q6. Can a municipality apply for the Safe Spaces Program? The website/RFP does not mention this.

A6. Please refer to Section 2.5 Eligible Agencies (page 4).

Q7. Can a school qualify as a potential space?

A7. Please refer to Section 2.5 Eligible Agencies on page 4, Section 4.3.1 Initial Awards and Allocations on page 16, and Section 5, Setting (page 19).

Q8. If a ymca has a space in a community but a ywca is in the same town but different location and different neighborhood with a need and are is interested in becoming a safe space is that permissible ? Or counts as an exclusion town?

A8. A proposed location under Option 1 Safe Space may not be established in the same zip code as an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse (see Table 1, Section 2.5, page 4). Under Option 2, please see pages 20-21.

Q9. What kind of activities are considered as part of the programming and for how many days a week and time frame to be open to service the youth?

A9. Please refer to Table 3 – Required Service Components (page 22) and Table 4-Program Expectations (page 24) for reference.

Q10. RFP states non clinical entities- but there is an emphasis on the mental health needs of this population- can a mental health program that offers education and awareness apply that offers psycho education programming and partners with community recreation centers?

A10. Please refer to Section 2.5 Eligible Agencies on page 4. The Youth Safe Space initiative is grounded in a non-clinical framework and cannot fund clinical services for participants. Please refer to the Framework and Scope of Work on pages 18-19.

Q11. What is the payment structure? Monthly fee for service? Reimbursement?

A11. The payment structure is expected to be quarterly payments.

Q12. If the President/CEO of a nonprofit has over 23 years of experience in the social services field and has managed various programs, including Transitional Housing Programs for general populations, would the nonprofit meet the eligibility requirements for the Youth Safe Spaces Program RFP?

A12. Please refer to Section 2.5 Eligible Agencies (page 4).

Q13. If an applicant is located in the same borough as a current OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse but not in the same zip code, and is proposing a youth safe space in a different zip code from the current OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse, can that applicant request Option 1 funding?

A13. Yes.

Q14. Do you have any guidance about how to identify who the appropriate LGU point of contact would be for our area? We are located in Brooklyn, NYC.

A14. In New York City, this role is fulfilled by the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH).- Specific contact information may be found at [https://www.clmhd.org/contact\\_local\\_mental\\_hygiene\\_departments/](https://www.clmhd.org/contact_local_mental_hygiene_departments/).

Q15. For Option 1. What is the maximum yearly funding amount that can be used towards purchasing and or renting a building/ space

A15. This RFP does not establish minimum or maximum amounts to be expended on space. The applicant must demonstrate that they can provide a viable program given responses to the RFP questions.

Q16. Can the program space be shared with another internal agency program and or department.

A16. The proposed program space must meet the requirements outlined in the RFP, as well as be able to fulfill the Scope of Work (Section 5).

Q17. Does the early funding amount not spent get rolled over to the next year?

A17. As detailed in Section 5.3 Operating Funding (pages 24-25), some of the funding may be used for one-time start-up costs as detailed in the RFP. If there are unused dollars at the end of Year 1, an awardee may apply to roll the money over by contacting the OMH Field Office and initiating a rollover/carryover request.

Q18. For Option 1. Does the laundry and shower facilities need to be onsite or can they be identified community access to such, example school building, town facility, public laundromat, gym membership with showers?

A18. All required activities must be provided on-site. Please refer to Section 5.2 Objectives and Responsibilities (page 23) of the RFP.

Q19. Will funding be rescinded if 500 participants aren't served each year?

A19. Please refer to Section 4.4 Contract Termination and Reassignment (pages 17-18) of the RFP.

Q20. How will documentation of the 500 unduplicated youth be recorded?

A20. Programs must adhere to forthcoming OMH Program Guidance and maintain accurate reporting. Providers are required to submit quality and program data to OMH as per guidance that will be provided. Please refer to Section 5.2 Objectives and Responsibilities (page 24), of the RFP.

Q21. If you participate in a community or school event for youths is this an eligible of-site service and if so how do you record the youths served?

A.21 Please refer to Section 5.2 Objectives and Responsibilities, Off Site Services (page 23) and record keeping (page 24, paragraph preceding Section 5.3).

Q22. Can there be a distinction between enrolled participants and unenrolled participants. If so can unenrolled participants be counted towards the 500 required unduplicated youths served?

A22 Yes, both may count toward the 500 unduplicated youth served if they meaningfully engage with Youth Safe Spaces Program services.

Q23. If the ratio of certified peer advocate is 1-10 is this only required onsite or also off-site.

A23. The 1:10 ratio refers to the required staff-to-youth ratio during on-site program hours. "Staff" may include agency staff, interns and/or volunteers, as appropriate. Please refer to Table 4 - Program Expectations (page 24). See response to Q24. Guidance on off-site staff to youth ratios will be shared with the program awardees.

Q24. Does the peer advocate ratio of 1-10 also apply to off-site such as at a lager event or presentation?

A24. The 1:10 ratio refers to the required staff-to-youth ratio during on-site program hours. "Staff" may include agency staff, interns and/or volunteers, as appropriate. Please refer to Table 4 - Program Expectations (page 24). Guidance on off-site staff to youth ratios will be shared with the program awardees. Please refer to Table 4 – Program Expectations (page 24). See response to Q23.

Q25. Does unduplicated mean that the person can only be counted once towards the 500 minimum?

A25. Yes, unduplicated means each youth can only be counted once toward the 500 minimum per year, regardless of how often they participate.

Q26. How do we know if our proposed site for the Youth Safe Space is located far enough from current sites to avoid duplication of services? For example, how far from the current LGBT Center Youth Clubhouse in Midtown would our program have to be located for us to apply for Option 1?

A.26. A proposed Safe Space location under Option 1 may not be established in the same zip code as an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse (see Table 1, Section 2.5, pages 4-5).

Q27. Is this new funding, or is it a competitive re-solicitation of an existing grant program?

A27. This is new funding for the development of a new non-clinical program model.

Q28. Is the source of this funding entirely New York State funds or does this include federal funds?

A28. The source of this funding is 100% state funding.

Q29. How should an applicant calculate its proposed staffing model to comply with the 1:10 staff to participant ratio? Is the ratio based on the anticipated volume present at the program site at any given time? For example, an organization expecting to host a maximum of 30 participants at any given program/event, would propose a staffing model of at least 3.0 FTE?

A29. An applicant should calculate the 1:10 staff-to-participant ratio based on the maximum number of youth expected to be present during program hours at any given time. For example, if 30 youth are expected, the staffing model should ensure at least 3 staff are available. This includes youth peer advocates, part-time staff, and trained volunteers.

Q30. Can applicants proposed to subcontract a portion of the project activities?

A30. Yes, program activities may be subcontracted to a partnering agency. An applicant would need to detail how the Scope of Work (Section 5) will be achieved and what role each organization will perform.

Q31. Must an applicant have site control (e.g., deed or lease) for the space where the Youth Safe Spaces Program will be held, or can program activities be conducted at a site owned by a partnering organization?

A31. Program activities may be conducted at a site owned by a partnering agency, as long as there is a clear agreement in place to ensure consistent access and use of the space. Please refer to Table 4 - Program Expectations, Volume & Hours (page 20), and Section 4.4 Contract Termination and reassignment.

Q32. Can you please provide additional information on the required credentials for the Youth Peer Advocate position? Are the individuals in this position required to have (or be in the process of obtaining) OMH Credentialed Youth Peer Advocate (YPA-C) certification?

A32. Yes, please refer to Section 5 Scope of Work, Staffing (page 20).

Q33. On page 4 of the RFP it states Eligible Option 1 applicants' proposed location for a Youth Safe Spaces Program must be located in communities without an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse or in areas where services provided do not duplicate those already available. If a community has an OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse located in a city within the County is an organization ineligible to apply for option 1 entirely or would a proposal for a program in a different city/town within the same county be eligible for funding?

A33.A proposed Safe Space location under Option 1 may not be established in the same zip code as an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse (see Table 1, Section 2.5, pages 4-5).

Q34. Can the Safe Space include online/virtual spaces? Or must they be in physical locations?

A34. Youth Safe Space Programs must operate in physical locations where all required activities (Table 3 – Required Service Components, page 22) are provided on-site (page 23). Virtual programming may only be used when indicated in the forthcoming guidance; please refer to page 19 regarding setting expectations around flexibility, adaptability, and accessibility.

Q35. Are school districts eligible to apply, as most are not 501c3?

A35. Eligible applicants must:

- Be a not-for-profit agency with 501(c) (3) incorporation located and doing business in New York State.
- Have at least 5 years of demonstrated experience working with underserved communities of youth and young adults ages 12-24, in a non-clinical setting.
- Attest that the proposed location of the proposed Youth Safe Spaces Program is not located in the community of an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse. Please refer to page 4.

Q36. What is considered an LGU, and does this include NYC?

A36. An LGU is the Local Government Unit, which is county or City department that oversees all the mental hygiene services (mental health, addiction, and intellectual/developmental disabilities services). In New York City, this role is fulfilled by the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). Specific contact information may be found at [https://www.clmhd.org/contact\\_local\\_mental\\_hygiene\\_departments/](https://www.clmhd.org/contact_local_mental_hygiene_departments/).

Q37. Do applicants need to have a physical space secured prior to applying for the grant?

A37. The awardee must be prepared to implement service components by the close of the 3rd quarter of the first contract year. Please refer to Section 5.2 Introduction (pages 21-22). See response to question 61.

Q38. Although we are not a licensed OMH program, could we partner with a licensed OMH program to provide these services?

A38. Eligible applicants do not need to be licensed and/or funded by the New York State Office of Mental Health. Eligible applicants must:

- Be a not-for-profit agency with 501(c) (3) incorporation located and doing business in New York State.
- Have at least 5 years of demonstrated experience working with underserved communities of youth and young adults ages 12-24, in a non-clinical setting.
- Attest that the proposed location of the proposed Youth Safe Spaces Program is not located in the community of an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse. Please refer to page 4.

Q39. Can multiple organizations apply together as a collaborative or consortium?

A39. Yes, however, there must be a lead organization that meets all eligibility requirements and assumes responsibility for the contract and all requirements.

Q40. After taking a first look at the RFP, I noticed that Ulster County isn't on the list of EDR counties. Does that mean our library, which is located in Ulster County, couldn't apply?

A40. Thank you for bringing this error to our attention. This has been corrected in the table below. Applicants in all NYS counties are eligible to apply if they meet the following criteria:

Eligible applicants must:

- Be a not-for-profit agency with 501(c) (3) incorporation located and doing business in New York State.
- Have at least 5 years of demonstrated experience working with underserved communities of youth and young adults ages 12-24, in a non-clinical setting.
- Attest that the proposed location of the proposed Youth Safe Spaces Program is not located in the community of an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse. Please refer to page 4.

**- Economic Development Regions (Corrected)**

Economic Development Region (EDR)	Counties In (EDR)
Capital Region	Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, Washington
Central New York	Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego
Finger Lakes	Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates
Mid-Hudson	Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester
Mohawk Valley	Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, Schoharie
North Country	Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Jefferson, Hamilton, Lewis, St. Lawrence
Southern Tier	Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins
Western New York	Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara
Long Island	Nassau, Suffolk
New York City	Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, New York, Richmond

Q41. Can applicants propose a multi-site model to meet the youth minimum (500 for "Option 1" and 250 for "Option 2"), or does the Youth Safe Space need to be located at a single site? (RFP Section 6.3).

A41. Yes, a multi-site model may be proposed as long as all requirements are met at each site and that the budget request does not exceed \$500,000 for Option 1 or \$250,000 for Option 2, regardless of the number of sites.

Q42. On page 16, eligible applicants for option 2 must already be recognized as safe spaces. Is there a definition to abide by?

A42. No, there is no formal definition. Eligible applicants must already be recognized as safe spaces and trusted by the community they serve.

Q43. On page 22, providing laundry and shower facilities is included as a requirement for Option 1. On page 27, the chart indicates that providing laundry and showers is required for both Option 1 and Option 2. Please clarify.

A43. To clarify, providing laundry and shower facilities is a requirement for Option 1 only. Please refer to the updated chart for accurate guidance

#### **Required Service Components (updated)**

- Essential Needs: Provide Wi-Fi, food resources\*, transportation support\*, phone charging stations, and computers
  - Essential Needs (Option 1 Only): Provide Laundry and shower
- Mental Health Supports: Non-clinical mental health support, peer-led workshops, medication/health/wellness groups, support groups, suicide prevention programming, ect.
- Referrals & Linkages: Partnerships to support youth-initiated referrals, supports suggested by staff.
- Community Workshops & Forums: Workshops, forums, and training for youth, adult allies, and community leaders.
- Recreational Activities: Sports, arts, and cultural activities for social interaction, community building, respite and personal growth.
- Work Readiness and Educational Support\* (Option 1 Only): Career and personal passion exploration, peer credentialing, resume-building workshop, leadership development, and educational support.
- Skill-Building Workshops\* (Option 1 Only): Workshops on social skill development, advocacy, mental wellness, Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Substance Use Disorder (SUD) prevention.

Q44. What credentials do Youth Peer Advocates need?

A44. Youth Peer Advocates must have or be pursuing the OMH-Youth Peer Advocate Credential. Please Section 5, Scope of Work, Staffing (page 20).

Q45. Can we provide a stipend to youth leaders?

A45. Yes, this will be outlined in forthcoming guidance.

Q46. On page 29, can the letter of support from a Behavioral Health Provider be internal and on our letterhead? As a multiservice Human Services agency, we offer behavioral health services in 5 separate locations in Dutchess County.

A46. The intent is to have a partnership with a minimum of 1 Behavioral Health Provider. A letter of support from an external partnering organization must be submitted to meet 6.5 (e).

Q47. Can the required staff listed on page 20 be paid fully and/or partially paid for with other funding if they are able to provide the percentage of time required for these grant activities?

A47. Yes, as long as staffing requirements are met. Please refer to Table 4- Program Expectations (page 24).

Q48. Where do we access the Proposal Submission Template referenced on page 32?

A48. This is located in the comments/attachments section of the RFP posting in SFS. Instructions on how to access SFS are located in the RFP document, Section 2.

Q49. In looking over the recently announced OMH RFP, Ulster County does not appear as a county in the EDR for the Mid-Hudson region. Is that correct?

A49. See response to question 40.

Q50. Please kindly advise us on the appropriate contact or office for submitting this notification? Brooklyn NY is where we are located.

A50. See response to question 14.

Q51. Is it allowable to have a Safe Space Program physically co-located with other youth programming?

A51. The proposed program space must meet the requirements outlined in the RFP, as well as be able to fulfill the Scope of Work (Section 5).

Q52. If allowable, If the existing youth programming is NOT funded by OMH and the Safe Space program would have its own dedicated staff, programming, and physical space, according to the option definitions on page 16 of the RFP, would this be considered option 1 or option 2?

A52. Eligible applicants do not need to be licensed and/or funded by the New York State Office of Mental Health and can apply for Option 1 or 2, as long as they meet the eligibility requirements as outlined in Section 2.5 – Eligible Agencies.

Q53. Can you clarify if the location proximity to another club house is per area or per zipcode? Our agency is interested in this bid, but there are two other clubhouses in the county. Please confirm if it is per zipcode or per county.

A53. A proposed Safe Space location under Option 1 may not be established in the same zip code as an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse (see Table 1, Section 2.5, pages 4-5).

Q54. Can you please clarify what is meant by competing services? If we are in a different location, but providing the outlined services per the RFP – would that be in direct competition of services to the other two club houses and act to disqualify us?

A54. Competing services refer to other programs or activities in the area that serve a similar population and offer overlapping services, which may impact youth participation or create duplication. The goal is to ensure coordination, not competition, within the community. A proposed Safe Space location under Option 1 may not be established in the same zip code as an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse (see Table 1, Section 2.5, pages 4-5).

Q55. For the requirement of the showers and laundry – do all services have to be in one building? We are considering a partnership with a community center that is part of our campus – within walking distances separated by a parking lot. Would it be acceptable to build a campus model where showering and laundry occur at this other location?

A55. A campus model may be acceptable if the partner site is included as part of the proposal, and there is a clear written agreement on what is being offered. The partnership must guaranteed access for Youth



Safe Spaces participants during program hours, be free of charge, in a welcoming space, and adherent to the same program principles. Shared use with non–Safe Space participants should be avoided.

Q56. For option 2 – does this option require us to be a current clubhouse seeking a renewal? Can we be a new organization but able to demonstrate the 5 years of youth non-clinical work?

A56. No, your organization is not required to be an OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse for Option 2, as long as the eligibility requirements outlined in Section 2.5 (page 4) are met.

Q57. Can you clarify age brackets? We noted that the demographic is listed as 12-24, but with the language stating exceptions as appropriate. Would we be permitted to include individuals close to but outside of these parameters?

A57. Yes, this will be outlined in forthcoming guidance to awardees.

Q58. Must the proposed programming serve all ages in the 12-24 year old age range? Or can it focus on a particular subset of ages?

A58. In response to youth demands for more youth-driven programs, New York State (NYS) Office of Mental Health (OMH) has announced funding for 3-5 pilot Youth Safe Space Programs targeting individuals ages 12–24. The program cannot focus on a subset of ages.

Q59. Childcare laws in NYS for 12 year olds and above require only 1 adult per every 20 kids for supervision. However, this RFP requires 1 adult per 10 kids. Why is that the case? Will 1 adult per 20 youth be permitted, as per state law?

A59. The 1:10 staff-to-youth ratio in the Youth Safe Space RFP must be maintained during all program hours and is not subject to childcare supervision standards. This is not a childcare program, which is overseen by OCFS; Youth Safe Spaces are non-clinical, youth development programs overseen by OMH, and the ratio is designed to ensure safety, engagement, and support to both participants and staff.

Q60. Is there a certain regularity of attendance that is required from participants to count towards the annual participants served number (500 or 250, depending on Option 1 or 2)? For example, could we total all unique individuals served within the program year, even if they only attend once?

A60. Please refer to the response to question 25.

Q61. Is there a scoring penalty for proposals that do not identify a specific site and address identified within the proposal?

A61. Please refer to Section 6 - Program Narrative. If questions are unanswered in the applications, points will be deducted accordingly.

Q62. If no to question 61, is it acceptable to indicate the neighborhood within which the site would be located, and the site criteria that we would meet in selecting a site?

A62. See response for question 61.

Q63. Within an ERD, are there any preferences for where a site is located?

A63. Awards will be granted based on the highest score, with no more than one award per EDR, as outlined in the RFP.

Q64. For a program that is located in Northern Manhattan, will its proximity to the Bronx and Midtown West OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse Programs disqualify us from applying for Option 2?

A64. An Option 1 Safe Space may not be established in the same zip code as an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse (see Table 1, Section 2.5).

Q65. How are the 250 unduplicated youth counted annually for option 2? Year by year? For example, does youth counted in year 1 also count for years 2,3,4 and 5 or is the count of 250 new unduplicated youth each year that were not previously in the program, which would mean that the program grows by 250 people each year?

A65. Each year, the program would be required to document the number of unduplicated youth who participate in the program.

Q66. We are proposing extending our youth services using the current program manager. Can we use the current program manager position as an in-kind contribution? if not, can we convert the 0.75 FTE program manager position to a program lead position so that this position could also support on-site implementation, maintain a consistent presence for young people, and ensure coordination with our broader efforts?

A66. Program Manager that dedicates 75% of their time to the Youth Safe Spaces Program. This position may be funded as an in-kind contribution as appropriate.

Q67. Providing laundry and shower facilities? We need confirmation that this is only for option 1, as noted in Table 3 on page 22 of the RFP. However, on page 27, Table 5, the provision of laundry and shower are listed as essential service components, suggesting this is required for both option 1 and option 2.

A67. Thank you for bringing this error to our attention. To clarify, providing laundry and shower facilities is a requirement for Option 1 only. Please refer to the response to question #23 for clarification.

Q68. Could you confirm that food resources and transportation support are required services for option 1 and not option 2?

A68. Food Services and Transportation support are required for both Options 1 & 2. Please refer to Table 3- Required Service Components (pages 22-23).

Q69. Are "laundry and shower facilities" required service components for both Option 1 and Option 2, or only for Option 1?

A69. Thank you for bringing this error to our attention. To clarify, providing laundry and shower facilities is a requirement for Option 1 only. Please refer to the response to question #23 & Table 3- Required Service Components (pages 22-23).

Q70. For qualifying criteria for service area, what is considered a high rate of homelessness (Section 5.1, Community)?

A70. There is no set threshold, but a high rate of youth homelessness may be demonstrated by, among other data, rates at or above state averages.

Q71. How is a geographic area of a community determined (zip code, miles from city center, etc.) (Section 5.1, Community)?

A71. See response to questions #1 and #40.

Q72. We support the importance of Peers in the work we do. Can the Program Manager also be a Youth Peer Advocate, and if so, can they count towards the requirement of 2 YPAs during operating hours (Section 5.1, Staffing)?

A72. No, the Program Manager cannot count toward the two required Youth Peer Advocates during operating hours. While the Program Manager may hold Youth Peer Advocate credentials, they must focus on their managerial responsibilities, as the two roles are separate and distinct.

Q73. How long do Youth Peer Advocates have to obtain their credential (Section 5.1, Staffing)?

A73. Programs must have 2 Youth Peer Advocates (credentialed, provisionally credentialed, or actively pursuing credentials) present during hours that the program is open to youth.

Q74. If Youth Peer Advocates are conducting off-site activities with youth, do they still count towards on-site staffing requirement of 2 YPAs during operating hours (Section 5.1, Staffing)?

A74. Programs must have 2 Youth Peer Advocates (credentialed, provisionally credentialed, or actively pursuing credentials) present during hours that the program is open to youth.

Q75. Some of our communities merge together with indistinct city limits in practice. If individuals from OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse Exclusion Areas travel and attend the Safe Spaces Program site, can they be served as part of the minimum number of unique individuals required annually (Section 5.1, Volume and Hours)?

A75. Yes. Youth Safe Spaces do not have outlined catchment areas.

Q76. Our agency operates a SOR 4-funded youth clubhouse in Wayne County, which functions as a satellite of our primary recovery center located in Ontario County. While the Wayne County site is not listed on the Youth Safe Space program exclusion list, both locations share a Provider Reporting Unit (PRU) number. Could you please clarify whether the shared PRU impacts our eligibility for Youth Safe Space program funding? Are there any additional factors we should consider when determining our eligibility?

A76. No, the shared PRU does not impact your eligibility.

Q77. Would the organization that receives the award be able to commence one-time start-up costs prior to the Anticipated Contract Start Date that is expected to be January 1, 2026?

A77. An awardee will be able to start preparing for the development of the new program upon notification of award. Any expenses incurred prior to the start of the contract is at the awardee's own expense. No money from this award may be expensed prior to the contract start date.

Q78. We're inquiring to see if we qualify for this funding opportunity. We noticed that Stayin Healthy at Silver Lake is listed as a site within our ZIP code. While they may have a presence in the area, we want to emphasize that we have served a significant portion of the Staten Island community—over 20,000 youth and residents over the past 20 years. We currently hold active contracts with six K-12 public schools and have worked with over 30 K-12 schools across the borough. Our expertise lies in delivering Compassionate Systems Learning programs and integrating art and chess into social-emotional learning for youth. Given our longstanding presence, trusted relationships with schools, and experience in non-clinical mental health work, we believe we serve a substantial audience on Staten Island that is not currently being reached by Stayin Healthy. Are we eligible for the opportunity?

A78. Please refer to page 4 for eligibility requirements. An Option 1 Safe Space may not be established in the same zip code as an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse (see Table 1, Section 2.5).

Q79. Under the training section of the RFP, it states that Youth Safe Spaces Program staff are required to participant in learning communities, complete OMG-identified trainings, and engage with other external resources listed. Are these trainings free? If not, should the cost of training be included in the budget?

A79. Any future learning opportunities that are provided by OMH will be free of charge; however, a proposal may include training costs covering non-OMH learning opportunities in the budget.

Q80. Would an OCFS funded Family Opportunity Center be considered an allowable "existing youth-serving space designation" to add the Youth Safe Spaces framework and services to for Program Option 2?

A80. Eligible applicants must:

- Be a not-for-profit agency with 501(c) (3) incorporation located and doing business in New York State.
- Have at least 5 years of demonstrated experience working with underserved communities of youth and young adults ages 12-24, in a non-clinical setting.
- Attest that the proposed location of the proposed Youth Safe Spaces Program is not located in the community of an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse. Please refer to page 4.

Q81. Our organization is a 501c3 nonprofit created to support a local youth center operated by the town's Parks and Recreation Department. Our current staffing costs are covered by the town and our staff are considered employees of the Parks and Rec dept. If awarded a contract through this RFP, is it ok to have the staff funded by this grant hired by the Town, but paid using this grant funding?

A81. Yes, this is allowable.

Q82. For the 1:10 ratio of staff to youth, can this be based on our average daily attendance? For example, we average 60-65 youth per day at our center, so should we plan to have 6 staff members present each day?

A82. Yes. Please refer to the response to question #29.

Q83. For the 1:10 ratio of staff to youth, does this have to be paid staff, or do vetted volunteers and interns also count as staff?

A83. Vetted Volunteers and Interns count. Please refer to the response to question #29.

Q84. For the 1:10 ratio of staff to youth, are Youth Peer Advocates considered staff?

A84. Yes.

Q85. On page 25 of the RFP, Table 3 - Required Service Components indicates that Option 2 applicants do not need to provide laundry and shower facilities. However, on page 30, Table 5 – Required Service Components indicates that both Option 1 and 2 must provide laundry and shower facilities. Can you clarify what is required for Option 2?

A85. Thank you for bringing this error to our attention. To clarify, providing laundry and shower facilities is a requirement for Option 1 only. Please refer to the response to question #43.

Q86. If we do not currently have laundry and shower facilities, can funds awarded through this RFP be used for renovations to install laundry and shower facilities?

A86. Yes, please refer to lists of One Time Start-up costs in Section 5.3 Operating Funding (pages 24-25).

Q87. Can funds in year 1 of the contract be used for minor construction to finish a "Quiet Room" where youth can go when they feel overstimulated?

A87. Please refer to lists of One Time Start-up costs in Section 5.3 Operating Funds (pages 24-25).

Q88. Can Option 2 applicants include components only required for Option 1, such as Work Readiness, Education Support, and Skill Building Workshops, in our program design and budget?

A88. Yes, an applicant may choose to add additional services into the program design, as long as the requirements for Option 2 are met.

Q89. Our youth center currently serves youth ages 12-21. Are we required to open up the center to youth ages 12-24 to be considered for funding through this RFP?

A89. Please refer to section 1.2 Target Population/Eligibility Criteria (page 2). Yes, you would need to serve up to 24.

Q90. Can funding in year 1 be used to cover expenses related to an addition to our building to increase the amount of space available for on-site programming specific to the requirements of this RFP? For example, we would like to add a computer room for homework help and workforce readiness activities.

A90. Please refer to lists of One Time Start-up costs in Section 5.3 Operating Funds (pages 24-25).

Q91. Will multi-agency collaboration proposals be more sought after in the application process?

A91. Please refer to Section 4.3 Process for Awarding Contracts (page 16-17).

Q92. Can we submit two separate proposals for Option 1 and Option 2 for Villa of Hope? If we can submit two separate proposals, will our chances in getting selected for either increase?

A92. Yes, more than one proposal may be submitted. Please refer to Section 4.3 Process for Awarding Contracts (pages 16-17).

Q93. The executive summary states we have to have 5 years of experience working with underserved youth and young adults – we only have this many years with young adults – do we still qualify?

A93. No, you do not. See page 26 of the RFP, where an applicant must attest to having at least 5 years of demonstrated experience working with underserved communities of youth and young adults 12-24, in a non-clinical setting.

Q94. For transportation support – if we provide metro cards for attendance at programming – and doctors appointments – does this meet the requirement?

A94. Please refer to Section 5.2 Objectives and Responsibilities, Transportation Support (page 23).

Q95. If we provide healthy snacks, grab n' go lunches, and food/nutritional workshops, and referrals to food pantries – does this meet the requirement for Food Resources? How do we define "healthy" food? Do we have to adhere strictly to the Food Standards? Do we have to provide the food on site, or can we partner with local food pantries? Does the food have to be available at all hours? Do we have to have a dedicated refrigerator or any other equipment exclusively for the snacks/food?

A95. Please refer to page 23, Section 5 of the RFP. Food resources are expected to account for a minimum of 2% of the total budget.

- Healthy food is broadly defined and should align with your community's needs—think nutritional, culturally relevant, and supportive of youth wellness.
- There is no specific standards for healthy food as part of this Program.
- All required services, including food, must be provided on site, but you may partner with local food pantries or other partners to supplement offerings.
- Food must be available during program hours, not necessarily at all hours.
- If food requires refrigeration, a dedicated refrigerator or appropriate equipment should be available to ensure safe storage.

Q96. Do we have to directly provide laundry and shower facilities onsite? Or is it permissible to use a laundry service or other service provider to offer these services?

A96. All required activities must be provided on-site. Please refer to the response to question #43.

Q97. Can we subcontract with a partner for the work readiness piece?

A97. Yes, all required services may be subcontracted as long as they are available on-site to participants. The contract would need to specify expectations for the services.

Q98. Are all of the Service components listed on Table 3 on page 22 of the RFP required? For the Essential Needs piece – does it need to be onsite, or could we contract it out? Can some of the schedule programming be provided virtually? Hybrid? Or does it all have to be in-person?

A98. All required services must be delivered on-site, though they can be contracted out. Option 1 must offer all components; Option 2 must offer at least 5 of 7. See the response to question #43, where Table 3 has been updated.

Q99. Are there any areas of this grant where we can't subcontract?

A99. All required services must be provided on-site and services may be subcontracted. The applicant's proposal will need to detail how the proposed design will meet the requirements of the RFP, and what roles each organization will perform.

Q100. Are there indirect cost limitations?

A100. See Section 6.8 Financial Assessments, (a) on page 32 of the RFP.

Q101. Do we have to have all of our partnerships established before we submit an application? Are we required to submit MOUs/service agreements for all partners with our application?

A101. No, partnerships do not need to be fully established at the time of application. MOUs or service agreements are not required with submission but may be requested post-award. Please refer to the RFP for guidance, Section 6.4 Implementation (page 29), as well as Section 6.5e Agency Performance (page 29).

Q102. Do we need to grant participants access to the Youth Safe Space outside of the scheduled program hours?

A102. No, programs are not required to provide access outside of scheduled program hours. However, spaces should offer consistent and accessible hours that meet the needs of youth in the community, as outlined in the Youth Safe Space Framework. See Section 5 Volume & Hours (pages 20-21).

Q103. Are there any limitations or restrictions on the type of space that can be proposed for use under the Youth Safe Spaces Program? For example, can a newly secured space be used, or must the setting space already be operating as a youth-serving location?

A103. Please refer to Scope of Work Section 5, Setting (page 19).

Q104. Will OMH provide ongoing technical assistance or training support beyond the initial onboarding period?

A104. Yes.

Q105. What are the specific reporting requirements for awardees (e.g., frequency, format, or data collection platform)?

A105. Reporting requirements are outlined throughout the RFP and include:

- Programmatic and fiscal reports will be required on a quarterly basis.
- An annual community needs assessment is required.
- Specific formats will be detailed in forthcoming OMH guidance to the awardees.

Q106. Will OMH provide a standardized evaluation tool for program performance, or will awardees be expected to develop and track their own outcomes and metrics?

A106. OMH will provide standardized reporting requirements and guidance, but awardees are expected to develop and track their own outcomes and metrics aligned with the Youth Safe Space Framework.

Programs should be prepared to measure impact, support continuous improvement, and report both quantitative and qualitative data as outlined in the RFP.

Q107. How will compliance and quality be monitored throughout the contract period?

A107. Please refer to Section 5 Scope of Work, as outlined throughout the RFP and in the response to question #105. Compliance and quality will be monitored through a minimum of :

- Technical assistance and supports from OMH and other partners
- Adherence to forthcoming OMH program guidance
- Site visits
- Submission of quality and program data
- Participation in regular meetings, learning collaboratives, and one-on-one check-ins with OMH program & fiscal staff
- An annual in-person convening
- Feedback from youth participants and the Peer Advisory Board (PAB)

Q108. What is the criteria for credentialing for the Youth Peer Advocates? What credentials are required? Are they the [SAC credentials](#) here?

A108. Youth Peer Advocates must have or be pursuing the OMH-Youth Peer Advocate Credential. Please refer to Section 5.1 Staffing (page 20) and Youth Peer Advocate Training and Credentialing- <https://www.ctacny.org/special-initiatives/youth-peer-support/youth-peer-advocate-training-and-credentialing/>

Q109. Can the Youth Peer Advocates be University Students (undergraduate and/or graduate level students)?

A109. Youth Peer Advocates can be university or graduate students, but they must be credentialed OMH Youth Peer Advocates or actively pursuing credentials and meet all YPA requirements outlined by OMH to serve in that role.

Refer to Youth Peer Advocate Training and Credentialing- <https://www.ctacny.org/special-initiatives/youth-peer-support/youth-peer-advocate-training-and-credentialing/>

Q110. We are a grassroots non-profit that incorporated in June of 2023, that will be partnering with a teen center in a library in Rochester NY for this initiative if we qualify. Currently, we are in the process of getting our 501 (c) (3) status, the application has been sent. However, the process could take up to 6-7 months and the application was sent recently. One of the qualifications for this funding opportunity, is to have 501 (c) (3) status. As a certified non-profit organization that is in process of receiving 501 (c) (3) status, are we permitted to apply if we have a fiduciary until the 501 (c) (3) status is received?

A110. If your organization is still in the process of obtaining that status, you may apply through a fiduciary that already holds 501(c)(3) status, as long as the fiduciary serves as the official applicant and contract holder. Be sure to clearly outline this relationship in your proposal.

Q111. Regarding the statement that eligible applicants must “Attest that the proposed location of the proposed Youth Safe Spaces Program is not located in the community of an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse” (pg 4), how is “community” defined? Is this specific to just the zip codes where the OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouses are located, or is there a broader definition? (For example, could an applicant propose a Youth Safe Spaces Program in Brooklyn in a zip code beyond 11208?)

A111. An Option 1 Safe Space may not be established in the same zip code as an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse, Table 1, Section 2.5(page 20).

Q112. Is the provision of laundry and shower facilities only required for Option 1, or is it required for both Option 1 and 2?

A112. Thank you for bringing this error to our attention. To clarify, providing laundry and shower facilities is a requirement for Option 1 only. Please refer to the response to question #43.

Q113. Can a portion of the time of administrative staff responsible for financial/contract management be included in an applicant's proposed budget?

A113. Yes, but it would be considered part of the Administrative Overhead, which has spending limits detailed on page 32 of the RFP.

Q114. Can letters of support from entities other than the required Behavioral Health Provider be included with an applicant's proposal?

A114. Letters of support from community partners are not required for this procurement and will not add points to the evaluation of the proposal. See Section 4.1 Evaluation Criteria (page 15).

Q115. Can you expand on the 1:1 staff supervision requirement (pg 20)? Does this mean that one Program Manager cannot supervise two Youth Peer Advocates?

A115. The one-to-one staff supervision requirement means that supervision of a staff member must occur individually, not in a group setting. A Program Manager may supervise more than one staff person.

Q116. Is there a specific way that awardees must track the annual unduplicated youth count (pgs 20-21)? (I.e., what information are awardees required to collect from youth who enter the Youth Safe Space?)

A116. Programs must adhere to forthcoming OMH Program Guidance and maintain accurate reporting. Providers are required to submit quality and program data to OMH as per guidance that will be provided. See responses to questions #105 and #107.

Q117. Are participant stipend costs allowable?

A117. Yes, this will be outlined in forthcoming guidance.

Q118. Can an organization submit an Option 1 and an Option 2 application or must an organization select a sole option?

A118. Yes, an organization may submit applications under both options, but each application must outline how it will meet all requirements. See response to question #92.

Q119. Pages 4 and 5 of the RFP include a table that lists current OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse Exclusion Areas. Our organization has youth programming spaces in the Bronx, but in operation in other zip codes, most notably 10455, 10456, and 10473. Can our organization submit an application to provide Youth Safe Space services in one of these zip codes?

A119. An Option 1 Safe Space may not be established in the same zip code as an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse, Table 1, Section 2.5.(page 20).

Q120. What is the relationship of the OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse network to the Youth Safe Spaces Program? The OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouses are listed in a table on pages 4 and 5, but how they relate to the Youth Safe Spaces Program is not explained.

A120. The OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouses and Youth Safe Spaces are related in that both provide non-clinical services to young people, but they are separate programs and have different requirements. OMH and OASAS are committed to collaboration and will convene both groups of providers to share best practices in the future.



The table on pages 4–5 lists existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouses to help applicants proposing a new Youth Safe Space ensure they are not duplicating services in a community that already has an OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse. New safe spaces must be located in zip codes without an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse.

Q121. Can an organization submit multiple Youth Safe Spaces applications? For example, can an organization submit one application for a program in Syracuse and another application for a program in Utica?

A121. Yes. See response to question #118.

Q122. In New York City, will the contract period be July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2031?

A122. For this procurement, the contract period will be January 1, 2026- December 31, 2030.

Q123. Given the difference in the cost of living in various parts of New York State, how likely is it that OMH will accordingly adjust Option 1 and Option 2 awards for New York City, Westchester County, Nassau County, or Suffolk County?

A123. There is no differential adjustment. Applicants for Option 1 may budget up to \$500,00 or \$250,000 for Option 2.

Q124. Pages 4 and 5 contain a table that identifies over 20 OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse providers? Do these providers periodically meet as a network to share information and to share best practices? If so, are there highlights or proceedings of meetings kept by OMH or OASAS?

A124. This RFP is being released by OMH. The Youth Recovery Clubhouses are funded and operated by OASAS. OMH cannot answer a question on whether these providers meet periodically or if there are minutes available.

Q125. Option 2 entails adding the Youth Safe Spaces framework to an existing youth serving space. (See page 16 of the RFP.) Who grants safe space designation? Is it OMH? If so, is such designation required prior to the submission of a request in response to this RFP? The RFP mentions "community members" with regards to safe space designation, but it does not say who they are.

A125. The Office of Mental Health will grant Safe Space designation as a result of this procurement. Community members are people who live in the neighborhood.

Q126. Page 4 of the RFP says that eligible agencies must attest that the proposed Youth Safe Spaces Program is not located in the community of an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse. How is OMH defining "community?" If "community" is synonymous with "neighborhood," neighborhoods often do not have clearly defined geographic boundaries.

A126. An Option 1 Safe Space may not be established in the same zip code as an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse, Table 1, Section 2.5 (page 20).

Q127. As per page 4 and this issue of community, can an organization with youth service providing spaces in the 10453, 10455, and 10473 zip codes apply for Youth Safe Spaces funding, or would said organization be ineligible for funding since there is an OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse in the Bronx (Bronx County)?

A127. An Option 1 Safe Space may not be established in the same zip code as an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse, Table 1, Section 2.5(page 20).

Q128. Page 18 says that applicants should notify the Local Governmental Unit in writing of their intent to apply and that a copy of the letter of intent to apply must accompany the proposal submission. What is the LGU for the Bronx County of New York City?

A128. See response to question #14.

Q129. Page 19 says that Youth Safe Spaces Programs will be required to establish partnerships with behavioral health providers. Are organizations responding to the RFP required to have a support letter or a memorandum of understanding (MOU) from a behavioral health provider as part of the application submission?

A129. See Section 6.5 d- Agency Performance (page 29).

Q130. What specific qualifications or certifications are required for Youth Peer Advocates (YPAs) to be eligible for employment under the Youth Safe Spaces Program, and how does the program ensure that YPAs meet these credentialing standards?

A130. Refer to response to question #108.

Q131. Do OASAS-certified Prevention providers meet the definition of "non-clinical" service providers for the purposes of eligibility to submit an application under this RFA?

A131. Eligible applicants must:

- Be a not-for-profit agency with 501(c) (3) incorporation located and doing business in New York State.
- Have at least 5 years of demonstrated experience working with underserved communities of youth and young adults ages 12-24, in a non-clinical setting.
- Attest that the proposed location of the proposed Youth Safe Spaces Program is not located in the community of an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse. Please refer to page 4.

Q132. If an applicant does not currently have an identified physical space, can they still apply by describing the intended or proposed space, contingent upon funding approval?

A132. An applicant may apply if the identified space has not been secured. An intended or proposed space may be described in reference to question 6.3(b) of the Proposal Narrative; points may be deducted if all areas of the question cannot be addressed (see page 27).

Q133. Would it be acceptable to fulfill the shower access requirement through a partnership with an external provider that offers mobile shower services?

A133. Yes, this is possible as this service would be provided on-site.

Q134. Is a detailed work plan required to be submitted as part of the proposal package? If so, are there specific formatting or content guidelines that applicants should follow?

A134. A workplan isn't required to be submitted with the application. For awarded proposals, a detailed workplan will be developed and approved prior to the start of the contract.

Q135. We are looking into possibly submitting a LOI for this RFA but our agency operates a SOR 4-funded youth clubhouse in Wayne County as a satellite of our primary recovery center in Ontario. The Wayne County site is not listed on the exclusion list, but both locations share a PRU. Does this shared PRU impact our eligibility for the Youth Safe Space program funding, or are there additional factors we should consider?

A135. See response to question #76.

Q136. What is the expectation for the frequency of "rotating PAB" (Peer Advisory Board) meetings? Also, it must be operational within 90 days, but if we are under construction, is it acceptable to meet in the main library space? "The PAB should be operational within 90 days of the start of the contract." page 19

A136. The Peer Advisory Board should be peer-led and youth-guided and meet the requirements outlined in Section 5.1 Introduction (page 19). While under construction, it is acceptable to hold meetings in an alternate community location as long as the space is accessible, safe, and youth-centered. The frequency of PAB meetings should ensure ongoing youth input and leadership in program development and implementation.

Q137. Is it acceptable to meet in alternative locations during the beginning stages of the grant due to construction?

A137. Yes, the awardee must be prepared to meet program requirements and timelines as outlined in the RFP. Services must be available at the end of the third quarter. OMH will be in frequent communication during early implementation and OMH will be in conversation regarding alternate locations, if necessary.

Q138. For laundry services and shower services, do these need to be on-site, or can we partner locally with facilities (such as the YMCA or laundromats)?

A138. All required activities must be provided on-site. Please refer to section 5.2 Objectives and Responsibilities (page 23).

Q139. I understand that Youth Peer Advocates may need to be qualified as mandated reporters. How does this integrate with our services as a public library? "Programs must have 2 Youth Peer Advocates (credentialed, provisionally credentialed, or actively pursuing credentials)..." page 20

A139. Youth Peer Advocates must follow the legal and ethical requirements of their role. Applicants, no matter the setting, must have policies in place to support the provision of youth peer support services and legal/ethical requirements.

Q140. How far away (in miles) does the nearest OASAS Youth Recovery have to be in order to claim Option 1 status? "Eligible Option 1 applicants' proposed location for a Youth Safe Spaces Program must be located in communities without an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse..." p. 4

A140. An Option 1 Safe Space may not be established in the same zip code as an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse, Table 1, Section 2.5(page 20).

Q141. Is there a recommended or minimum square footage requirement for the Youth Safe Spaces Program to ensure adequate delivery of on-site services and youth engagement activities?

A141. Please refer to Scope of Work Section 5, Setting (page 19).

Q142. Can first-year start-up funds be allocated toward renovations or capital improvements, such as installing showers or laundry facilities, purchasing IT infrastructure, or making the space ADA-accessible?

A142. Please refer Section 5.3 Operating Funding (pages 24-25).

Q143. Is the Youth Safe Spaces location permitted to share space within a facility that houses other programs, provided the designated area and hours are reserved exclusively for youth programming?

A143. Yes, a Youth Safe Space can share a facility with other programs as long as the designated area and hours are reserved exclusively for youth safe space programming. The space must still meet all requirements outlined in the RFP.

Q144. Are meals required to be provided based on the program's hours of operation, or is there a minimum expectation for food availability regardless of schedule (e.g., lunch versus dinner)?

A144. There is no strict requirement to provide specific meals based on program hours. Please refer to Section 5.2 Objectives and Responsibilities, Food Resources (page 23) for detail on ways in which applicants can support youth food needs.

Q145. The RFP specifies two required staffing positions. Are awardees permitted to include additional staff roles as long as the total budget remains within the allowable funding parameters?

A145. Yes, awardees may include additional staff roles as long as the total budget stays within the allowable funding limits outlined in the RFP.

Q146. The RFP states that programs must maintain a minimum 1:10 staff-to-youth ratio during program hours. Do Youth Peer Advocates and/or volunteer youth mentors count toward this ratio? If so, are there specific qualifications or supervision requirements they must meet to be included?

A146. Youth Peer Advocates and volunteer youth peer mentors do count toward the 1:10 staff-to-youth ratio, as they are considered staff. "Youth" refers to the target population receiving services—not peer staff. Please refer to the Section 5.1 Introduction, Staffing (page 19) for supervision and role requirements.

Q147. The RFP mentions that programs serving minors and young adults must have 'clearly defined areas' for developmentally appropriate programming. Can OMH provide additional guidance or minimum standards for defining these areas? For example, do physical partitions or separate rooms need to be used, or can programming schedules be staggered in shared spaces?

A147. Separation must align with Section 5 Scope of Work. Spaces should support positive youth development and recovery principles, using separate rooms or staggered schedules or other mechanisms as needed to meet the developmental needs of different age groups (see Participants, pages 19-20).

Q148. The RFP states that a minimum of 2% of the budget must be allocated for food and 2% for transportation. Can these percentages be combined across shared programming if the Safe Space is part of a larger existing youth center?

A148. 2% of this award must be budgeted for food and 2% for transportation must be allocated to the operation of the Youth Safe Spaces Program.

Q149. Can OMH provide examples or guidance on what qualifies as appropriate peer supervision? Does it need to be a licensed professional or a certified peer specialist?

A149. Peer supervision does not need to be from a licensed professional. See Section 5 Scope of Work, Staffing (page 20). If the Program Manager does not have peer support experience, then the applicant is obligated through other internal staff or external arrangements to provide in-discipline peer supervision. The Program Manager provide task supervision, but the Youth Peer Advocate should have support from someone with peer support experience. These individuals will support role clarity, ethics, and emphasis on peer values.

Q150. For the required floor plan attachment, are there specific expectations for level of detail (square footage, labeled program areas, etc.) or format ( PDF, CAD drawing, hand-drawn with measurements, etc.)?

A150. Please refer to Section 6.3 Program Description, b) for detail on what is expected to be described and attached to the application.

Q151. The RFP states all service components must be implemented by the end of Quarter 3. Does this refer to the calendar year or contract year (starting January 1, 2026)?

A151. Both the calendar year and expected contract start are January 1, 2026. Therefore, all service components need to be implemented by September 30, 2026.

Q152. If a proposed program currently offers similar activities, how much differentiation or enhancement is required to be eligible under Option 2 without being considered duplicative?

A152. To be eligible under Option 2, programs must enhance—not duplicate—existing services. This means adding new elements aligned with the Youth Safe Space framework. The enhancement should be clear, measurable, and show how it builds upon or expands current offerings to meet the unique goals of the youth safe space model.

Q153. What is the funding source?

A153. New York State Office of Mental Health. See response to question #28.

Q154. What is the expectation of long-term funding after the five years?

A154. This procurement is for a funding term of five-years. It is expected that the awards will be-reprocured at that point.

Q155. How much/percentage of the first-year funding can be applied towards start-up funding for each option?

A155. Please refer to section 5.3 Operating Funding (pages 24-25). Resources need to be allocated to meet all requirements. All service components need to be implemented by September 30, 2026, and offered to participants as required in the RFP.

Q156. Could you elaborate further on how the start-up funding can be utilized?

A156. Please refer to 5.3 Operating Funding (pages 24-25).

Q157. If start-up funds are used for renovations, etc., can the volume expectations for each option be negotiated?

A157. All service components need to be implemented by end of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter and offered to participants as required in the RFP. Once implemented and accessible, the volume expectations may be prorated given the start date of service delivery in partnership with OMH.

Q158. How does an unduplicated youth count towards the volume expectations for each option?

A158. Unduplicated means each youth can only be counted once toward the 250/500 minimum per year, regardless of how often they participate. See responses to questions 5, 20, 22, 25, 65, and 116.

Q159. The RFP states that onsite and offsite services can be provided. Can interacting with youths at outreach events count towards the volume expectations?

A159. No, providing outreach is not a service component. See response to question #43.

Q160. What are the hours of operation expectations for each option?

A160. Please refer to Table 4- Program Expectations (page 24).

Q161. Is it expected that the program would operate if schools were closed due to inclement weather, or is it only during scheduled school breaks as stated in the RFP?

A161. As detailed in Table 4 – Program Expectations (page 24) access during school breaks and after school is expected. Guidance on provision of services virtually will be forthcoming to awardees.

Q162. Are we eligible to apply for both Option 1 and Option 2?

A162. Yes, if an organization meets the requirements detailed in Section 2.5 Eligible Applicants (page 4). See responses to questions #92 and #118.

Q163. What is meant by “non-clinical” wellness space?

A163. See Section 5.1 Introduction, Framework (page 18-19) for detail on the intent of the Youth Safe Spaces Program approach. Mental health clinical services encompass a range of intervention, assessment, and treatments provided by mental health professionals to address and improve mental health conditions, which a Youth Safe Spaces Program may not provide. The Youth Safe Spaces Program is intended to be a multifaceted approach to youth mental health prioritizing mental wellness, self-improvement, and community connection provided in a space that is welcoming and safe.

Q164. What percentage of procurement has to come from Minority and women owned businesses? Is there a difference between certified businesses for the state and city?

A164. There is no MWBE requirement for this RFP.

Q165. What is the criteria for community linkages with behavioral health centers?

A165. Please see Section 5 Scope of Work (page 19). Programs must partner with behavioral health providers to facilitate voluntary, youth-led, and youth-guided access to treatment, in alignment with the Youth Safe Space Framework. Community linkages should be available to readily assist youth in accessing needed services.

Q166. For Option 1, what's the criteria for the site/location? Does it need to be a stand alone or an extension? Are we able to allocate funding for capital improvements?

A166. For site location, Option 1 proposed sites may not be in a zip code of an OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse (page 4). See responses to questions #1, 7, 8, 26,33, 53, 103, 111, and 140. As for capital improvements, please Section 5.3 Operating Funding (pages 24-25) to review what is allowed under Startup Costs. This will clarify what types of improvements may be supported through the funding. See responses to questions #86, 142, 155, and 156.

Q167. Are laundry and shower facilities required service components for Option 2 applicants? On Table 3 (page 22) of the RFP laundry and showers are not required for Option 2, however on Table 5 (page 27) laundry and shower are not noted as exclusively required for Option 1.

A167. To clarify, providing laundry and shower facilities is a requirement for Option 1 only. Please refer to the response to question #43.

Q168. Is there a minimum threshold for the interventions' dosage, frequency, or duration for youth? For example, youth must attend at least 100 hours of programming per year to count toward the 250 unduplicated participants per year.

A168. No. As shared in Section 5.1 Introduction, Framework, the intent is for the program to be youth led in design and delivery (pages 18-19).

Q169. Is there a cost per session rate for food expenses, or does the agency determine that?

A169. Please refer to Section 5.2 Objectives and Responsibilities, Food Resources (page 23). Refer to responses to questions #95 and 144.

Q170. Are incentives, stipends, or gift cards for participation permitted for the Youth Safe Spaces Program?

A170. Yes, this will be outlined in forthcoming guidance.

Q171. Is the funding able to be used for leased property improvements? Leased property with adding shower, washer dryer, etc? As part of the one time startup costs

A171. Yes, please refer to Section 5.3 Operating Funding (pages 24-25) for guidance.

Q172. What is respite defined as?

A172. Respite is defined as a short period of rest or relief from something difficult or unpleasant. Respite is not a service intended nor can be funded under this RFP.

Q173. What is the OMH identified training?

A173. OMH will be working closely with awarded entities to ensure that agencies and its staff have needed training to operate a Youth Safe Spaces Program as required. See responses to questions #79 and 104.

Q174. Is a vehicle purchase permitted under Option 2? Does this count as the 2% spent for transportation for the contract year? Would a lease count as 2% of that funding?

A174. A vehicle purchased to support the transportation needs of youth participants of the Youth Safe Spaces program is allowed. It should be carefully considered whether this resource alone is adequate to meet the transportation needs of the participants. A vehicle purchased solely from these funds must be dedicated to this program. Any exception must be approved.

Q175. Define what holidays mean? As far as open on holidays? Or does this mean school holidays?

A175. Holidays are broadly defined and depend on the program and its community. Some may observe federal, religious, or school holidays—others may recognize culturally significant days. It is up to each space to define holidays based on what is meaningful to their specific community.

Q176. Page 2 - Target Population - Must programming/services be provided/available to youth of all ages between 12 to 24 or can a program specialize services and programming for a specific age group within the target age range? For instance, can a program serve only 12- to 15-year-olds?

A176. Please refer to Section 1.2 Target Population/Eligibility Criteria (page 2).

Q177. Page 22 and 23 - Required Service Components and On-Site Services - If an agency wanted to partner with another agency, through a subaward, is that allowable? Furthermore, if agency A is going to provide a bulk of the programming, but Agency B is going to provide the on-site building/space, which agency would be the preferred lead applicant (for Option 2)?

A177. Yes, subawards are allowed, but all required service components must be delivered on-site at the youth safe space. We cannot determine who should be the lead applicant—that decision is up to your partnership. See responses to questions #30, 97 and 99.

Q178. We respectfully request clarification of the definitions of "new space" and "existing space".

A178. A "new space" (Option 1, page 16) refers to the creation of a brand-new youth safe space program, meaning the applicant is establishing a new program and site from the ground up that will be designated as a youth safe space.

An "existing space" (Option 2, page 16) refers to an already established, trusted physical space that currently serves youth—such as a community center, youth-serving organization, or similar program—that is not currently designated as an OMH youth safe space. In this case, the applicant would be enhancing their existing services by incorporating the youth safe space framework and programming into that space (Section 5 Scope of Work, pages 18-25).

Q179. Can we propose a plan for services that rotate throughout the week to a variety of locations within one community? Instead of having just one location?

A179. As outlined in Section 5, Scope of Work (page 18-24), each site must be able to provide all required services and meet the requirements of the RFP.

Q180. Is Lockport NY an approved location, given that the only other Safe Space in the same county is currently in Niagara Falls, about 20 miles of distance between the two but within the same county (Niagara)?

A180. An Option 1 Safe Space may not be established in the same zip code as an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse, Table 1, Section 2.5 (page 20).

Q181. Is providing bus fare satisfactory for the transportation portion of the budget, or does OMH seek something more robust than that?

A181. Please refer to Section 5.2 Objectives and Responsibilities, Transportation Support (page 23) for way in which transportation support can be provided. Bus fare is one of the methods. Community needs should dictate the array of supports that should be available.

Q182. Would working with the local laundromat (>0.7 miles away) potentially considered sufficient, or does OMH seek something more robust than that?

A182. All required activities must be provided on-site. Please refer to Section 5.2 Objectives and Responsibilities, On-Site Services (page 23). See responses to questions #18 and 55.

Q183. For an organization that is an HCBS/CFTSS provider that has 99.9% of our current client contact occurring off-site, could we qualify as an "Option 1 New Safe Space"

A183. Eligible applicants must:

- Be a not-for-profit agency with 501(c) (3) incorporation located and doing business in New York State.
- Have at least 5 years of demonstrated experience working with underserved communities of youth and young adults ages 12-24, in a non-clinical setting.
- Attest that the proposed location of the proposed Youth Safe Spaces Program is not located in the community of an existing OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouse. Please refer to page 4.

Q184. Regarding needing an MOU with a behavioral health provider, we would seek to contract with one; however, there is likely to be a fair portion of Safe Space participants that we could provide behavioral health services to directly. For these clients and applicable services, would we be permitted to provide these services to Safe Space clients, or would we be required to refer to an outside provider under an MOU?

A184. See response to question #46.

Q185. We are on the Nassau/Suffolk border. Is it either required/recommended that we limit our Safe Space proposal to one county, or is it, instead, encouraged that we offer services to residents of both counties?

A185. Youth Safe Spaces Programs must meet the specific needs of the community while adhering to the requirements outlined in the RFP. The community does not need to be defined by the county line.

Q186. We have another non-profit that approached us to consider jointly applying for the grant? Is that permitted? If so, is there any guidance on how to proceed with a joint application?

A186. Yes, however, there must be a lead organization that meets all eligibility requirements and assumes contractual responsibilities and obligations.

Q187. Can existing Lodestar clients be served by the safe space? While the goal is sustained engagement, if someone elects to minimally participate (attend 1 workshop) do they still count towards the 500 unique clients/yr.



A187. Please refer to Section 1.2 Target Population/Eligibility Criteria (page 2) and responses to questions #5, 20, 22, 25, 65, and 158.

Q188. We have 6 years of experience providing peer support under CFTSS. Is this sufficient for "Have at least 5 years of demonstrated experience working with underserved communities of youth and young adults ages 12-24, in a non-clinical setting.

A188. If each requirement, i.e., working with underserved communities, with youth and young adults 12-24, in a non-clinical setting, is met, then this experience can qualify.

Q189. Does the non-profit organization have to be a New York registered entity to apply/qualify? I reviewed the pre-qualification documents but did not see whether the certificate of incorporation had to be in NY.

A189. Eligible applicants must:

- Be a not-for-profit agency with 501(c) (3) incorporation located and doing business in New York State.