LGBTQIA+ Youth and Young Adult Crisis Line

RFP#MH263038

Questions & Answers

Q1. Please reconfirm the due date for this procurement by providing it in response to answers to questions.

A1. The due date for the proposal is 11/12/2026. Other relevant dates can be found in the RFP document located here: https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/rfp/2026/lgbtqia-yyacl/lgbtqia_hotline_rfp.pdf

Q2. Why has this bid been released at this time?

A2. This initiative is a core component of the Governor's FY 26-27 State of the State initiative. LGBTQ+ youth suffer from high rates of depression and anxiety. To continue serving young people in New York's LGBTQ+ community, Governor Hochul directed the Office of Mental Health (OMH) to partner with a national crisis center to provide youth with access to trained crisis counselors who specialize in issues the LGBTQ+ community face. The State will also partner with this center to provide training to hundreds of local 988 crisis counselors to prepare them to handle specific concerns of LGBTQ+ youth.

Q3. When is the anticipated go-live date?

A3. The Anticipated Contract Start Date is July 1, 2027. The RFP requires applicants to submit an implementation plan outlining major phases, key activities, and timeframes from contract award through full operation, and to describe staff onboarding and preparation prior to service delivery.

Q4. Are bidders permitted to deviate in any way from any manner of quoting fees you may be expecting? For example, if there is a pricing page in the RFP, can bidders submit an alternate fee structure? If there is no pricing page in the RFP, do you have any preference for how bidders should quote fees or can bidders create their own pricing categories?

A4. Please see section 6.8 and the Budget Template in the RFP. The bidder may add additional specificity as long as the Template is used.

Q5. Eligible applicants are not-for-profit agencies with 501(c) (3) incorporation that operate a LGBTQIA+ hotline with 24/7/365 availability covering all 50 states and territories.
We are a NYS non-profit agency with significant prior experience operating hotlines, including LGBTQIA+ hotlines. However, we are not currently operating any hotlines. Are we really not eligible to apply if we are not currently operating a national LGBTQIA+ hotline? Please clarify.

A5. The eligibility criteria in the RFP states that applicants must currently operate a 24/7/365 LGBTQIA+ hotline that is available across all 50 states and territories. The RFP specifically seeks to contract with an existing qualified organization that currently operates a 24-hour-per-day, 7-day-per-week, 365-day-per-year crisis service for LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults. Therefore, an agency not currently meeting this criteria would not be eligible.

Q6. Because the contract is starting on 7/1, when does NYS expect the hotline to start answering calls?

A6. The Anticipated Contract Start Date is July 1, 2027. The RFP requires applicants to submit an implementation plan outlining major phases, key activities, and timeframes from contract award through full operation, and to describe staff onboarding and preparation prior to service delivery.

Q7. Is the agency that gets the aware responsible for routing calls throughout NYS?

A7. Yes, the awarded agency is responsible for routing calls. OMH seeks an organization that can provide a New York State specific routing for LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults on their currently existing crisis line. The vendor will implement a dedicated routing option specifically for NYS youth and young adults within their existing infrastructure.

Q8. Please provide more details for what "nationally recognized" means.

A8. An existing qualified organization that currently operates a 24/7/365 LGBTQIA+ crisis service hotline through call/chat/text across all 50 states and territories.

Q9. Do you have to have experience operating a crisis line/text/chat specific to LGBTQIA+ individuals? Does it count if the crisis line/text/chat is more general but you have LGBTQIA+ callers?

A9. Yes, applicants must have experience operating a crisis line/text/chat specific to LGBTQIA+ individuals. Experience operating general lines is not sufficient.

Q10. How would this new crisis line work with the 14 existing 988 centers across NYS? Would 988 centers be transferring calls/texts/chats or would callers dial a separate number?

A10. The LGBTQIA+ Youth and Young Adult crisis line is intended to complement the statewide 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline by expanding specialized expertise and strengthening coordination. Callers would access the awardee's existing 24/7/365 LGBTQIA+ crisis services line, including through dedicated routing options for NYS callers. It is expected that the awardee and the 988 Contact Centers collaborate complimentary resources.

Q11. Would the organization that is awarded the contract have to create all of the training materials from scratch or could they use and adapt trainings that already exist through NYS 988 centers and LGBTQIA+ organizations?

A11. The chosen applicant is responsible for the development of the materials including the proposed content for training.

Q12. Does OMH have an estimate of how many NYS calls/texts/chats that they expect this line to receive?

A12. OMH does not have an estimate of how many calls/texts/chats that this line will receive.

Q13. What kind of advertising is expected of the grantee?

A13. The applicant chosen is responsible for describing the advertising efforts that must be targeted towards the population of interest.

Q14. The RFP states that "Eligible applicants are not-for-profit agencies with 501(c) (3) incorporation that operate a LGBTQIA+ hotline with 24/7/365 availability covering all 50 states and territories." Is hotline defined as a voice line only? Would a center that provides chat/text services but not voice services be considered eligible to apply (assuming all Prequalification expectations are also met)?

A14. The RFP explicitly states that this crisis service must be available through call, chat, and text. Therefore, a center providing only chat/text services, but not voice services, would not be considered eligible.

Q15. Does this line currently exist? If so, could you provide the average volume of contacts per month?

A15. The specific New York State LGBTQIA+ Youth and Young Adult Crisis Line described in the RFP does not currently exist as a standalone entity; OMH is seeking to establish it through this RFP.

Q16. Per Section 2.9 and the Applicant Checklist, all proposal narrative responses and labeled supporting attachments/artifacts must be combined into a single PDF document uploaded under Q1 in SFS. What is the maximum file size (MB) or page count limit permitted for this single combined PDF upload in SFS?

A16. Maximum file size is 20mb. Please refer to the FAQ at the beginning of the applicant checklist for the link to the SFS Attachment Guide.

Q17. How will supplementary artifacts (e.g., sample curriculum outlines, training modules, or organizational workflows) labeled with specific question numbers be evaluated relative to the written narrative responses in scoring the Technical Evaluation section?

A17. The bidder is not required to submit supplementary artifacts. The bidder is required to describe their proposed content for training as described in section 6.3(e) of the RFP.

Q18. How does OMH expect vendors to meet the standard NYS Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business (SDVOB) participation goals? Are full or partial waivers considered standard for this specific RFP, or are vendors expected to carve out specific operational areas (e.g., marketing or IT) to fulfill these requirements?

A18. In specific regards to the LGBTQIA+ Youth and Young Adult Crisis Line RFP there are no MWBE goals required for vendors to adhere to.

Q19. What is the preferred mechanism or standard procedure at the time of submission for an applicant to explicitly designate, separate, and protect confidential information, trade secrets, proprietary clinical protocols, custom technology architecture, and unique training methodologies from public disclosure, given that agreements and proposals are subject to the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL, Public Officers Law Article 6)?

A19. 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. Please refer to section 3.12 of the RFP for full details.

Q20. If a FOIL request is received by the State targeting information designated by the vendor as confidential, will the State provide the vendor written notice and an opportunity to defend against disclosure prior to releasing the requested records?

A20. If protection has been properly provided by a vendor when submitting their proposal, and that proposal is subject to a FOIL request, OMH will evaluate the protection (trade secret) request. The vendor is notified and must supply OMH with a written statement of the necessity for the granting of such exception. The final decision as to whether to release the material is with OMH.

Q21. Are the standard legal terms and confidentiality provisions in the resulting contract open to negotiation prior to program implementation to address these protections?

A21. We're unable to answer this question. We don't understand what is being asked. Please refer to section 3.12 regarding Freedom of Information requests.

Q22. Section 5.1 and 5.2 seem to contradict regarding training types. Are both synchronous and asynchronous training programs required deliverables?

A22. In addition to asynchronous trainings, the awardee is expected to provide synchronous trainings that can be enduring for future use by 988 crisis counselors.

Q23. Of the 600 trained counselors, how many are expected to be trained through synchronous training versus asynchronous training?

A23. The awardee will work with OMH to identify synchronous training opportunities for a subset of the 600, all current and future 988 crisis counselors are expected to be trained through asynchronous.

Q24. What is NYS OMH's definition of Asynchronous to synchronous training?

A24. Synchronous refers to a live virtual or in-person learning approach where instructors and learners engage with each other at the same time. Asynchronous training refers to self-paced learning modules.

Q25. What current training is provided to counselors for LGBTQ+ competency today? Is that curriculum available for review during the application process?

A25. 988 Crisis Counselors do currently receive a variety of training offerings on working with the LGBTQIA+ population. The intention of this RFP is to ensure that the highest quality trainings developed through this initiative is made available. The existing training curriculum will not be available for review during the application process.

Q26. Will there be a discovery period and review of the curriculum prior to the start of training, or is the expectation that training will be ready to begin at the start of the grant period (7/1)? If there is a review or discovery process for training, what is the anticipated timeframe and the protocols for reviewing the training?

A26. The contract period begins on 7/1/2027 at which point the vendor will begin the discovery period for curriculum and training creation, the vendor should provide additional detail on when they anticipate that trainings will be ready to launch.

Q27. Regarding the training component (Section 1.1 / Section 5.3), will the selected grantee retain sole ownership of its underlying core training frameworks, methodologies, and materials ('Background IP'), subject to granting OMH a non-exclusive license? Specifically, does the grantee maintain full authority to offer, adapt, or commercialize its training programs with other entities outside of NYS?

A27. Pre-existing intellectual property (IP) owned by the contractor prior to the contract remains the property of the contractor. However, by submitting a proposal, the contractor grants New York State a perpetual, royalty-free, non-exclusive license to use, reproduce, and distribute any such pre-existing materials or modifications thereof delivered under this contract. All newly created materials developed specifically using contract funds will be the sole property of NYS OMH.

Q28. What are the State's intended terms of use for the asynchronous modules? Will OMH agree to a content retirement or mandatory review/refresh schedule to ensure outdated training materials are not utilized indefinitely?

A28. OMH regularly reviews training materials to ensure that materials are not utilized indefinitely.

Q29. Does OMH require specific pre-mandated survey tools or standardized outcome metrics for the 988 counselor training, or is the selected vendor allowed to propose and administer its own evaluation methodology and participant feedback tools?

A29. OMH does not require specific tools for metrics on 988 crisis counselor training. The RFP asks applicants to describe their own metrics used to evaluate previous training efforts and the success of the trainings.

Q30. Will OMH assist the grantee in coordinating with contact center leadership across the 14 NYS 988 Contact Centers to ensure counselors complete required pre-/post-training evaluations?

A30. OMH will assist in encouraging NYS 988 Contact Center crisis counselors to complete pre/post training evaluations.

Q31. Once services begin, will the applicant be repurposing an existing phone number or creating a new number? If an existing number is expected, what is it and its current use?

A31. The applicant will not be repurposing an existing phone number or creating an entirely new number for the national line. Instead, the selected organization is expected to leverage its currently existing crisis line and implement a dedicated New York State specific routing for LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults within that infrastructure.

Q32. What will the onboarding timeline look like for the selected organization? How soon after the grant period start will live calls/text/chat need to begin, and will funding be disbursed at the start of the award, and if so, what amount?

A32. For the onboarding timeline and go live information please refer to A6. Per section 5.3 of the RFP, $1.8 million for the first fiscal year, with an annual funding amount of $1.2 million for the following 4 years. One time funding of $600,000 for training is included in the first year of the award. Payments are released quarterly.

Q33. Does OMH require language interpretation services to be available across all communication modalities (call, chat, and text), or are there different requirements for voice calls versus chat & text services, per Section 5.2(A)?

A33. OMH requires language interpretation across all modalities.

Q34. What is the estimated total call/contact volume expected under this contract? Will projected 24/7 hourly volume be made available during the proposal process, and if not, will the applicant's proposed volume be scored?

A34. A projected 24/7 hourly volume will not be made available during the proposal process. OMH will not score proposed volumes.

Q35. What are the requirements for staffing allocation for this contract (dedicated vs. multiple service queues)? Regarding Call Routing & Identification, is the awarded organization required to explicitly identify whether a user has reached a designated NY state line, or may the vendor disclose the partnership and serve per established crisis center procedures? What are acceptable ways to confirm, document, and report on this?

A35. This funding must be used for services to NYS LGBT youth, including through a NYS specific routing option. Regarding call routing and identification, the applicant may determine the best way to provide this service, inclusive of a custom routing option for NYS, and ensure that volume of services to NYS LGBT youth are reported.

Q36. How does OMH propose routing phone, text, and webchat volume? Will there be dedicated numbers/modules for each, routed to the new center, or will NYS use its own Automatic Call Distribution (ACD)/Routing system?

A36. The vendor's own system will be used for this routing. Vendors must propose in their application how they intend to ensure NYS dedicated routing.

Q37. For performance data submission (Section 6.5(d)), should national data, state-specific data, or both be provided for 2024 and 2025? What preferred format or specific documentation examples are required for verification?

A37. For performance data submission under Section 6.5(d), the provided documents **do not explicitly state whether national data, state-specific data, or both should be provided for 2024 and 2025** for the applicant's existing services. The requirement is to submit specific data points for the applicant's existing services, with supporting documentation. The RFP also **does not specify a preferred format or specific documentation examples required for verification** for this historical data.

Q38. Regarding asynchronous LGBTQIA+ training modules (Section 5.2(B) and 6.3(e/f)), will the selected vendor host and deliver these via the vendor's proprietary Learning Management System (LMS), or does OMH require the content to be exported and uploaded directly into a State-hosted LMS?

A38. The training modules will be hosted on an OMH approved LMS and content should be able to be exported to the OMH or state LMS.

Q39. If OMH intends for the asynchronous training modules to be hosted on a State-operated LMS, what are the protocols for data privacy, user tracking, and system access? How will ongoing content updates, clinical maintenance, and course refreshes be managed between the vendor and OMH?

A39. OMH will employ routine protocols for data privacy, user tracking, and system access already established on a state-hosted LMS. Within the parameters of the RFP, OMH and the vendor will implement a system for communication and collaboration.

Q40. Does OMH maintain an existing statewide referral directory or database that the selected vendor will integrate into, or is the vendor expected to independently build, curate, and maintain its own standalone database of local NYS LGBTQIA+-affirming resources and referral pathways?

A40. The RFP requires the vendor to describe how they will curate and maintain NYS-specific resources and referral pathways across all counties in NYS. The vendor is expected to build, curate, and maintain its own database of local NYS LGBTQIA+-affirming resources.

Q41. Could OMH clarify whether the State expects the selected provider to establish an entirely new, standalone crisis hotline/number, or to implement a dedicated New York State routing option/menu choice within the provider's existing nationally operated 24/7 crisis line infrastructure?

A41. Please see response to Q36.

Q42. Are there specific state pre-approval requirements or standardized forms required prior to carrying out agreements with third-party vendors or subcontractors under this grant, beyond the required MWBE/SDVOB Utilization Plans (Section 6.7(j))?

A42. The forms required to subcontract will have to be filled out after award. The awarded vendor must fill out a subcontractor attestation if they're to receive $100,000 or more over the life of the contract. Other forms would include vender responsibilities questionnaire, workers comp, disability and charities registration forms.

Q43. Could OMH clarify the complete schedule and required mechanisms for data submission (e.g., monthly REDCap data uploads, quarterly financial/programmatic reports, annual work plan reviews) per Section 5.2(D) and 6.6?

A43. OMH will require monthly uploads to REDCap for data submission, quarterly submission of financial/programmatic reports electronically, and annual review of work plans submitted electronically.

Q44. Is all programmatic, clinical, and volume data expected to flow exclusively from the vendor's internal telephony/CRM systems to OMH via REDCap/SFS, or will OMH (or 988 Contact Centers) provide state-level data feeds, caller routing analytics, or feedback metrics back to the vendor?

A44. At this time, the vendor is expected to provide programmatic, clinical, and volume data to OMH on a monthly basis through REDCap. Should there be opportunities to establish alternative submission (e.g. through secure file transfer protocols) during the award period, for the vendor to submit data to OMH, these will be explored between the vendor and OMH.

Q45. Will OMH provide standardized reporting templates and exact data definitions for the monthly REDCap submissions upon contract award, or are vendors expected to propose their own reporting schema?

A45. OMH will provide the template and data definitions for the monthly REDCap data submission.

Q46. May administrative support functions (such as dedicated HR, financial, and legal staff) be billed as direct personnel costs if their effort is specifically allocated and tracked against contract deliverables, or does OMH require all such personnel to be included exclusively within the 15% indirect cost pool?

A46. OMH requires all such personnel to be included within the 15% indirect cost pool.

Q47. Could OMH clarify what specific expense categories are allowable under the $1.2M annual operating budget and the $600K one-time training grant, and provide a direct link or reference to the state's full list of unallowable cost items?

A47. OMH does not publish this information. Bidders are encouraged to follow standard industry practices and submit a plan for review.