



**Office of
Mental Health**

MH253033 - Youth Safe Spaces Program Round 3

Request for Proposals

Grant Procurements

(On-Line Submission Required)

Statewide Financial System (SFS) Identifier- MH253033

Release July 2026

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Youth Safe Spaces RFP #MH253033 Applicant Checklist

Frequent Issues/Questions:

- Please begin working on your application in SFS **no later than 5 business days before the application due date** and **submit no later than 48 hours before the due date**. This will allow you time to troubleshoot any issues that arise that may prevent you from submitting. Exceptions will not be considered or made for an applicant who cannot complete their proposal/application by the due date and time of the RFP.
- All required forms/templates are available in the “Event Comments and Attachments” section of SFS. Please note that there are restrictions to the type, size and naming conventions of the files and attachments uploaded in SFS. For more information, please review the SFS Attachment Guide [here](#). Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in attachments not being viewable to reviewers.
- No workplan is required at this time. If awarded, a workplan will be developed during the contract development phase.
- The “Bid Amount” box is required to be filled out in SFS. Please enter the total amount of funding your organization is requesting from NYS OMH in this box.
- New York State reserves 5-10 business days from the receipt of complete Prequalification Applications to conduct its review. If supplementary information or updates are required, review times will be longer. Due to the length of time this process could take to complete, it is advised that nonprofits prequalify as soon as possible. Failure to successfully complete the prequalification process early enough will prohibit the submission of the application in SFS.

Please complete the following checklist prior to submission of your proposal. This checklist **SHOULD NOT** be submitted, it is for your use only.

Confirm the following:

- ☐ Your organization has met the eligibility requirements outlined in **Section 2.4 Eligible Agencies**
- ☐ Your organization is prequalified in SFS. SFS will prevent submission if your organization is a not-for-profit and not prequalified (see **Section 2.8 and 2.9 of the RFP document** for more information on Registration, Prequalification and Training Resources for SFS)
- ☐ Updates to the RFP can happen at any time, per **Section 2.6**, check the OMH website for any updates to the RFP posted by OMH.
- ☐ Notification of intent to apply was sent to local government unit and proof has been uploaded in SFS. A list of County Local Mental Hygiene Directors can be found [here](#).
- ☐ Provider Contact form completed and uploaded in SFS
- ☐ Sexual Harassment Prevention Certification Completed and uploaded in SFS
- ☐ Gender Based Violence and the Workplace Certification completed and uploaded in SFS.
- ☐ Proposal Template completed and any applicable attachments labeled with question numbers (For example, if a question asks for an organizational chart, when providing that document, make sure it is labeled specific to that question number.)
- ☐ Proposal Template and attachments (except budget, see next checkbox) combined into one PDF

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and uploaded in SFS under Q1

- ☐ Budget Template Completed (left in Excel) and uploaded in SFS under Q2
- ☐ Application submitted in SFS prior to the due date and time listed in **Section 2.2 Key Events/Timeline** (OMH strongly advises that applicants do not wait until the last day/last few hours to complete and submit applications/proposals to Grant RFPs. Exceptions will not be considered or made for an applicant who cannot complete their proposal/application by the due date and time of the RFP).

1. Introduction and Background

1.1. Purpose of the Request for Proposal

One in five youth and young adults experience mental health challenges, yet nearly 60% do not receive the support they need.¹ In 2023, Governor Hochul conducted a [Youth Mental Health Listening Tour](#).

Young people gave feedback on the specific challenges they face:

- Challenges in developing positive relationships: Many youth face difficulties in building positive peer relationships and social skills. This reflects a notable absence of school and community-based programs designed to foster these connections.
- Perceived lack of empathy and cultural sensitivity: Youth frequently express dissatisfaction with the perceived lack of empathy and cultural awareness among adults. As a result, many prefer to seek support from peers and trusted adults who share their demographic and cultural backgrounds.
- Insufficient community-based resources: Limited investment in community resources has deprived many young people of opportunities for recreation and mental wellness promotion.

In particular, young people highlighted the need for safe spaces where they can interact with peers, participate in community activities, and design the vision for programming. The lack of designated safe spaces in schools and communities exacerbates these challenges, leading to heightened mental health crises, disengagement from services, and unmet basic needs, especially among high-risk populations [e.g., BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color), migrants, LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Questioning/Queer), differently abled, Native American, etc.].

In response to youth demands for more youth-driven programs, New York State (NYS) Office of Mental Health (OMH) has announced funding for **one** Youth Safe Space Program targeting individuals ages 12-24. This program will adopt the supplemental model of this framework and allow other community spaces - such as libraries, OASAS Youth Recovery Clubhouses, Boys and Girls Clubs, local recreation centers, etc. - to expand service offerings through an application and funding process. There will be **only one award**. Applicants are not required to be licensed OMH providers to participate.

The Youth Safe Spaces will:

- Reduce social isolation by providing peer-led, supportive, culturally responsive, non-judgmental environments for youth and young adults through the promotion of positive peer relationships and non-clinical activities.
- Enhance youth understanding of wellness and empower them to advocate and access community resources by facilitating linkages to mental wellness resources, both non-clinical and clinical.
- Increase community capacity for youth mental wellness activities by facilitating peer-led

¹ Reinert, M, Fritze, D & Nguyen, T (July 2024). "The State of Mental Health in America 2024." Mental Health America, Alexandria VA.

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trainings and providing support to adult allies and community members when seeking support for young people.

- Provide opportunities for young people to empower themselves to advocate for better youth services and supports in their communities by teaching/coaching in advocacy and other skills to promote better services and supports for themselves, their peers, and their communities.

The Youth Safe Spaces Program framework embodies a multifaceted approach to youth mental health, prioritizing *voluntary, youth-led, and non-clinical programming*. Its foundational principles include positive youth development, recovery-oriented principles, civic engagement and advocacy, mental health awareness and education, and social equity and justice. While Youth Safe Spaces do not replace clinical settings, they address critical cultural, financial, and logistical barriers that prevent many young people from seeking traditional mental health services and supports. By offering voluntary, non-clinical support, these community-driven programs complement clinical care and fill a vital gap in the mental health care continuum.

The awardee will participate in training and technical assistance provided by OMH and adhere to forthcoming program guidance to ensure alignment with the initiative's objectives. This framework represents a significant step toward meeting the mental health needs of New York State's young people by creating accessible and culturally sensitive spaces that promote wellness, recovery, and community connection.

OMH invites applications from programs that **youth and community members already view as safe, welcoming, and trustworthy spaces**. These may include grassroots organizations, faith-based groups, libraries, museums, arts and recreation centers, youth mentorship programs, and other nonprofit community spaces that support young people's well-being.

Notice: Notification of intent to apply should be made in writing to the Local Governmental Unit (county director of community services), as defined in Section 41 of the New York State Mental Hygiene Law, for each county to be served under the program application. (Find your LGU- https://www.clmhd.org/contact_local_mental_hygiene_departments/)

1.2. Target Population/Eligibility Criteria

The program is designed to support youth and young adults ages 12-24 across New York State.

The programs will serve individuals at risk of developing mental health challenges as well as those who may or may not have a documented mental health diagnosis.

2. Proposal Submissions

2.1. Designated Contact/Issuing Officer

OMH has assigned an Issuing Officer for this project. The Issuing Officer or a designee shall be the sole point of contact regarding the RFP from the date of issuance of the RFP until the issuance of the Notice of Conditional Award. To avoid being deemed non-responsive, an applicant is restricted from contacting any other personnel of OMH regarding the RFP. Certain findings of non-responsibility can result in rejection for a contract award. The Issuing Officer for this RFP is:

Jeremy Rossello

New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)

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

2.2. Key Events/Timeline

RFP Release Date	7/16/2026
Bidder's Conference	8/4/2026
Questions Due	8/6/2026
Questions and Answers Posted on Website	8/27/2026
Proposals Due by 2:00 PM EST*	9/17/2026
Anticipated Award Notification	10/15/2026
Anticipated Contract Start Date	1/1/2027

*OMH strongly advises that applicants do not wait until the last day/last few hours to complete and submit applications/proposals to Grant RFPs. Exceptions will not be considered or made for an applicant who cannot complete their proposal/application by the due date and time of the RFP. **Please note that there are restrictions on the type, size and naming conventions of the files and attachments uploaded in SFS. For more information, please review the SFS Attachment Guide [here](#). Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in attachments not being viewable to reviewers.**

2.3. Bidders Conference

A Bidder's Conference will be held on the above date and time (see Section 2.2) to provide an overview of the RFP. The link to join the conference will be posted on the OMH website, under Procurements or access it by clicking the link below-

Webinar topic: NYS OMH Youth Safe Spaces Cycle 3 Bidder's Conference

Date and time: Tuesday, August 4, 2026 1:00 PM | (UTC-04:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)

Register link:

<https://meetny-gov.webex.com/weblink/register/r8dc37a2dbe3d0194e46ffff2a3b80255>

2.4. Disposition of Proposals

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

2.5. Eligible Agencies

Prequalification is required for all not-for-profit organizations seeking grant funding from New York State. Please see Section 2.8 and Section 2.9 for additional Disqualification Factors and Prequalification Information.

1. The applicant organization is a not-for-profit agency with 501(c) (3) incorporation located and doing business in New York State

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2. The applicant organization's proposed location for the supplemental model of Youth Safe Spaces to expand services will be in a zip code without an existing OMH Youth Safe Space Program. Ineligible zip codes include: **11377, 11798, 12203, 13662, 14456, 14513, and 14850.**
3. The applicant organization's proposed location for the supplemental model of Youth Safe Spaces to expand services will be in an Economic Development Region (EDR) without an existing OMH Youth Safe Spaces Program. Ineligible EDRs include: Capital Region, Finger Lakes, Long Island, New York City, North Country, and Southern Tier.

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

2.6. RFP Questions and Clarifications

All questions or requests for clarification concerning the RFP shall be submitted in writing to the Issuing Officer by e-mail to OMHLocalProcurement@omh.ny.gov by the "Questions Due" date indicated in Section 2.2 and will be limited to addressing only those questions submitted by the deadline. No questions can be submitted or will be answered after this date. No questions will be answered by telephone or in person. Please enter "Name of RFP" in the subject line of the email.

The questions and official answers will be posted on the OMH website by the date listed in the timeline Section 2.2.

2.7. Addenda to Request for Proposals

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

It is the applicant's responsibility to periodically review the [OMH Procurement website](#) and the [NYS Contract Reporter](#) to learn of revisions or addendums to this RFP. No other notification will be given.

2.8. Disqualification Factors

Following the opening of bids, a preliminary review of all proposals will be conducted by the Issuing Officer or a designee to review each proposal's submission for completeness and verify that all eligibility criteria have been met. Additionally, during the proposal evaluation process, evaluators will also be reviewing eligibility criteria and confirming that they have been met. During either of these review processes, proposals that do not meet basic participation standards will be disqualified, specifically:

- Proposals from applicants that do not meet the eligibility criteria as outlined in 2.5 or
- If the proposal submitted does not conform/comply to criteria set forth in Section 2.5 or 4.4, the application will be disqualified.
- Proposals from applicants that do not meet the initial awards and allocations criteria as outlined in 4.4 or

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- Proposals that do not comply with bid submission and/or required format instructions as specified in 2.10 or
- Proposals from eligible not-for-profit applicants who have not completed Vendor Prequalification, as described in 2.9, by 2:00 PM EST on the Proposal Due Date posted in section 2.2 or

2.9. SFS Prequalification Requirement

Pursuant to the New York State Division of Budget Bulletin H-1032, dated June 7, 2013, New York State has instituted key reform initiatives to the grant contract process which require not-for-profits to be Prequalified in order for proposals to be evaluated and any resulting contracts executed.

Proposals received from eligible not-for-profit applicants who have not been Prequalified by the proposal due date of 2:00 PM EST on the Proposal Due Date posted in Section 2.2 will not be able to submit their bid response through SFS.

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

2.10. Vendor Registration, Prequalification and Training Resources for Not-for-Profits

NOTE: All applications must be submitted through the Statewide Financial System (SFS). No applications will be accepted electronically, US Postal Service, express mail delivery service or hand delivered.

For any application that does not contain all of the required documentation and/or “See Attached” responses that were to be uploaded, please be advised that the application will be reviewed and scored as submitted. For any incomplete response or missing and/or inappropriately submitted documentation, points will be deducted. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure, prior to submission, that the application is appropriate and complete. A workplan is not required for this RFP.

Each proposal submission through SFS is required to contain:

- Operating Budget (Appendix B)

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

Not-for-profit organizations must Register as a vendor with the Statewide Financial System and successfully Prequalify to be considered for an award.

This grant opportunity is being conducted as an SFS bid event. Not-for-profit vendors that are not prequalified can initiate and complete bid responses. However, not-for-profit vendors that are not prequalified will NOT be allowed to submit their bid response for consideration.

Information on [Registration](#) and [Prequalification](#) are available on the Grants Management Website. A high-level synopsis is provided below.

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Registering as an SFS Vendor

To register an organization, send a complete [Grants Management Registration Form for Statewide Financial System \(SFS\) Vendors](#) and accompanying documentation where required by email to grantsmanagement@its.ny.gov. You will be provided with a Username and Password allowing you to access SFS.

Note: New York State Grants Management reserves 5-10 business days from the receipt of complete materials to process a registration request. Due to the length of time this process could take to complete, it is advised that new registrants send in their registration form as soon as possible. Failure to register early enough may prevent potential applicants from being able to complete a grant application on time.

If you have previously registered and do not know your Username, please contact the SFS Help Desk at (855) 233-8363 or at Helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov. If you do not know your Password, please click the [SFS Vendor Forgot Password](#) link from the main log in page and follow the prompts.

Prequalifying in SFS

- Log into the SFS Vendor Portal.
- Click on the Grants Management tile.
- Click on the Prequalification Application tile. The Prequalification Welcome Page is displayed.

Review the instructions and basic information provided onscreen.

Note - If either of the above referenced tiles are not viewable, you may be experiencing a role issue. Contact your organization's Delegated Administrator and request the Prequalification Processor role.

- Select the Initiate a Prequalification Application radio button and click the Next button to begin the process. Starting with Organization Information, move through the steps listed on the left side of the screen to upload Required Documents, provide Contacts and Submit your Prequalification Application.

Note - If the Initiate a Prequalification Application radio button is not available, your organization may have already started a prequalification application and could even be prequalified. Click on the Version History Link to review your organization's prequalification status. If you are not currently prequalified, or your prequalification expires prior to the due date of this RFA, you will need to choose Collaborate on or Update your application.

- System generated email notifications will be sent to the contact(s) listed in the Contacts section when the prequalification application is Submitted, Approved, or returned by the State for more information. If additional information is requested, be certain to respond timely and resubmit your application accordingly.

Note: New York State reserves 5 business days from the receipt of complete Prequalification applications to conduct its review. If supplementary information or updates are required, review times will be longer. Due to the length of time this process

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could take to complete, it is advised that nonprofits Prequalify as soon as possible. Failure to successfully complete the Prequalification process early enough will prohibit the submission of the application in SFS.

Final Submission Format

Please note that all responses/applications/submissions to this RFP **must** be submitted through the Statewide Financial System (SFS). No mailed, delivered or emailed submissions will be accepted. OMH strongly recommends that applicants plan accordingly and allow themselves enough time to appropriately complete and submit by the due date and time of this RFP.

When providing uploads in response to any of the questions posed (other than the Fiscal/Budget component), please upload only PDF versions of those documents. When saving these files before uploading, with the exception of an underscore, please do not use any special characters in the file name, letters only should be used. All attachments required with the proposal must be combined into the proposal template PDF and clearly labeled. Uploading documents that are not in PDF form (other than the budget, which must be uploaded as an excel document) will result in the disqualification of the application.

Specific questions about SFS should be referred to the SFS Help Desk at helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov.

On Demand Grantee Training Material

A recorded session with information about the transition to SFS is available for Grantees on the Grants Management website - <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/> and in SFS Coach.

The following training material focused on grants management functionality is currently available in SFS

Coach:

- An SFS Vendor Portal Reference Guide (https://upk.sfs.ny.gov/UPK/VEN101/FILES/SFS_Vendor_Portal_Access_Reference_Guide.pdf) to help Grantees understand which Grants Management roles they need in the SFS Vendor Portal based on the work they are currently involved in.
- A Grantee Handbook (upk.sfs.ny.gov/UPK/VEN101/FILES/Grantee_User_Manual.pdf), which provides screenshots and step-by-step guidance on how to complete Grants Management-related tasks in SFS
- On-demand recorded training videos focused on each aspect of the Grants Management business process

Agencies can view vendor training material in SFS Coach by selecting **SFS Training for Vendors** from the Topic drop-down list.

3. Administrative Information

3.1. Reserved Rights

OMH reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals received in response to the RFP that are deemed non-responsive or do not meet the minimum requirements or are determined to be otherwise

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unacceptable, in the agency's sole discretion;

- Withdraw the RFP at any time, at the agency's sole discretion
- Make an award under the RFP in whole or in part;
- Disqualify any applicant, and rescind any conditional award or contract made to such applicant whose conduct as a provider does not meet applicable standards as determined solely by OMH and/or proposal fails to conform to the requirements of the RFP;
- Seek clarifications and revisions of proposals for the purposes of assuring a full understanding of the responsiveness to this solicitation's requirements;
- Use proposal information obtained through the state's investigation of an applicant's qualifications, experience, ability or financial standing, and any material or information submitted by the applicant in response to the agency's request for clarifying information in the course of evaluation and/or selection under the RFP;
- Prior to the bid opening, direct applicants to submit proposal modifications addressing subsequent RFP amendments;
- Prior to the bid opening, amend the RFP specifications to correct errors or oversight, supply additional information, or extend any of the scheduled dates or requirements and provide notification to potential bidders via the OMH website, SFS and the New York State (NYS) Contract Reporter;
- Eliminate any non-material specifications that cannot be complied with by all of the prospective applicants;
- Waive any requirements that are not material;
- Negotiate any aspect of the proposal with the successful applicant in order to ensure that the final agreement meets OMH objectives and is in the best interests of the State;
- Conduct contract negotiations with the next responsible applicant, should the agency be unsuccessful in negotiating with the selected applicant;
- Require clarification at any time during the procurement process and/or require correction of arithmetic or other apparent errors for the purpose of assuring a full and complete understanding of an applicant's proposal and/or to determine an applicant's compliance with the requirements of the solicitation;
- Cancel or modify contracts due to insufficiency of appropriations, cause, convenience, mutual consent, non-responsibility, or a "force majeure";
- Change any of the scheduled dates stated in the RFP.

3.2. Debriefing

OMH will issue award and non-award notifications to all applicants. Non-awarded applicants may request a debriefing, in writing, requesting feedback on their own proposal, within 15 calendar days of the OMH dated letter. OMH will not offer debriefing to providers who receive

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an award. OMH will not offer ranking, statistical, or cost information of other proposals until after the NYS Office of the State Comptroller has approved all awards under this RFP. Written debriefing requests may be sent to the Designated Contact, as defined in Section 2.1.

3.3. Protests Related to the Solicitation Process

Protests based on errors or omissions in the solicitation process, which are or should have been apparent prior to the deadline for receipt of all written questions for this RFP, must be filed prior to the deadline for questions. In the event an applicant files a timely protest based on error or omission in the solicitation process, the Commissioner of OMH or their designee will review such protest and may, as appropriate, issue a written response or addendum to the RFP to be posted on the OMH website in the RFP section. Protests of an award decision must be filed within fifteen (10) business days after the notice of conditional award or five (5) business days from the date of the debriefing. The Commissioner or their designee will review the matter and issue a written decision within twenty (20) business days of receipt of protest.

All protests must be in writing and must clearly and fully state the legal and factual grounds for the protest and include all relevant documentation. The written documentation should clearly state reference to the RFP title and due date. Such protests must be submitted to:

New York State Office of Mental Health
Commissioner Ann Marie T. Sullivan, M.D.
44 Holland Ave
Albany, NY 12229

3.4. Term of Contracts

The contracts awarded in response to this RFP will be for a five-year term. OMH reserves the right to modify the first period of the contract to coincide with the applicable fiscal period. For New York City contracts, the fiscal period is July 1 through June 30 of each year. Selected applicants awarded a contract under this RFP will be required to adhere to all terms and conditions in OMH's Contract for Grants.

3.5. Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises

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

With respect to MWBEs, each award recipient must document its good faith efforts to provide meaningful opportunities for participation by MWBEs as subcontractors and suppliers in the performance of the project to be described in each grant disbursement agreement and must agree that OMH may withhold payment pending receipt of the required MWBE documentation. The directory of MWBEs can be viewed at <https://ny.newnycontracts.com>. For guidance on how OMH will determine a contractor's "good faith efforts", refer to 5 NYCRR §142.8.

In accordance with 5 NYCRR § 142.13, each award recipient acknowledges that if it is found to

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have willfully and intentionally failed to comply with the MWBE participation goals set forth herein and in its grant disbursement agreements, such finding constitutes a breach of contract and OMH may withhold payment from the award recipient as liquidated damages.

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

By applying, an Applicant agrees to demonstrate its good faith efforts to achieve its goals for the utilization of MWBEs by submitting evidence thereof in such form as OMH shall require.

Additionally, an Applicant may be required to submit the following documents and information as evidence of compliance with the foregoing:

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

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

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

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

- i. If an award recipient fails to submit a MWBE Utilization Plan;
- ii. If an award recipient fails to submit a written remedy to a notice of deficiency;
- iii. If an award recipient fails to submit a request for waiver; or,
- iv. If OMH determines that the award recipient has failed to document good faith efforts. The award recipient will be required to attempt to utilize, in good faith, any MBE or WBE identified within its MWBE Utilization Plan, during the performance of the project. Requests for a partial or total waiver of established goal requirements may be made at any time during the term of the project but must be made no later than prior to the submission of a request for final payment under the grant disbursement agreement.

Each award recipient will be required to submit a Quarterly MWBE Contractor Compliance & Payment Report to OMH over the term of the project, in such form

and at such time as OMH shall require, documenting the progress made toward achievement of the MWBE goals established for the project.

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

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

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

With respect to SDVOBs, each award recipient must document its good faith efforts to provide meaningful opportunities for participation by SDVOBs as subcontractors and suppliers in the performance of the project to be described in each grant disbursement agreement, and must agree that OMH may withhold payment pending receipt of the required SDVOB documentation. For purposes of providing meaningful participation by SDVOBs, the Applicant/Contractor would reference the directory of New York State Certified SDVOBs found at <https://ogs.ny.gov/Veterans>. Additionally, following any resulting Contract execution, Contractor would be encouraged to contact the Office of General Services' Division of Service-Disabled Veterans' Business Development to discuss additional methods of maximizing participation by SDVOBs on the Contract.

3.7. Equal Opportunity Employment

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

The Applicant will be required to submit a Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises and Equal Opportunity Policy Statement, to the State Contracting Agency with their bid or proposal. To ensure compliance with this Section, the Applicant will be required to submit with the bid or proposal an Equal Opportunity Staffing Plan (Form # to be supplied during contracting

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

3.8. Sexual Harassment Prevention Certification

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

3.9. Gender-Based Violence and the Workplace Certification

State Finance Law §139-m requires all vendors bidding on state contracts to implement and attest to a Gender-Based Violence and the Workplace policy. Applicants on state procurements must certify that they have a written policy addressing gender-based violence and the workplace that meets the minimum requirements of State Finance Law §139-m. Bids that do not contain the certification may not be considered for award; provided however, that if the applicant cannot make the certification, the applicant may provide a statement with their bid detailing the reasons why the certification cannot be made. A template certification document is being provided as part of this RFP. Applicants must complete and return the certification with their bid or provide a statement detailing why the certification cannot be made.

3.10. Bid Response

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

3.11. Acceptance of Terms and Conditions

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

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3.12. Freedom of Information Requirements

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

3.13. NYS and OMH Policies

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

4. Evaluation Factors and Awards

4.1. Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be rated and ranked in order of highest score based on an evaluation of each applicant's written submission. **Please note that there are restrictions to the type, size and naming conventions of the files and attachments uploaded in SFS. For more information, please review the SFS Attachment Guide [here](#). Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in attachments not being viewable to reviewers.**

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

Technical Evaluation	Points
6.1 Notification of LGUs	1
6.2 Executive Summary & Demonstration of Need	6
6.3 Program Description	40
6.4 Implementation	10
6.5 Agency Performance	9
6.6 Utilization Review, Reporting, and Quality Improvement	4
6.7 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Peer Support Language	10
6.8 Financial Assessment	20
Total Proposal Points	100 Points

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

4.2. Method for Evaluating Proposals

Designated staff will review each proposal for completeness and verify that all eligibility criteria are met. A complete proposal shall include all required components as described in Section 2.10. If a proposal is not complete or does not meet the basic eligibility and participation standards as outlined in Section 2.5, the proposal will be eliminated from further review. The agency will be notified of the rejection of its proposal within 10 working days of the proposal due date.

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

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

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

In case of a tie in the scoring process, the proposal with the highest score on the Program Description (Section 6.3) of the Proposal Narrative will be ranked higher.

4.3. Process for Awarding Contracts

This procurement's goal is to make **one** Youth Safe Spaces (Supplemental Model) available through this RFP.

4.4. Initial Awards and Allocations

Proposals will be evaluated and ranked based on final scores. **One (1) award** of \$250,000 for a Youth Safe Spaces Supplemental Model will be made following the priorities listed below. A supplemental model is a program that adds the Youth Safe Spaces framework and services onto an already existing, trusted local youth program felt to be a safe community space.

Priority 1: One award will be issued to the highest passing score within the Central NY Economic Development Region, **excluding** Ontario County (see Table 1).

Priority 2: If **no** award was made under Priority 1, one award will be issued to the highest passing score within the Mid-Hudson, Mohawk Valley, or Western New York Economic Development Regions (see Table 1), in a zip code that does not already have a Youth Safe Spaces Program.

Table 1- Economic Development Regions

Economic Development Region (EDR)	Counties in EDR
Central New York	Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego
Mid-Hudson	Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester
Mohawk Valley	Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, Schoharie
Western New York	Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara

4.5. Contract Termination and Reassignment

There are a number of factors that may result in the contract being reassigned. This includes but is not limited to an OMH determination that the applicant has failed to adequately progress a project within 18 months of the award notification date; an OMH determination that the project is not feasible; failure to meet start-up milestones, failure to maintain staff-to-individual ratio, or poor performance outcomes.

A contractor will be provided with notification if there is need for reassignment.

- Non-compliance with contract terms: Failure to meet deliverables outlined in the contract, such as providing required & optional services (e.g., peer support, workshops, or youth engagement activities); maintaining a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment; submitting reports or documentation on time; misuse or mismanagement of funds, including failure to follow approved budget.
- Failure to adhere to program and fiscal standards: Not upholding youth-led, trauma-informed, and recovery-oriented principles, lack of culturally competent or inclusive practices, violations of minimum requirements, such as not providing essential services or failing to maintain adequate staffing levels, failure to meet financial obligations, or inappropriate use of funds.
- Unsafe or harmful practices: Incidents of harm or unsafe practices, such as neglect or mistreatment of youth participants & staff, unsafe physical conditions at the site, breaches of confidentiality or privacy, allowing or fostering toxic or discriminatory environments.
- Lack of accountability: Refusal to cooperate with audits, monitoring, or evaluations, or inability or unwillingness to provide transparency in operations.
- Community distrust: Loss of trust or confidence from the community due to negative incidents, lack of communication, or program mismanagement.

To reassign the contract, OMH will follow the priorities outlined in Section 4.4 and select the next highest ranked proposal. If there are no agencies left with a passing score, OMH will go to the top of the list and work its way down the list to reassign the contract.

4.6. Award Notification

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

5. Scope of Work

5.1. Introduction

The Local Governmental Unit (LGU), Director of Community Service (DCS)/Mental Health Commissioner has a statutory authority and responsibility for oversight and cross-system management of the local mental hygiene system to meet the needs of individuals and families affected by mental illness, substance use disorder and/or intellectual/ developmental disability in their communities. LGU collaboration is a vital part of the work of OMH Youth Safe Spaces. Applicants should notify the LGU(s) of their intent to apply. Find your LGU:

<https://www.clmhd.org/contact-local-mental-hygiene-departments/>

Framework

The awardee will utilize the New York State (NYS) Office of Mental Health (OMH) Youth Safe Spaces framework, which represents a multifaceted approach to youth mental health. This model provides free, voluntary, community-based, non-clinical, peer and youth-led programming that prioritizes mental wellness, self-empowerment, and community connection. At its core is [*Positive Youth Development*](#), which supports young people through meaningful engagement in community activities, leadership opportunities, and skill-building. The program integrates [*Recovery-Oriented Principles*](#), emphasizing respect, peer support, and holistic approaches to mental health. Each Youth Safe Spaces Program centers on *Civic Engagement and Advocacy*, encouraging youth to actively drive positive change in their communities. Additionally, the model promotes Mental Health Awareness and Education while embedding principles of Social Equity and Justice, ensuring that every aspect is inclusive, culturally responsive, and aligned with the diverse needs of each individual youth. This comprehensive approach creates sustainable, youth-driven programming that facilitates mental health recovery, resilience, a sense of belonging, safety, and improves trust, access, and utilization to supports and services for young people, particularly in underserved and marginalized communities.

Implementation Lead

The applicant should be the intended lead on planning, implementation, and financial management to full operationalize the Youth Safe Spaces Program. While the applicant may have partners, the primary management and implementation responsibilities may not be subcontracted to another entity.

Community Provider Connection

To strengthen linkages with existing supports within the mental health system, Youth Safe Spaces Programs will be required to establish partnerships with behavioral health providers to facilitate access to treatment services for individuals in need.

Peer Advisory Board

The Youth Safe Spaces Program must have a rotating Peer Advisory Board (rPAB). The majority of the rPAB (51% or greater) must be comprised of representatives of the target

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population and may also include the local community (e.g., adolescent youth, young adults, families, and community partners). The rPAB should be operational within 90 days of the start of the contract. OMH reserves the right to send representatives to rPAB meetings to monitor operations and progress.

Community

Implementation focuses on communities within New York's Economic Development Regions (**see Table 1, Section 4.4**) where youth and young adults lack adequate programming and safe spaces, and meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Have experienced a significant traumatic community event
- Experience high rates of youth homelessness
- Face significant transportation barriers, making it difficult to reach mental health care and supports.
- Are part of historically marginalized communities including indigenous or tribal communities with limited access to behavioral health resources.

Setting

Youth Safe Spaces Programs must meet the specific needs of the community while adhering to the requirements outlined in the RFP. Facilities should be flexible and adaptable, providing sufficient room to support a variety of activities and services. Additionally, the environment should be safe, welcoming, and accessible, ensuring comfort and functionality for the youth and young adults it serves.

Participants

Youth Safe Spaces Programs serve participants between the ages of 12-24. Youth Safe Spaces Programs must serve both minors and young adults (i.e., the entire age range); there needs to be clearly defined areas to support developmentally appropriate programming for relevant age groups (e.g., 12-17 and 18- 24 year-olds).

Staffing

Programs must maintain a minimum **1:10 staff-to-youth ratio** during program hours. Programs must have a minimum of **2 FTE Youth Peer Advocates** (credentialed, provisionally credentialed, or actively pursuing OMH YPA credentials) who are present during hours that the program is open to youth. Families Together in NYS administers the New York State Youth Peer Advocate Credential; [click here](#) for more information.

Youth Safe Spaces Supplemental Model must employ a minimum of a 0.75 FTE Program Manager, dedicated to managing program operations, staff supervision and providing oversight and direction to the program.

The budget should allocate resources to ensure appropriate 1:1 staff supervision. Youth Peer Advocates' supervision should be made available through other internal staff or external consultants **if the Program Manager lacks peer support experience**. Organizations must adhere to the [National Ethical Guidelines and Practice Standards](#).

Training

Youth Safe Spaces staff are required to participate in learning communities, complete OMH-identified training, and engage with resources such as Statewide Youth Peer Support Infrastructure, Youth MOVE National, The Trevor Project, NYS Trauma Informed Network and Resource Center, Collective Impact Organizations, and/or the county's System of Care network. Staff should attend meetings to review progress, outcomes, and develop best practices. Training in specialty areas such as youth housing, substance use disorder, community mapping, vocational support, immigration, and systems literacy is encouraged.

Staff are also encouraged to connect with lived-experience peer networks for learning, support, and maintaining credentials.

Volume and Hours

This model adds the Youth Safe Space services and framework to an existing youth-serving space such as libraries, OASAS clubhouses, faith-based organizations, recreational centers, and others. **The budget for the Youth Safe Spaces Supplemental Model is \$250,000 annually.**

Applicants may propose an enhancement, ensuring that there is no duplication of existing neighborhood/community services. Applicants are expected to serve (both on-site and off-site) a minimum of 250 unduplicated youth per year. Services must be offered most days each week, including during school breaks and holidays, to ensure accessibility for young people.

For locations where the existing youth-serving space is prohibited from remaining open on this schedule, applicants will document reason, what efforts have been taken to address this prohibition, and what alternative arrangements will be made to ensure youth have access to support services, transportation, and food resources during these periods.

5.2. Objectives and Responsibilities

The awarded vendor will be expected to meet the objectives and responsibilities below. These will form the basis for the scope of work and contract deliverables when an award is made.

The implementation of Youth Safe Space Programs is expected to result in the following outcomes:

- Reduce social isolation - Youth Safe Spaces Programs will decrease social isolation amongst youth by fostering positive peer interactions, connections, and promote a sense of belonging and foster a community of mutual support.
- Foster full inclusion and cultural responsiveness - Youth Safe Spaces Programs will be youth-led and youth-guided, reflecting diverse racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual identities. Programs will be designed to be trauma-informed and -responsive, addressing the unique experiences and needs of each youth.
- Enhance youth understanding of wellness - Through workshops, discussions, and interactive activities, youth will gain valuable knowledge and skills to manage their mental health, make informed decisions, and engage in healthy behavior.
- Empower youth to access community resources - Through workshops, resource fairs,

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resource directories, and one-on-one assistance, Youth Safe Spaces Programs will ensure youth are well-informed about where to seek help and support within their community, making it easier for them to locate and access the help they need when facing challenges.

- Increase community capacity through youth mental wellness training - Youth Safe Spaces Programs will collaborate with trusted community settings, such as libraries, faith-based organizations, public parks/recreation areas, to train staff in the necessary skills needed to recognize and address the mental wellness needs of youth and guide them to relevant and appropriate services and supports.
- Empower youth to advocate for better youth services and supports in their communities - Youth Safe Spaces Programs have the opportunity to help youth not only focus on their own wellness but learn advocacy and other skills to promote better services and supports for themselves, their peers and their communities.
- Enable youth to have better self-awareness about their individual passions and skills and how those may shape the work that they will pursue - Youth Safe Spaces Programs have the opportunity to offer opportunities for career exploration, identify internships, and a wide variety of enrichment activities that support the transition from school to work.

Applicants are required to offer a range of services that meet the mental wellness, social, and developmental needs of the youth. The awardee must be prepared to implement service components by the close of the 3rd quarter of the first contract year.

Table 2- Required Service Components

Service Component	Description
Essential Needs	Provide Wi-Fi, food resources, transportation support, phone charging stations, and computers.
Mental Health Supports	Non-clinical mental health support, peer-led workshops, meditation/health/wellness groups, support groups, suicide prevention programming, etc.
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.
*All vendors will receive technical assistance and support from OMH to ensure that staff are adequately trained and supported. The program staff will be required to participate in these offerings.	

On-Site Services: All required activities must be provided on-site.

Off-site Services: Off-site services include but are not limited to facilitating youth-led peer

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support meetings in accessible public spaces such as libraries, schools, or community hubs. Programs may host recreational and wellness activities, such as hiking, sports, art therapy, or mindfulness sessions, in parks or other recreational facilities. Youth-led advocacy and volunteer projects can be coordinated to promote leadership and community engagement. Additionally, programs can organize field trips to museums, cultural sites, or local businesses to foster learning and enrichment. Off-site services may also involve partnering with local organizations to provide specialized support, such as housing assistance, substance use recovery, or vocational training.

Food Resources: Food resources to ensure accessibility and address food insecurity may include stocking healthy snacks and grab-and-go options that youth can access anytime, as well as meal supports for youth. Programs can offer shared kitchen facilities equipped with basic appliances like a microwave, refrigerator, burners, or stove, allowing youth to prepare simple meals or snacks.

Partnerships with local food pantries and food banks can supply a stocked food closet with nutritious staple items. Additionally, cooking and nutrition workshops can teach essential skills while empowering youth to make healthy, affordable meals, with the option of providing take-home meal kits. Meal sponsorships or vouchers through partnerships with local restaurants or grocery stores can further ensure access to fresh, prepared food. A minimum of 2% of the budget is expected to be dedicated to food resources.

Transportation Support: Transportation supports to assist with engagement barriers may include but are not limited to providing vouchers for public transit, ridesharing, or taxis; collaborating with localities and schools to adjust bus routes for convenient drop-offs; and/or offering a program-sponsored shuttle service. Programs can also invest in a vehicle with a dedicated driver or establish a carpool network with families and volunteers. Partnering with local transportation services can further ensure reliable access for youth. A minimum of 2% of the budget is expected to be dedicated to transportation supports.

Outreach & Marketing: Programs will be required to outline marketing, strategic outreach, and referral strategies to identify and enroll participants through low-barrier, youth-centered processes.

Table 3- Program Expectations

Description		Expectations
Volume	The number of unduplicated youth the program is required to serve annually.	250 per year
Required Program Manager FTE	The required Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) allocation for the Program Manager position.	Minimum 0.75 FTE

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Required Hours	The program's operating hours or the time during which services must be made available.	Minimum of 25 hours At least 4 days each week After school availability is required, as well as access to services during school breaks and holidays.
Required Youth Peer Advocate Staffing	The required number of Youth Peer Advocates during program hours	2.0 FTE
Required Ratio during Program Hours	The staff-to-youth ratio that must be maintained during program hours to ensure adequate coverage.	1:10

- A. Programs will be required to maintain accurate reporting and records according to Program Guidance.
- B. OMH providers are expected to ensure continuous quality improvement of services, including regular monitoring and evaluation of outcomes. To support these efforts, it is expected that providers have a quality, supervisory, operational and IT / data infrastructure to routinely self-monitor and ensure ongoing quality improvement of services, including analyzing utilization review findings and recommendations.
- C. It is also expected that providers will routinely submit data to OMH, including client-identified data, quality and program data. Data submission requirements and guidance will be provided by OMH.

5.3. Operating Funding

One award will be made annually in the amount of \$250,000 each year for 5 years.

It is expected that operating funding in Year 1 may be used for one-time start-up costs including, but not limited to: basic renovations (e.g., painting, flooring, lighting upgrades, kitchen/bathroom updates if applicable), general space enhancements, postage, participant & staff training (including training of trainers), non-clinical prevention screening tools (e.g., suicide prevention, anti-violence, pregnancy, substance use, etc.), vehicle, computers and tablets, hardware, software, printers, phone system and mobile devices, office/program furniture, office supplies, staff recruitment, utilities, insurance, promotional material and marketing, data collection or IT costs, or Electronic Recordkeeping system (reporting capabilities) enhancements.

Operating funding is intended to support the specialized staff as outlined in Table 3 (Section 5.2), fringe benefits, OTPS, systems that strengthen and improve grant management processes, financial and administrative systems, property costs, participant transportation, participant essential needs, program supplies and equipment, ongoing staff training,

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administration and overhead. Funding for this program may not be utilized in any other program. Any misuse of funds or purchase of unapproved or unnecessary items will result in corrective actions, which may include repayment of misallocated funds, potential contract suspension and contract termination. Programs must adhere to budget guidelines and are prohibited from using funds for items such as personal expenses, luxury goods, or non-program-related activities. Regular financial reporting/reviews and audits will be conducted to monitor compliance.

Note: Purchases may be allowable if they directly align with the program's goals, benefit the participants, and are necessary for program activities. For example, kitchen equipment could support culinary skills workshops or community-building events that enhance youth engagement. However, all such purchases must be reasonable, cost-effective, and justified as essential to the program's mission. Programs are encouraged to seek prior approval from OMH to ensure compliance with allowable expense guidelines. Extravagant or unnecessary purchases that do not demonstrably benefit the youth or align with program objectives will not be permitted. OMH retains ultimate authority to determine whether a purchase is reasonable and justified as essential to the program's mission.

Applicants are reminded that funding to support the operation of this program is contingent upon the continued availability of State appropriations.

6. Proposal Narrative

Please note that there are restrictions on the type, size and naming conventions of the files and attachments uploaded in SFS. For more information, please review the SFS Attachment Guide [here](#). Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in attachments not being viewable to reviewers.

A proposal template is provided in the "Event Comments and Attachments" section of SFS and ***MUST*** be used to answer the following questions. Any supporting attachments ***MUST*** be included in the upload of the proposal template as one continuous PDF document AND be labeled specific to the question number it is associated with. **Proposals/applications not submitted as described (other than the budget which must be uploaded in excel format) will result in disqualification of the application.**

When submitting proposals for funding under this RFP, the narrative must address all components listed below, in the following order:

6.1. Notification of LGUs

- a. To receive the point for LGU notification, identified in section 4.1 Evaluation Criteria, please provide proof that LGU(s) were notified of your agency's Intent to Apply to this RFP (e.g., sent email, certified letter, etc.). A list of County Local Mental Hygiene Directors can be found [here](#).

6.2. Executive Summary & Demonstration of Need

- a. Provide an executive summary of the proposed Youth Safe Spaces Program, including:
 - Proposed location (including zip code) and approach to delivering the required service components (refer to Table 2, Section 5.2)

- Description of organizational alignment with Youth Peer Support principles

Demonstration of Need:

- b. Applicants must provide a demonstration of need and a summary of their due diligence process to ensure services do not duplicate those already available in the community.
 - Describe how the proposal addresses unmet needs in communities lacking safe spaces or programming for youth and young adults
 - Provide data and describe community factors such as:
 - Have experienced a significant traumatic community event.
 - Experience high rates of youth homelessness.
 - Face significant transportation barriers, making it difficult to reach mental health care.
 - Are part of historically marginalized or indigenous communities with limited behavioral health resources.

Summarize process and findings from community assessments, stakeholder engagement, or service mapping that validate program necessity, the degree to which the proposed activities are complementary, and avoidance of service redundancy.

6.3. Description of Program

- a) Describe a plan for conducting an initial and annual youth-led needs assessment within the first 3 months of program implementation. Explain how findings will be youth-led and inform program improvements and be shared with stakeholders.
- b) Describe the proposed Youth Safe Space, the square footage, and physical space/layout, accessibility, age of building/renovations, floor plans. Include any other pertinent physical characteristics of the site. Attach/upload floor plans, identifying areas where the required services will be provided. Describe the location of the Youth Safe Spaces Program within the community, including public transportation routes and proximity to other community hubs.
- c) Explain how each required service will be implemented, including off-site offerings and estimated unduplicated youth participation. Detail specific activities and specific staffing (See Table 3).
- d) Describe how the program and space will promote openness, comfort, social connections, and safety for both age groups (12-17 & 18-24 year-olds). Highlight any modifications for the service provision based on age range of participants.
- e) Identify which service components are already funded, and detail how this funding will enhance or expand services without duplication.
- f) Describe how Youth Safe Spaces will ensure consistent access (evenings, weekends, seasonal adjustments, holidays, school breaks). If applicable, explain any limitations (e.g., school/library space restrictions) and alternative arrangements for locations where the existing youth-serving space is prohibited from remaining open on this schedule (e.g.,

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libraries or schools), describe reason, what efforts will be taken to address this prohibition, and what alternative arrangements will be able to ensure youth access to safe community based program during these periods.

- g) Describe enrollment processes that are low-barrier, welcoming, youth-centered, and transparent.
- h) Describe the structure of youth leadership within the program, including the development of a rotating Peer Advisory Board. Explain how youth will co-design and lead initiatives, and detail strategies for incorporating youth voices into decision-making regularly.
- i) Describe strategies to meet transportation barriers and support food resources. (See section 5.2 for required budget allocation).
- j) Explain protocols for identifying, preparing for, and addressing mental health and safety risks, for the safety and wellness of participants & staff during behavioral health crises.
- k) Describe how the program will support youth aging out of services (age 24+) with warm hand-offs and community linkages.
- l) Outline training plans responsive to the needs of the population, including evidence-based approaches like motivational interviewing, youth-guided practices, safety planning, anti-violence, LGBTQ+ affirming care, Teen-Intervene, and/or non-clinical suicide prevention screening tools, etc.

6.4. Implementation

- a) Provide a detailed staffing plan, including roles, required skills, and experience levels and address how peer support supervision will be conducted if the Program Manager lacks peer support experience. Include timelines for recruitment, hiring, and onboarding.
- b) Explain the plan for recruitment, onboarding, and retention of qualified staff and volunteers, including background checks and leadership strategies for staff retention.
- c) Outline an implementation timeline to reach full operational capacity by the third quarter, including site readiness, MOUs, and staff training milestones.

6.5. Agency Performance

- a) Provide summary of the agency, its mission, services, and population(s) served.
- b) Demonstrate a minimum of 5 years of experience serving underserved youth and young adults ages 12-24 in a non-clinical setting. Service experience to the entire age range is required.
- c) Describe how the proposed program will be integrated into the overall organization structure, including to whom the Program Manager will report.
- d) Outline your internal and external networks, including non-clinical youth supports, local peer programs, behavioral health, and other providers, and how you plan to utilize those networks to facilitate rapid access to care. Include plans to formalize Memoranda of Understanding with community partners and include timeframes in your description.
- e) Describe how you will partner with a minimum of 1 Behavioral Health Provider (per Section

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5.1) and include a letter of support from the provider agreeing to establish an MOU. Describe the proposed referral pathway and collaboration with this provider.

6.6. Utilization Review, Reporting, and Quality Improvement

- a) State the program's commitment to participating in planning, reporting, and learning collaborative meetings with OMH.
- b) Describe the program's plan for tracking and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data to assess performance and support program improvements. Outline confidentiality safeguards, self-monitoring strategies, and incident management processes.
- c) Describe how processes will be implemented to track the use of funds and ensure that they are allocated exclusively for enhancements or new services, rather than supplanting existing activities.

6.7. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Recipient Input

This section describes the commitment of the entity to advancing equity. OMH is committed to the reduction of disparities in access, quality, and treatment outcomes for historically marginalized populations as well as centering and elevating the voice of individuals with lived experience throughout the system.

Commitment to Equity and the Reduction of Disparities in Access, Quality and Treatment Outcomes for Marginalized Populations

- a. Provide a mission statement for this project that includes information about the intent to serve individuals from marginalized/underserved populations in a culturally responsive trauma-informed way.
- b. Identify the individual(s) responsible for coordinating/leading efforts to reduce disparities in access, quality, and treatment outcomes for marginalized populations.
- c. Describe how your agency currently applies diversity, equality, inclusion and belonging principles in the way you deliver services and what changes you have made to ensure that these practices are safeguarded. *Examples of this may include the following:*
 - Use of the National CLAS standards
 - Workforce Diversity and Inclusion
 - Reduction of disparities in access.
 - Adequately engaging underserved foreign-born individuals and families in the project's catchment area.
 - Soliciting and utilizing input from community stakeholders, organizations and people with lived experience

Equity Structure

- d. Describe the organization's commitment to reduce disparities in access, quality, and treatment outcomes for marginalized populations (diversity, inclusion, equity, cultural/linguistic competence).

Workforce Diversity and Inclusion

- e. Describe program efforts to recruit, hire and retain: a) staff from the most prevalent cultural group of service users and b) staff with lived experience with mental health and receiving mental health services.

Access

- f. Describe how you will address or provide language assistance to individuals who have limited English proficiency, may be Deaf, or hard of hearing.

Recovery Values

- g. Describe the agency or program's plan to embed recovery and resilience- oriented values into practice.

Collaboration with Diverse Community-Based Stakeholders/Organizations

- h. Describe your plan to engage, partner, and collaborate with culturally relevant community partners to gather stakeholder input on the provision of these services.

7. Financial Assessment

- a. The proposal must include a 5-year Budget (Appendix B). **\$250,000 is available annually** for the Youth Safe Spaces Supplemental Model (see Section 5.3). The indirect cost/ administrative overhead rate is capped at 15%. A minimum of 2% of the budget must be allocated to food resources, and a minimum of 2% must be allocated to transportation supports for the youth participants. Applicants must include minimum required staffing (refer to Table 3. Section 5.2) Providers must follow Consolidated Fiscal Report (CFR) Ratio-Value guidance which excludes equipment/ property from the direct cost base. Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements (NICRA) are not allowable. Any travel costs included in the Budget must conform to New York State rates for travel reimbursement. Applicants should list staff by position, full-time equivalent (FTE), and salary.
- b. Describe how your agency will manage the proposed programs operating budget. Please include the following:
 - detailed expense components that make up the total operating expenses;
 - the calculation or logic that supports the budgeted value of each category; and,
 - description of how salaries are adequate to attract and retain qualified employees.