

**Department of Materials Management
Procurement Unit
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
45 W. Gude Drive, Suite 3100
Rockville, Maryland 20850**

September 14, 2020

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

**The following are questions and responses regarding
RFP No. 4548.1, School-based Mental Health Services for Students**

Question 1: Is there a total monetary amount of the RFP?

Answer: No, there is no set dollar value associated with this RFP.

Question 2: Being a firm fixed annual contract, is the fixed amount based on a) the cost per session for individual clients (different rate for insured and uninsured) or b) a fixed annual amount of the total cost of the program based on the number of clients that the contractor proposes to serve? If it is b), can the contract set a limit on the number of insured and uninsured clients that will be served under the contract to ensure economic viability of the contract?

Answer: The contract is a fixed annual amount of the total cost of the program based on the number of students that the contractor proposes to serve. The purpose of this contract is to provide students with access to mental health services that they might not ordinarily have. As a result, the mental health provider must be willing to accept any insured or uninsured student who is referred for services. The organization may choose to seek reimbursement from Medical Assistance or private insurance and may assist families with applying for Medical Assistance in order to seek reimbursement.

Question 3: Would the contract allow for payment by MCPS to the contractor for mental health services provided to un-insured clients?

Answer: No. It is expected that the contractor will provide mental health services to students who are un- or under-insured as part of the contractual agreement and there will be no additional payment by MCPS to the contractors for serving un-insured clients. The contractor may choose to bill Medical Assistance for reimbursement and will be responsible for all aspects of the reimbursement process.

Question 4: Would the contractor need to be able to serve the entire county or could an organization propose to cover just one area of the county?

Answer: The contract will be to provide mental health services in areas of the county where such community services are not readily available. The organization that wins the contract should be prepared to serve schools that are in various parts of the county; however, it is expected that the contract will cover approximately 10 schools and not all 208 schools within MCPS. If the organization proposes to cover just one limited geographic area of the county, the contract may be pro-rated, depending on the expected number of schools and students that will be served.

Question 5: Is the contract required to be able to accept/bill private insurance?

Answer: No. The contract does not require the organization to accept or bill private insurance. It is recommended strongly that the organization accept or bill private insurance.

Question 6: How many professionals do you anticipate needing every week? How many hours per professional?

Answer: This is a pilot project and new contract. Mental health providers should propose how many students they expect to be able to serve, given their capacity to designate mental health providers to serve students and schools. Mental health professionals should be available to provide services from Monday through Friday while maintaining a consistent schedule to ensure continuity of services to students and allow for providers to establish a therapeutic relationship with students. Organizations may choose to propose a contract with two half-time therapists, for example, or one full-time therapist.

Question 7: What kind of professionals are you looking for? Psychologists, social workers, etc.?

Answer: We are looking for mental health professionals who are licensed to practice in the state of Maryland and are in good standing with the appropriate licensing board. Mental health professionals may be licensed psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, or licensed professional counselors.

Question 8: Is this a new contract or a renewal of a previous RFP? If it is a renewal:

- a. Who is your current vendor?
- b. What are your current bill rates for these services?

Answer: This is a new contract.

Question 9: Can MCPS provide information about how the mental health services requested via this RFP will integrate and coordinate with those already being provided through county contracts (e.g., Linkages to Learning Program, School Community-based Youth Services, etc.) and other agreements?

Answer: Mental health services provided through this contract will be delivered to students in schools that currently are not served by any other existing partnership or contract (i.e., services will not be provided in schools currently served by Linkages to Learning, School Community-based Youth Services, etc.). The goal of this RFP and resulting contract is to provide students that currently do not have such services onsite with access to much-needed mental health services.

Question 10: Will clinicians who provide services via this RFP/contract:

- a) be assigned to particular schools or school clusters with the expectation of being available routinely on a regularly scheduled basis in and to those particular school/clusters?
- b) be expected to receive referrals and respond to a variety of schools throughout the entire county and only when particular youth/families are referred?

- c) can you describe MCPS's thinking on how mental health staff members will be deployed/selected in service of particular student/families or schools?

Answer:

- a) **Clinicians may be assigned to specific schools or a cluster of schools. Assignments are dependent on a multitude of factors, including the level of need presented in schools. Once a clinician is assigned to a school or cluster, the expectation is that mental health services will be provided on a continual and regular basis to support and promote student mental health and well-being.**
- b) **Clinicians will be assigned to schools where it is anticipated that there will be a high level of need for mental health services (based on baseline data, such as attendance, engagement, disciplinary referrals, behavioral concerns, culture and climate surveys, etc.). Clinicians then will be expected to support the school and receive referrals from school-based well-being and educational management teams. Because of the expected partnership between the school and clinicians, clinicians should be prepared to engage regularly with school-based staff members, including participating in student meetings, upon request.**
- c) **Students exhibiting behavioral or social emotional difficulties and who have not responded to in-school interventions may be referred to clinicians for solution-focused therapy. School-based well-being teams should have documented baseline data, the interventions that have been implemented to date, and the efficacy of such interventions. Those data then may be used to help inform therapy that will be provided by clinicians to support the student.**

Question 11: Can you provide information about office space and other school-based resources that will be provided to mental health staff via this RFP/contract?

Answer: Schools identified to receive services through this RFP will be expected to provide clinicians with appropriate office space in which to complete administrative tasks (e.g., writing reports, making telephone calls), as well as a private space in which therapy may be provided in a confidential manner.

Question 12: How will services rendered via this RFP/contract be compensated? (The RFP references third-party billing and also invoices monthly to MCPS. Wording further states that the contract will be a "firm fixed annual contract.")

- a) Is there an expectation that the contractor/provider will bill available third-party insurance coverage for services rendered when available?
- b) Will MCPS compensate the provider for activities and services to students with insurance that are non-billable to insurance plans (including but not limited to collaboration with school staff and meetings (e.g., with EMTs, CCSTs, and other committees at the building or district levels), and administrative report time and other activities that may be required as part of the work?
- c) Will MCPS pay for clinical services to students/families who do not have mental health insurance coverage? If so, can you describe how this will be accomplished?

- d) It is stated in 3.3 of the RFP that contract staff will not report hours for days when MCPS schools are closed. It further states that services must continue during holidays. There is indication that services can be provided as needed beyond the normal school day to meet the needs of families. Is the intent of 3.3 to restrict services for student/families only to school days? What services beyond the normal school day and calendar will MCPS compensate or allow the provider to offer?
- e) In the context of utilizing third-Party billing to cover some of the work under this RFP/contract, can you provide further explanation of the requirements in 8.4 regarding the “pricing proposal?” What are you looking for in terms of price elements?
- f) Since there is the provision for a multi-year continuation of the contract, will annual price adjustments be allowed for services billed to MCPS?
- g) Is MCPS able to provide any information as to the volume of services that may be requested through this RFP/contract?

Answer:

- a) **The contract that will be awarded does not preclude the provider from seeking reimbursement from insurance, if available. However, it will be the responsible of the provider to take care of all aspects of the reimbursement process. MCPS will not seek reimbursement from insurance for services provided.**
- b) **No. The provider is expected to partner with the assigned school to support student health and well-being. Therefore, the submitted proposal should take into consideration such non-billable activities (e.g., collaborating with school-based staff members, attending meetings, and administrative reports).**
- c) **No. This contract will be awarded only to organizations and service providers that include mental health service delivery to un- and under-insured students for the fixed price of the contract. There will be no financial compensation above and beyond the cost of the annual contract.**
- d) **The intent of Section 3.3 is that services are not expected to be provided during emergency school closings (e.g., snow days). However, during longer school breaks (e.g., winter or spring breaks, summer sessions), the organization will be expected to continue to provide therapeutic services to students so that there is not an extended period of interrupted service delivery. During these periods, the organization may choose to provide services in the student’s home, at a community location (e.g., public library), or at the organization’s home office. The intent is not to restrict services only to school days. In addition, it is recognized that there may be occasions when services need to be delivered to the student and family and that the only time that is convenient for the family is during the evening. Clinicians are expected to reasonably accommodate family schedules and provide services outside of school hours to promote student wellness and academic achievement. On days when services will be provided in evenings, for example, the clinician may adjust hours to start the day at a later time. MCPS will not provide additional compensation for services provided during breaks, summer, or evenings. The services proposed by the organization in response to this RFP should factor in these variations in services in the overall cost of the annual contract.**

- e) **Pricing proposal should include how many students you expect to serve during the course of the school year, what types of services you will provide, what therapeutic expertise providers will have, how therapists will ensure best practices and engage in ongoing professional development, what ongoing training does the organization provide to staff members, timeline for implementing program should organization's proposal be accepted, and the cost of this entire proposal.**
- f) **This contract will be renewed on an annual, based on availability of funds. At the renewal period, the organization may engage in negotiations to adjust the cost of the entire contract. However, if the proposed increase in contract price is above what MCPS has allocated in the fiscal year budget, MCPS reserves the right to deny the contract and seek services from alternate mental health providers.**
- g) **The proposal submitted by the organization should include the expected level of service delivery that can be provided by the agency to MCPS students for the price of the contract. It is expected that up to 10 schools may be identified to receive services and that students will be referred for mental health services based on individual need. If more students are referred than can be served at any one time, the organization may, within reason, maintain a waiting list so that new students may be added to the caseload as other students achieve their goal and serves are phased out.**

Question 13: Can required references include MCPS personnel (district or school-based administrators and others) who are familiar with similar services provided in the context of MCPS by the provider?

Answer: Yes.

Question 14: Regarding submission requirements:

- a) Can you clarify the submission requirements? It is stated in the RFP: "One (1) original and six (6) copies, as well as one (1) electronic version on CD or flash drive of the response, and one (1) redacted copy, as well as one (1) electronic version on CD or flash drive of the redacted response must be sent by mail, courier, or hand-delivery to the address below." The cover letter states: "The contractor must submit one (1) original, one (1) redacted copy, one (1) electronic version on CD or flash drive and six (6) separate copies of the proposal."
- b) What is meant by a "redacted copy"?
- c) Are the six (6) separate copies of the proposal to be of the original and not of the redacted version?
- d) If modifications or addendum are offered to the RFP how will prospective providers learn about these? Can MCPS provide alerts in this regard instead of expecting prospective bidders to continue to check the webpage?
- e) Considering the detailed responses required to respond to this RFP and the need for further clarification to the document, will MCPS consider extending the due date for submission?

Answer:

- a) **Your response should contain one (1) original, six (6) copies of the original, one (1) electronic version on flash drive or CD, one (1) redacted version in both hard copy and electronic format.**
- b) **A redacted copy is a version of your submission that redacts any information that you would not like shared, should there be a public information request regarding this RFP.**
- c) **Yes, the six (6) separate copies are to be of the original submission.**
- d) **MCPS will alert those who have submitted questions to the RFP that an addendum/erratum has been issued as well as issue an addendum via eMaryland Marketplace Advantage. At this time MCPS has no other method of alerting offerors.**
- e) **Yes, the due date will be extended until September 25, 2020 at 2:00pm.**



Angela McIntosh-Davis, CPPB, Team Leader
Procurement Unit

AMD

Please indicate your receipt of this notice my signing below and returning with your proposal or under a separate cover.

Accepted By: _____
(Name and Title)

Name of Company: _____