



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Peer to Peer Support RFP

Release Date: Monday, January 20, 2025

Pre-Proposal Conference: Thursday, January 28, 2025, at 11:30 am

Proposals Due: Friday, February 21, 2025, at 5:00 pm

Anticipated Award Notification: Monday, April 28, 2025

Anticipated Contract Start: Thursday, May 1, 2025

Issued by:

Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc.
100 South Charles Street, Tower II, 8th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Peer to Peer Support RFP

II. Overview of the Project

A. Overview of BHSB

Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc. (BHSB) is a non-profit organization tasked by Baltimore City to manage the city's public behavioral health system. As such, BHSB serves as the local behavioral health authority for Baltimore City. In this role, BHSB envisions a city where people live and thrive in communities that promote and support behavioral health and wellness.

BHSB is committed to enhancing the behavioral health and wellness of individuals, families, and communities through:

- The promotion of behavioral health and wellness prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery;
- The creation and leadership of an integrated network of providers that promotes universal access to comprehensive, data-driven services; and
- Advocacy and leadership of behavioral health-related efforts to align resources, programs, and policy.

BHSB is committed to promoting behavioral health equity in Baltimore City by ensuring that the behavioral health provider network is culturally and linguistically responsive to the diverse populations served; reducing behavioral health care access barriers for populations known to experience discrimination and marginalization; and supporting communities directly to develop services that are responsive to their unique strengths and needs.

B. Overview of Project

Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), BHSB seeks one (1) qualified organization to integrate Peer-to-Peer services specifically for Transition-Age Youth (TAY) aged 16-25. These services will be facilitated exclusively by peers with lived behavioral health recovery experience. TAY Staff between the ages of 18-26 with experience as Maryland Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (CPRS) will support Transition-Age Youth (TAY) aged 16-25 in identifying and accessing needed behavioral health supports and services.

The initial FY25 procurement will be \$106,510. The provider will receive \$74,380.00 for staffing and start-up costs. The remaining \$32,130 will be used to cover TIP Model training costs. The FY26 sub-vendor award will be for the full award amount of \$106,510.00

BHSB reserves the right to award more or less depending on the proposed service delivery and available funds. Applicants may request more than the anticipated contract award amount per provider with justification for how the additional amount would impact fulfilling the scope of service.

C. Scope of Service (including deliverables)

There is an intentional effort to invest in providing peer-related services to the TAY population. This approach bridges gaps in traditional medical interventions while fostering community and mutual understanding critical for recovery. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (CPRS) are pivotal in addressing mental health and substance use disorders through their distinctive professional approach. Peer-to-peer interventions have shown significant positive outcomes in various health and social support areas. A study in the Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment found that peer support specialists can reduce hospital remissions by up to 30% for individuals with substance use disorders. Research from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) indicates that peer support interventions can:

- Reduce emergency room visits by 25-35%
- Improve medication adherence by up to 60%
- Decrease psychiatric hospitalizations by 20-25%
- Increase overall treatment retention rates by 40-50%

By leveraging certified professionals' lived experiences, these programs provide authentic, personalized support to individuals confronting substance use and mental health challenges.

The selected provider implementing young adult peer-to-peer support must utilize the evidenced-based program Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model and prioritize a trauma-informed, person-centered approach. Expectations include creating a non-judgmental environment that supports participants' autonomous choices, developing collaborative and individualized support plans, and implementing harm reduction strategies that meet participants where they are.

Peer Specialists should be able to provide guidance on navigating healthcare coverage, disability accommodations, and financial support. In addition to the peer support specialists shall be trained to recognize trauma indicators and provide compassionate support that respects participants' experiences and self-determined goals. The approach must systematically prioritize participant safety, consent, and incremental positive change, with continuous adaptation based on participant feedback and emerging best practices in trauma-informed care and harm reduction

methodologies. For more information on Harm Reduction & the TIP Model & Training please refer to the links below:

[Maryland Harm Reduction Training Institute](#)
[TIP Model Institute | Stars Training Academy](#)

Project Deliverables

- 40 unduplicated individuals served
- The sub-vendor will provide quarterly consumer feedback via consumer survey providing aggregate data and comments (no PHI).
- Track the total number of:
 - 1:1 Peer Contacts (*Peer support sessions in person, virtually or telephonically, of at least 15 minutes in duration*)
 - Community Outreach Efforts (*Peers in the community, outreach other TAY serving agencies or organizations, and community events to connect with individuals seeking behavioral health support*).
 - Individuals who obtained TAY Recovery Support Services in the following categories:
 - Housing
 - Funded Benefits
 - Resource Assistance,
 - Employment, Enrolled in a formal education program,
 - Vital Documents,
 - Accompanied to court and/or medical appointments
 - Enrolled in a mental health and/or substance use treatment program.
- The organization will hire and retain a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist who will receive a minimum of bi-weekly supervision from a Maryland Registered Peer Supervisor per Maryland Peer Recovery Specialist requirements.

D. Focus Population

TAY Peer Recovery Support programming will serve and support young adults ages 16-25 with behavioral health needs facing barriers to accessing and securing Housing, Entitlements and/or funded benefits, Vocational training, Educational programming, Employment, System navigation, Treatment, and recovery support, Vital Documents, Sustainable peer support

E. Staffing Requirements

- One (1) FTE Certified Peer Support Specialist between the ages of 18-26. This includes a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist [Certified Peer Recovery Specialist \(CPRS\) | Maryland Addiction and Behavioral-health Professionals Certification Board](#).

- Maryland Certified Registered Peer Recovery Supervisor (Not funded through this project, but required to supervise eligible or currently Certified Peer Recovery Specialist)

F. Funding Availability

The initial FY25 procurement will be \$106,510. The sub-vendor will receive \$74,380.00 for staffing and start-up costs. The remaining \$32,130 will be used to cover TIP Model training costs. The FY26 sub-vendor award will be for the full award amount of \$106,510.00

Funds shall be used for Peer-to-Peer services, including: (1) Staffing, (2) Training costs, (3) Supplies and IT equipment, (4) Administrative costs, (5) Rent and utilities, and (6) any other related expenses as approved by BHA.

Funds shall not be used for gift cards or clinical services that are reimbursable through Maryland Medicaid. Funds shall not be used to support peer positions providing services to individuals enrolled in Medicaid Provider Type 50 settings (Community-Based Substance Use Disorder Programs licensed under COMAR 10.63.03 as OP Level 1, IOP Level 2.1, and/or PHP Level 2.5) or Medicaid Provider Type 32 settings (Opioid Treatment Programs)

G. Quality and Financial Review

As part of BHSB's procurement process, internal quality and financial reviews are completed to ensure there are no significant concerns with the organization(s) being selected. Applicants should be sure to provide the most recent available versions of all requested documentation with their RFP application in order to ensure this is a smooth process.

H. Contracting with BHSB

Applicants selected through this process will enter into a contractual agreement with BHSB. Following a notification of selection, BHSB will issue a Letter of Award that provides details about the contract and the process for executing it. The selected applicant will be required to submit a new budget on BHSB's budget forms, which will be reviewed for allowable costs under the grant.

Please note that applicants may be asked to change their budgets and/or details of their proposals even if the proposal was selected for funding. Applicants new to BHSB's contract process are encouraged to review relevant forms available on our website here: <https://www.bhsbaltimore.org/for-providers/forms-for-providers>.

Contract Type and Payment

The contract and payment type that will result from this procurement is described below. Applicants are encouraged to consider whether their organization will be able to operate with this payment mechanism before applying for these funds.

Cost Reimbursement – Advance Basis

- Vendor receives payment in advance of incurring and reporting costs based on a pro-rated budget (e.g., ¼ of budget each quarter), with payment amounts adjusted based on spending.

BHSB issues payments once per month. Applicants should note that submitting required documents and reports late can result in delayed payment.

Contract Monitoring and Technical Assistance

Selected applicants will be required to submit regular program and financial reports to BHSB using an electronic contract management system. BHSB will review these reports to monitor progress and contract compliance throughout the contract term.

Program reports include an update on progress toward deliverables (e.g., number of people served, number of services delivered, etc.). Some program reports may also require organizations to attach a data report with additional information (e.g., consumer demographic information, process, and/or outcomes data, etc.). BHSB monitors progress on these reports throughout the contract term and may offer technical assistance and support if deliverables are not on track to be met.

Financial reports are required to generate payment and involve submitting actual expenditures or invoices (depending on the contract type) and to monitor spending compared to the budget or award amount. If organizations are spending more or less than expected awarded throughout the contract term, BHSB may offer technical assistance and support to ensure the funding covers the contract term fully, and BHSB may reduce funding if all funds are not likely to be expended by the end of the contract term.

Please note that submitting program or financial reports late can result in delayed payment.

Verification of Services

BHSB audits all contracts to review whether the requirements set forth in the contract were completed as reported and that relevant federal, state, and local regulations were followed. This generally occurs after the conclusion of the contract period. Audits may be conducted remotely through a review of documents submitted to BHSB or on-site at the organization's location. Failure by vendors to

comply with the terms of any contract with BHSB may result in denial of future contracts with BHSB.

Applicants should be aware of best practices in documenting both programmatic and financial activities to aid in an efficient audit.

III. Overview of RFP

A. Purpose of RFP

The purpose of this RFP is to select one (1) qualified organization to integrate Peer-to-Peer services specifically for TAY individuals aged 16-25, facilitated exclusively by peers with lived behavioral health recovery experience.

Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must meet all of the criteria outlined below to be considered eligible to be selected through this RFP process:

- Organization must have a location in Baltimore City
- Organization must have a minimum of 5 years serving transition-age young adults aged 16-25. This can be demonstrated by providing service descriptions for existing programming.
- Must have and maintain a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist credential from an approved state credentialing board in Maryland.
 - Maryland Peer Certification
 - TIP Model Certification (will be provided during the contract period)
- Must have demonstrated knowledge of:
 - The Public Behavioral Health Services (PBHS) services and eligibility, behavioral health resources, and other medical services.
 - Entitlement programs, including Social Security Disability Insurance, Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, and state-specific assistance programs.
 - Affordable housing providers, transitional housing programs, and independent living support services.
 - Educational and employment support programs, including supported employment, vocational rehabilitation services, workforce development programs, and community
 - TAY-focused nonprofits, community support groups, peer support programs, culturally specific resources, and community engagement opportunities
 - Diversion programs that redirect young adults from criminal justice systems to support services and work to develop collaborative approaches with courts and probation services to provide alternative sentencing and promote continuous mental health support.

B. Proposal Timeline and Specifications

1. Timeline

Release Date:	Monday, January 20, 2025
Pre-Proposal Conference:	Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 11:30 am
Proposal Due:	Friday, February 21, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.
Anticipated Award Notification:	Monday, April 28, 2025
Anticipated Contract Start:	Thursday, May 1, 2025
Anticipated Service Start:	Thursday, May 1, 2025

2. Pre-Proposal Conference

Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2025

Time: 11:30 am

Location: Microsoft Teams meeting - Join on your computer or mobile app

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 221 862 064 258

Passcode: j4Wc2UK3

Dial in by phone

[+1 443-819-0973](tel:+14438190973), [194843845#](tel:+14438190973) United States, Bel Air

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 194 843 845#

For organizers: [Meeting options](#) | [Reset dial-in PIN](#)

Please join five minutes early to leave time to troubleshoot. If you have any problems accessing the meeting, please contact Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org.

Questions related to this RFP will be answered at the Pre-Proposal Conference. Questions posed during the conference and BHSB's responses will be posted on BHSB's website at <https://www.bhsbaltimore.org/for-providers/funding-opportunities/> by **Thursday, January 30, 2025**

Individuals who attended the Pre-Proposal Conference will be notified by email when questions and answers are posted on BHSB's website.

Questions received after this conference cannot be answered.

3. Proposal Due Date, Time, and Location

BHSB uses Survey Monkey Apply (SM Apply) to manage applications. All proposals must be submitted through this system. Applicants must register with the system ahead of time and submit narrative and supporting documents directly through the system. You are able to save your application and continue working on it before submitting it. BHSB encourages all applicants to test this system well in advance of submitting proposals.

Applicants can access SM Apply here: <https://bhsb.smapply.org/>

All proposals must be received no later than **5:00 pm EST [or EDT] on Friday, February 21, 2025**. All submitted proposals become the property of BHSB. If you are having technical troubles related to submitting your proposal, contact BHSB before the due date/time at Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org.

Proposals submitted after the due date/time cannot be considered.

4. Interviews (if applicable)- Not application for this RFP

5. Authorized Contact

Applicants are advised that the authorized contact person for all matters concerning this RFP is Kisha Winston-Watkins & Ashley Coston, whose contact information is listed below.

Kisha Winston-Watkins & Ashley Coston, Procurement Leads
Email: Procurements@BHSBaltimore.org

6. Anticipated Service Term: May 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025, with options to renew annually pending availability of funding and performance.

C. Award of Contract

The submission of a proposal does not, in any way, guarantee an award. BHSB is not responsible for any costs incurred related to the preparation of a proposal in response to this RFP. BHSB reserves the right to withdraw an award prior to execution of a contract with a selected applicant in BHSB's sole and absolute discretion.

BHSB will select the most qualified and responsive applicants through this RFP process. BHSB will enter into a contract with selected applicants following the notification of award. All selected applicants must comply with all terms and conditions applicable to contracts executed by BHSB.

D. RFP Postponement/Cancellation

BHSB reserves the right to postpone or cancel this RFP, in whole or in part.

E. Applicant Appeal Process

Applications must be complete and fully responsive to the below Proposal Narrative Outline and must include all required appendices. Applicants may file an appeal within five days of notification of non-selection. BHSB will not review new proposal materials that were not included in the application. BHSB will review the appeal letter and respond to the non-selected applicant within ten working days of receipt of the appeal.

F. Governing Law and Vaccination Mandates

The applicant acknowledges and agrees that BHSB is a federal contractor for purposes of Executive Order 14042, Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors (the "Order"). The applicant and its subcontractors shall comply with the Order and all other applicable mandates, rules, laws, and regulations (collectively, the "Requirements"). Upon request by BHSB, selected applicants shall promptly provide evidence of compliance with the Requirements and shall promptly take such further actions as may be requested by BHSB with respect to the Requirements and/or the resulting contract. The applicant and all of its subcontractors shall, for the duration of the resulting contract, comply with all guidance for contractor and subcontractor workplace locations published by the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force. These requirements shall be incorporated into all subcontracts of the sub-vendor.

IV. Format and Content of Proposal

A. Proposal Instructions

- Applicants must submit all required information using Survey Monkey Apply (SM Apply) accessible here: <https://bhsb.smapply.org/>. We recommend you start your application early so you know what to expect with the system.

Late proposals will not be considered.

- Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are becoming increasingly prevalent. While AI is a helpful administrative tool, it is important to ensure that proposals reflect authentic responses and realistic service delivery plans.
- It is the policy of BHSB to adhere to the rules and regulations in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), which require appropriate safeguards to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and security of all protected health information. No proposals submitted in response to this RFP should include individually identifiable health information.

For more information, please refer to the Guide to IT Privacy and Security of Electronic Health Information: <https://www.healthit.gov/topic/privacy-security-and-hipaa/health-it-privacy-and-security-resources-providers>.

B. Proposal Narrative Outline and Rating Criteria

The outline below shows the information being requested for applications and how points will be awarded during the review. Use SM Apply to submit your responses. See the instructions for more information about how to submit proposals.

1. Organizational Background and Capacity (15 points total)

- a. Provide an overview of your organization, including how long it has provided behavioral health services or Maryland Certified Peer-to-Peer Support services.
- b. Describe your organization's history and experience, including the length of time delivering services, serving the Transition Age Young Adults (16-25) population, and any evidence-based practices used.
- c. Describe your organization's history of forming partnerships with organizations serving Transition Age Young Adults (16-25).

2. Principles and Values (15 points total)

- a. Describe how your organization's current practices ensure services are delivered in a culturally responsive and linguistically competent

manner, responsive to the diverse communities served, including individuals for whom English is a second language.

- b. Describe your organization's commitment to and understanding of the principles of a [Recovery-Oriented System of Care \(ROSC\)](#) that supports consumer self-determination and multiple pathways of recovery.
- c. This project seeks to empower young adults and promote positive development by involving young adults and their peers in leadership and engagement opportunities. Describe how your organization will involve young adults and their peers in the planning and implementation of your proposed activities.

3. Service Delivery (30 points total)

- a. Describe your organization's plan to provide all services as outlined in the Scope of Service section of this RFP.
- b. Describe your organization's plan to implement person/family-centered services and treatment planning, to include support of behavioral health needs (mental health/substance use disorder treatment), medical needs, and other identified areas of needed support to ensure overall wellbeing.
- c. Describe how your organization will collaborate with community providers, systems, and other organizations serving young adults with behavioral health needs to identify and engage individuals in need of services and ensure that all individuals referred will, with consent, be linked to and/or receive needed services.
- d. Describe other behavioral health services your organization provides and what structure/process you will use to avoid conflicts of interest and inappropriate self-referral.
- e. Describe your approach to providing a competent, integrated, holistic "whole health" approach to addressing substance use, mental health, and medical health.
- f. Describe how this program would function as a low-barrier "safe space" that is welcoming, non-stigmatizing, and affirming to the population to be served.

4. Staffing Plan (15 points total)

- a. Describe your proposed staffing pattern, including supervisors, and how it will fulfill the staffing requirements in this RFP. Include an organizational chart that shows how this program will fit into your organization's overall structure.
- b. Describe your plan to ensure adequate support and clinical supervision for staff, particularly staff who work independently/ off-site.

- c. Describe how the program would support consumers to become certified peers and foster their professional development, providing examples of how your organization has done this in the recent past.

5. Effectively Serving the Focus Population (10 points total)

- a. Describe how your organization is uniquely qualified and designed to address known disparities experienced by Transition Age Young Adults (TAY).
- b. Describe how your organization will ensure Transition Age Young Adults (TAY) are hired as staff or have meaningful input into the planning, implementation, and ongoing operations of the project.

6. Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance (10 points total)

- a. Describe how your organization obtains and incorporates feedback from people served and other stakeholders into the development, implementation, operation, and improvement of program services.
- b. Specify how consumers' Protected Health Information will be collected, maintained, used, and disclosed in compliance with (i) The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. 1320d et seq. and implementing regulations at 45 CFR parts 160 and 164) as amended, (ii) the Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Records (42 U.S.C. 290dd-2, as implemented by 42 CFR part 2) as amended; and (iii) the Maryland Confidentiality of Medical Records Act (Md. Code Ann. Health-General Section 4-301 et seq.) as amended.

7. Implementation Timeline (5 points total)

- a. Provide a detailed timeline for implementation that includes all of the activities that you have committed to perform in your proposal. Show an outline of all the steps necessary to fully operationalize this project and by when each step would be completed. Contracts are expected to start on May 1, 2025.

8. Appendices

- Most recent site visit report from the ASO, Accrediting Organization, and/or the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ), including any statements of deficiencies and program improvement plans.
- Copies of all relevant licenses/certifications, including any licenses issued by the Maryland Department of Health (BHA and OHCQ).
- Organizational chart
- Two letters of support highlighting partnership in working with the TAY population. These letters should be no older than two years.

- Most recent final Financial Audit package, including Findings and Management Letter from an independent auditor (preferred) OR a recent unaudited Income Statement AND Balance Sheet, if an audit is not available.
- Most recent IRS 990 – Return of Organization Exempt from Income Taxes OR if an IRS 990 form is not required to be filed, the most recent Business Tax Return OR the Schedule C only of the most recent Personal Tax Return. (Please redact any social security numbers on the Schedule C).
- Certificate of Good Standing from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (screenshots from the MDAT website will not be accepted) - the certificate must be dated within one year of the RFP submission due date.