
C - RFA SCOPE OF WORK

I. Introduction

The City of Austin (City) seeks applications in response to this Request for Applications (RFA) from qualified social service providers (Applicants) with at least two years demonstrated experience providing high quality behavioral health services. The City will fund programs serving individuals, families, and children with behavioral and/or mental health disorders, who are residents living in Austin/Travis County. This RFA includes funding for a broad range of behavioral health services to individuals and families, with a focus on zip codes and neighborhoods with a high proportion of low-income households, and communities of color.

II. Background & Purpose of Funding

Austin Public Health has historically funded many programs to support individuals and families that need behavioral health support which includes services for children and family mental health, substance misuse, community-based behavioral health, individual counseling, supported employment, and more.

The purpose of this funding is to provide an opportunity to realign the City of Austin's resources with the needs of the community and build upon existing efforts to maximize the impact.

In 2018, the Austin City Council adopted [Austin Strategic Direction 2023](#) (SD23), which outlines a shared vision and six priority Strategic Outcomes. Council has directed all social services contracts to operate in alignment with SD23 to improve the identified outcomes. In the Priority Outcome, Health and Environment: Enjoying a sustainable environment and a healthy life, physically and mentally, HE.B.3, describes the measure as accessibility to quality health care services, both physical and mental. According to the [US Department of Health and Human Services](#), mental and physical health are closely related; mental disorders can affect a person's ability to have healthy behaviors and physical health problems can make it difficult for a person to receive treatment for mental disorders.

In 2016, Austin Public Health (APH) began engaging stakeholders, community health providers and other partners to discuss the improvements that are needed. With that information APH collected and analyzed health-related data to inform decision-making, prioritize health problems, and assist in the development and implementation of community health improvement plans (CHIP). In 2018 a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) was drafted, and a workgroup was formed to implement the findings and prioritization related to community stress, mental health, and wellbeing. Currently, the workgroup continues to operate to increase access to behavioral health services with a focus on substance abuse, trauma informed care, geographic area, integrated mobile mental health care, and advocating for enhanced behavioral health healthcare coverage.

In 2021 APH conducted listening sessions and an online survey to collect feedback from service providers, and people with behavioral health needs. Much of what was learned in those

sessions reflected needs identified in the CHA/[CHIP](#) and those in the [Texas Statewide Behavioral Health, Strategic Plan Update \(2019\)](#).

Data and process informed the creation of the solicitation service categories and evaluation tool to award funds in proportion to community identified need. Areas of exceptional priority included behavioral health services delivered adhering to a Trauma Informed Care Model for: individuals; groups; older adults; children and families, in coordination with and support of existing school-based services; individuals experiencing homeless; Hispanic/Latino, Black/African American, Multiracial, Asian; formerly incarcerated populations; individuals with disabilities; and those residing in the 78701, 78702, 78704 zip codes and eastern crescent.

It is an important goal of this solicitation to award programs which not only address a need in the community but do so with the intention to prevent recurrence, recidivism, and relapse, ensure continuity of care and intervene at the earliest point possible.

III. **Funding and Timeline**

Department: Austin Public Health

Available Funding: \$1,490,895 total

Applicants may apply for a minimum of \$65,000 per 12-month program period with four extension options.

In the event additional funds become available (federal or city general funds), APH may provide additional funding and/or new funding to applicants from this solicitation.

Application Acceptance Period: All Applications are valid for a period of three hundred and sixty-five (365) calendar days subsequent to the RFA closing date unless a longer acceptance period is offered in the Application.

Anticipated Number of Awarded Agreements: Austin Public Health anticipates awarding up to 20 Agreements and will undergo a review process to ensure that as many age groups and services are funded as possible.

Contract Term: It is anticipated that the Agreements will have an effective start date of October 1, 2022, for an initial 12-month period, and four 12-month extension options. All extension options are conditional upon City Council approval of the City Council Budget. If additional funding is available, start dates and contract terms may vary.

Awarded programs may be structured as a reimbursable-based agreement or a deliverables-based agreement, as defined below:

- **Reimbursable Agreement-** An Agreement where an agency is reimbursed for expenses incurred and paid through the provision of adequate supporting documentation that verifies the expenses.
- **Deliverable Agreement-** An Agreement where an agency is reimbursed for a report or product that must be delivered to the City by the grantee (or by the Subgrantee to the Grantee) to satisfy contractual requirements. It can include goods or finished works, documentation of services provided, or activities undertaken, and/or other related

documentation.

IV. Services Solicited

The City is intentionally leaving program strategies open beyond the criteria listed in this section, allowing Applicants to propose solutions to meet community needs effectively and successfully. APH will fund services which provide:

- Individual, group and family counseling and/or therapy
- Psychological assessment
- Community-based mental health programs
- Mobile, virtual, telehealth behavioral health services
- Assessing and addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)
- Mental health and life skills training
- Behavioral health system, coordination of care and integration improvements
- Peer support services and mentorship
- Respite services for crisis service providers or caretakers
- Crisis support services
- Substance misuse services
- [Mental health case management](#)
- [Adult mental health supported employment](#)
- [Prevention of substance use and mental disorders](#)

Populations

- Adults, children and/or families
- Children in foster care
- Individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities
- Individuals experiencing homelessness
- People who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired
- Veterans
- Hispanic/Latino, Black/African American, Multiracial, Asian
- Previously incarcerated individuals
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, ally, asexual, two-spirited, plus

Geographic areas for focused outreach activities

- 78701, 78702, 78704
- Eastern Crescent of Austin/Travis County

Program Objectives

The objectives of the proposed program should be determined by the client population, service delivery model and evidence based and/or emerging practices. The outputs, outcomes and impact must be described in the application and supported by evidence based and/or emerging practices. Applicants must describe how the incorporation of evidence-based or emerging practices will be monitored to ensure fidelity to the model. Applicants must also provide

evidence that supports how their services will ultimately impact Austin/Travis County and lead to improved behavioral health for clients.

Evidence Based and Emerging Practices

The [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services which provides an expert level of knowledge and resources to improve individual, community, and public health. Below is a list of practices which are not exhaustive nor represent all the services or intentions of this solicitation.

- [Trauma-Informed Treatment Principles](#)
- [Peer Support](#)
- [Crisis Care](#)
- [Telehealth](#)
- [Cultural Competency](#)
- [Prevention](#)

Principles of Service Delivery

The Applicants awarded must follow HIPAA guidelines to protect client confidentiality and security of healthcare information as well as follow relevant provisions of the Texas Administrative Code see, [26 Texas Admin Code 301 – 301.3 - Standards of Care](#).

The City of Austin is dedicated to selecting behavioral health service providers who have a strong understanding of the needs of the individuals it seeks to serve, and a demonstrated history of services provided in a trauma-informed care framework. The environment established by the provider – which includes staffing, client engagement, and opportunities for feedback – must reflect a trauma-informed service model. Furthermore, the City of Austin seeks providers who are exhibiting expertise, continuing to improve, and/or striving to develop cultural competency and provide staffing that is reflective of the clients it proposes to serve.

Staffing

Applicants will employ behavioral health care professionals and paraprofessionals to provide quality services in accordance with the licensure requirements outlined in appropriate Texas Administrative Code [Title 22 Examining Boards](#) Part 30, Part 34, and Part 35.

An Applicant should have all peer support specialists enrolled and active in a training program or certified by the [Texas Certification Board](#).

For youth programs, all staff and volunteers must comply with [26 Texas Admin Code § 745.605](#), which details required background checks for individuals working with youth, if the proposed program serves youth.

If care of a child, including programming during out-of-school time, is provided outside the presence of a legal guardian or parent, an awarded applicant will be required to provide insurance coverage for sexual abuse and molestation.

City of Austin Client Eligibility Requirements

Client eligibility must be documented, and any proposed alternative requirements explained. See Section D – APH Client Eligibility Requirements.

V. Application Evaluation

A total of 100 points may be awarded to the application with an additional ten bonus points available for a potential of 110 total evaluation points. All applications will be evaluated as to how the proposed program aligns with the goals of this RFA and whether each question has been adequately addressed. Applications providing similar services will likely be reviewed and evaluated accordingly.

Required documents

Required APH Documents:
The following must be completed and/or submitted in Partnergrants.

Form No.	Title	Requires Applicant Response Due
1	OFFER SHEET	Thursday, January 20, 2022 by 3:00pm CST in Partnergrants
2	RFA APPLICATION	
3	PROGRAM BUDGET AND FUNDING SUMMARY	
4	COA CERTIFICATIONS AND DISCLOSURES	
Section No.	Title	Form input in Partnergrants Due
A	THRESHOLD REVIEW FORM	December 8, 2021 by 3:00pm CST

RFA 2021-007 Behavioral Health Issue Area Evaluation Rubric		
Form 1	Offer Sheet - Applicants must print, sign, scan and upload signed forms.	No points, but Applicant must submit signed form
Form 2: RFA Application		
Part I: Fiscal and Administrative Capacity		
Section 1	Threshold Review Form in Partnergrants (A in table above)	No points awarded, but Applicant must pass threshold defined in Applicant Minimum Qualifications to advance to submittal of their Final Application
	Agency Information (included in Form 2)	No points awarded. This is for informational purposes only.
Part II: Scored Application (Form 2)		
Section 1: Experience and Cultural Competence	Agency Experience & Performance Cultural Competence & Racial Equity CLAS Standards	10 points 10 points 10 points 30 points total
Section 2: Program Design	Program Services Principles of Service Delivery Performance Metrics	20 points 15 points 10 points 45 points total
Section 3: Data-Informed Program Management	Data Collection and Management	10 points total
Section 4: Cost Effectiveness	Program Staffing and Time	10 points
Form 3	Program Budget and Narrative	5 points 15 points total
		Total: 100 Points
Section VII: BONUS Healthy Service Delivery	Questions A-D	10 points
Total possible points: 110 points		
Form 4:	COA Certifications and Disclosures- Applicants must print, sign, scan and upload signed forms.	No points, but Applicant must submit signed form

Applicant Minimum Qualifications

All Applicants applying for funding must:

- At least two years demonstrated experience providing high quality behavioral health services
- Be a non-profit organization able to conduct business in the State of Texas
- Have submitted all applicable tax returns to the IRS and the State of Texas (e.g. Form 990 or 990-EZ and state and federal payroll tax filings)

- Be eligible to contract and not debarred from contracting, according to SAM.gov and City Debarment information
- Be current in its payment of Federal and State payroll taxes
- Not owe past due taxes to the City
- Can meet Austin Public Health’s Social Services Insurance Requirements
- Have an active Board of Directors that meets regularly and reviews program performance, financial performance, and annually approves the Applicant budget

VI. Application Format and Submission Requirements

See Section B. Standard Solicitation Provisions and Instructions for more information.

The Application must be submitted in the [Partnergrants database](#). No late submissions will be accepted. Responses should be included for each question.

A. Partnergrants Registration

Since APH is only accepting applications in Partnergrants, all Applicants must do the following to get registered in Partnergrants:

1. Confirm that their organization is a registered vendor with the City of Austin.
 - To find the City of Austin Vendor Number please visit [Austin Finance Online](#) and search for the organization’s legal name.
 - To register to become a potential City of Austin vendor, go to [Austin Finance Online](#) to register.
2. Be a registered user in the Partnergrants system. The applications will be submitted through this web-based system.
3. [To register, visit Partnergrants](#) and click on “Register Here.”

Note that the organization’s City of Austin Vendor number is required to complete registration in Partnergrants.

B. Submissions Instructions

See Section B. Standard Solicitation Provisions and Instructions for more information.

ALL DOCUMENTS MUST BE UPLOADED INTO PARTNERGRANTS. NO PAPER COPIES WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Please note: Only name your uploaded documents with letters and numbers. To reduce possible submission and/or review delays, please ensure any attached file from your local drive DOES NOT contain any special characters. Letters and numbers are acceptable.

VII. Additional Information

See Section B. Standard Solicitation Provisions and Instructions for more information.

- A. Proposal Acceptance Period: All Applications are valid for a period of three hundred and sixty-five (365) calendar days after the RFA closing date unless a longer acceptance period is offered in the Application.

- B. Proprietary Information: All materials submitted to the City become public property and are subject to the Texas Open Records Act upon receipt. If an Applicant does not desire proprietary information in the proposal to be disclosed, each page must be identified and marked proprietary at time of submittal. The City will, to the extent allowed by law, endeavor to protect such information from disclosure. The final decision as to what information must be disclosed, however, lies with the Texas Attorney General. Failure to identify proprietary information will result in all unmarked sections being deemed non-proprietary and available upon public request.
- C. Exceptions: Be advised that exceptions to any portion of the Solicitation may jeopardize acceptance of the application.
- D. Application Preparation Costs: All costs directly or indirectly related to the preparation of a response to the RFA or any oral presentation required to supplement or clarify an application that may be required by the City shall be the sole responsibility of the Applicant.
- E. Agreement Adjustments: The City of Austin reserves the right to adjust the Agreement amount or scope of work over the contract period based on community needs, Applicant's ability to expend funds in a timely manner or any other factor. When the City determines adjustments need to be made, the City will provide at least a 90-day notice to the Grantee.