Revised September 19, 2023 – additions are in **red**

Community Supports Partnerships Call for Proposals, August 2023
Frequently Asked Questions – Advice for Applicants

GENERAL RFP QUESTIONS

Who is eligible to apply?
Any provider of behavioral health services or supports for children and families is eligible to apply, regardless of non-profit status or ability to bill Medicaid. Providers must satisfy all other requirements of the RFP, including a letter of support from local Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee, use of evidence-based programs (EBPs), ability to collect and report data, connection to schools, etc. Funds should be used to fill gaps and cover services that are not billed to Medicaid or commercial insurance.

How many service provider grants will be awarded?
The overall distribution of grant funds will depend upon the proposals received and the amount of each grant awarded by the Commission. The Commission will consider geographic balance and equity.

When will award decisions be made?
Award decisions are expected in December 2023.

Is there a dollar limit for grant awards?
The CHRC has not placed limits on the amount of funding that could be requested by an applicant, but encourages applicants to be reasonable in their requests.

How much total funding is available?
A total of up to $120 million will be available for grants statewide.

Will there be a funding formula?
No, this RFP will not have a funding formula. The Consortium may consider a funding formula after full implementation has been reached, anticipated to be several years in the future.

Can an applicant request funding for services in more than one jurisdiction in the same grant proposal? Can an applicant request funds for a statewide program?
Service providers wishing to serve more than one jurisdiction must submit a separate proposal for each jurisdiction. The CHRC may award multiple grants to the same provider if those grants are in different jurisdictions.

What is a jurisdiction?
A jurisdiction is a Maryland County or Baltimore City. Each jurisdiction has its own school district, also called a Local Education Agency (LEA).

What is an LEA?
An LEA is a Local Education Agency, or school district. Each jurisdiction in Maryland has its own LEA.

How many grants will be awarded per jurisdiction?
The CHRC anticipates awarding multiple grants in each jurisdiction. There is not a limit to the number of grants that may be awarded within a jurisdiction, but the award process will consider geographic representation.

Should an applicant submit a separate proposal for each strategy, initiative, or MTSS Tier of service?
Applicants should submit one proposal per jurisdiction. A proposal may include multiple interventions; please list all interventions in your application.

May an applicant submit more than one proposal?
Yes. The CHRC may award multiple grants to the same provider if these grants are in different jurisdictions. Providers may apply for grants in multiple jurisdictions and will not be penalized for doing so, if a different application is received for each jurisdiction. The substance of such applications may be fairly similar so long as they also reflect local needs and priorities. The CHRC may consider synergies between multiple applications from the same agency, however, each proposal will be reviewed in the context of its own jurisdiction/school district.

Could an established program receive grant funding, or is funding only available for new programs?
An established program can receive grant funding if the funding represents an expansion of services or an increase in the number of individuals served. The proposal should clearly state the baseline of individuals currently served and explain how requested grant funding would expand service delivery. Funding may be requested for training in EBPs by existing staff, but the overall proposal should represent an increase or expansion in some way.

If a proposal represents both an expansion of current services and the initiation of new services by the same organization, should the applicant submit one application or two? What should they indicate on the cover sheet?
One application. Indicate "expansion of current services" on the cover sheet.

If multiple agencies are planning to submit applications for the same jurisdiction, should they coordinate and apply together, or apply separately? Does the grant allow for collaborative groups to apply within one jurisdiction?
Proposals may be submitted by a coalition of providers, or providers may apply separately. See below.

If there are multiple partner organizations coordinating together to work on the proposed project, should they list all participating organizations? Should they submit separate budgets?
Yes. The proposal should identify all partners that will provide grant funded services and/or provide substantive support to the project during planning and implementation. One organization should be designated as the lead. The proposal should present a clear accountability or management plan that delineates the roles and responsibilities of each project partner, including data sharing agreements, and describe how the lead applicant will oversee these services and activities. Only one budget should be

submitted per proposal. Partner budgets should be listed under "Contractual" and described in the budget narrative. For a collaborative grant, the lead grantee would receive funding from the CHRC, and distribute funds to its partners.

Will there be opportunities for potential grantees to be matched with or partner with other organizations in their jurisdiction?
For this RFP, applicants may apply on their own or with partners. There is not a formal mechanism through the CHRC for matching potential grantees within jurisdictions during the application process. Grantees may be encouraged to coordinate their work as grants are implemented. Future RFPs may be coordinated through Community Support Partnership Hubs (see page 5 of the RFP).

Can the program target a sub-group within the school(s), such as homeless children or LGBTQ+ youth?
Yes. Please elaborate in your proposal.

What is the grant period?
The grant project period will be approximately 18 months, from December 2023 to June 2025. Well-performing grantees may have the opportunity to apply for continuing operating funds at the end of the grant period and/or be sustained as subgrantees of a Hub. The Coordinated Community Supports Partnerships program has multiple years of funding through the Blueprint.

Can the grant period be extended beyond June 2025 in order to meet service targets and/or spend down funds?
No, all grants will end in June 2025. At that time, successful programs may be extended and/or modified through a new grant with the CHRC or through local Hubs. Grantee performance will be a factor when the CHRC and Hubs make determinations about which grants to award in June 2025. Any unspent funds at the end of the grant period will be returned to CHRC.

Do grantees need to be self-sustaining at the end of the grant period? Are grant dollars intended to be seed money only?
No. Continuing funding may be available. The Consortium's funding is part of the Blueprint, and funds may be available on a longer-term basis. While grantees will be required to bill Medicaid and other payers to the maximum extent (see page 16 of the RFP), grantees will not be required to demonstrate self-sustainability at the end of the grant period.

If an organization is not able to meet the application deadline, will there be another opportunity to apply?
Service providers will have additional opportunities to apply for funding under the Coordinated Community Support Partnerships program. At the end of the initial grant period (approximately 18 months, December 2023 through June 2025), another RFP will be issued. Pending the availability of grant funds, an additional RFP for services may be issued sooner.

Do applicants need to be non-profit organizations?
Service providers may be non-profit or for-profit.

Do applicants need to have a physical office in the locations they are proposing to serve?
No.

Is this funding intended for large organizations or smaller providers?

Organizations of all sizes are invited to apply. The capacity of smaller organizations to write competitive grant proposals will be considered during the review process.

Can out-of-state providers apply?
Yes, but preference will be given to providers from Maryland.

How frequently will grantees receive payments?
An initial fund distribution will be made upon execution of the grant documents. The fund distribution schedule will be provided after awards are made.

Does it matter if an applicant is a current and/or former CHRC grantee?
Former and current grantees are welcome to submit proposals. Prior CHRC grant performance, such as timeliness in submitting required reports and progress toward stated goals, will be considered in evaluating new grant proposals.

What does it mean that funds must be supplemental to and not supplant existing funds for school behavioral health?
Funds from this RFP may not be used to replace or redirect existing funding streams. Grant funds may be used to expand current activities and implement best practices.

Can funds from this RFP be used to continue programs where the funds have run out or will run out, such as ESSER or the Strengthening Families Program? How should applicants reflect this in their cover sheet?
Yes, applicants may request Consortium funds to support programs for which funding streams have expired, such as programs that were initiated using ESSER dollars. Applicants should describe how the requested funding will expand access to services and should clarify the baseline of students/families currently being served. In this event, an applicant's cover sheet should indicate "expansion of an existing program."

How should applicants demonstrate collaboration with a Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) and/or Local Management Board (LMB)?
Applicants may submit letters of support from their LBHA or LMB, or may describe contacts or relationships with these agencies and/or their partners. Applicants that do not currently collaborate with these agencies should describe their awareness of these agencies and indicate their willingness to work with them in the future.

What should be included in a letter of support from a LBHA and/or LMB?
Letters of support from a LBHA and/or LMB are optional, and there is flexibility in what that letter would contain.

If an organization won't be ready to begin programming until the 2024-2025 school year, should they still apply?
Yes. Please indicate on your cover sheet when services can begin. While priority may be given to programs that can begin implementation immediately, the CHRC understands that programs may need some time to hire staff, execute legal agreements, etc., and the proposal's budget should reflect this. However, all grants awarded under this RFP will end in June 2025.

Can grant funds support summer programs, or only programs during the school year?

Services may be provided during the summer, school year, or both. Please clarify in your proposal. The Consortium encourages services provided during the school year to be maintained during the summer months, if possible.

What mechanisms are in place to ensure the process for awards is fair and equitable?
The proposal review criteria can be found on page 18 of the Call for Proposals. Additional considerations will include: 1) Equity, 2) Geographic Balance, 3) Prioritization by the LEA and 4) Ensuring programming for all ages pre-K - 12.

Is the CHRC using Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (YRBS) data to prioritize what is funded?
Yes. In addition, applicants are encouraged to use YRBS data in their applications. Applicants may consult the data toolkit in Appendix D, which includes instructions to help identify key YRBS measures.

SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS (LEAs)

What is the role of schools and school districts?
Schools are integral to this program. All applicants will be required to have a letter of support from their local Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee that reflects genuine collaboration and alignment with the LEA's priorities. A sample letter of support is included in Appendix E. A list of LEA contacts is provided in Appendix H.
Service providers must have an MOU with the LEA before services may be provided in schools. The CHRC will consult with LEAs during the application review process as well as during the grant implementation period.
In addition, school staff may receive training in evidence-based programs coordinated by the National Center for School Mental Health. School districts may indicate their interest in this training by filling out a form found at the following link: https://bit.ly/EBPs_SchoolApp. Schools and school districts should not apply for training through the RFP process, but should use the link provided.

What needs to be included in the letter of support from the Superintendent or their designee?
The purpose of the letter is to demonstrate genuine collaboration and alignment. Collaboration can be demonstrated by identifying specific meeting dates, points of contact, commitments about when and where services will be provided, and details about the respective roles and responsibilities of the school(s) and service provider. LEAs are asked to attest that grant funding would not supplant existing funding for student behavioral health. A sample letter is provided in Appendix E.

Does the school system need to see an entire grant proposal before issuing a letter of support?
Each school district has the flexibility to develop its own review process for considering requests for letters of support.

Who should be contacted at the school district to request a letter of support?
An LEA contact list is included at Appendix H. If you have other contacts in the LEA, feel free to reach out to them as well.

Does the letter of support need to be submitted with the grant application, or can it be provided at a later date?
Letters of support must be submitted with the grant application. Applications that do not have a letter of support from the Superintendent/designee will not be considered.

What happens if an applicant does not receive a letter of support from a school district?
For this first RFP, a letter of support from the Superintendent/designee is mandatory.

If an applicant receives support from a school district, can their proposal still be denied? If so, why?
All proposals will be evaluated according to the scoring criteria on page 18 of the RFP. Some applicants may be denied depending on the availability of funds, geographic distribution, equity considerations, and their alignment with the requirements of the RFP.

Does an organization need to have an MOU or legally binding cooperative agreement letter with the school system in order to apply?
No, a letter of support will be sufficient for the application. However, after awards are made, organizations that do not currently have an MOU or cooperative agreement letter with the relevant school district must execute an MOU prior to the initiation of services. A sample MOU may be provided upon request.

If an organization already has an MOU with the school district, will they need a new one for this grant?
Existing MOUs or cooperative agreement letters will be sufficient for this grant if the LEA concurs. Please submit a copy of that MOU with your application.

Is an MOU with the school system required as a condition of grant funding for service providers?
Yes, all grantees must submit an MOU or other legal document between the grantee and their school system prior to the initial disbursement of funds.

Do applications need to name the precise schools that will be served by the grant, or could that be finalized later? Could an application discuss the criteria that will be used to identify schools rather than naming the actual schools?
Applicants are encouraged to develop a list naming each school they intend to serve. If this list requires modification later, grantees will have the opportunity to make changes through the CHRC's grant modification process. Whether schools have been identified or remain to be identified, describing the criteria for how schools were or will be selected is encouraged. It is permissible for a proposal to indicate that the precise list of schools has not yet been finalized, if there is a shared expectation between your organization and the Superintendent/designee, expressed in the letter of support, that services will be provided at a certain estimated number of schools to be finalized at a later date. Please indicate this in your proposal and cover sheet.

Could more than one service provider serve the same school?
Yes, so long as there is need and capacity for these services that cannot be met by one provider, or if each of the providers offers a different kind of service.

Can schools or school districts apply for grants? Can grant funds be requested to provide training to school staff?
Schools and school districts are not eligible to apply for grants. However, school staff may receive training in evidence-based programs coordinated by the National Center for School Mental Health. School districts may indicate their interest in this training by filling out a form found at the following link: https://bit.ly/EBPs_SchoolApp. Schools and school districts should not apply for training through the RFP process, but should use the link provided.

Can grant funds be used to hire school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and other staff?

No, direct hires of school-employed staff are not permissible. Schools and school districts are not eligible to apply for grants under this RFP. The Consortium's model supports schools by enhancing and expanding partnerships with community providers to augment the supports and services provided by school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and other staff across the multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS).

Can grant funding be provided for students in private/parochial schools or homeschooled?
No, services for students in private/parochial schools or homeschooled children are not eligible for grant funding at this time. The Consortium is funded through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, which is focused on public schools.

Can grant funding be provided for students in nonpublic special education schools?
Yes, grant funding may be provided for services in nonpublic special education schools (MANSEF) for students whose tuition is supported by the State. Applicants will be required to demonstrate unmet needs that cannot be met by existing sources. Because MANSEF schools serve students from across LEAs, applicants should include a letter of support from the MANSEF school principal rather than a local Superintendent.

Are services provided to pre-kindergarten children eligible for grant funding? Would Head Start be included as a pre-k?
The Consortium will provide grant funding for services for pre-kindergarten programs located in public school buildings. Grant funding will also be available for services for private pre-kindergarten programs that receive grant funding through Blueprint grant programs.

Does a project need to serve all the schools in a school district?
No, please identify which schools will be served or the process by which schools will be selected.

Could funding be requested for services in a single school?
Yes, proposals may target only one school.

May funding be used to support programming in Community Schools?
Services may be provided in both Community Schools and schools that are not Community Schools. Grant funds may not supplant Community Schools funding or Concentration of Poverty grants. Applications should clearly differentiate between existing programs funded through Concentration of Poverty grants and new/expanded programs that would be funded through this RFP. Existing Community School Needs Assessments could be used by applicants to demonstrate need and identify priorities.

Do applicants need to receive a letter or other documentation from the school system explaining how their proposed program in a Community School are supplemental to the services that are funded through the Concentration of Poverty grants?
The school district should attest to this in their letter of support. Applicants are encouraged to describe in their proposals how their project aligns with but does not duplicate what is currently being funded through Concentration of Poverty grants.

Do all services need to be provided in the school building?
Services may be provided in locations other than schools, such as clinics, community centers, and other locations, but schools and/or school districts must be involved in the planning and implementation of programs. Services must be aligned with, coordinated with, and augment the school's/district's multi-

tiered system of supports (MTSS). Services should be connected or embedded in a school in order to facilitate access. Services provided in locations beyond the school may include a plan for transportation, and grant funding may be requested for transportation. Technology-based interventions such as telehealth also may be utilized.

What does it mean that services must be coordinated with the LEA?
Services funded by this grant mechanism must be endorsed (as reflected in a letter of support) by an LEA. If awarded, grantees are expected to work with the LEA to ensure alignment and coordination with the district's school mental health priorities, processes, and services. Examples of coordination may include integration into school-community triage/referral processes, alignment with MTSS processes, and regular communication and coordination with district/school staff.

HUB AND SPOKE QUESTIONS

Will the RFP support grants to Hubs?
No. This RFP will not fund grants to Partnership Hub organizations. The Consortium anticipates issuing a Partnership Hubs RFP in the future.

Should Hub applicants work with service provider applicants to submit a joint Partnership grant request?
No, this RFP will not support grants to Hub organizations. As stated above, the Consortium anticipates issuing a Partnership Hubs RFP in the near future. In addition, future RFPs may support Partnership grants with Hubs as lead grantees and service providers as Spokes/subgrantees.

Since service providers will be awarded separately from Hubs for the first RFP, to whom will they be accountable? Who will provide oversight?
All grantees will be accountable and report to the CHRC and Consortium on a regular basis. The CHRC will distribute funding directly to all grantees and perform grant monitoring. The National Center for School Mental Health will provide technical assistance and support. Service providers that bill Medicaid will be required to sign agreements to cooperate with their Local Behavioral Health Authority. Service providers must have a letter of support from their LEA prior to submitting their grant proposal, and must have an MOU with their LEA prior to the initiation of services. Local school districts and other local agencies will coordinate with the CHRC on any grantee performance concerns.

When will Hub grants be awarded? When will the CHRC determine which kinds of organizations can be Hubs?
A Hub RFP is expected to be issued in fall 2023 with awards made in early 2024. The Hub RFP will contain information about the types of organizations that can serve as Hubs. Schools and school districts will not be eligible to serve as Hubs under the first Hub RFP.

If an entity applies as a service provider under this RFP, is it also able to apply when the Hub RFP is released? Can an organization serve as both a service provider and a future Hub?
Organizations awarded service provider grants under this RFP may be eligible to become Hubs in the future if adequate safeguards are in place to ensure accountability. For example, the Hub function and service provider (Spoke) function should exist in different units within the organization with no shared staff. The unit responsible for the Hub should not be subordinate to or under the authority of the unit responsible for service provision.

PERMISSIBLE USES OF GRANT FUNDING

Can grant funds be requested to support data collection?
Yes, grant funds may be requested for salaries for data collection and data systems software, including purchasing new or improving existing software to implement Measurement-Based Care. All grantees will be required to collect and report outcomes data.

If an applicant is interested in implementing Measurement-Based Care, but doesn't know how to select or budget for a platform, where should they start?
The local school district may already have a preferred platform. A provider's Electronic Medical Records (EMR) vendor may have a recommended platform. Applicants may also consult this link to a presentation Dr. Elizabeth Connors made to the Consortium's Data Subcommittee on December 8, 2022. Applicants are not required to purchase a data platform to participate in the learning collaborative.

Some communities have language, cultural and other barriers to care that must be addressed in order to achieve an improvement in behavioral health for students from these populations. Could language translation and health literacy outreach to minority communities be supported through grant funds?
Yes. This type of outreach will be essential for program effectiveness. Outreach should be part of comprehensive proposals that also provide services using culturally appropriate EBPs. Translation/interpretation services are also eligible for grant funding if they are not covered by Medicaid.

Is funding to be spent on reactive measures or proactive measures? Will preventative measures be considered?
Prevention (proactive) efforts are permissible for funding, and will be an important part of this program. This RFP will support interventions at all levels of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and across a wide range of behavioral health and wraparound services.

Can grant funds support services for youth and adolescents who are not in school?
The school is the primary entry point for services. Grant-funded services may continue to be provided at the discretion of a provider if (1) services were initiated while the child was attending school and the child subsequently is removed from the school and (2) alternative funding cannot be secured.

Can transportation funding be used to purchase vehicles?
This will be considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on how much the vehicle will be used for school-linked behavioral health programming versus other uses, the cost of the vehicle, and other considerations.

What are wraparound services, and what kinds will be supported by this RFP?
The definition of wraparound services that will be supported by this RFP can be found on page 11 of the RFP.

The RFP states that wraparound services are limited to students (or families of students) "with identified behavioral challenges or at significant risk." Do children and families from low-income and/or marginalized communities qualify as being at "significant risk" for the purposes of the RFP?
We encourage applicants to provide data documenting that the populations being served are "at significant risk" for behavioral health challenges. Therefore, if an applicant can demonstrate that the specific children and families they serve qualify as being at "significant risk" for behavioral health concerns, that would be adequate.

Can grant funding be requested for High Fidelity Wraparound?
The Consortium discourages applicants from requesting funding for the High Fidelity Wraparound model. However, Consortium funds could be used to support *access* to High Fidelity Wraparound services (e.g., navigation, transportation, referral systems, school meetings, etc). See pages 11-12 of the RFP.

Are there any special considerations for peer support?
Peer support programs are eligible for funding if they meet the other requirements of the RFP, such as EBP usage, data reporting, connection to the school, letter of support, etc.

Can funds be used to address the behavioral health workforce shortage?
All proposals must directly result in expanded behavioral health and wraparound services for students and families during the grant period. Applicants could include as part of their proposals innovative efforts to address challenges in the behavioral health workforce, such as: use of supervised interns and other staff consistent with State and federal legal requirements, peer support programs, innovative use of technology, expanding Tier 1 and Tier 2 services, paid staff training and career ladders, and building the behavioral health workforce pipeline.

Can grant funds be used for assistance with hiring?
Grant funds may not be used for hiring bonuses. A modest amount of grant funding could be used for advertisements for hiring, contracting with recruiters, etc, and budgets for these activities will be scrutinized closely. Grant funds also could be used for workforce pipeline initiatives, etc. See above.

Are Psychiatric Rehabilitation Programs (PRP) eligible for grant funding?
Applicants may submit proposals for PRP programs. Programs must identify evidence-based programs that will be utilized and data that will be reported consistent with the requirements of the RFP. Currently, PRP services are not authorized during school hours.

Can grant funds can be used for salaries for school-based therapists for team meetings, etc?
Yes, grant funds may be used for staff salaries related to meetings and consultations.

Can grant funds be used to hire or pay for an EHR consultant or time with EHR staff to update/streamline forms/TP and set up certain reports?
This is permissible, as part of a proposal that also expands access and meets the other requirements of the RFP.

Would a proposal from a software solutions company offering technology and client services, such as for universal screening, referral process automation, etc. but not including specific provider staff, be eligible under the RFP?
Grant funds may be requested for technology-based interventions that will provide services to students and/or families, including but not limited to software to support screening, triaging, progress monitoring, and referrals. Proposals must meet the other requirements of the RFP, and should identify who will utilize the software (e.x., school staff, community providers, etc.) and who will be responsible to report required data to the CHRC. Service provider applicants may also request grants funds to subcontract with software companies (see below).

DATA AND REPORTING QUESTIONS

Should applications include all data points referenced in the Data Toolkit (Appendix D)?

No, applicants should select the most relevant data, and/or may use data from other sources.

Do applicants need to cite quantitative data as evidence for unmet needs? Or is it sufficient to say that the LEA has told them in qualitative terms what the needs are?
Both qualitative and quantitative data will be accepted. Proposals will be stronger if they include quantitative as well as qualitative data. The Data Toolkit (Appendix D) provides some resources.

How should applicants count "unduplicated individuals served?"
"Unduplicated individuals served" means each unique person receiving services through the grant is counted only once, regardless of how many types of services, service encounters, etc. they receive. A family counts as one individual. Grant proposals involving multiple organizations should describe their plan to ensure individuals are not counted twice.

Page 17 of the RFP provides a number of standardized measures. Do applicants need a plan to measure each of these?
All grantees will be expected to report on the number of unduplicated individuals served. All grantees should report on outcomes, but may use assessment tools best suited to their programs and are not limited to the ones listed in the RFP. Please describe these tools in your proposal. If there are measures that don't align with your program (for example, positive classroom environment), please explain in your proposal.

Can we use an assessment tool that is not on the list?
See above. Grantees may use assessment tools best suited to their programs and are not limited to the ones listed in the RFP. Please describe these tools in your proposal.

How would the unduplicated individuals be tracked? Student ID? With schools appropriately concerned about Personal Identifying Information of high school students, how do you recommend tracking of engaged students?
If a program is providing Tier 2 or Tier 3 services, it is expected that students served will be identifiable within the grantee organization using a specific identifier. If the Student ID is not feasible to use, the organization should determine another method for generating IDs for students served in order to document unduplicated students. For Tier 1 services, grantees will be required to report the total number of students served by activities funded by the grant, but will not need to document individual student identifiers.

Is it possible to use grant funding to build a program's capacity for evaluation, such as hiring a consultant or subcontractor to conduct formal evaluation studies?
A formal evaluation study will not be required for this grant, however, applicants are encouraged to plan and budget for data collection and evaluation, including both staff and software systems.

MEDICAID AND BILLING QUESTIONS

Are applicants required to bill Medicaid?
No, however, the legislative intent for Coordinated Community Supports Partnerships is to maximize every source of potential funds, including Medicaid.

If some services are Medicaid-reimbursable, could a provider use grant funds to fill the "gaps" that Medicaid does not reimburse, including provider staff that do not bill Medicaid?

Yes, grant funds can be used to fill in "gaps" that Medicaid does not reimburse (see page 8 of the RFP), provided that the proposal as a whole meets the other requirements of the RFP.

Are services only for children covered by Medicaid, or can they be provided to uninsured children or children with commercial insurance?
Consortium services should be available to all students regardless of insurance status. Grant funds may support services for insured children. If a child has private insurance, the provider should bill the private insurer if possible. Consortium grant funds may be used for copays, particularly for low-income families. If the provider is not able to bill a particular insurer, grant funds may be used for these services. An income-based sliding scale fee schedule could be considered.

Can funds be used to supplement or add to existing Medicaid or commercial reimbursement rates?
Per Federal rules, funds may not be used to supplement Medicaid rates. The Consortium also will not permit funding to be used to supplement commercial reimbursement rates.   Funds can be used for co-pays and for activities that are not reimbursable.

If a provider currently bills Medicaid but not for services in schools, (different funding source), which cover sheet drop-down should they use?
They should use the drop-down option for "Applicant does not currently bill Medicaid," and provide more explanation in their proposal.

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS (EBPs)

What Evidence-Based Programs will be required?
Applicants must identify the Evidence-Based Programs (EBPs) or other strategies they will use in their programs. The RFP contains two menus of evidence-based programs (EBPs). Applicants who select EBPs from the "Priority" menu on page 9 of the RFP and commit to receive training and implementation support, and/or commit to regular participation in a learning collaborative on Measurement-Based Care, will receive added consideration during the application review process. Applicants should not request grant funding for training and implementation support for Priority EBPs in their budgets, as this support will be provided by the Consortium through the National Center for School Mental Health. Applicants may, however, request funding for staff salaries and stipends associated with training and implementation support for Priority EBPs. Applicants who select from the 15 Priority EBPs or commit to participate in the Measurement-Based Care learning collaborative will receive a 5-point advantage in the application review process (out of 100 total points).

Applicants that do not select one of the Priority EBPs can still be scored well, and are encouraged to apply for grant funding. Applicants who will not implement EBPs on the Priority menu may select from the menu of 32 other EBPs found on page 10 of the RFP, or identify other EBPs and strategies not on the list. Applicants are required to provide a justification for selecting these alternate EBPs or strategies consistent with the criteria on page 10.

Can an applicant be considered for grant funding if it does not intend to implement one of the 15 Evidence-Based Programs?
Yes. If applicants do not intend to implement one of the 15 Priority EBPS or participate in the Measurement-Based Care learning collaborative, they may either select from any of the 32 other Recommended EBPs, or describe an alternate EBP or strategy and provide justification for that approach. See above.

Is the State providing the EBP trainings or do applicants need to find a vendor?
As part of the Consortium program, the National Center for School Mental Health will coordinate training in the 15 Priority EBPs, and will provide program materials. Please indicate how many staff members will participate in the training. You may include staff training time in your budget.

Does this grant pay for the EBP trainings?
Grantees do not need to budget for EBP training for any of the Priority EBPs, aside from staff salaries for training and implementation support participation time. Priority EBP trainings will be coordinated by the National Center for School Mental Health, who will procure program materials. If applicants would like training on an EBP that is not on the Priority list, they may request funding for it in their budget, and they will need to arrange their own trainings. Applicants may consult the lists of EBPs in Appendix G, which include helpful links.

Can an applicant list multiple EBPs in the EBP line or do they need a separate cover sheet for each EBP? How should applicants indicate the number of staff that would be trained in each?
Applicants may list multiple EBPs on the cover sheet. Put the total number of staff on the cover sheet and provide a break-down in the grant proposal.

What does "participate" in training and technical assistance mean? Is a one-time training enough?
For Priority EBPs, applicants must commit to the standard training protocol and implementation support as specified for each EBP. Appendix G contains information about training and implementation support requirements.

Where and when the trainings will happen? By whom will the trainings will be done? Will it be all at once or will the training schedule for each of the 15 come out separately? Will they all be in the state of Maryland? If there will be travel involved, will that cost be covered?
It is anticipated that the trainings will be scheduled as soon as possible once grants are awarded, with training to begin in early 2024. Trainings will be led by experienced trainers of each EBP. The National Center will develop a training schedule and will give as much advance notice as possible for all 15 EBPs, seeking to avoid conflicts. Virtual trainings will be prioritized, and any in-person trainings will be held within the state of Maryland. If applicable, grantees may be reimbursed for mileage, hotel, and per diem.

Can the grant budget include staff to participate in the Measurement-Based Care collaborative, and if so, is there an estimate of time that it will require?
We are estimating that the measurement-based care learning collaborative will involve one hour per month in virtual sessions for provider agency administrators/leads and one hour per month of virtual sessions for front-line practitioners. Applicants may choose to engage in either or both opportunities and may determine how many staff they would like to include. The grant budget may include staff time to participate in the collaborative.

Regarding the awarding of bonus points in the scoring rubric: are there a total of 5 to be awarded if <u>either</u> (1) an EBP from the Priority list is selected for implementation, <u>or</u> (2) participation in a MBC learning collaborative is proposed? If <u>both</u> strategies 1 and 2 are proposed are there a total of 10 points available?
There will be a total of 5 points available, not 10.

OTHER PROPOSAL DETAILS

How will cultural and linguistic competency be addressed?
Behavioral health services are most effective when delivered in a culturally and linguistically competent manner. As a matter of policy, all CHRC grantees are asked to demonstrate cultural and linguistic competency, and describe the extent to which the racial and ethnic diversity of their workforce reflects the individuals to be served. Applicants are required to consider cultural responsiveness in selecting evidence-based programs and strategies. These factors will be evaluated as part of the application review process. Grant funds may be used for interpretation services if they are not covered by Medicaid.

How will health equity be addressed?
Applicants must describe unmet need in their communities and explain how their programs will advance health equity. A list of recommended data sources to help applicants target resources where they are most needed can be found on page 12 of the RFP and in Appendix D.   These will be key review criteria in selecting applicants. Grant funds may be used to provide services to uninsured students. Equity will be considered in distributing grant funds.

Should programs target only students with limited means, or should services be available to all students?
The program seeks to expand access to behavioral health services for all Maryland students. At full implementation, services and supports should be available to all students in the state. Providers must seek reimbursement from Medicaid and/or commercial insurance, and may use grant funding to support copays and/or implement an income-based sliding scale fee schedule. As stated above, equity will be considered in the distribution of grant funds.

Is there an age range for youth to be served?
All ages, from pre-k through high school. Please read page 14 of the RFP for requirements related to pre-k. A proposal may focus on certain age groups.

Will programs require parental consent?
Providers must obtain parental consent for services in accordance with the laws of Maryland and the requirements of their Local Education Agency.

BUDGET AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE QUESTIONS

Can lines be added to the Budget Spreadsheet Template?
Yes, lines should be added to account for all parts of the applicant's budget.

If an applicant's budget / pricing model does not fit the template provided, is it acceptable to use a different format rather than the spreadsheet template?
The CHRC Budget Spreadsheet Template and Budget Narrative provided must be used for each proposal submitted.

Should applicants name persons in the budget, or just their licenses/positions?
Please use names for incumbent staff. For positions that will be hired, use the job title and/or license.

Should a grant manager or administrative staff salaries be budgeted under salaries or indirect?
Regular staff salaries. Calculate the percentage of their FTE.

For budgeting purposes, how much time will grantees be required to participate in ongoing grant monitoring and technical assistance by the CHRC, Consortium, and the National Center?
Please see Appendix G for information about the time commitment for EBP training and implementation support. The CHRC and National Center may require an estimated two hours per month per grantee for other technical assistance and learning collaboratives.

How should a summer program fill out the application?
Summer programs should request funding for the summer of 2024 as part of their fiscal year 2024 budget (i.e. December 2023-June 2024), and should request funding for summer of 2025 as part of their fiscal year 2025 budget (i.e. July 2024-June 2025). Please explain in your budget narrative.

Is there a budgetary limit to the amount of funding for contractors?
Grantees may work with contractors to implement grant activities. There is no defined limit for the amount of a grantee's budget that may be used for contractors. The Budget Spreadsheet and Budget Narrative should clearly state and explain all contract costs. The application should include a MOU or letter of commitment between the applicant organization and any contractors.

If an organization operates in multiple jurisdictions, it may be difficult to divide certain fixed costs, and there may be efficiencies/economies of scale depending on how many grants they are awarded. How should this be addressed in a budget that covers just one jurisdiction?
We appreciate the concern. Please provide a reasonable estimate in your budget spreadsheet template and include additional explanation in your project proposal.

Will the Commission accept rates for indirect costs that exceed 10%?
Yes, in limited circumstances. In accordance with MD Code Ann., State Finance and Procurement § 2- 208, the CHRC will allow for reimbursement of indirect costs to nonprofit organizations in an amount equal to the rate the nonprofit organization has negotiated and received for indirect costs under a direct federal award, or from a non-federal entity based on the cost principles in Subpart E of OMB Uniform Guidance.

Can both for-profit and non-profit companies apply for indirect costs?
Yes, however non-profits may be eligible for the higher rate discussed above.

Can a for-profit provider apply for grant funds at their usual rate, i.e. including "profit?"
Proposals should reflect actual costs and not include "profit." To the extent that services have a Medicaid rate, that rate should be used.

What are permissible expenses incurred as part of indirect costs?
Indirect costs include items that are associated with running the organization as a whole and benefit more than one project/program. Allowable indirect costs include items such as administrative staff salaries, rent, utilities, office supplies, insurance, etc.

Should start-up costs be budgeted separately from ongoing operating costs, or should that all be included in the 18-month budget?
All start-up costs should be included in the 18-month budget.

Payroll fringe costs are limited to 25%. Will fringe costs exceeding 25% be considered?

The Commission advises that the fringe rate be calculated at no more than 25%. If the grantee requests more than 25%, the applicant will be required to provide a compelling rationale for exceeding this amount. The Commission is willing to consider fringe requests above 25% on a case-by-case basis.

Should in-kind contributions by the applicant (e.g., equipment, staff) be included in the Budget Spreadsheet?
No. Please describe these contributions in your proposal.

Are expenses incurred prior to the execution of the grant agreement eligible for reimbursement under the grant?
No. Expenses incurred by applicants prior to full execution of the grant agreement are not eligible for reimbursement. Grant agreements are expected to be executed in December 2023.

Are these state or federal funds?
State funds, from the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Fund.

Will the CHRC reduce an applicant's budget? Will the CHRC consider funding certain parts of a proposal if other elements are found to be outside the scope of the RFP?
The CHRC may ask applicants to reduce their budgets and/or scale back their proposals, depending on the amount of available funds, geographic distribution, and other factors.

Is this a reimbursable grant or upfront? Will this be a cost reimbursable budget, per diem or other format? How frequently will grantees receive payments?
An initial fund distribution will be made upon execution of the grant documents. The fund distribution schedule will be provided after awards are made.

Will grantees be paid via check or electronic transfer?
Grant funds will be distributed either electronically or via check. CHRC staff encourages all programs who are awarded grant funds through the Consortium to enroll in the Comptroller's ACH program in order to receive grant fund electronically. Enrollment forms may be found here:
https://www.marylandtaxes.gov/forms/state-accounting/static-files/GADX10Form.pdf. Entities who are already receiving state funds electronically do not need to reenroll. Entities who do not elect to receive funds electronically may experience a delay in receiving funds via check.

Do grantees need to request a budget modification for changes in personnel, i.e. staff turnover?
So long as the position titles and salaries remain the same, grantees do not need to notify the CHRC of staffing changes. If a position remains vacant for more than four months, we would ask to be notified, as this may impede your ability to deliver services and meet your service targets. Notification may occur through regular reporting requirements.

The RFP states that at the end of the grant period, grantees may apply for a continuation of funds. If there is increased need for the service or a need for the service in another county(ies), can the grantee apply for a larger grant, or will the continued funding be the same amount as the initial grant?
Yes, after the end of this grant period, grantees will have the opportunity to revise their programs and budgets and reapply. For program changes during the current grant period, grantees will use a standard CHRC grant modification request process.

How should an applicant indicate on their budget spreadsheet that funds are requested for attending school meetings?
Applicants may factor school meetings and other nonbillable activities into their requested salaries for FTE employees.
For employees that are compensated using a Fee for Service model, applicants may estimate the total amount of staff time that will be spent on school meetings during the grant period, propose a reimbursement rate that corresponds to Medicaid rates, and calculate a budget request under Staff Salaries. Requests for more than 10 staff members may be consolidated on a single budget line. The line may be titled "Nonbillable staff activities." Explanatory information should be provided in the Budget Narrative.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION QUESTIONS

Can a proposal exceed the limit of 10-12 pages?
Applicants are encouraged to be concise in their proposals. The narrative portion of the application should not exceed 10-12 pages, but appendices and supplemental information may exceed the page limit.

Is it necessary to print a copy of the application cover sheet?
Service provider applicants are required to fill out a Smart Sheet that will serve as an electronic cover sheet. Service provider applicants may print and scan this information for their application package, but this is optional. The URL for the SmartSheet is:
https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/118606f8811140b189656eb5d58bfb79

Are applicants required to submit a financial audit?
No, applicants are not required to submit a financial audit for this RFP.

Are applicants required to submit 501(c)(3) letters?
No, non-profit status is not required to apply for grant funding, and applicants are not required to submit letters demonstrating 501(c)(3) status.

Can applicants submit the two hard copies of the full proposal in person?
Yes, you may submit the full proposal in person at 45 Calvert Street, Room 336, Annapolis, MD 21401. You will need to sign in at the guard station and present a photo ID.

May grant proposals include clickable links?
Yes, you may submit your application as a PDF with clickable links.

Should the electronic submission include all the application items or only the Executive Summary and Full Project Proposal?
All application items should be sent both electronically and by mail.

Is there a preference for how hard copies are bound?
We prefer comb bound or spiral bound. No binders, please.