

Standard Bid Request for Proposals for:
Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports for Educators

Issued by:

Vermont Agency of Education

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Proposals due: January 31, 2023

Contact person for this RFP:

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Overview

In May 2022, the VT General Assembly passed [Act 112](#), An act relating to the provision of mental health support. Section two of the act requires that the Agency of Education (AOE), in consultation with the Department of Mental Health (DMH), contract with one or more organizations to provide statewide COVID-19 recovery supports for educators and school staff. The support shall be provided by mental health clinicians and focused on COVID-19 recovery, on a statewide, regional, or district-specific level as needed.

This request for proposals (RFP) seeks one or more contractors to provide mental health services through multiple modalities to VT educators, to support their recovery from the effects of COVID-19. The effects of the pandemic have changed the needs of many students, and thereby impacted the demands on educators and school staff. It is essential that Vermont’s educators and school staff are strong and healthy so that they can best assist students in their recovery processes across social and emotional, mental health, academic, and student engagement domains. Bidders should respond to the requirements of the scope of work in a way that includes best practices for accomplishing the deliverables based on their specific knowledge and experience.

Bidders should review Vermont’s current broader wellness initiative for educators’ COVID recovery with the Vermont Education Health Initiative, Planning Action Towards Health ([VEHI PATH](#)). Successful proposals will not duplicate services provided through the VEHI PATH wellness program but will supplement this initiative with educator supports addressing acute, just-in-time needs. One example of such services may be providing rapid support to an educator who has experienced severe behavioral challenges in their classroom and requires psychological support to fully re-engage. Another example might be assisting school personnel after they have experienced a traumatic event, such as the loss of a student.

Contract period: The proposed period is March 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024. The definite period will be stated in the executed contract upon agreement with the State and the Contractor.

RFP Timetable

RFP posted	1/9/2023
Deadline for questions about RFP	1/13/2023
Proposal submission deadline	1/31/2023
Selection notification	Upon successful review of received bids.
Anticipated commencement of contract	3/1/2023

Proposal Guidelines and Requirements

Bidder Qualifications

For a proposal to be considered, a bidder must demonstrate:

1. Appropriate mental health clinician licensure or certification (e.g., Mental Health License or equivalent) for relevant staff, commensurate with the proposed work.
2. Specific plan to provide mental health services and supports to VT educators, adopting strategies that include individual, group, and/or community-based approaches.

Educator roles include:

- a. Teachers
 - b. Paraprofessionals
 - c. Principals and Superintendents
 - d. Other support staff
3. Experience using evidence-based practices to provide mental health support in educational settings.

Scope of Work

The Vermont Agency of Education seeks proposals for an organization(s) to provide evidence-based (as defined by US DOE) statewide mental health supports specific to COVID-19 recovery. Proposals may include opportunities for educators to engage with mental health supports through a variety of approaches (e.g. reflective practice, psychoeducation, etc.) and through a variety of modalities including in-person supportive groups or workshops, and/or virtual or tele-health formats.

Specific responsibilities include, at minimum, the following:

1. Communicating and promoting services and/or supports through multiple means statewide. The AOE and DMH will provide district-level contact information and disseminate information statewide as needed.
2. Providing mental health support through services that are timely and responsive to educators who may need to process challenging experiences during the school day and gain insights to improve the education of students and educators' own personal and professional well-being.
3. Developing and utilizing surveys, as needed, to understand participants' current state as well as progress/improvement before and after utilizing available supports.
4. Documenting the success of project objectives (e.g., number of participants, number and type of forum or group, and geographical region), improvement of educators' reported stress levels, or related indicators.
5. Submit a final report jointly to AOE and DMH that provides, at minimum, the number of educators participating in receiving support, the amount of time or duration of the support, as well as measures of success for the interventions.

Additional Scope of Work and Deliverables

1. Project plan w/in 14 days of the start of the contract that includes the following:
 - a. Project plan and timeline with identified benchmarks for monitoring success
 - b. Persons responsible for the work and their specific duties to be carried out for the project
 - c. Communications plan and outreach strategies
 - d. Plan for tracking project progress and success

2. Collection of use data and similar measures (e.g., framed within a Results-Based Accountability Approach) such as the number of educators participating in receiving support, the amount of time or duration of the support, as well as measures of success for the interventions. Successful bidders should communicate and implement a concrete plan for demonstrating how their project has improved outcomes for educators.
3. Resources, materials, communications.
4. Final project report.

The successful proposal will describe in detail how the bidder will:

1. Meet the requirements of the Scope of Work including Deliverables.
2. Ensure the project stays on track.
3. Describe how the proposed solution/interventions will ensure participant privacy.
4. Plan for and demonstrate improved outcomes for educators.
5. Ensure applicable materials, surveys, handouts, and communications:
 - a. meet accessibility requirements of Section 504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (508 Compliance).
 - b. are formatted according to the [State of Vermont Brand Standards](#).
6. Develop a budget that clearly identifies, at minimum, the following elements:
 - a. Cost for providing mental health support to VT educators that describes any specific metrics around usage (such as per-person, hourly, minimum/maximum number of sessions)
 - b. Administrative costs
 - c. Costs for marketing and communications
7. Include Curriculum Vitae (CV)/resume with licenses/certifications as appropriate of all persons providing direct services to educators.

Note: Bidders should respond to the requirements of the scope of work in a way that includes best practices for accomplishing the deliverables based on their specific knowledge and experience.

General Requirements

Single Point of Contact: All communications regarding this RFP shall be in writing and addressed to the Contact Person indicated on page one of this RFP, Meg Porcella (aoe.sssdivisionleadsteam@vermont.gov).

Questions: Any vendor requiring clarification of any section of this proposal or wishing to comment or take exception to any requirements or other portion of the RFP must submit specific questions in writing no later than January 13, 2023. Questions should be e-mailed to Meg Porcella at AOE.SSSDivisionLeadsTeam@vermont.gov. Any objection to the RFP, or to any provision of the RFP, that is not raised in writing on or before the last day of the question period is waived. At the close of the question period, a copy of all questions or comments and the State's responses will be posted along with the RFP on the [Vermont Business Registry](#) bid site. Every effort will be made to have these available as soon after the question period ends, contingent on the number and complexity of the questions.

Confidentiality: Bidders should be aware that all materials submitted will become part of the Request for Proposal

contract file and will be considered public records under the Vermont Public Records Act, 1 VSA Sections 315-320. The Agency of Education prefers that vendors *not* file proprietary information with their bids. If the bidder finds it necessary to include material that the bidder considers to be proprietary, a trade secret or otherwise confidential, the bidder must: (1) clearly designate any information in the response the bidder believes is proprietary as “confidential”; (2) provide a written explanation sufficient to justify each exemption from release under the Vermont Public Records Act, including the prospective harm to the competitive position of the bidder if the identified material were to be released; and (3) include a redacted copy of the response for any portions of the bid that the vendor designates confidential. Under no circumstances can the entire response or price information be marked confidential. Responses so marked will not be considered and will be returned to the vendor. Vendors filing submissions agree that final discretion to release or exempt all material so identified as confidential rests with the Agency.

Acceptance of the Proposal: The State reserves the right to waive minor irregularities in a bidder’s proposal, providing such action is in the best interest of the State. Where the State may waive minor irregularities, such waiver shall in no way modify the RFP requirements or excuse the bidder from full compliance with the RFP specifications. The State reserves the right to request clarification or correction of the proposal, reject any or all proposals received, or cancel the procurement at any time prior to an award. A proposal may be rejected for: (1) the failure of the bidder to adhere to one or more provisions established in this RFP; (2) the failure of the bidder to submit required information in the format specified in this RFP; (3) the failure of the bidder to adhere to generally accepted ethical and professional principles during the RFP process; or (4) for any other reason deemed to be in the best interest of the State. In the event that the State is not successful in negotiating a contract with the selected bidder, the State reserves the option of negotiating with another bidder.

Form of Contract: The contract between AOE and the winning bidder will be required to be in the form of the Standard Vermont State Contract, including but not limited to standard provisions, which can be found at:

[State of Vermont Standard Contract Template 12-12-18](#)

All contracts of the State of Vermont have standard provisions, which are included with this RFP as “Attachment C” and can also be found at:

[Attachment C Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants 12-15-17](#)

Exclusive Ownership: Any and all data, surveys analysis, reports, studies and other complete or incomplete work product prepared or developed by the contractor in connection with the contract shall become the exclusive property of the State and will not be copyrighted or resold by the contractor.

Costs of Preparing Proposals: All costs incurred by the bidder during the preparation of the proposal will be the sole responsibility of the bidder. Unless explicitly stated, the State will not reimburse the bidder for any costs associated with submission of a proposal.

Use of Subcontractors: Bidder is required to provide a list of subcontractors that bidder anticipates using on the job along with lists of subcontractors' subcontractors and the names of insurers by whom those subcontractors are insured for workers' compensation purposes. Include additional pages if necessary. This is not a requirement for subcontractor's providing supplies only and no labor to the overall contract or project.

Submission and Evaluation of Proposals

Proposal Delivery: The method of delivery shall be via e-mail attachment (Microsoft Word or PDF document) and shall arrive in the e-mail in-box of the above Contact Person no later than **11:59 pm January 31, 2023** and should include the project title, VT SPDG Part C Professional Development, in the subject line of the e-mail.

Proposal Format: Use standard 8.5" x 11" document format, single-spaced and use not less than a twelve point font. Write the program proposal in the order given in the below criteria for scoring chart. Address the proposal specifications in the same manner as the criteria for scoring chart, title and number each item.

Proposals responding to the RFP are expected to cover the content listed below.

1. Complete description of the bidder's qualifications, background and experience, including resumes for key staff; description of previous work similar to that described in the Scope of Work performed for similar organizations; and evaluation data and samples of that work.
 - a. Briefly describe or list previous contracts/agreements for similar services performed in the past three years, with a brief narrative describing the nature of services and to whom. Provide a contact person for reference purposes for each contract/agreement.
2. The bidder's understanding of the RFP requirements, including:
 - a. A detailed outline of the plan for addressing each area of work including a detailed description of deliverables for each part; and
 - b. Strengths, skills, and approaches that the bidder brings to each deliverable; and
 - c. A description of any perceived difficulties in this project, together with potential and recommended approaches for their solutions.
3. The attached price quotation form includes costs associated with each major scope of work and associated deliverables.

- a. Include a description of the number of “person days” required to fulfill each deliverable.
- b. Include a description of the number of “person days” required to fulfill the management/oversight needed to produce each deliverable.
- c. Include a description of other costs to produce each deliverable.

Proposal Evaluation: Proposals will be evaluated by one or more knowledgeable individuals from the Agency of Education. Evaluation will be based upon the bidder’s responses to the sections outlined in the below scoring criteria chart.

Scoring is intended to clarify strengths and weaknesses of proposals relative to one another and to provide guidance to decision-makers. The sum of the scores of the members will become the proposal’s final score.

Award Announcement: The winning proposal will not be announced until a contract is signed and finalized.

The below criteria sub-categories should be changed to meet project needs. Note that the Program Cost category is required with a minimum possible points of 20.

CRITERIA FOR SCORING	Total possible points	Applicant Score
1. Quality of Bidder's Experience and Capacity to Perform	40	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Describe the bidder's understanding, experience, and knowledge for the project. b. Describe the bidder's experience with conducting similar projects. c. Describe licensures or accreditations of the individual or organization or other indicators of quality review that attest to the quality of the bidder or bidder programs. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide a description of how bidder will respond to program goals and how the bidder will report its performance and quality. b. Describe how the bidder ensures projects remain on track for proposed period. c. Describe how the bidder will work with AOE program staff to ensure appropriate, timely and accurate completion of project. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lowest bid received by the State of Vermont. 		
	100	

Price Quotation Form
Submit this form at the end of the proposal.

The below categories can be changed to meet project needs.

Provide a brief description of each item and the price associated. Only complete the sections and items that apply to your proposal. This form can be expanded as needed (not limited to one page).

Goal area	Price Quotation	Justification/Details
Professional Development	Management: Personnel: Materials/Supplies : Contracts: Other:	
Technical Assistance	Management: Personnel: Materials/Supplies : Contracts: Other:	
Evaluation and Assessment	Management: Personnel: Materials/Supplies : Contracts: Other:	
Overall	Other (itemized):	
TOTAL QUOTE		