



Request for Proposal
Low-threshold Harm Reduction Day Engagement Spaces

Bureau of Recovery Services

06/21/2022

I. Overview

The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) is the local public health department for the City of Boston. BPHC’s mission is to protect, preserve, and promote the health and well-being of all Boston residents, particularly the most vulnerable.

The changing landscape of the opioid and overall drug epidemic in Boston compounded with public space changes due to Covid-19 restrictions, has exposed gaps in our continuum of care for people who use drugs, specifically safe spaces to spend time during the day. Both nationally and within the City of Boston, having lower threshold and harm reduction spaces accessible during the day have been shown to reduce the barriers that people who use drugs (PWUD) face to supportive services and access to care.

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to fill a critical need in the daytime continuum of care for individuals with substance use disorder, specifically individuals experiencing homelessness and substance use disorder. BPHC is seeking to expand low-threshold daytime spaces to an additional two neighborhoods in the City of Boston. The daytime engagement spaces will provide a supportive environment that offers basic services such as food, shelter, clothing, referral to housing and treatment resources, access to harm reduction services and medical care, and fosters a sense of community and belonging. Community based organizations are encouraged to apply to enhance current programming or implement a new space. Enabling individuals to receive the support they need in the community they reside is an overarching goal of the RFP. The City will convene programs funded by this RFP to provide technical support around subjects such as community relations and implementation.

As part of BPHC’s efforts to have an equitable procurement process, BPHC will consider and encourage unrepresentative businesses that includes; Minority-owned Business Enterprises (MBE), Women-owned Business Enterprises (WBE), Veteran-owned Business Enterprises (VBE), Disability-owned Business Enterprise (DOBE), Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Business Enterprises (LGBTBE), Minority Non Profit(MNPO), Women Non Profit(WNPO), Minority Women Non Profit(MWNPO) and local businesses to apply to this RFP.

II. RFP Timeline

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| Thursday May 5, 2022 | Legal Notice Publication in the Boston Globe |
| Friday June 21, 2022 | RFP available online at www.bphc.org/RFP by 10:00 AM EST. RFP will also be disseminated via e-mail to relevant networks. |
| Friday July 1, 2022 | Questions due in writing by 5:00 PM EST to: Jennifer Tracey jtracey@bphc.org Subject – Proposal for Low-threshold Day Engagement Space |
| Tuesday July 5, 2022 | Responses to questions available for viewing on www.bphc.org/RFP by 5:00 PM EST |

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| Monday July 18, 2022 | <p>Proposal due via email by July 18, 2022, by 5:00 PM EST:</p> <p>Subject – Proposal for Low-threshold Day Engagement Space</p> <p>Email: Procurement@bphc.org</p> <p>NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS DEADLINE</p> |
| Friday July 22, 2022 | <p>Eligible candidates will be notified of an in-person or phone interview by 5:00 PM EST</p> |
| Wednesday July 27, 2022 | <p>Notification of Decision: Selected candidate will be notified by or before 5:00 PM EST of the award.</p> <p>BPHC has the discretion to extend this time period without notice to the proposers. All proposals shall remain valid and open for a period of one hundred twenty (120) days from the proposal submission date unless a proposer notifies BPHC of its withdrawal. In addition, BPHC may cancel this bid if funding does not become available for the project.</p> |

III. Scope of Work

Low-threshold day engagement spaces aim to accomplish the following goals:

- Create a comfortable space for individuals to begin or continue engagement in services,
- Provide a safe and supportive co-ed space that allows for individuals to spend leisure time in, access services, and
- Offer public safety and neighborhood partners a location to guide other individuals who may need services or support.

Proposals for small daytime engagement spaces should aim to serve 20-50 individuals at a time, with up to 200 individuals/day receiving services throughout the day depending on capacity. This space would serve as a place where individuals can access essential services and support in a welcoming environment including weekends. Proposals should include plans that address the following scope of work:

1. Create a low-threshold day space for people to gather safely and access harm reduction, clinical, social, and other services.
2. Offer services at least five days a week including weekend days, offering early morning and afternoon hours. See best practices above for range of services to be provided.
3. Conduct outreach and communications to increase awareness and use of sites.
4. Ensure provision of harm reduction services and partnership with Syringe Service Programs to ensure access to safe drug use supplies and naloxone for participants.
5. Ensure staff are trained in harm reduction approaches and overdose education and naloxone use.
6. Create partnerships with agency's services/programs so day space participants will be able to access other, related services (i.e., clinical care, Medication for Opioid Use Disorder, housing navigation and HIV services)

7. Participate in monthly calls with BPHC team and other day space programs to strategies and best practices, including client/guest feedback and input on services.
8. Attend a convening consisting of programs funded by this RFP, to share resources and support around implementation and community relations.
9. Document use of the day space in terms of participant demographics, attendance, times, services utilized; and referrals made. Report day space utilization data to BPHC monthly.

Qualitative and quantitative feedback and measures for evaluating the program can be collected from:

- Admissions data
- Daily logs of services provided, and referrals made by type
- Staff and guest surveys
- Establishing an advisory group
- 1:1 interviews and check-ins

Measures can include:

- Unique individuals served
- Length of stay
- Services received on-site
- Connection to care (medical services, MOUD, SUD treatment etc.)
- Referrals to housing services (transitional, permanent supportive housing, etc.)

The proposed day engagement model will depend on the physical location, space, services, and partnerships of the applicants. Several best practices identified from the BPHC Engagement Center experience are described below based on several factors: location and physical space, available or referred to service, staffing, and community relations. While all these elements may not be feasible for all day engagement spaces, these elements can act as guidelines, helping applicants assess and plan for their response.

Location and Physical Space

- Walking distance (i.e., within .25 miles) to public transportation (subway and bus stops).
- Access to transportation vouchers to support guests to referrals to care, housing opportunities, and medical appointments if public transportation is not an option.
- Street level access (first floor).
- Access to bathrooms and sinks or portable toilets and handwashing stations.
- Indoor space with comfortable chairs and places for people to gather.
- Opportunities to engage in activities (art, gardening, music, haircuts, games, yoga, acupuncture, television, etc.).
- Outdoor space

Supportive Available Services

- Drop-in model vs. structured sessions and activities.
- Access to basic first aid care, including minor wound care.
- Provision of hot beverages, water, and refreshments. Provision of a meal a plus.

- Provision of harm reduction services or formalized partnership with harm reduction service provider on site: overdose prevention and education including naloxone, fentanyl drug testing strips, safer injection supplies, condoms; risk reduction counseling.
- Provision of directly or through formalized partnership to provide clinical care, medication for opioid use disorder (OTP; OBOT), mental health services; Provision of HIV, viral hepatitis, and STI testing and treatment highly recommended.
- Referral to SUD services, including ATS/detox, and Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD).
- Case management, and housing triage/navigation or referral to housing services.
- Linkages to shelter and other overnight resources.
- Additional supportive services include employment opportunities, legal services, and identification procurement.
- Stations with charging capability and internet access.

Staffing

This space will work to ensure it is serving the people who will use it - both guests and staff. Involvement of people who use drugs and front-line staff in every stage of planning, programming, and evaluation is crucial to the overall success.

- Depending on size of space, staff for the drop-in day center include: Manager; Direct Care Staff; Security (outside facility and inside safety checks)
- Note, additional staff including harm reduction service providers and clinical providers are not included here given assumption that those services are already being provided by the organization or through a formalized partnership with an outside organization.

Staff Trainings

To ensure success in a space that is accommodating to guests with complex lived experiences and needs:

- Trauma-informed care
- Overdose Prevention/Narcan administration
- Harm Reduction
- Motivational Interviewing
- De-escalation
- Racial equity
- Additional training of staff in the following areas: available housing and treatment resources.
- Staff representative of racial, ethnic, and linguistic characteristics of people served.

Community Relations

- Provide neighborhood residents and businesses an agency point-of-contact and their contact information
- Establish with participants an agreed upon good neighbor policy
- Create and engage guests in community work program

IV. Minimum Qualifications

- Applicants that demonstrate the ability to meet the scope of work in the City of Boston, including community health centers, housing, and shelter providers; substance use service providers; faith-based organizations; and community-based organizations.
- Applicants with Spanish bilingual staff are strongly encouraged.
- Demonstrated harm reduction approach and services.
- Involvement of people who use drugs and front-line staff in every stage of planning, programming, and evaluation is crucial to the overall success

V. Proposal Requirements

Proposal narrative and budget should be no longer than 8 pages, 1.5 space, 12-point Times New Roman font, standard 1-inch margins. Attachments (such as workplans, resumes, or additional information) not included in the page length.

Proposal narratives should address the following content:

1. Organizational background and expertise relevant to this scope of service
2. Approach when working with clients to meet the goals of your low-threshold day space, including policies and protocols related to creating a welcoming space
3. Available services, indicating which are provided by your program and which through a partnership. For any partnerships, describe the details of the partnership and include a letter of support describing the specific nature of their role with this program.
4. Physical space and access issues
5. Outreach and communications messaging about program to ensure awareness and use of site
6. Staffing model, including staff roles and responsibilities, and FTEs; Staff training plans. Include resumes of key staff.
7. Safety plans and protocols
8. Ongoing service utilization data collection plan
9. Anticipated challenges and proposed plans to address
10. Budget for Year 1 (July 1, 2022-August 31, 2023), including a detailed budget justification describing each line item.

VI. Period of Performance and Funding Amount

- The contract will begin on or about August 31, 2022, through August 31, 2023, with potential to renew, depending on performance. The BPHC Standard Contract or Subaward Agreement forms are required and must be fully executed before services can begin.
- Budgets should not exceed \$500,000 for the 12-month period.
- BPHC has the discretion to extend this deadline as needed without notice to the bidders. In addition, BPHC may cancel this bid if funding does not become available for the project.

VII. Proposal Scoring

| Scoring Criteria | Points |
|------------------------------------------|--------|
| Organizational Experience | 20 |
| Program Model/Approach/Services | 20 |
| Physical Space/Access and Outreach Plans | 20 |
| Staffing Plan and Safety Plans | 20 |
| Budget Addresses Needs | 20 |
| Total Points | 100 |

VIII. Submission Instructions

Please submit your Proposal by Monday, July 18, 2022, 5:00 PM EST

Subject: Proposal for Low-threshold Day Engagement Space

Email: Procurement@bphc.org