

Request for Information



State of Alaska
Department of
Division of

Date Issued: May 5, 2022

Response Deadline: May 16, 2022 – 2:30PM AKST

RFI 0622-084 - PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION BODY

A. Introduction:

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Behavioral Health, is seeking letters of interest from qualified offerors for the Certification Program for Alaska Behavioral Health Peer Support Specialists. The goal of the project is to maintain the infrastructure of policy and procedure; continue with the application and certification process; and maintain a database to track applications, locations, and certifications from peers in FY23. The offeror will also need to have a process in place to complete any recertification applications as many Peer Supports will need recertified in the later part of FY23.

B. Background Information:

For the past several years, the Division of Behavioral Health has worked to create a Behavioral Health Peer Support Specialist Certification program. This certification is applicable for both the substance use disorder and mental health treatment fields. In 2021, the certification process was launched and began certifying Peer and Traditional Support Specialist for the State of Alaska. The current certification body also works with the Advisory Group (made up of a majority of behavioral health peers to guide the development and continuing work of the certification body) to address any changes or inclusions that need to be made in the certification process. The certification body must follow the original recommendations of the workgroup that established the original certification process. For any deviation from the original certifying process, there must be a majority agreement of the advisory group. The certification was developed to provide assurances that peers were trained with SAMHSA core competencies in peer support work. The certification process evaluates training requirements; documents; employment history; education records; supervisory hours; and maintains a matrix for multi-tiered certifications.

C. Scope of Work

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Behavioral Health, is seeking letters of interest from qualified offerors for the continuation of the Certification Program for Alaska Behavioral Health Peer Support Specialists. The Certification will enable those with a lived experience of a mental health or substance use challenge to utilize their experience and training in helping others with similar issues.

The following tasks include but are not limited to the major areas of ongoing support work required for this project.

1. The Certification Body is expected to maintain the current infrastructure for Certification that has been developed, maintain the policy and procedures, forms, and website; maintain the application process and the recertification process; maintaining the database on applicants, location and certification; and informing the public on peer support certification.
2. Manage and maintenance on the website for certification.

3. Have a developed application process.
4. Have a developed program for recertification applications starting in December 2022/January 2023.
5. Have a developed Code of Ethics for peer support.
6. Have an approval process developed with the Peer Support Commissioners.
7. Conduct the Peer Support Advisory Board.
8. Acting Liaison between the Advisory Board and the Peer Support Commissioners.
9. This must be operational on July 1, 2022

D. Deliverables

1. Accept, review, and certify applications for Peer Support Specialists.
2. Maintain database and reporting on applicants, location, status, and certification to the Division.
3. Continue participation and oversight with the Advisory Board. The certification body will continue to meet quarterly and review/address any issues that may need to be modified to enhance the certification process. The certification body will also oversee the following with the Advisory Board:
4. Advisory group should provide input on all aspects of the Certification process. (Contractor is responsible for advisory group-related travel)
5. Majority of advisory group should be BH peers
6. Should include one representative from the Division of Behavioral Health
7. Should include one or more CBHC organizational representatives
8. Continue to maintain the Peer Support manual and other materials to continue the certification program. The certification body will manage, but not limited to the following materials:
 - a. Policy and Procedures; Eligibility Requirements; Training Requirements; matrix of requirements that include timeframe for training requirements, hours of employment and supervision; grandfathering (if extended); reciprocity; certification renewal documents and process; appeals; complaints and sanctions; inactive status; and fees.
9. Maintain the program website. This would include:
 - a. Link to Peer Certification Manual
 - b. Information on Training availability
 - c. Frequently Asked Questions
 - d. Employment Opportunities
10. Accept, review, and recertify applicants up for renewal of their current certification.
11. Market and educate peer support to the public, this should include:
 - a. Correspondence to stakeholder groups (peers, providers)
 - b. Presentations at behavioral health and peer conferences
 - c. Announcement of any changes in Peer Certification

E. Preferred Minimum Experience:

The interested parties must have:

1. At least three (3) years in the last five (5) of experience managing state-wide certification and recertification programs.
2. At least three (3) years in the last five (5) of documented experience managing a related program that includes writing, maintaining, and updating policy and procedure; continuing an application and recertification process; managing a database; and creating public-facing information (i.e., manuals, websites).
3. Developed program, forms, training manual and website for peer support certification.

4. Developed standards and a process to recertify renewal applications which will begin in December 2022/January 2023.
5. Developed a Code of Ethics for Peer Support that are founded upon SAMHSA principles.
6. Lead the Peer Support Advisory Board and be a liaison with the Peer Support Commission.
7. Communicated and worked efficiently with Peer Support Commissioners around approval process of applications.
8. Prior experience in soliciting and approving applications for Advisory Board members and Commissioners.

F. Budget

- Not to exceed \$300,000 over the 5-year contract life span. This budget allows for Initial Term plus Four (4) renewal options. NOTE: Special funding in year 1 for \$40,000 must be billable and expended by 9/30/22.

G. Questions

1. What current experience do you have with the certification process, Advisory Board and Commissioners?
2. Does your program have ideas or suggestions to improve certification rates across the state?
3. Does your program have suggestions that would help with the certification process? And encourage individuals to become certified?
4. What is your experience in meeting program goals for certification programs?
5. How do you see growth in the certification process?
6. Demonstrate an established program operational by July 1, 2022 and a recertification process for December 2022/January 2023
7. How do you propose to provide adequate support to meet the application needs?

H. Response Information:**How to Participate**

Interested applicants/firms who believe they can provide the services described above should indicate their interest by submitting an electronic response (.pdf format is preferable) with the following information:

- Company name
- Contact information (email) for the individual(s) who should be notified if DHSS releases a solicitation
- A summary that clearly describes your company's capabilities and experience related to providing the services described in this RFI.
- A summary that clearly describes how the applicant/firm meets or exceeds the *preferred minimum experience* above (Section E).
- Responses to Questions in the Section G of this RFI posting.
- A statement confirming that the company anticipates the project deliverables, as shown in Section D, are reasonably within the estimated budget provided (Section F). Or, if not, why not?
- A summary of any concerns regarding the project as described. What potential obstacles should be anticipated?

I. Submission Instructions:

Applicants/firms must submit their response as a PDF file, sent via email, on or before May 16, 2022, 2:30PM. The response should be attached to the email with RFQ 0622-084 Peer Support Specialist Certification Body included as the subject line of the email to the following:

Annalisa Haynie

Procurement Specialist

Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

Annalisa.Haynie@alaska.gov

It is the responsibility of the interested party to follow up with the procurement specialist shown above to ensure that response was received prior to the time and date specified at the top of this RFI.

Important Notice:

This Request for Information does not constitute a formal solicitation. The purpose of the RFI is to determine if there are qualified offerors out there who would be interested in bidding on these services. The State will use this information to potentially develop a future solicitation.

The State of Alaska is not responsible for any costs associated with the preparation of responses. The issuance of the Request for Information does not obligate the state to purchase any goods or services, extend any rights to prospective vendors nor guarantee that the State of Alaska will proceed with a formal solicitation.