

# Request for Information



State of Alaska  
Department of Health  
Division of Behavioral Health

**Date Issued: April 2, 2024**

## CRISIS TRAINING INITIATIVE

### **Introduction:**

The Alaska Department of Health (DOH), Division of Behavioral Health is seeking information on qualified vendors who could implement training for crisis services providers, including peer support specialists, parent navigators, behavioral health aides, substance use disorder counselors, professional level individuals such as master's level clinicians, any individual who is providing crisis care such as medical personnel, and crisis program administrators. The initial training is to assist in shifting our culture of crisis care to one that reflects the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) essential values in crisis care as we develop a crisis response continuum of care (based on the SAMHSA National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care Best Practices Toolkit).

This contract is to obtain a vendor to develop and provide a comprehensive suite of training on crisis services. Training goals include the provision of live webinars that will be recorded or automated for future use. Additionally, the vendor would develop a training portfolio of asynchronous modules on the framework of crisis management to be used on a State of Alaska training platform. It is essential that initial training is focused on the culture of crisis care, the factors that impact a person-centered approach, decreasing iatrogenic harm, and promoting safer care for individuals in crisis with the essential feature of the "care experience."

### **Background Information:**

The State of Alaska (SOA), Department of Health (DOH), Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) is using the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care Best Practices Toolkit to guide our work in developing a crisis response continuum of care, which promotes developing a coordinated system that provides crisis services to anyone, anywhere and anytime with: someone to talk to (e.g., a crisis line), someone to respond (e.g., a mobile crisis team) and a place to go (e.g., a crisis stabilization center, a short-term residential program, etc.). To fulfill a best practice model statewide, it is essential for crisis workers who are fulfilling this critical work to be trained on relevant crisis intervention strategies and practices. This would include workers across the spectrum, such as peers, parent navigators, behavioral health aides, substance use disorder counselors, and professional-level individuals. Offering training in crisis services for crisis care providers statewide also creates a common structure, approach, and language for those working in the crisis continuum. Additionally, it has the secondary gain of increasing the number of trained peer support specialists to bolster the behavioral health and substance use disorder system of care.

While DBH has been promoting and developing the 1115 Medicaid Waiver Demonstration crisis response services, the state is still in the early development phase of implementation of a full crisis continuum. The current culture of care is one that relies on the expert evaluator as the driver of crisis care and an over-

reliance on the use of emergency departments and psychiatric hospitalizations. This culture of care must change to adapt to a new person-centered model that focuses on the “care experience” and treats individuals in crisis at the least restrictive level of care.

While Alaska's current training infrastructure supports crisis services, it is not comprehensive and is unable to fully meet the needs of the workforce as we develop our crisis continuum of care. Increasing our workforce via peer support specialists, as well as providing training to those individuals who are providing crisis response services, will be critical in ensuring Alaska’s success as we move forward. A series of universal training for crisis service workers will ensure a shift in our crisis care culture to meet SAMHSA values, provide a more structured and consistent approach in line with best practices, a common language as individuals work across regions, and provide the workforce with support in this difficult and challenging work. Finally, it will provide our rural providers who have limited resources with a valuable training resource for their staff.

For this contract, the topics of the crisis intervention training must include the SAMHSA essential values in crisis work and incorporate the SAMHSA Essential Principles of Crisis Response. Synchronous training must be developed and offered, which focuses on the culture of crisis work, including the factors that impact a person-centered approach, decreasing iatrogenic harm, and promoting safer care for individuals in crisis with the essential feature of the “care experience.” Core competencies for these trainings should include collaborative ways to reduce hospitalization. The training must be focused on helping the providers recognize their previous beliefs related to expert-directed care, challenge this approach, and teach providers alternative ways to conceptualize crisis care that focuses on the individual's care experience. Trainees would develop skills to reframe crisis situations and engage the individual in crisis to enhance the client experience in a positive way, preserving the dignity of the individual. The vendor will teach core concepts and skills related to crisis engagement and alternative options to manage a crisis. These training will be combined training with peers, clinicians, or other professionals working in the crisis system as well as administrators to fully understand the culture of person-centered crisis care.

Additional asynchronous training modules may include topics such as the following: familiarization with the crisis care continuum and model, youth crisis response, de-escalation, skill development, negotiating the system when seeking services for individuals, crisis safety planning, wellness, and recovery action plans, the peer support model, ethics and boundaries, trauma-informed care, suicide prevention, cross-cultural training, clinical support for workers & self-care, additional topics such as work with special populations as identified. Additionally, this contract would include ongoing technical assistance to the State and providers on current and future training needs.

**Year One (1)** – This contract would include three (3) live synchronous training, which would be recorded for future use on a State of Alaska training platform. These trainings would be on the core competencies of working with individuals in crisis from a care experience perspective as outlined above. The vendor would begin to develop fifteen (15) asynchronous supplemental skills-focused crisis curricula (0.5 - 1.5 hours in length) to post on the state training platform. These would align with the topics listed above and include informational presentations or PowerPoints & post-test evaluations for the training platform. Additional technical assistance to the State and providers would support further development of the state training program for crisis work.

**Year Two (2)** – This contract would include two (2) live synchronous training, which would be recorded for the state training platform. These trainings would continue the crisis core competencies framework established in Year One (1) experience and community-based crisis care for state-wide crisis care providers who have never completed the training. The vendor would continue to develop fifteen (15) additional

asynchronous supplemental crisis training (0.5 - 1.5 hours in length) to post on the state training platform. These would align with the topics listed above and include informational presentations or PowerPoints & post-test evaluations for the training platform. Technical assistance will be continued to the State and providers related to the ongoing training and the expansion of the state training program for crisis work.

**Year Three (3)** – This contract would include two (2) live synchronous training, which would be recorded for the state training platform. These trainings would continue the crisis core competencies framework established in Year One (1) and Year Two (2) of the contract that focuses on the care experience and community-based crisis care for state-wide providers state-wide who have not completed the training. The vendor would continue to develop ten (10) additional asynchronous supplemental crisis webinars (0.5 - 1.5 hours in length) to post on the state training platform. These would align with the topics listed above and include informational presentations or PowerPoints & post-test evaluations for the training platform. Technical assistance will be continued to the State and providers on ongoing training and future planning of the needs of the state.

**Response Information:**

Interested vendors are invited to submit responses to the following:

1. Provide the vendor's company name, address, telephone number, and email address, as well as the names of the individuals who would be fulfilling the work identified in the RFI.
2. Provide an overview of the vendor's experience in providing training that is consistent with the description in this RFI. Please include resumes that highlight the experience and training. Please note any proprietary content to such training that the vendor may already have in this content area.
3. Describe any current projects that align with this RFI.
4. Describe the vendor's proposed plan to provide the services identified in this RFI, potential start date and timeline for fulfilling the first-year content. Describe the ability to carry out three (3) years of contract services.

**Response Information:**

Interested vendors must submit their response in writing via email by **2:00 p.m. Alaska Time, on April 12, 2024**, to the following person:

**Dorothy Tauaese-Puletapuai**

Procurement Specialist

Department of Health

Division of Finance and Management Services

Phone: (907)764-6410

Email: [dorothy.v.tauaese-puletapuai@alaska.gov](mailto:dorothy.v.tauaese-puletapuai@alaska.gov)

Please also copy [doh.procurement.proposals@alaska.gov](mailto:doh.procurement.proposals@alaska.gov) on the submission.

Responses in Microsoft format are preferred, with attachments submitted in PDF, Microsoft Word, Adobe, Microsoft Excel, or PowerPoint files.

It is the interested party's responsibility to follow up with the person listed above to ensure your response was received prior to the time and date specified. Please ensure the response includes your company's name and contact information (email) for the individual(s) who should be notified if DOH releases a solicitation.

**Important Notice:**

Responding to this RFI is not a requirement for any future contract opportunities, and there is no guarantee that any of the information provided in response to the RFI will be used for any potential future procurements. Responses to this RFI are for information purposes only and will not be evaluated. This RFI does not extend any rights to prospective contractors or obligate the state to conduct a solicitation or purchase any goods or services, nor will DOH or the State be financially responsible for any costs associated with the preparation of any response to the RFI.