



To: Interested Parties / Potential Bidders
Fr: Elizabeth H. Connell, Interim Executive Director, MCOA
Date: August 12, 2022
Re: Request for Proposal: Older Adult Behavioral Health Innovation

Across the U.S., various issues, including workforce shortages and traditionally siloed care models, are impacting the ability of older adults to access behavioral health services. The intention of this RFP is to provide grant funding to explore and test innovations to deliver behavioral health services and supports to older adults in home and community-based settings despite limited workforce capacity and availability.

Additional objectives include learning from grant recipients' innovation outcomes to inform behavioral health and aging services policy and to potentially replicate and scale promising practices.

Opportunity Description

This opportunity is funded by the Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging (MCOA) through a contract with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) for the provision of behavioral health services for older adults in the Commonwealth.

Innovations may encompass early intervention, treatment, and/or continuing care. Innovations may also address a variety of conditions, including but not limited to, mental health conditions, substance use disorder, social isolation and loneliness. Innovations may also aim to build or strengthen pathways between home and community-based settings and the behavioral health care system, including the [recently designated Community Behavioral Health Centers](#) (expected to begin operations in January 2023).

Example innovations include, but are not limited to:

- Strategies that leverage behavioral health and other paraprofessionals, such as Community Health Workers, Peer Specialists, and Master's in Social Work Students.
- Strategies that create economies of scale, such as the hiring of an LICSW or LMHC to regionally oversee behavioral health paraprofessionals or Social Work Students (including Masters' Students) and building coalitions to address behavioral health needs more effectively in the community.

- Strategies that utilize technology to extend capacity, such as tele-health for tele-mentoring and use of devices to provide behavioral health interventions.
- Building bridges between Community Behavioral Health Centers (CBHCs), community mental health centers (CMHCs), and the aging network, i.e.: Councils on Aging (COAs) and/or Aging Service Access Points (ASAPs), to build referral options and access to behavioral health services for older adults. Learn more about how CBHC's will provide expanded access to behavioral health evaluation and treatment in communities across the Commonwealth here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/community-behavioral-health-centers#designated-community-behavioral-health-centers>

This opportunity is open to member Councils on Aging, Aging Services Access Points, Area Agencies on Aging, other community-based human services organizations, and behavioral health providers.

Funding Potential

Grants may not exceed \$50,000 for the performance period – November 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

Applicant Expectations for Performance Period

Grantees will be expected to provide a brief progress report at the end of the performance period with a due date to MCOA and EOEA by August 31, 2023. Report guidelines will be finalized and communicated with awardees in November and include categories of:

- a. Number of people served and demographics summary
- b. Progress against defined goals (see Narrative Application Question 4)
- c. Insights and learnings, including barriers experienced and promising practices
- d. Potential next steps for the innovation after the performance period

Grantees may also be asked to participate in 1-2 meetings with MCOA/EOEA during the performance period as a method to sharing updates, discussing opportunities, challenges, and early findings .

Review Criteria

Key features of this RFP:

1. The Review Committee will consider such factors as:
 - a. The bidder's ability to adequately describe the behavioral health needs in the proposed service area, including specific workforce challenges that will be addressed with this grant, if applicable.
 - b. The ability of the bidder's proposed approach to meet identified barriers to behavioral health access and behavioral health needs of older adults in home and community settings.
 - c. The innovative context/structure of the bidder's proposed approach.
 - d. The bidder's ability to rapidly operationalize and execute their proposal, which may include a bidder's past performance and evaluation of their ability to meet stated objectives, milestones, and resourcing plan.
 - e. The potential for replicability and scale of the bidder's proposed approach.
2. MCOA reserves the right to:
 - a. Recommend adjustments to bidders' budgets based on proposed scope and plan.
 - b. To choose any number of awardees, contingent upon availability of funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs, including the decision to select no awardees if proposals do not meet criteria.
3. Bidders are encouraged to augment their budget proposals to include other funding sources such as in-kind, local cash, staff and/or interns.
4. Final contract amounts and duration will be contingent upon the availability of funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs.
5. ***MCOA issues "Cost Reimbursement" contracts only.***

Application and Review Process

To be considered for funding, all bidders must complete a responsive proposal and submit it by the due date to MCOA in accordance with the instructions provided below.

RFP Schedule and Instructions

1. RFP released on August 12, 2022.
2. A bidders' conference meeting will be held on August 26, 2022, from 3:00-5:00 pm. You must register to receive the zoom meeting link and call-in number and pass code; to register, go to <https://fs16.formsite.com/mcoa/ib4swldamm/index.html>
3. Questions submitted in writing and posed during bidders' conference meeting, along with the answers, will be posted, within 5 days of the bidders conference meeting on the MCOA Website, to review go to <https://mcoaonline.com/grants/bid-opportunities/>
4. Bidders must complete the **Intent to Bid** Form by September 6, 2022. The form is located at: <https://fs16.formsite.com/mcoa/qp7mw7a604/index.html>
5. Complete applications must be submitted to MCOA no later than 4 PM on October 4, 2022. (Upload applications here: <https://fs16.formsite.com/mcoa/vfnhtwfu9f/index.html>)
6. The RFP Selection Committee will review all applications submitted by the deadline.
7. Award notification to successful bidders shall occur by October 12, 2022.
8. Contracts must be signed and returned to MCOA by October 31, 2022.
9. The initial project period will begin promptly on November 1, 2022, and shall continue through June 30, 2023. Projects must be ready for implementation as soon as November 1, 2022, and no later than November 15, 2022.

Bidder Instructions

Completed applications are due to MCOA by October 4, 2022, and award notifications will be made by October 12, 2022, contracts will be executed expeditiously for the November 1, 2022, start date.

Application Instructions for MCOA Direct Grant Funding Opportunities

We require all interested bidders to complete the **Intent to Bid** form (**this is non-binding**) which can be accessed here: <https://fs16.formsite.com/mcoa/qp7mw7a604/index.html>

1. The Intent to Bid Form asks for agency name, address, phone, and the name of the agency's primary contact person, and the primary contact person's email address.
2. Prepare the application using these **format and submission instructions**:

- Use 12-font 8"x11" paper size only.
- Save the document as follows: FY23 Older Adult Behavioral Health Innovation from *Name of Agency*
- Upload your application and all required attachments here:
<https://fs16.formsite.com/mcoa/vfnhtwfu9f/index.html>
In addition, to ensure your uploading was successful, please email your *Proposal Narrative* **only** to Shari Cox, MCOA Fiscal Manager, at Shari@mcoaonline.com

3. During MCOA's application review period, please reply promptly should we contact you (the primary contact) with any questions via email or telephone.
4. MCOA will notify the primary contact of the outcome via email.
5. A formal contract will be emailed to the primary contact identified in the application of the successful bidders.
6. The contract must be signed and returned promptly to MCOA, prior to incurring any program costs. (**MCOA Contracts are Cost Reimbursement only**)

Questions? If you have questions on the application requirements or permissible use of funding, attend the Bidders Conference on **Friday, August 26, 2022**, from 3:00-5:00 pm. For questions of a technical nature regarding uploading letters of intent or registering for the bidder's conference, please contact Lynn Wolf at Lynn@mcoaonline.com or 413-270-5280.

<p>Narrative Application Questions and Budget Requirement</p>
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Page Limit: 15 pages (not including certain required attachments)

1. What behavioral health needs and behavioral health access challenges have you identified that could be addressed by this proposal? Please be specific.
2. What is your proposed innovation? How does it meet the needs described in (1) above?
 - a. If this innovation involves partner collaboration, please be specific about expected roles and interactions.

3. Please provide rationale for your proposed innovation, including:
 - a. Existing evidence base
 - b. Explanation of how this is an innovative practice for addressing behavioral health in the older adult population

4. What are the specific goals you are hoping to achieve in this 6-month time period? Goals should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound).

5. Please describe the potential for replicability and scalability of your innovation.

6. Describe your past experience designing and delivering a similar practice.

7. Please provide a project plan and resourcing plan. Both should include activities and milestones for the 7-month performance period as well as any pre-work that can be done prior.

8. Please provide letters of support from no more than four organizations that will either be partners in designing and delivering this innovation or will be supporting outreach and continuous engagement during the performance period. If the applicant is a behavioral health provider/agency or a non-aging network community based human services organization, please provide in your project plan (under number 7 above) which Aging services entities you plan to partner with and why.

9. Prepare a project budget (not included in page limit) for this project.
 - a. For the November 1, 2022, to June 30th, 2023, service year.
 - b. Allowable costs include salary for at least 1 FTE, fringe benefits, mileage reimbursement, and rent/utilities/phone (capped at 2% of contract value). Allowable fringe must not exceed 30%, and travel reimbursement is at the rate allowed by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs which at this time is .62 per mile.

Budgets must also show any in-kind support that will be provided by the lead agency and by behavioral health/social work student interns.