

**State of Vermont**  *Agency of Human Services*

Department of Mental Health

Commissioner’s Office

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# Request for Information

By the Agency of Human Services

Department of Mental Health

For

RFI 1

**DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMMING:**

**UNLOCKED COMMUNITY RESIDENCES FOR TRANSITIONAL SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS BEING DISCHARGED FROM INPATIENT PSYCHIATRIC CARE OR FOR INTERVENTION TO PREVENT INPATIENT CARE**

# Request for Information:

**Developing and Implementing Programming:**

**Unlocked community residences for transitional support for individuals being discharged from inpatient psychiatric care or for intervention to prevent inpatient care**

**PURPOSE**

This Request for Information (RFI) is issued for the Vermont Department of Mental Health (DMH) to gather input and obtain information and cost estimates in proceeding with proposals from VT designated and specialized service agencies and peer-run agencies for developing and implementing programming for unlocked community residences for transitional support for individuals being discharged from inpatient psychiatric care or for intervention to prevent inpatient care.

The DMH intends to evaluate the submissions by respondents to explore how these would meet the system needs and understand the related system development activities and cost associated with proposed solutions. The DMH shall not be held liable for any costs incurred by the vendors in the preparation of their submission, or for any work performed prior to contract issuance.

**LIABILITY**

**THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) ONLY.** This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes – it does not constitute a Request for Proposal (RFP) or a promise to issue an RFP in the future.  This request for information does not commit the State to contract for any materials or service whatsoever.  Further, the State is not at this time seeking proposals and will not accept unsolicited proposals.  Respondents are advised that the State will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI; all costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party’s expense.  Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future RFP, if any is issued.  If an RFP is released, it will be posted on the BGS bid opportunities web site:  <http://www.bgs.state.vt.us/pca/bids/bids.php>.   It is the responsibility of the potential offerors to monitor this site for additional information.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

The DMH retains the right to promote transparency and to place this RFI into the public domain, and to make a copy of the RFI available as a provision of the Vermont access to public records laws. Please do not include any information in your RFI response that is confidential or proprietary, as the DMH assumes no responsibility for excluding information in response to records requests. Any request for information made by a third party will be examined in light of the exemptions provided in the Vermont access to public records laws.

The solicitation of this RFI does not commit the DMH or the State of Vermont to award a contract. This RFI is for information gathering purposes only and no vendor will be selected, pre-qualified, or exempted based upon their RFI participation.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

This RFI is required under [Act 50 (2021)](https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/ACTS/ACT050/ACT050%20As%20Enacted.pdf) An act relating to capital construction and State bonding. Sec. 27.  RESIDENTIAL BEDS FOR INDIVIDUALS DISCHARGED FROM INPATIENT PSYCHIATRIC CARE

“The Department of Mental Health shall issue a request for information from designated and specialized service agencies and peer-run agencies for developing and implementing programming for unlocked community residences for transitional support for individuals being discharged from inpatient psychiatric care or for intervention to prevent inpatient care. Responses to the request for information shall include provisions that address the need to develop and implement community residential programming for youths.”

Responses from this RFI will be utilized to submit a report to the House Committees on Health Care and on Corrections and Institutions and to the Senate Committees on Health and Welfare and on Institutions containing: a summary of the responses and how the Department of Mental Health can best use information gathered in this process, as well as data analysis, to determine the most effective and appropriate way to ensure there are robust community-based services for individuals who have complex needs.

# RFI DESCRIPTION

The State is seeking information from Designated and Specialized Service Agencies and Peer-run agencies for developing and implementing programming for unlocked community residences for transitional support for individuals being discharged from inpatient psychiatric care or for intervention to prevent inpatient care

The State is seeking feedback on the information in this RFI and will consider any information, including partial responses, received in response to this RFI. If the State moves forward in the development of an RFP, the RFP process will be open to all respondents regardless of their decision to participate in this RFI.

**The State envisions that the solution will support the following Guiding Principles:**

1. Vermonters live in their communities.
2. Vermonters have access to supports and services in their community.
3. Community teams are supported with resources to assist individuals with complex needs so they can remain in their community.
4. Individuals have access to more intensive levels of care when necessary.

**The State envisions that the solution will support the following high-level goals:**

* Diligent efforts are made to serve Vermonters with complex needs in the community whenever possible.
* A comprehensive and coordinated system of care includes access to timely and effective services in the community with crisis supports available at the time and location of need.
* Mental health care adheres to person-centered, culturally responsive, trauma informed and responsive practices.
* Partnership occurs in all aspects of the programming.
* Peer supports are effective and valued.
* Best-practices, evidence-informed and evidence-based interventions are used that have been shown to reduce the need for inpatient psychiatric care.
* Children, youth, and adults can safely return to the community in a timely manner when discharging from higher levels of care such as inpatient, residential, and crisis stabilization programs.

# CURRENT STATE

**Adult System**

The Department of Mental Health works with private nonprofit agencies in Vermont to provide mental-health care. In addition to these 10 community mental health agencies, DMS works with one Specialized Service Agency: [Pathways Vermont](http://mhnew.vcms.vt.dev.cdc.nicusa.com/pathways-vermont), who serve adults.

In 2020, DMH completed an analysis of the current mental health beds in communities based on Act 26 (2019). The summary and recommendations from that assessment can be found in the [Analysis of Need: Residential Mental Health Beds](https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/sites/mhnew/files/documents/AboutUs/Leg/Act_26_Section_2_Report_Analysis_of_Need_FINAL_01152020.pdf) (January 15, 2020).

**Child, Youth and Family System**

Vermont’s child, youth and family system today is based on the foundation of [Act 264](https://ifs.vermont.gov/docs/sit) for a coordinated system of care with the identified values and partnerships. The mental health system of care embraces a public health approach of promotion, prevention, identification and intervention, and strives to provide supports and services where children, youth and families are in their daily lives. There is a continuum of supports in the home, community and out of home settings such as therapeutic foster care, crisis stabilization and hospital diversion, inpatient psychiatric care, and residential care. For more information about the system of supports and services at different developmental stages of early childhood, school-aged, and youth transitioning to adulthood, please follow the links at the bottom of the page at this [link](https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/services/children-youth-and-family/services-and-support-children-youth-and-family). Descriptions of the broader child, youth, and family system of care can be found in the annual System of Care [reports](https://ifs.vermont.gov/docs/sit) and in the annual Act 79 [legislative reports](https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/policy-and-legislative-resources/legislative-reports-and-budgets).

In 2020, the Vermont Agency of Human Services (AHS) engaged with Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) to “conduct an analysis of the children’s residential system of care in Vermont in to identify the steps Vermont can take to:

* increase community-based supports and services;
* increase the ability of families to care for their children while they receive the necessary therapeutic treatment;
* provide necessary treatment within family like settings, thus decreasing the need to receive that treatment within a residential setting; and
* assure youth only reside within residential settings when treatment provided is necessary and prescribed and only for the duration of that need.”

The summary and recommendations from that consultation and assessment can be found in the [Analysis of Children's Residential System](https://ifs.vermont.gov/document/analysis-childrens-residential-system) report (2020).

**Additional Information on the mental health system in Vermont can be found in the following reports**

* [Vision 2030](https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/document/vision-2030): A 10-Year Plan for an Integrated and Holistic System of Care (January 2020)
* [Evaluation of the Overarching Structure for the Delivery of Mental Health Services](https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/sites/mhnew/files/documents/Reports/Act82_200_Section_9_Report_FINAL_1.14.19.pdf) (January 2019)

# ELIGIBILITY TO SUBMIT AN RFI

Designated Agencies, Specialized Services Agencies, and peer-run agencies for mental health are encouraged to respond to this RFI. All parties responding to this RFI must identify themselves and provide a brief explanation of their interest in Vermont’s System of Care.

# RFI SUBMISSION QUESTIONS

Respondents are encouraged to respond to all questions. However, partial responses will be accepted and reviewed. Considering the information above, provide your thoughts about how you could enhance and creatively support children, youth, families and adults in a community-based setting.

1. In your region, what programming would you propose to develop and implement for unlocked community residences for transitional support for individuals being discharged from inpatient psychiatric care or for intervention to prevent inpatient care? Please specify the population this programming would serve (children, youth, and/or adults)
2. Is there a payment methodology which would assist in your ability to implement this programing?
3. What performance measures should be adopted to monitor and ensure the effectiveness of your programming?
4. What actions are you currently taking that other regions could consider adopting to ensure children/youth and/or adults are supported to prevent inpatient care or upon discharge from inpatient care?
5. What supports and resources are needed to facilitate seamless transitions into and out of inpatient settings and to reduce the likelihood of multiple hospitalizations?
6. What partnerships could be established to provide the services needed by individuals and their families (including but not limited to mental health, developmental services, education, medical/dental, substance abuse treatment, recreation, family partnership, independent living skills, and community transition)?
7. How would your programming enhance current utilization review to ensure after-care plans are made early, progress is monitored and lengths of stay in residential or inpatient (when required) are reduced?
8. Describe how your proposal would incorporate, coordinate and/or collaborate with other regional or state initiatives/pilots?
9. Respondents are welcome to include any other recommendations or thoughts for consideration.

# REQUESTED INFORMATION

Each submission prepared in response to this RFI must include the elements listed below, in the order indicated.

The vendor, when presenting the response, must use the following outline:

* Cover Page
* Vendor Information
* Responses (full or partial) to prompts 1-9
* Cost Estimates (if applicable)

## COVER PAGE

The first page of the vendor’s RFI Response must be a cover page displaying at least the following:

* Response of RFI Title
* Vendor’s Name
* Contact Person
* Telephone Number
* Address
* Email Address

**RFI RESPONSE SUBMISSION**

Written submissions must be received by November 29, 2021, by 4:30 p.m.

Submissions should be sent electronically in Microsoft Word or PDF format to Jennifer Rowell at [jennifer.rowell@vermont.gov](mailto:jennifer.rowell@vermont.gov).

Additional questions may be directed to Samantha Sweet at [samantha.sweet@vermont.gov](mailto:samantha.sweet@vermont.gov) or 802-241-0090.