

STATE OF WASHINGTON
HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)
RFI NO. 2020HCA26

Date September 25, 2020

Request for Information # 2020HCA26: Determining availability of providers to operate a crisis counseling program in the North Sound and Pierce regions.

Washington State was one of the first states hit by the COVID-19 outbreak. The state received a presidential disaster declaration on March 22nd, 2020 that allowed us to apply for a Crisis Counseling Program (CCP) grant to support the emotional needs of Washington during the outbreak. On April 3rd HCA submitted an application for the Immediate Services Program (ISP) grant to fund the CCP throughout Washington. On May 6th Washington was approved for the ISP and HCA applied for the second round of funding called the Regular Services Program (RSP) on May 21st. In the RSP application HCA asked for funding to operate a CCP team in North Sound regions and Pierce. The original partners for those teams have indicated they will not be able to move forward with the program.

The Crisis Counseling Program in Washington is called Washington Listens and is a support program that provides non-clinical, psycho-education based support to anybody in Washington struggling with the outbreak and ongoing natural disasters. Services are provided virtually until it is safe for services to be provided face to face. Crisis Counselors in Washington Listens are called Support Specialists to avoid the stigma associated with crisis services in this state. Support Specialists qualifications include a high school diploma, good interpersonal skills, and good listening skills. They do not need to be licensed and can be students.

Acknowledging that:

- a) A Crisis Counseling Program is one of the best tools to build resilience and mitigating the likelihood of people needing crisis services due to the stress of the disaster.
- b) Forecasts created by the Covid-19 Behavioral Health Strike Team predict a large rise in depression and anxiety with it peaking in October and December.
- c) The North Sound and Pierce regions have been hit hard by the outbreak and the mental health system in regions are strained.

HCA is looking for a qualified partner(s) to stand up and operate a CCP program in both the North Sound and Pierce regions. Teams will be provided training, supplies, and equipment to operate the team and contract directly with Health Care Authority (HCA). Teams would be expected to outreach their region's communities and provide CCP services virtually until safe to outreach in person. Please see **Attachment A** outlining the Crisis Counseling Program description and staffing.

Request for Information Goals and Process

HCA is using this RFI to gather information about interest, and capability of agency to operate a CCP team in the North Sound and Pierce regions.

Your response to this RFI is important to the Department and is greatly appreciated.

This Request for Information is not a competitive solicitation that will result in the award of one or more contracts. Rather, it is intended to obtain information that may assist the Department in determining its contractual options, should the Department elect to contract directly with multiple professionals who may have requisite qualifications and varying geographic and time availability. Participation in this RFI

is voluntary and responses are not considered proposals. This document does not obligate the Department to evaluate the services of any respondent or to negotiate or enter into any contracts. The Department reserves the right to explore any and all options for meeting its service needs including, but not limited to, options that are brought to its attention through this RFI. The Department shall not be responsible for any cost that may be incurred by persons responding to this RFI.

Notice of this RFI will be sent to persons who are or may know of potential respondents. Notice of this RFI will be published on the [Washington's Electronic Business Solution \(WEBS\)](#), the procurement website hosted by the State [Department of Enterprise Services \(DES\)](#). HCA reserves the right to utilize freely any ideas and information received as a result of this RFI in planning and developing potential solutions to HCA's Service requirements.

Questions and Answers about this RFI

Because of the rapid response time that is requested, the dept. will not be able to respond to questions regarding the RFI at this time.

How to Respond to this RFI

If you are interested in being considered for a contract, please submit a letter of interest that addresses how your organization's ability and approach to implementing crisis counseling services in your area.

Please submit your response so that it is received no later than October 31, 2020

Please email your response.

Please note that HCA may not be able to receive documents of greater than 10MB via email. As such respondents shall use the following:

Subject Line Naming Convention: RFI # _____ (Your Company Name), Email (#) of (#).

Email Address:

Cody Azabache cody.azabache@hca.wa.gov

Responses should be provided in an electronic format, such as Adobe Acrobat or Microsoft Word. This will assist in HCA's review process. You only need to provide a single copy of your response. Responses may be provided in more than one file and submitted in more than one email. HCA prefers that all responses be submitted via email to the RFI Coordinator.

Please note that HCA will not accept zipped or compressed files in connection with this RFI. HCA will not open any such file. If individual files to a response are too large, please send multiple emails instead of compressing files.

A. Cost of Response

You will not be reimbursed for any costs associated with preparing or presenting any response to this RFI.

B. Response Property of HCA

All materials submitted in response to this RFI become the property of HCA. HCA has the right to use any of the content presented in any response to the RFI.

C. Public Records and Proprietary Information

Any information contained in the response that is proprietary or confidential must be clearly designated as such. The page and the particular exception(s) from disclosure must be identified. Each page claimed to be exempt from disclosure must be clearly identified by the word "confidential" printed on the lower right hand corner of the page. Marking the entire response as confidential will be neither accepted nor honored and may result in disclosure of the entire response.

To the extent consistent with chapter 42.56 RCW, the Public Records Act, HCA will maintain confidentiality of your information marked confidential or proprietary. If a request is made to view your proprietary information, HCA will notify you of the request and of the date that the records will be released to the requester unless you obtain a court order enjoining that disclosure. If you fail to obtain the court order enjoining disclosure, HCA will release the requested information on the date specified in its notice to you.

HCA's sole responsibility will be limited to maintaining the above data in a secure area and to notify you of any request(s) for disclosure for so long as HCA retains your information in HCA records. Failure to so label such materials, or failure to timely respond after notice of request for public records has been given, will be deemed a waiver by you of any claim that such materials are exempt from disclosure.

Timeline and Next Steps

HCA will review responses after the initial deadline and may engage one or more respondents in discussion regarding ability in standing up a CCP team. HCA will review responses and may extend the response deadline until a CCP team is chosen in each region identified in the RFI.

Thank you for your assistance and participation in this request.

Attachment A

Washington Crisis Counseling Program

“Washington Listens”

Program Goals: To provide non-clinical psycho-education based support to people experiencing elevated stress due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

Plan of Action: Provide virtual based outreach to support the emotional needs of Washington during the outbreak. Teams will use a variety of tools including Zoom, social media, and referrals for the support line to provide support. Teams will connect with their communities and leaders to offer services.

Crisis Counseling Program:

Crisis counseling program (CCP) is a psycho-education based non-clinical support for people who are experiencing elevated stress due to the outbreak of Covid-19. CCP is an anonymous program and no identifying information is ever maintained. Service encounters and the nature of the encounter is tracked, but only to ensure we are meeting the needs of the people with this program. Crisis counselors use good listening skills to be empathetic and help people get connected to resources in their community.

Support Line Functions:

Operated as the back bone of the program.

Anyone in the state can call into the line to receive support. They will be given a few options to either hear information or be connected to a support specialist. The recording offers an option to select language or any accessibility options, to be routed to a person who can assist them. If no person is available with the skills to help the individual with their accessibility needs, then the crisis counselor will be connected with technology to help them assist the person. Crisis counselors should do their best to gather basic information at the start of the call. There is no time limit to a call and people should be supported as much as they need. If a caller needs behavioral health support or is in a behavioral health crisis the counselor should work to get this person connected to behavioral health crisis services. All teams have access to the same resource databases that the support line uses. Overflow from the support line can flow to the regional teams.

Staffing Requirements:

Core team

- **Team Leader:** High school diploma, organization skills, good people and listening skills, supervisory experience, behavioral health experience is a plus, tech experience, able to pass a background check. Must be able to devote 8 hours a day. Estimated hourly pay \$25-\$32

Attachment A

- Crisis Counselor/Support Specialist:** High school diploma, organization skills, good people and listening skills, tech experience, able to pass a background check. Can be part-time, but need set hours for the hotline. Estimated hourly pay \$18-21

Ancillary Support

Support for IT and admin needs can be provided at a set rate. Most of the administrative needs for the program is operated through the support line.

Data Tracking and Oversight Requirements

Tracking: Crisis Counselor Program is an anonymous service. No personal information should be collected. There does not need to be any case notes for services provided. A service encounter log will need to be filled out for contacts over 15 minutes. A copy of an encounter log is attached. Weekly tracking logs will need to be completed as well, to summarize all activities for the week. All tracking documents will need to be compiled by the team leader or data specialist and sent to the designated person to compile the information, and ensure it is entered into the data entry platform.

Support and Oversight: Teams will be working remotely due to precautions to slow the spread of the virus. Oversight will need to be done remotely through routine daily check-in meetings with staff, ensure services are being tracked if there are any issues that need to be resolved, and ensure staff are following guidelines. Team leaders should also check to make sure call logs match service tracking.

During these check-ins, support needs to be provided to any counselor experiencing stress whether it is related to the job or not. We are asking a lot from our counselors who are working with individuals experiencing difficult moments while our counselors are experiencing stress themselves. HCA will conduct regular weekly check in with team leaders and any counselors who wish to join the call to hear about concerns and successes from the field.

North Sound Region

Budget Line Item Description					Total Funded Costs
Direct Costs					
Direct Personnel Costs	No. of FTE	Hours per Day	Rate	Days	Total Funded Costs
Crisis Counselor	6.00	8.00	\$20.00	189.00	\$181,440.00
Crisis Counselor Team Leader	1.00	8.00	\$28.00	189.00	\$42,336.00
IT Specialist	1.00	4.00	\$29.00	50.00	\$5,800.00
Program Support Person	1.00	4.00	\$17.31	100.00	\$6,924.00
Personnel Subtotal					\$236,500.00

Attachment A

Fringe			Total Funded Costs
30%, Includes FICA, FUTA, Health Insurance state average	30%		70950

Pierce Region

Direct Personnel Costs	No. of FTE	Hours per Day	Rate	Days	Total Funded Costs
Crisis Counselor	6.00	8.00	\$20.00	189.00	\$181,440.00
Crisis Counselor Team Leader	1.00	8.00	\$28.00	189.00	\$42,336.00
IT Specialist	1.00	4.00	\$29.00	50.00	\$5,800.00
Program Support Person	1.00	4.00	\$17.31	100.00	\$6,924.00
Personnel Subtotal					\$236,500.00
Fringe					Total Funded Costs
30%, Includes FICA, FUTA, Health Insurance state average			30%		70950