

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR CONTRACTUAL SERVICES

Release date: September 11, 2020, 1:00 pm CT
Proposal due date: October 13, 2020, 3:00 pm CT
Procurement Point of Contact: Keri Bennett
Phone: (308) 224-7571, Email: keri.bennett@nebraska.gov

Submit electronically to:
Keri Bennett, Program Director
keri.bennett@nebraska.gov

The State of Nebraska, Department of Education (NDE), Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (Nebraska VR), also referred to as the State of Nebraska, or State, is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) for the purpose of selecting a qualified Contractor to conduct assessment and planning activities as the first phase of a three-phase demonstration pilot of Peer to Peer Support practices as a model of care for individuals that have experienced acquired brain injury (ABI). ***Note: this RFP is for Phase 1 only:**

1. **Phase 1: Assessment and Planning**
2. Phase 2: Start-up and Recruitment
3. Phase 3: Implementation and Evaluation

All required forms and communications regarding this RFP may be found at the Nebraska Department of Administrative Services (DAS) website: <http://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/purchasing.html>

FUNDING

The ceiling amount for this RFP is \$5,000. Funding for the project is provided by grant number 90TBSG0036-03-00, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. The resulting contract may be up to four (4) months in duration. The anticipated ceiling amount for Phase 2 is \$45,000 for up to six (6) months. The anticipated ceiling amount for Phase 3 is \$80,000 for up to twelve (12) months. Ceiling amounts and funding for all phases are subject to availability of Federal grant funds.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The resulting contract may not be an exclusive contract as Nebraska VR reserves the right to contract for the same or similar services from other sources now or in the future. Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 84-602.04, State contracts in effect as of January 1, 2014, and contracts entered into thereafter, must be posted to a public website. The resulting contract will be posted to a public website managed by DAS, which can be found at <http://statecontracts.nebraska.gov>

PROPOSAL PREPARATION COSTS

The State shall not incur any liability for any costs incurred by Contractors in replying to this solicitation, including any activity related to bidding on this solicitation.

CONTRACTOR QUALIFICATIONS

Any agency, business, organization, entity or individual may submit a response to this RFP. Contractors with the lived experience of acquired brain injury (ABI) and/or expertise in accommodating disability resulting from ABI are encouraged to respond.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Nebraska VR was awarded a Mentor State Grant from the Federal Administration for Community Living (ACL) Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) State Partnership Program for fiscal years 2018 through 2021. The Federal program's purpose is to "create and strengthen a system of services and supports that maximizes the independence, well-being, and health of people with TBIs across the lifespan and all other demographics, their family members and support networks." Nebraska VR sponsors the Brain Injury Advisory Council (BIAC), which advises NDE and Nebraska VR on matters that include implementation of the Annual Brain Injury State Plan and the Federal TBI grant. The BIAC is empowered to engage and reflect the voices of individuals with brain injury, family members and caregivers in pursuit of the *Statewide Vision for Brain Injury Policies and Services*. Additional information is available at the following links:

- Nebraska VR: <http://www.vr.nebraska.gov>
- The BIAC: <https://braininjury.nebraska.gov>
- The FY 2018-2021 ACL TBI grant narrative, work plan and logic model: <https://braininjury.nebraska.gov/council/tbi-implementation-partnership-grant>
- Nebraska's *Statewide Vision for Brain Injury Policies and Services*: <https://braininjury.nebraska.gov/council/statewide-vision-brain-injury-policies-and-services>

ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY

Acquired brain injury (ABI) includes injuries that may be categorized as traumatic or non-traumatic. Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a serious public health problem in Nebraska. A TBI is caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the normal function of the brain. Even a mild TBI can result in permanent cognitive, physical, emotional and behavioral changes that impact daily function. Individuals with moderate to severe injuries may require life-long services and supports for housing, work and community living. Each year, over 13,000 Nebraskans of all ages are diagnosed with TBIs. An unknown number of individuals experience non-traumatic injuries as well, caused by stroke, aneurysm rupture, tumor, bacterial or viral infection, toxin exposure, drowning, suffocation, respiratory arrest, and other conditions. Individuals surviving non-traumatic injuries report similar challenges in daily function. Hereditary and congenital conditions are not considered ABI.

Regardless of how an injury occurs, many Nebraskans with ABI and their families report they experience social isolation, and geographic, financial and other barriers which limit access to services and supports needed for recovery, return to school or work, or independent living. Community-based supports are particularly scarce for those living in rural areas of the state where medical services are also limited.

PEER TO PEER SUPPORT

Peer to Peer Support refers to a process through which people who share common experiences or face similar challenges come together as equals to give and receive help based on the knowledge that comes through shared experience (Riessman, 1989). Peer to Peer Support is recognized by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as a beneficial model of care for individuals in recovery with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders. Peer to Peer Support has shown promise as an intervention for individuals with TBI (Hibbard, et.al, 2002).

SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

The intent of this three-phase pilot is to develop and demonstrate the benefits of a customized Peer to Peer Support model for individuals with ABI and their families, with priority placed on those living in underserved, rural areas of Nebraska. The selected Contractor for Phase 1 will; 1. Complete and deliver a comprehensive assessment, and 2. Deliver a proposal for a Peer to Peer Support model that complements and interfaces with existing brain injury programs and supports in the state. Stakeholder input solicited in the spring of 2020 is available for review in Attachment A: *Peer Support Stakeholder Survey Responses 5.14.20*.

1. The selected Contractor will complete and deliver a comprehensive assessment to describe the following:

- Insights impacting model development that are obtained from a review of relevant research literature;
- Insights impacting model development that are gained from a review of relevant reports and data on Nebraskans with brain injury;
- Insights impacting model development that are gained from stakeholder interviews;
- The level of stakeholder readiness and “buy-in” that exists for Peer to Peer Support from individuals with ABI, their families, and from existing service and support providers;
- A SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) of the potential use of the Peer-to-Peer model in Nebraska, including but not limited to, specific issues resulting from the COVID-19 Pandemic;
- Potential funding options for sustainability after a pilot is successfully completed;
- Other factors that may impact pilot start-up and implementation.

2. The selected Contractor will deliver a proposal for a Peer to Peer Support model to describe the following:

- A vision for Peer to Peer Support as a complementary addition to the existing infrastructure of ABI services and supports;
- Unique qualifications of the Contractor (or other named entity if not the Contractor) to conduct the Peer to Peer Support demonstration pilot;
- A detailed description of the model, including any proposed evidence-based practices;
- A diagram of the model based on the vision, suggesting points of interface and collaboration between the Peer to Peer Support model and existing ABI services and support providers, including partnerships that may be leveraged for sustainability;
- Methodology for integrating a Peer to Peer Support model into your organizational operations;
- Proposed strategies to address Weaknesses and Threats identified in the SWOT Analysis;
- Proposed adaptations to existing Peer to Peer models to accommodate the needs of individuals with ABI;
- Proposed geographic location/boundaries for a pilot start-up, and proposed target sub-population(s), if any;
- Proposed methods for connecting individuals with ABI and their families to the Peer to Peer Support pilot.

SUBSEQUENT PHASES

Upon successful completion and acceptance by Nebraska VR of Phase 1 deliverables, the selected Contractor will be invited to submit a proposal, work plan and budget narrative for completion of Phase 2, Start-up and Recruitment activities.

NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

Contractors are requested to email their intent to submit a proposal to the Point of Contact (POC) for Procurement, Keri Bennett at keri.bennett@nebraska.gov by the close of business on September 17, 2020. Notification of intent to submit a proposal is not required, however it is encouraged.

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Submit a Proposal Narrative and Cost Proposal as indicated below. Please use an easily readable font, such as Times New Roman, Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, or Calibri. The text and any table portions of the proposal narrative and attachments must be submitted in not less than a 12 point font and 1.0 line spacing. Proposals not adhering to font and line spacing requirements may be deemed non-responsive and returned. It is vital that any charts or tables are legible when scanned or reproduced for the evaluation committee. For duplication and scanning purposes, please ensure that the proposal narrative and all attachments can be printed on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper. Margins must be at least one (1) inch at the top, bottom, left and right of the paper. Put all section headings flush left in bold type.

Clearly identify proposal sections and subdivisions; failure to do so may result in disqualification. Failure to respond to a specific requirement may be the basis for elimination from consideration during evaluation. Proposals shall conform to all instructions, conditions, and requirements included in the RFP. Proposals may be found non-responsive if they do not conform to the RFP.

Proposals are due by the date and time shown in the Schedule of Events. It is the responsibility of the Contractor to check the Nebraska Department of Administrative Services (DAS) website for all information relevant to this solicitation to include addenda or amendments issued prior to the opening date. The website address is: <http://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/purchasing.html>

Electronic proposals must be submitted via email to the Procurement POC by the date and time of the proposal opening per the Schedule of Events. No late proposals will be accepted. No faxed, voice, or telephone proposals will be accepted.

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

The proposal narrative consists of Sections 1 through 3.

SECTION 1. CONTRACTOR INFORMATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The Contractor Information and Organizational Capacity section of the proposal narrative should consist of subsections a. Contractor Information, and b. Organizational Capacity:

a. CONTRACTOR INFORMATION

Provide the full name, headquarter address, entity organization (corporation, partnership, proprietorship), state in which the Contractor is incorporated or otherwise organized to do business, year in which the Contractor first organized to do business and whether the name and form of organization has changed since first organized. The Contractor's office location responsible for performance pursuant to an award of a contract with the State of Nebraska should be identified.

b. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Describe the Contractor's vision, mission and purpose, and relationship to ABI. List any leadership positions in the organization that are filled by individuals with ABI. Describe any partnerships with other programs or organizations that support individuals with ABI. Describe the Contractor's understanding of, and any previous experience with Peer to Peer Support practices. Describe the Contractor's strengths, expertise, experience, and unique characteristics and qualifications for completing the described Scope of Work. Describe the Contractor's vision for Peer to Peer Support as a means to improve the lives of individuals with ABI and their families.

Describe the Contractor's organizational culture and experience in managing change. Describe the level of staff and/or organizational member "buy-in" and commitment to completing assessment and planning activities to develop a customized Peer to Peer Support model for individuals with ABI. Describe the potential for integration of Peer to Peer Support with existing Contractor programs or initiatives.

SECTION 2. PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Describe the Contractor's proposed approach to project management. Describe any strategies that will be used to meaningfully involve individuals with ABI (including Contractor personnel or volunteers with ABI) in all phases of project leadership, planning, implementation and quality management. List project personnel, including paid staff and unpaid volunteers, and provide a resume for each. Resumes should not be longer than three (3) pages. Resumes should include, at a minimum, academic background and degrees, professional certifications, related employment history, and at least three (3) references (name, address, and telephone number). Any changes in proposed personnel shall only be implemented after written approval from Nebraska VR.

Identify the primary work or tasks assigned to each person. Describe anticipated challenges and strategies that will be used to overcome them, including unique challenges presented by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Describe how the Contractor will collaborate with the BIAC, Nebraska VR and other stakeholders to complete the project. Note: proposed collaborative activities that include stakeholders with disabilities must be completed using a person-centered approach in barrier-free, accessible environments, and requests for disability-related accommodations must be honored.

If the Contractor intends to Subcontract any part of the Scope of Work, the Contractor should provide:

- name, address, and telephone number of the Subcontractor(s);
- specific tasks for each Subcontractor(s);
- percentage of performance hours intended for each Subcontract; and
- total percentage of Subcontractor(s) performance hours.

SECTION 3. PROJECT WORK PLAN

The Contractor should include a detailed project work plan with identified objectives, major tasks/action steps, and estimated timelines (i.e. Month 1, Month 2...instead of actual dates). Include any benchmarks or decision points for Nebraska VR and BIAC review and approval.

COST PROPOSAL

The Contractor must use Attachment B: *State Cost Sheet* for the cost proposal, and include details justifying any and all costs. The *State Cost Sheet*, and any other documents submitted with the proposal shall not be considered confidential or proprietary and is considered a public record in the State of Nebraska. In the cost proposal, include documentation of any proposed in-kind match sources for the project (donated goods or services that directly relate to accomplishing project objectives). Third-party in-kind contributions must meet requirements specified in the HHS Grants Policy 107, 45 CFR 74.23 and 45 CFR 92.24. Proposed costs must total \$5,000 or less, and comply with terms and conditions of 45 CFR Part 75 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards: <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/grants/grants/policies-regulations/hhsgps107.pdf>

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

All proposals that are responsive to the RFP will be evaluated. Each evaluation category will have a maximum point potential. The State will conduct a fair, impartial, and comprehensive evaluation of all proposals in accordance with the criteria listed in Attachment C: *RFP BI Peer Support 2020 Evaluation Criteria*.

EVALUATION COMMITTEE

Proposals will be evaluated by members of an Evaluation Committee. The Evaluation Committee will consist of individuals selected at the discretion of Nebraska VR. Any contact, attempted contact, or attempt to influence an evaluator that is involved with this RFP may result in the rejection of this proposal and further administrative actions.

AWARD

The State reserves the right to evaluate proposals and award contracts in a manner utilizing criteria selected at the State's discretion and in the State's best interest. After evaluation of the proposals, or at any point in the solicitation process, the State of Nebraska may take one or more of the following actions:

- Amend the solicitation;
- Extend the time of or establish a new proposal opening time;
- Waive deviations or errors in the State's solicitation process and in contractor proposals that are not material, do not compromise the solicitation process or a contractor's proposal, and do not improve a contractor's competitive position;
- Accept or reject a portion of or all of a proposal;
- Accept or reject all proposals;
- Withdraw the solicitation;
- Elect to rebid the solicitation;

- Award one or more all-inclusive contracts.

PROCURING OFFICE AND COMMUNICATION WITH STATE STAFF AND EVALUATORS

Procurement responsibilities related to this RFP reside with the Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (Nebraska VR). The POC for the procurement is as follows:

Name: Keri Bennett
Agency: Nebraska VR
Address: 315 W 60th Street, Ste 400
Kearney, NE 68845-1504
Telephone: 308-224-7571
Email: keri.bennett@nebraska.gov

From the date the RFP is issued until the Intent to Award is issued, communication from the Contractor is limited to written contact with the POC listed above. After the Intent to Award is issued, the Contractor may communicate with individuals designated as responsible for negotiating the contract on behalf of Nebraska VR. The POC will issue any clarifications or opinions regarding this RFP in writing. Contractors shall not have any communication with or attempt to communicate or influence any evaluator involved in this RFP. Nebraska VR reserves the right to reject a Contractor's proposal, withdraw an Intent to Award, or terminate a contract if Nebraska VR determines there has been a violation of these procurement procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: *Peer Support Stakeholder Survey Responses 5.14.2020*
Attachment B: *State Cost Sheet*
Attachment C: *RFP ABI Peer to Peer Support 2020 Evaluation Criteria*

REFERENCES

Hibbard, M., Cantor J., Charatz H., Rosenthal R., Ashman T., Gundersen N., Ireland-Knight L., Gordon W., Avner J., & Gartner A. (2002). Peer support in the community: initial findings of a mentoring program for individuals with traumatic brain injury and their families. *Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation*, 17(20), 112-131.

PfP Program Development Guide, July 1, 2015 Peers For Progress.org
<http://peersforprogress.org/resource-guide/preface/>

Riessman, F. (1989). *Restructuring help: A human services paradigm for the 1990's*. New York, NY: National Self-help Clearinghouse.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Nebraska VR expects to adhere to the procurement schedule shown below, but all dates are approximate and subject to change.

	ACTIVITY	DATE/TIME
1.	Release RFP	September 11, 2020 1:00 pm CT
2.	Last day to submit written questions	September 24, 2020 5:00 pm CT
3.	Post Nebraska VR response to questions at DAS website:	September 29, 2020 1:00 pm CT
4.	Proposal opening	October 13, 2020 3:00 pm CT
5.	Review for conformance to RFP requirements	October 13, 2020 3:30 pm CT
6.	Evaluation period	October 13 - 26, 2020
7.	Post "Intent to Award" at DAS website:	October 27, 2020
8.	Contract finalization period	October 27 – November 6, 2020
9.	Contractor start date	November 9, 2020