

Solicitation Summary

Date of Solicitation: August 22nd, 2024

Number of Proposals Received: 19

Review Team Agencies: Review Team included 1 member from healthcare, 2 members with lived experience, 2 members from community partners and 1 member from local government, 3 members from Dakota County (Erin Carder, James Johnson, Gina Pistulka).

Services Description: In the summer of 2021, national settlements were reached with opioid distributors McKesson, Cardinal Health, and AmerisourceBergen and opioid manufacturer Johnson & Johnson. The Minnesota Memorandum of Agreement governs how Minnesota will distribute the nearly \$300 million that Minnesota could receive of the total settlement amount over an 18-year period to support state and local efforts to combat the opioid epidemic. Dakota County is expected to receive the 6th largest settlement in the state, approximately \$16 million over 18 years. The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to identify qualified organizations to respond to the opioid crisis in Dakota County through opioid epidemic response strategies, including prevention, treatment and recovery, harm reduction, and continuing care.

Primary Deliverables: The goal of this approach is to fund innovative projects in Dakota County that will have a high impact, particularly from Dakota County communities most disproportionately impacted by the opioid crisis. Projects that are in alignment with the opioid remediation strategies identified in the Minnesota Memorandum of Agreement, Exhibit A, will be prioritized. The service area includes all territories within the geographical bounds of Dakota County.

Solicitation Selection Criteria:

- The project goals fit with the stated purpose of the award and are related to opioid epidemic response strategies, as identified in the Minnesota Memorandum of Agreement, Exhibit A, including prevention, treatment and recovery, harm reduction, or continuing care.
- The application describes how the proposed project will prioritize an innovative and/or evidence-based approach to address the opioid crisis.
- The proposed project is scalable and replicable.
- Project success is defined, and a clear communication method of project means, methods, and outcomes back to the County and Opioid Response Advisory Committee is planned.

Non-Collusion & Conflict of Interest: The Opioid Response Advisory Committee created a subcommittee to author the RFP process and select the contracted vendors to provide the services. They did this in order to avoid any potential conflict of interest in the process. Additionally, there were two members of the subcommittee whose agency submitted proposals, so those two members were removed from the selection subcommittee.

It was determined that 7 of the 19 proposals received, may have a conflict of interest. As we narrowed the pool to 8 finalists, 5 of those had a potential conflict of interest.

Of the 5 we are recommending contracting with, 3 remain where there is potential conflict of interest, either at the Opioid Response Advisory Committee, or sit on the Dakota County Board of Commissioners, or have Dakota County Staff on their board.

As the selection subcommittee reviewed the proposals, they felt the potential conflicts of interest were not of concern due to 1) the individuals identified as being a potential conflict of interest are not the staff actually doing the direct services or 2) in these cases these agencies are one of very few providing these specific services with best proposed strategies, or 3) agency is providing specific work in a specific area identified as being very high need.

Evaluation Results: After a thorough review, the review panel recommended to award contracts with: LionHeart Wellness & Recovery (\$75,000), Gateway Recovery Center (\$32,293), Wayside Recovery Center (\$100,000), Thrive Family Recovery Resources (\$93,707), and MN Recovery Connection (\$89,000).

Rationale of Recommended Vendor: The panel recommended five vendors to the board to award contracts to, these vendors were chosen by top scores and a variety of services and strategies in the Opioid Settlement MOA (Treatment, Prevention and Continuing Care).