

**SCHOHARIE COUNTY
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY
SERVICES**

**INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT (IPS)
SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT**

Request for Proposals

January 2012

Table of Contents

1	Introduction and Background.....	3
1.1	Purpose of Request for Proposals	3
1.2	Availability of RFP	5
2	Proposal Submission.....	5
2.1	Letter of Intent	5
2.2	Issuing Officer/Designated Contact	5
2.3	Key Events/Time Line	6
2.4	Addenda to the Request for Proposals	6
2.5	Eligible Organizations	6
2.6	Disqualification Factors	6
2.7	Instructions for Proposal Submission	7
2.8	Packaging of RFP Responses.....	7
3	Administrative Information.....	7
3.1	Term of Contract.....	7
4	Evaluation Factors for Awards.....	7
4.1	Proposal Evaluation.....	7
4.2	Recommended Award and Notification	8
5	Scope of Work	8
5.1	Objectives and Responsibilities.....	8
5.2	Requirements for Submission	9
5.3	Budget Form and Budget Narrative.....	9

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Purpose of the Request for Proposals

The Schoharie County Office of Community Services (OCS) is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to invite eligible applicants to submit proposals to provide 2 Employment Specialists (ES) who would follow the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of evidenced-based supported employment for Schoharie County residents with a diagnosed mental illness who have a desire to work in competitive employment. The goals of this program are to provide all aspects of vocational services including engagement, assessment, job development, job placement, job coaching, job counseling, job related crisis intervention, benefits counseling and individualized and ongoing flexible follow-along supports.

Employment is an important aspect to a healthy, fulfilling life. Participating in competitive employment provides people with the opportunity to demonstrate a skill and find more of a purpose in life. Not only does employment allow people to actively contribute to society, but it also serves as a way to provide for themselves and/or their families. Earning wages enables people to maintain their dignity and a sense of self-sufficiency. Offering a service for a cost and utilizing those wages earned to consume allows people to play key roles in this capitalist society.

A study published in the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal in 2008 noted employment as beneficial in recovery for a person with mental illness. The study also found that employment helped the subjects with a sense of identity and was a core aspect of their lives.¹

However, people with a mental health diagnosis face multiple obstacles when trying to gain and maintain competitive employment, as reflected in the higher unemployment rates for this population. Concerns about loss of benefits, symptom management and strength of coping skills are among some of the unique difficulties for those with a mental health diagnosis. Increased supports, networking and follow-up are essential to ensuring the success of employment.

¹Retrieved on November 3, 2011 from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18614451> "The meaning and importance of employment to people in recovery from serious mental illness: results of a qualitative study."

The Individual Placement and Support model has proven to be an effective approach to supporting people with mental illness in competitive employment. This model of supported employment utilizes Employment Specialists (ES) to help support the person through the work process. Great emphasis is placed on consumer interest and choice, rather than testing and assessment, to find a good fit with a position.

Employment Specialists can provide individuals with a mental health diagnosis the support they need to overcome barriers to work. Employment Specialists help people explore what they would like to do for work by considering their skills, interests, talents and work history. The ES helps the person obtain employment and works with him/her, the employer and possibly the worker's family to help problem-solve and increase the chance for a successful working relationship. Intensive support is provided by the ES, as needed. This support includes face-to-face contact, as well as phone contact. Additionally, the ES will work closely with the mental health treatment team to formulate an employment plan and monitor progress and obstacles.

The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of evidence-based supported employment encompasses important research identified core principles. These include:

- (1) Every person with a severe mental illness who wants to work is eligible for IPS supported employment.
- (2) Employment services are integrated with mental health treatment services.
- (3) Competitive employment is the goal.
- (4) Personalized benefits counseling is provided.
- (5) The job search starts soon after a person expresses interest in working.
- (6) Employment specialists systematically develop relationships with employers based upon their client's work preferences.
- (7) Client preferences are honored.²

Schoharie County is issuing this RFP to provide \$138,221 in funding under NYS OMH program code 1380—Assisted Competitive Employment, a non-licensed program to assist individuals in choosing, finding, and maintaining satisfying jobs in the competitive market at minimum wage or higher. This program will provide individuals with job related skills training as well as long-term supervision and support services, both at the work site and off-site. (as per the NYS Consolidated Fiscal Reporting and Claiming Manual issued 05/2011)

²retrieved from <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ips/page29/page31/page31.html> on November 2, 2011

This funding is to be utilized specifically to hire 2 Employment Specialists who will operate under the Individual Placement and Support model of evidence-based supported employment. Each ES will be expected to carry a caseload of 20 consumers. The Employment Specialists will work closely with the Schoharie County Mental Health Clinic and any private mental health providers to support consumers who have an interest in obtaining competitive employment. Any consumer that expressed an interest in work will be offered supported employment services. Mental health diagnosis, substance abuse issues, job readiness, behavioral history, cognitive impairments or anything of the like will not preclude someone from services.

1.2 Availability of the RFP

The full RFP will be available through a link on the Schoharie County webpage and advertised through the NYS Contract Reporter. An announcement of the RFP will also be sent to Rehabilitation Support Services, Inc.; Albany County ARC; Capital District Center for Independence, Inc.; Catskill Center for Independence; Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State

2. Proposal Submission

2.1 Letter of Intent

Agencies interested in responding to this RFP must submit a letter of Intent to Bid to the Schoharie County Office of Community Services by January 27, 2012. The Letter of Intent to bid shall be non-binding. Please mail the letter of intent to:

Barb Largeteau
Schoharie County Office of Community Services
PO Box 160
Schoharie, NY 12157

2.2 Issuing Officer/Designated Contact

Questions regarding the RFP should be directed to

Barb Largeteau, Department Business Manager II,
Schoharie County Office of Community Services via email at
largeteaub@co.schoharie.ny.us

or by mail at
Schoharie County Office of Community Services
PO Box 160
Schoharie, NY 12157

Questions need to be submitted within 2 week from release of RFP. No questions will be answered by telephone. Questions will be collected via the above methods and answers will be posted through a link on the Schoharie County website at <http://www.schohariecounty-ny.gov/CountyWebSite/index.jsp>

2.3 Key Events/Time Line

Event

RFP Release	
Letters of Intent to Bid	2 weeks from RFP release
Deadline for Submission of Questions	2 weeks from RFP release
Questions/Answers posted on the Schoharie County Website	3 weeks from RFP release
Proposals Due	4 weeks from RFP release
Notice of Conditional Award	6 weeks from RFP release
Estimated Contract Start Date	10 weeks from RFP release

2.4 Addenda to the Request for Proposals

In the event that it becomes necessary to revise any part of the RFP prior to the scheduled submission date for proposals, an addendum will be posted on the Schoharie County website. It is the bidder's responsibility to periodically review the Schoharie County website to learn of revisions or addendums to this RFP, as well as to view the official questions and answers. Changes to the RFP will also be posted in the NYS Contract Reporter. No other notifications will be given.

2.5 Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are any fiscally viable agency in good standing with the County and the NYS OMH. Funding is for new services and will not be used to supplant existing services.

2.6 Disqualification Factors

Following the opening of bids, a preliminary review of all proposals will be conducted by the Issuing Officer or a designee to review each submission for completeness and verify that all eligibility criteria have been met. Proposals that do not comply with the RFP required format will be disqualified.

2.7 Instructions for Bid Submission and Required Format

Proposals submitted for funding under this RFP must include all of the following components in the order listed:

Agency Transmittal Form

Program Narrative:

The program narrative must respond to the criteria. The program narrative is to be single-spaced, one-sided, 12 point font, and no more than 10 pages in length, excluding attachments. Please number the pages "1 of 10," "2 of 10," etc.

Budget Form

Budget Narrative:

Bidders mailing proposals should allow a sufficient mail delivery period to ensure timely arrival of their proposals. Proposals cannot be submitted via e-mail or facsimile. All proposals received after the due date and time cannot be accepted and will be returned unopened.

2.8 Packaging of RFP Responses

Proposals should be sealed in an envelope/or boxed and be sent to:

Barb Largeteau
Schoharie County Office of Community Services
PO Box 160
Schoharie, NY 12157

3. Administrative Information

3.1 Term of Contract

The contract will be written for an initial period of one (1) year with the potential for annual renewals, dependent upon appropriated funding.

4. Evaluation Factors for Awards

4.1 Proposal Evaluation

Designated staff will review each proposal for completeness and verify that all eligibility criteria are met. A complete proposal shall include all required components. If a proposal is not complete or does not meet the basic eligibility and participation standards the proposal will be eliminated from further review. Proposals will be reviewed by a committee consisting of a fiscal person, a program person and the Deputy Director.

4.2 Agency Recommended Award and Notification

Upon completion of the evaluation process, notification of conditional award will be sent to the successful and all non-successful offerers.

5. Scope of Work

5.1 Objectives and Responsibilities

A. Program Requirements

The proposed supported employment program is required to:

- **Serve the Intended Population**
Individuals with a diagnosed severe mental illness who express a desire to work in a competitive employment setting.
- **Follow the Intended model of supported employment**
Successful applicants will have received training in the delivery of IPS, or be willing to participate in IPS training.
- **Work collaboratively with mental health providers**
Programs will be willing to work collaboratively with the treatment team at the Schoharie County Mental Health Clinic (SCMHC), including any applicable case managers. This collaboration may involve attendance at periodic SCMHC team meetings and facilitating regular updates to and from SCMHC clinicians.
- **Submit monthly data**
Programs will be required to submit monthly reports to the Schoharie County Office of Community Services for outcomes measurement. Such reports shall include:
 - number of new persons served
 - number of total persons served
 - number of people obtaining competitive employment
 - number of hours spent in direct service to consumers
- **Transition participants into competitive employment**
The goal of this program is to enable consumers to engage in the competitive employment experience. Successful applicants will include a detailed narrative outlining steps that will be taken to facilitate this process. Narratives should detail plans to establish an ongoing network with employers.
- **Carry an appropriate caseload**
Each Employment Specialist will carry a caseload of 20 people. Proposals should include a plan to identify and accept consumers for service.

5.2 Requirements for Submission

The applicant must describe:

- A staffing plan depicting the role of each staff and/or consultant
- The qualifications and competencies of staff; and
- Their experience with similar projects and populations.

5.3 Budget Form and Budget Narrative

Develop a one (1) year budget. The maximum award amount anticipated per year is \$138,221. **Administrative and overhead charges cannot exceed 15% of the total budgeted costs.**