

**County of Inyo**  
**Inyo County Department of Health and Human Services**  
**Division of Behavioral Health**  
**PO Drawer "H"**  
**Independence, CA 93526**

**Request for Proposals for the Provision of Tele-psychiatry Services**

**Opening Date:** June 5, 2020

**Closing Date:** June 26, 2020

**Contact:**

Meaghan McCamman  
Assistant HHS Director  
Inyo County Department of Health and Human Services  
168 May Street  
Bishop, CA 93514  
760-8937-1253

To be considered, proposals must be received by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on or before 5pm on June 26, 2020. Proposals may be submitted by mail (mailing address: 168 May Street, Bishop, CA 93514) or by email (email address: [mmccamman@inyocounty.us](mailto:mmccamman@inyocounty.us)). No oral or telephonic proposals will be accepted.

Pursuant to Inyo County Ordinance 1156, Inyo County contracting preference for small and local businesses applies. To be eligible for the preferences, a business must provide a certification that it is a small and/or local business as defined by Inyo County Code § 6.06.040 with its bid.

HHS will evaluate all submissions based on the totality of their responses. A respondent's inability to provide a certain service is not necessarily disqualifying, as HHS will consider which submission *as a whole* will provide the best service to county residents. HHS reserves the right to enter into contracts with multiple tele-psychiatry providers if no one respondent is able to provide all of the requested services or if multiple providers would benefit HHS or our clients.

Pursuant to Inyo County's Purchasing and Contracting Policy and Procedures Manual, HHS reserves the right to determine whether respondents meet the criteria set forth below. HHS further reserves the right to reject any respondent based on its assessment that a respondent does not meet the criteria.

The successful respondent will be expected to enter into Inyo County Standard Contract No. 116, a copy of which is attached.

All proposals will remain confidential until they are opened. Opening will occur after the Closing Date.

Bidder's questions must be submitted by June 19, 2020, to Meaghan McCamman at [mmccamman@inyocounty.us](mailto:mmccamman@inyocounty.us). A summary of the questions submitted, including responses deemed relevant and appropriate by the County, will be provided to all potential bidders.

## **A. Introduction**

It is the intent of this Request for Proposal (RFP) to seek proposals from qualified bidder(s) to implement and provide an array of tele-psychiatry and/or in-person psychiatric services to clients of the County of Inyo Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Behavioral Health (HHS).

Inyo County HHS serves as the Medi-Cal Mental Health plan, responsible for providing Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS) to adults with Serious Mental Illness (SMI) and children with emotional disturbance. This RFP will allow HHS to expand access to psychiatric services via tele-psychiatry. Tele-psychiatry providers will be expected to work closely with Inyo County's behavioral health staff, participate in multi-disciplinary team meetings, and provide consultation upon occasion to ensure continuity of care. Ideally, tele-psychiatry providers will be available to come to Inyo County on occasion to meet in-person with clients and staff. This RFP may also be used for tele-psychiatrist supervision for mid-level providers who work in-person with Inyo County behavioral health clients. The County estimates that we will use no more than eighty-five (85) hours per month of tele-psychiatry services or some combination of tele-psychiatry and in-person psychiatric services, but seeks flexibility under this contract to adjust based on client need.

Bidders can submit a proposal for all or part of the County's Telehealth program. County reserves the right to award to multiple Bidders if deemed in the best interest of the County.

## **B. Background**

Inyo County is the second largest county by area in California with 10,140 square miles; and, with population of 18,546, Inyo has one of the smallest population densities in the state with only 1.8 persons per square mile. While the vast majority of the population is in the Northern part of the county centered around the city of Bishop, there are scattered populations of residents throughout our whole geographic area.

To serve our widespread population, HHS has identified a need to identify a high quality and accessible tele-psychiatry service that can serve County clients. In addition, it is our preference to find a tele-psychiatry provider willing to travel to Inyo County periodically for in-person work in order to build relationships and rapport with our long term clients and our staff.

HHS is invested in creating a coordinated continuum of care for adults with SMI and children with emotional disturbance, including those who are experiencing psychiatric crisis. As HHS continues to transform its service systems, we seek a tele-psychiatric service provider who can serve as the primary psychiatric prescriber for the County system of care, enhance our current service provision by working closely with our behavioral health staff, support individuals in crisis and support alternatives to acute psychiatric hospitalization, allow for crisis stabilization in the least restrictive setting possible, reduce the use of medical emergency rooms, reduce recidivism of acute crises and hospitalizations; and reduce incarcerations.

### **C. Program Description**

Services sought under this RFP may include:

1. General, acute, and continuing psychiatric outpatient services with clients of Inyo County's behavioral health clinic;
2. General psychiatric services for inmates of the Inyo County Jail;
3. Crisis stabilization services delivered on an as-needed basis;
4. Consultation and support for Inyo County's in-person behavioral health staff;
5. Medical oversight and supervision of one or more nurse practitioner(s) providing in-person psychiatric services.

#### **1. General, acute and continuing psychiatric outpatient services with clients of Inyo County's behavioral health clinic**

Tele-psychiatry services will be used by the outpatient program for the evaluation, treatment, and ongoing medication management for clients in need of psychotropic medication, as well as to fill gaps in linguistic competencies in our threshold language of Spanish. Clients may include those who are currently under the care of the Inyo County psychiatrist who is retiring, and for others who receive services from Inyo County and who are in need of medication treatment.

#### **2. General psychiatric services for inmates of the Inyo County Jail**

Tele-psychiatry services will be scheduled to support the provision of psychotropic medication to inmates of the Inyo County Jail. Tele-psychiatric providers will be scheduled and supported by the Inyo County corrections nurse.

#### **3. Crisis stabilization services delivered on an as-needed basis**

Northern Inyo Healthcare District (NIHD) serves as a drop-off location for people with mental health emergencies. There are currently long waiting periods for transfers to either inpatient or outpatient care. During these waiting periods, consumers-in-crisis need supports for their psychiatric needs. This tele-psych contract will provide time-limited, reactive emergency response services involving 5150 evaluations in support of Inyo County's crisis-on-call team.

#### **4. Consultation and support for Inyo County's in-person behavioral health staff**

Inyo County Behavioral Health Services are available and provided by integrated, multidisciplinary care team comprised of licensed mental health professionals, social workers, drug and alcohol specialists, and registered nurses. This contract tele-psych provider will work in close conjunction with Inyo County Behavioral Health staff for the evaluation, treatment, and support of clients.

#### **5. Medical oversight and supervision of one or more nurse practitioner(s) providing in-person psychiatric services**

Inyo County is exploring the possibility of hiring an in-person psychiatrist or nurse practitioner to support in-person psychiatric services to clients. If an NP is hired, this tele-psych contract could provide medical supervision to the NP.

#### **D. Proposed Services**

Services will primarily be provided remotely via the internet and multiple forms of teleconferencing equipment and software that allows real-time audio and visual communication between Inyo County Behavioral Health sites and the selected applicant's site. After examination, services shall also include any and all subsequent telephone, fax, e-mail, and written communication necessary to provide follow-up services to HHS. At no point shall mental health services be provided to clients who have not been established as under the care of Inyo County Behavioral Health.

Services to outpatient clients shall include but not be limited to:

- a. Initial Evaluation;
- b. Psychiatric Medication Management;
- c. Diagnostic, suicide, Tarasoff, involuntary admission, medication evaluations;
- d. Medication education for staff, clients, and families;
- e. Review, revision, and approval of assessments of clients;
- f. Consultation, training, and support of multi-disciplinary team members;
- g. Utilization Review, quality improvement protocols, and peer review; and
- h. Documentation and Reporting as established by County.

Applicants must be able to directly enter data into County's Electronic Medical Record, Kingsview, and use the county's electronic prescribing system.

Preference will be given for applicants who propose to send providers to Inyo County on a periodic basis for in-person services.

#### **E. Expectations**

Inyo County HHS provides services to clients with serious and persistent mental illness at multiple sites that could be served by tele-psychiatry services. The interval over which HHS might request services is variable, but will not be greater than 85 hours per month, with a mix of scheduled appointments, medication support services, and crisis on-call services. Applicants will also be expected to maintain basic County Mental Health compliance requirements, including mandatory compliance trainings in areas such as cultural competency, HIPAA, and electronic record management.

The program requires a small amount of "on demand" tele-psychiatry meaning that a psychiatrist or nurse practitioner will be expected to be available by phone to provide psychiatric support within an hour of a call from HHS staff. Although it is expected that the number of clients seen by applicant's staff will be variable, we approximate no more than two (2) hours per month after business hours Monday through Thursday 6 pm – 8 am and during weekend hours beginning 6 pm Friday until 8 am Monday.

#### **F. Staffing Requirements**

All applicants should be able to provide psychiatrists who are appropriately licensed and/or certified to practice in California. It is preferred that each psychiatrist possess a minimum of one (1) year of full-time experience in tele-psychiatry practice with additional preference for

experience in the public mental health system. All Applicants should be board certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

All psychiatrists must be eligible to participate in Medicare, Medicaid and/or other federal health care programs. They must also possess a valid Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) license in the State of California, and where applicable will be required to meet the following criteria:

- a. Submit a completed credentialing application and/or required documentation for credentialing as applicable;
- b. Possess a valid third-party billable provider certification (such as Medicare, Medi-Cal and/or private insurance) OR have submitted a completed billable provider application, along with the required documentation, in order to obtain the appropriate billable provider status.
- c. Complete annual compliance trainings such as HIPAA and Cultural Competency.

Psychiatrists shall provide services in accordance with all applicable provisions of the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, Welfare and Institutions Code §§5000-5550, Title 9 of the California Code Regulations, and Short-Doyle Medi-Cal policies.

### **G. Funding**

Funding available for tele-psychiatry services is variable and will depend upon utilization and in-person staff capacity.

Inyo County HHS reserves the right to withhold funding if there is a lack of qualified applicants or inadequate demand for services to expend these funds.

Applicants selected will be subject to the County's standard contract 116 terms and requirements. At the end of each fiscal year of the contract period, contractors shall be required to submit an annual performance report, annual audit report and final data reports to Inyo County HHS.

### **H. HIPAA**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) mandates standardized code sets for electronic transactions of healthcare data (e.g. electronic claims, clinical data, fax information). HIPAA also contains provisions to protect the privacy and confidentiality of any individually identifiable healthcare information, including behavioral health information.

Telehealth provision or use does not alter a covered entity's obligations under HIPAA, nor does HIPAA contain any special section devoted to telehealth. Therefore, entities that utilize telehealth must meet the same HIPAA requirements that they would for a service provided in person. It is expected that the selected applicant will conduct accurate and thorough assessments of the potential risks and vulnerabilities to personal health information confidentiality, integrity and availability.

### **I. Proposal Content**

Applicants interested in supporting tele-psychiatry in Inyo County must meet the following requirements and are required to submit verifying documentation or information as outlined below. The proposal application must include the following:

1. **Cover Sheet** - with company name and address. (0 points) (1 page)
2. **Program Narrative** - (100 points) (Up to 10 pages)

This section of the proposal should present a comprehensive statement of the proposed program and describe how the applicant would implement the needed tele-psychiatry Services as described in the “Program Description” above. Applicants should be attentive to the stated expectations included in the RFP.

The maximum number of points for the application is 100 points. Points will be assigned as follows for each of the segments comprising the Program Narrative.

- **Skills and Experience Requirements (25 points)**

Provide an overview of your organization’s experience serving individuals who would be eligible for tele-psychiatry Services. Extra points will be awarded for experience providing SMI services to California Counties. Extra points will be awarded for experience with the Kingsview electronic health record system.

- **Program Services Proposal (35 points)**

Provide an overview of your implementation of the proposed services and include how you would propose to address each of the elements in the program description.

- **Schedule of Rates (25 points)**

Please provide a proposed budget with a schedule of rates that addresses each of the programmatic elements described in the Programs section including charges for no-shows and whether substitutions can be made for cancelled or urgent appointments.

- **Management and Reporting (10 points)**

Provide a detailed description of your program’s capabilities in the following areas:

- Financial management
- Experience in accurate and timely Mental Health Medi-Cal billing
- Personnel Management

- **Investigation Statement – (0 points)**

Include a statement of whether the agency is now or has been the subject of a public or private audit or investigation due to potential or alleged financial mismanagement. These statements must describe the program audited or investigation, by whom, the date of the audit, the period audited and the purpose and outcome of the audit or investigation.

- **Legal Information- (0 points)**

Include statement of whether the agency is now or has been the subject of a public or private audit or investigation due to potential or alleged financial mismanagement. These statement must describe the program audited or investigated, by whom, the date of the audit, the period audited and the purpose of the audit or investigation.

- **Supportive Information - (5 points)**

Include in this section any additional information supportive of the agency or this proposal.

## **J. Evaluation and Selection**

All completed proposals received from Applicants before the deadline will be evaluated and selected based on qualifications as specified in this RFP, without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, or disability. Inyo County HHS will reject any proposal that is found to be non-responsive at any stage of evaluation. The Applicant whose proposal is selected will be the most advantageous in terms of cost, functionality, support, and schedule. Proposals will be evaluated and selected through a competitive process.

The methodology for application evaluation will include a review by a panel of HHS staff followed by a telephonic interview. Any application omitting any item listed in the Proposal Content section of this application will be considered incomplete, will not receive further review, and will not be considered.

In assigning points for individual rating factors, reviewers may consider issues including, but not limited to, the extent to which a proposal response:

- Is lacking information, lacking depth or breadth or lacking significant facts and/or details;
- Is fully developed, comprehensive, and has few if any weaknesses, defects or deficiencies;
- Demonstrates that the applicant understands the services sought, and/or the contractor's responsibilities;
- Illustrates the applicant's capability to perform all of the services and meet all scope of work requirements;
- Demonstrates the applicant's capacity, capability and/or commitment to exceed regular service needs (enhanced features, approaches, methods, creative or innovative business solutions).

Taking the recommendations of the review panel under advisement, the HHS Director in concert with the Deputy Director of Behavioral Health will make the final selection from among the highest scoring applicants and will enter into negotiations with the chosen applicant. Inyo County will notify all applicants of their status by email correspondence. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors has the final authority to approve any tele-psychiatry contract service agreements on behalf of the County of Inyo.

June 5, 2020	RFP Released
June 19, 2020	All questions due to <a href="mailto:mmccamman@inyocounty.us">mmccamman@inyocounty.us</a>
June 26, 2020	Applications due by 5:00 PM
July 17, 2020	Notice of Intent to Award is posted
July 17, 2020	Contract negotiations begin
July 28, 2020	Board of Supervisors' Decision (tentative date)