



**Request for Proposal (RFP):**

Case Studies of Comprehensive State Infrastructure for School-Based Prevention Behavioral Health Services

September 30, 2024

**Request for Proposals for The Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew)**

RFP No.: 2024-SUPTI-02

RFP Issue Date: October 14, 2024

RFP Title: Case Studies of Comprehensive State Infrastructure for School-Based Prevention Programming

Point of Contact (POC): Patial Sherzai, senior associate, contracts and procurement services, [substanceuseRFP@pewtrusts.org](mailto:substanceuseRFP@pewtrusts.org)

Key Dates:

|   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| Deadline for notification of expression of interest                   | October 21, 2024  |
| Deadline for requests for clarifications                              | October 21, 2024  |
| Anticipated release of Pew’s responses to requests for clarifications | November 4, 2024  |
| <b>Deadline for submission of proposals</b>                           | November 18, 2024 |
| Anticipated date of award   | December 16, 2024 |
| Anticipated start date of awarded agreement(s)                        | February 16, 2025 |

If you need assistance or accommodation to participate in the RFP process, please reach out to the Pew POC as soon as possible.

\*All proposals, including pricing, must be valid for at least one hundred and twenty (120) calendar days from the date of submission.

## **RFP OVERVIEW**

Through this RFP, Pew is soliciting proposals from organizations (Respondents) to provide research and analysis as further set forth herein and in the Scope of Work attached hereto as Appendix A (Scope of Work).

In recent years, given the backdrop of the nation's opioid and youth mental health crises, federal and state governments have recognized the critical role that schools can play in providing mental health and substance use prevention services, and the governments have directed sizeable resources to develop schools' capacity to do this.<sup>1</sup> School districts are increasingly building systems that house supports that offer a range of services to bolster behavioral health and academic functioning (including mental health, substance use prevention, and suicide prevention services and policies/activities to improve the school social climate).<sup>2</sup> More than 27,000 schools have been trained in how to set up these systems, often called either Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS) or Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).<sup>3</sup>

Within these frameworks, school districts are largely free to select the programs and services they offer to meet their communities' particular needs, but a number of experts monitoring these efforts say there is often a lack of coordination across overall behavioral health, suicide prevention, and substance use prevention services—despite their interrelation.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, programs and services across these three topics are not consistently available to all students. Some states are beginning to integrate substance use prevention, suicide prevention, and mental wellness services within their MTSS/PBIS frameworks, which could allow for more efficient and impactful deployment of limited behavioral health resources flowing to schools from all levels of government.<sup>5</sup>

Pew seeks a contractor to (1) identify, in collaboration with Pew, three to four states that are leaders in building a comprehensive infrastructure that enables school districts to identify needs and respond appropriately; (2) create an interview guide and conduct in-depth interviews with state officials throughout states' legislative and executive branches (including mental health, substance use, and education agencies) as well as with select school administrators and staff; (3) create case studies profiling efforts within said states, documenting challenges and lessons learned; (4) where possible, identify elements that are likely applicable to and may represent opportunities for progress in other states; and (5) disseminate case studies and a summary report throughout the contractor's and Pew's professional networks.

## **BACKGROUND ON PEW**

Pew is a United States (U.S.) nonprofit organization and Section 501(c)(3) public charity. Pew is driven by the power of knowledge to solve today's most challenging problems in the U.S. and

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<sup>1</sup> R. Lipari et al., "Adolescent Mental Health Service Use and Reasons for Using Services in Specialty, Educational, and General Medical Settings," *The CBHSQ Report* (2016), <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27195364/>; S. Hoover, "Investing in School Mental Health: Strategies to Wisely Spend Federal and State Funding," *Psychiatric Services* : (2024), <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379535587>.

<sup>2</sup> I-MTSS Research Network, "What Is the current state of I-MTSS implementation?" 2024, <http://www.mtss.org>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid; Interview with Brandi Simonsen and Steven Goodman (Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, University of Connecticut) on May 20, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid; interview with Sharon Hoover (co-director, National Center for School Mental Health) on May 20, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> L. Ayer et al., "Preventing Youth Suicide: Potential 'Crossover Effects' of Existing School-Based Programs," *Prevention Science* 24(2):382-392, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36484887/>

globally. Pew applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improving public policy, informing the public and invigorating civic life. Pew partners with a diverse range of donors, public and private organizations and concerned citizens who share its commitment to practical, fact-based solutions and goal-driven investments to improve society. For more information about Pew, please see [www.pewtrusts.org](http://www.pewtrusts.org).

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

**All** communications related to this RFP must be conducted via email with the Pew Point of Contact (POC) and by the Key Dates listed on Page 1 of this RFP. Questions must be submitted in writing via email; **phone calls will not be accepted**. Phone calls not initiated by Pew to discuss the RFP or ask questions **are not** permitted. **Pew reserves the right to modify or cancel this RFP, including Key Dates, at any time and to make all decisions respecting this RFP in its sole discretion.**

**Expression of Interest.** Any entity interested in submitting a proposal in response to this RFP must submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) via email by the date and to the POC listed on Page 1. Pew will only send additional materials, clarifications, and answers to questions to those entities that have submitted an EOI by such date. EOIs are not binding; submission of an EOI does not obligate a Respondent to submit a proposal. Any EOI must include, at a minimum:

- Entity's legal name; and
- Point of contact details, including name, phone number, and email address.

**Requests for clarifications.** All questions, and the responses thereto, that Pew believes may be of interest to other potential Respondents will be circulated to all Respondents who have submitted an EOI. Only written responses issued by Pew will be considered official. Any verbal information received from employees of Pew or any other entity should not be considered an official response to any requests for clarifications regarding this RFP.

### **Submission Instructions:**

1. Proposals must be submitted via email to the POC by the date listed on the first page. Please reference the RFP number in the subject line of any response to this RFP. Pew reserves the right to accept or reject, without consideration, proposals that are received late or obtain proposals from, and negotiate with, third parties outside of this RFP at any time.
2. Pew will endeavor to confirm receipt of all properly submitted proposals. If Pew does not confirm receipt, Respondent should assume its proposal has not been received and resubmit before the deadline.

### **Proposal Requirements. Proposals must:**

1. Be submitted in Adobe PDF or Microsoft Office format, using 8.5" x 11" sized layouts.
2. Not exceed ten (10) pages. This page limit does not include the following:
  - a. Resumes and or CVs
  - b. Past performance examples
  - c. References
  - d. Required Appendix forms (listed at the bottom of this RFP):
    - Completed budget template
    - Completed Provider Summary Form

- A detailed response of your organization's ability to comply with critical Conditions of Agreement that will govern the resulting agreement (Agreement) as further set forth in Appendix D.
3. Contain at a minimum the following information:
- a. Description of Respondent's proposed project and/or services, including the methodology, approach, and timeline for implementing the Scope of Work attached in Appendix A, and if applicable, the specifics of how Respondent would perform the work and any limitations or assumptions.
  - b. Resumes/CVs, specific qualifications, and proposed role of key individuals, and any subcontractors, who will carry out the Scope of Work.
  - c. Brief description of Respondent's capabilities and past performance of completed projects of similar size and complexity.
  - d. Description of Respondent's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and what specific steps it will take to ensure that commitment is demonstrated in its work with Pew in the Scope of Work.
  - e. Two (2) or three (3) references from clients to which Respondent provided a similar service or project of similar scope and complexity. Each reference must include:
    - the organization's name, address, contact person, current email address, and phone number
    - a brief description of the work performed
    - a reference to any key individuals involved that would be engaged under the Scope of Work
    - the duration (including the dates) of the work
    - fees associated with the contract if not confidential
- Pew reserves the right to obtain past performance information from other sources in addition to those identified in proposals.

By submitting a proposal, each Respondent grants to Pew and its designees the right to duplicate, use, disclose, and distribute all materials (and information contained therein) submitted for purposes of evaluation, review, and/or research. In addition, each Respondent guarantees that (1) it has full and complete rights to all information and materials included in the proposal and (2) all such materials are not defamatory and do not infringe upon or violate the privacy rights, copyrights, or other proprietary rights of any third party. Additionally, each Respondent agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless Pew with respect to any claims or losses arising from the aforementioned guarantees. Each Respondent further agrees that in addition to this RFP, which is owned by Pew, any submission to Pew (including, without limitation, all materials and information contained therein) will become the property of Pew (not including any of Respondent's preexisting intellectual property rights contained in such submission), and Pew is not required to return the proposal, including any submitted materials, to any Respondent.

### **EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS.**

Pew will review and evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

1. Approach and methodology
2. Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
3. Timeline
4. Staffing
5. Background and past performance
6. Cost and Budget

## 7. Agreement with Pew's Conditions of Agreement

Pew will review all proposals and recommend award allocation, with final selection made by Pew at its sole discretion.

### **AWARD**

Upon completion of the review of all proposals, and a decision to proceed with the selected Respondent(s) (Selected Respondent(s)), Pew will contact each Respondent to advise whether or not its proposal has been accepted. This RFP, and any award resulting from it, does not constitute a binding agreement between Pew and the Selected Respondent. All future work with Pew is contingent upon Pew and the Selected Respondent(s) signing a mutually acceptable Agreement as further set forth in Conditions of Agreement described above. Selected Respondents who are notified that Pew is interested in their services/products/project shall not start any work for Pew, or incur any expense, before an Agreement between Pew and Selected Respondent is fully executed.

### **No Financial Liability for Proposal Preparation**

Pew is not liable, financially, or otherwise, for any costs associated with the preparation, submission, or presentation of any proposals in response to this RFP. By submitting a proposal, Respondent acknowledges and agrees it has read, understands, and accepts the RFP documents, including all appendixes and attachments (including, without limitation, the Conditions of Agreement). The person submitting the proposal on behalf of Respondent has all necessary authority to act on behalf of Recipient.

### **Best Offer**

Best-offer proposals are requested. Pew reserves the right to conduct negotiations with and/or request clarifications from any Respondent prior to award. Respondents may be required to submit additional information during Pew's evaluation process.

### **APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Scope of Work

Appendix B: Budget Template

Appendix C: Respondent Summary Form

Appendix D: Conditions of Agreement

Appendix E: Personal Data

Appendix F: Research Proposal Guidance

## APPENDIX A Scope of Work

### **Proposed scope of work**

*Contractor(s), in collaboration with Pew, will execute the following tasks:*

#### **Task 1. State role in implementation/service integration**

- Describe the impetus for integration, e.g., federal or state funds, and who was at the table, e.g., agencies, subject matter experts.
- Describe state-level barriers and facilitators to implementing integration at the school level and the lessons learned.
- Discuss any legislative or regulatory policy actions that needed to be taken to establish integration.
- Describe the type of technical assistance that has been provided to school districts to help with implementation. What are the key ingredients for successful state technical assistance to districts?
- Describe the data the state is collecting to monitor performance/outcomes.
- Discuss lessons learned, to date, regarding state actions in providing prevention activities in schools.

#### **Task 2. School district role in implementation/service integration**

- Describe the requirements/responsibilities for implementation and funding that are placed on school districts.
- Discuss how buy-in and readiness for implementation has been fostered and sustained.
- Describe the degree of penetration across districts within each state.
- Describe any key messages that have been directed to schools and families to explain and promote use of the school-based services being offered.
- Explain what data the district is collecting to monitor performance/outcomes.
- Discuss any prevention implementation lessons learned at the district level that have been able to inform statewide integration efforts.

#### **Task 3. Addressing the needs of special populations (youth of color, those who identify as LGTBQ+, or who come from low-income families or communities)**

- Describe how families/communities of these subpopulations of students were involved in building school-based services and selecting programming.
- Describe the extent to which programming has evidence of improving outcomes of interest with the particular subpopulation(s) of students being served.
- Describe any mechanisms for community/family/student feedback in what and how services are delivered.

#### **Task 4. Funding**

- Describe how these states are using available funds, including federal grants, to pay for prevention programs and services, including implementation factors such as staffing, training, or curriculum purchase.
- Discuss the degree to which services are currently being paid for by Medicaid.

- Discuss lessons learned in these states' experiences braiding together funding—successes and challenges.

**Task 5: Opportunities for improvement**

- Identify and interview up to 10 additional experts, such as those providing technical assistance to states or school districts, organizations providing funding for prevention, and/or additional school administrators, teachers, or staff.
- Where feasible, draw upon the case studies and additional interviews to identify opportunities to improve integration at the state level that may be applicable to other states.

**Goals for case studies**

- To illustrate how states can operationalize a framework that integrates substance use prevention, suicide prevention, and mental health promotion programming and outcomes measurement for youth in school-based settings.
- To better understand which elements of the framework are critical and align with the core features of MTSS/PBIS (e.g., teams, evidence-based programs and practices, screening and identification, data systems, monitoring for fidelity and family engagement).
- To describe the necessary funding architecture and staffing.
- To identify potentially scalable policies or practices that could apply to other states.

**State selection criteria**

- Those who are operating with fidelity to a MTSS and/or PBIS framework and who have some degree of integration of substance use and suicide prevention and mental health promotion in schools.

**APPENDIX B**  
**Price Proposal Template**

Please provide the proposed budget in the template provided.

(SEE ATTACHED)



APPENDIX C  
Respondent Summary Form

Please complete the attached.

(SEE ATTACHED)

## APPENDIX D Conditions of Agreement

A summary of some critical Conditions of Agreement that will govern the resulting agreement (Agreement) are described below. As stated previously, these are not the actual provisions or an exhaustive summary of terms and conditions that will be included in the final Agreement. For example, different conditions may apply if Pew is funding the Selected Respondent's project through a grant and the project supports the Selected Respondent's own charitable work, as a nonprofit organization or university, as opposed to Pew purchasing a service. Also, Pew's funders may have additional requirements. In addition, if the Selected Respondent is organized outside of the United States or will be performing work in any country outside of the United States, additional terms and conditions may be required.

Any submitted proposal must indicate which condition(s) the Selected Respondent cannot agree to, an explanation as to why (including citations to any relevant statutes or Selected Respondent policies that may govern such position), and any proposed alternatives related to that condition. Selection of a Respondent that proposes alternative or revised conditions in its proposal shall not obligate Pew to consider or accept such revised or proposed conditions for inclusion in the Agreement.

1. Intellectual Property. Pew shall own the Work Product. "Work Product" consists of the deliverables and other materials, including drafts thereof, prepared by Selected Respondent and its personnel under the Agreement.
2. Datasets. Depending on the Scope of Work, Selected Respondent may be required to provide Pew, in a form satisfactory to Pew, a copy of datasets used in connection with the Work Product and grant Pew an unrestricted license to all such datasets.
3. Representations and Warranties. Selected Respondent is required to represent and warrant that its personnel are experienced, properly trained or otherwise qualified and capable of performing the work and that the Work Product and any applicable datasets shall not infringe any intellectual property right of any third party. This is not an exhaustive list of the representations and warranties in the Agreement.
4. No Campaign Intervention. Selected Respondent cannot use Pew funds to participate or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.
5. Ethics Requirements. Selected Respondent may not use funds provided under the Agreement to give anything of value to a government official or employee without prior written approval from Pew.
6. Insurance. Depending on the Scope of Work, Selected Respondent may be required to maintain insurance coverage including, but not limited to, General Liability (\$1,000,000 per occurrence, \$2,000,000 aggregate, \$1,000,000 personal and advertising, \$2,000,000 aggregate); Workers Compensation and Employer's Liability (not less than \$500,000 each accident for bodily injury by accident, and \$500,000 each employee and policy limit for bodily injury by disease); Professional Liability (with a minimum limit of \$3,000,000 each claim/aggregate); Umbrella

Liability (with a \$3,000,000 limit). As a reminder, if for any reason, Respondent cannot meet Pew's insurance requirements (for example, if Respondent is self-insured or otherwise), Respondent should state the reasoning and its current insurance coverage in the proposal.

7. Indemnification. Selected Respondent is required to indemnify Pew and certain related parties for any costs or claims arising from (i) Selected Respondent's breach of the Agreement, (ii) performance under the Agreement, or (iii) intentional misconduct or negligent acts or omissions, of Selected Respondent or its personnel.
  8. Pew Limitation of Liability. Recourse against Pew under the Agreement shall in no event include lost profits, incidental, consequential, special, punitive, or indirect damages, regardless of whether advised of the possibility of such damages. Selected Respondent's liability will not be limited under the Agreement.
  9. Termination Rights. Each party may terminate the Agreement upon the other party's breach and failure to cure within the notice and cure period(s) set forth in the Agreement. Pew may terminate at any time, without cause, by giving 30 days' prior written notice to Selected Respondent, and if applicable, Selected Respondent shall cooperate with Pew in transitioning the Agreement to a new provider during the wind-down period. Termination remedies are specified in the Agreement.
  10. Governing Law. The laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania shall govern the Agreement, and the state and federal courts in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, shall have exclusive jurisdiction over any disputes arising under the Agreement.
  11. Best Rate Available. Selected Respondent must agree that as of the start date of the Agreement, the pricing (including all rates in which the pricing is based) reflects the best rate available. If, after the start date of the Agreement and before the services are performed, Selected Respondent charges another client a lower fee for the same or similar services, Selected Respondent agrees that this lower fee will apply to the Agreement (and the Agreement will be amended to reflect the lower pricing).
  12. Right to Audit. Selected Respondent must agree, during the Agreement term and for three (3) years thereafter, to maintain complete and accurate books and records to substantiate the Selected Respondent's charges to Pew under the Agreement.
  13. Personal Data. Selected Respondent must agree to comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and personal data requirements, which are attached as Appendix E to this RFP. Depending on the Scope of Work, additional requirements may be included in the Agreement.
- Other material terms and provisions will be set forth in the Agreement provided to the Selected Respondent.

## APPENDIX E Personal Data

Unless otherwise specified in the Agreement, Selected Respondent represents and warrants that no Personal Data (defined below) relating to non-U.S. residents shall be processed or transferred from the European Union or any other jurisdiction outside of the United States to the United States under an Agreement. Pew represents and warrants that Pew shall not knowingly transfer Personal Data relating to non-U.S. residents to Selected Respondent under any Agreement.

If processing, including transferring, of any Personal Data is performed under an Agreement, Selected Respondent shall comply with the Data Protection Law (defined below) in connection with the processing, including transfer, of Personal Data for purposes of the Agreement. Specifically, Selected Respondent represents and warrants that: (i) it shall not disclose any Personal Data except where it is lawful; (ii) it shall carry out the sharing of any Personal Data obtained from Data Subjects (defined below) pursuant to the Agreement in accordance with any notices supplied to, and consents obtained from, Data Subjects; (iii) it shall enter into any additional contractual clauses or addenda as may be necessary for compliance with the Data Protection Law; and (iv) it shall not process any Personal Data other than in accordance with (a) any applicable consents, (b) any applicable privacy policies or other conditions as notified to Selected Respondent by Pew, and (c) applicable law, including the Data Protection Law.

Selected Respondent agrees to provide Pew written notice of any reasonably suspected or actual information security or other incident that compromises the security, integrity, confidentiality, or availability of Personal Data, and any such incident shall be deemed a breach of the Agreement. Within seventy-two (72) hours of discovery of the data security incident, without waiver of any other rights and remedies available to Pew, including, but not limited to, Pew's rights under the indemnification section of the Agreement, Selected Respondent shall cooperate (and cause its Personnel to cooperate) with Pew on taking reasonable steps to ensure the security, integrity, confidentiality, and/or availability of the data.

Each Party shall also, upon request of the other Party, provide all such assistance as the other Party may reasonably request to comply with its obligations under Data Protection Law (including responding to any requests from a supervisory authority or Data Subject and providing copies of any and all notices and consents a Party has provided to Data Subjects) in relation to the transfer of the Personal Data to the other Party.

For the purposes of the Agreement:

- (i) "Data Protection Law" means any applicable data protection or privacy laws to which either Party, as applicable, is subject to in connection with the Agreement; and
- (ii) "Personal Data" means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (a "Data Subject").

## APPENDIX F Research Proposal Guidance

The project proposal is a written statement that describes the project, its questions, method, design, analysis and scope. Proposals that carefully address the relevant categories below are generally stronger and require fewer revisions after submission to Pew.

- 1. Background:** Please describe the proposed research project, including how it fits into current research and policy landscapes, the information gaps the research would seek to address, and the target audiences.
- 2. Research question(s):** Provide specific research question(s) the study will address and, if applicable, any associated hypotheses.
- 3. Research methods and analyses:** Describe in detail the proposed research methodologies—both quantitative and qualitative—and analyses. If there are multiple research questions, specify which methods and activities are associated with each research question. This section should also include details of other major activities that will be carried out as part of this contract or grant (e.g., hosting a workshop).
- 4. Diversity, equity, and inclusion statement:** If applicable, include a description of how you are considering aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the content of the research and the approach you are taking.
- 5. Data:** What are the data sources needed to answer the research questions? How will they be collected? Are they available? If proprietary source data will be used, please explain the rationale and limitations.
  - a. Surveys: Please state if you will be designing a new survey, which require a methodology statement and topline. Please reach out to Pew for more information on Pew's survey expectations if the provider/grantee is proposing survey methodology.
  - b. Do you plan to use sensitive data (e.g., personally identifiable information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as a name, Social Security number, date/place of birth, or any other data linked to an individual, such as medical, financial, educational or employment information)? If so, please address plans for obtaining informed consent, engaging with an Institutional Review Board (IRB), chain of custody, and how Pew or the provider/grantee will ensure privacy (e.g., plans for cell suppression).
- 6. Challenges:** Describe potential scientific limitations to the proposed research and methods and how the project design accounts for each. Also detail any potential for controversy or other considerations that may affect how the findings are received and interpreted.
- 7. Deliverables/Milestones:** A deliverable (or milestone for grantees) is a specific result that the provider or grantee commits to producing within the funding period. A research deliverable or milestone can be an output (e.g., work products like reports, briefs,

chartbooks, and slide decks, or activities like hosted events) or an outcome (e.g., a consequence or payoff of the work, such as policy change or uptake or use of findings by key audiences). Please provide a bulleted list of deliverables or milestones. Each should be distinct and phrased in plain language.

- 8. External review:** Briefly describe plans for any external advisers and external peer reviewers. Note that external reviewers cannot be involved in earlier stages of the work, such as acting as an adviser on its design and development. Describe how the provider or grantee will accommodate external review.
- 9. Data- and fact-check:** Describe how the provider or grantee will complete data-check (verifying the accuracy of quantitative findings) and fact-check (verifying the factual accuracy of the product's content). For guidance on Pew's expectations concerning data- and fact-checking, please see this helpful [resource](#). RQS can provide data- and/or fact-checking services if the provider or grantee is unable.
- 10. Project timeline:** Please include estimated start and end dates for each deliverable or milestone, to tell and describe any outside drivers for the timing of document release.
- 11. Works cited, bibliography, references (as appropriate):** Please list any works cited in the proposal.
- 12. Budget:** Please include the estimated research costs. If you would like assistance with gathering this information, please contact RQS.
- 13. Senior director (SD) or VP approval required after RQS review (enter name of approver and date of approval):** Conduct a final check: Before you submit this for SD/VP approval, did you make all necessary changes?