



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
New York Statewide Comprehensive Screening Project
Due Date: August 12, 2024

The Center for Justice Innovation (the Center) is a non-profit organization that works to create a more effective and humane justice system by performing original research and helping launch reforms around the world. The Center creates operating projects that have been documented to reduce the use of jail and prison, assist victims of crime, and strengthen communities. Nationally and internationally, the Center performs research and provides consulting services to justice innovators. To learn more about the Center please visit our [website](#).

Background

In fall 2022, New York State’s Unified Court System’s (UCS) Division of Policy and Planning (DPP) was awarded a Bureau of Justice Assistance Adult Drug Court Discretionary Grant. This grant will be used to develop and implement a first-of-its-kind approach to comprehensive statewide screening for substance use and mental health disorders. To achieve this, DPP partnered with the Center for Justice Innovation (the Center), leveraging over two decades of successful collaborations to address the barriers and limitations to treatment access for individuals with criminal legal involvement.

The goal of this project is to implement ten recommendations that were developed by an advisory board of twenty-two professionals—including court and legal practitioners, addiction specialists, agency administrators, and people with lived experience. The recommendations will establish or enhance connections to needs-based services for people with criminal legal involvement.

Four pilot sites from across the state – Chemung County Drug Treatment Court, Lackawanna City Court, Oneida County Drug Treatment Court, and Troy Regional Treatment Court – were selected to pilot the recommendations beginning in the fall of 2024. A community-based organization in each pilot site jurisdiction will receive funding for a support specialist to conduct needs-based screenings. The support specialist can be one full-time position or two part-time positions. The screenings will be used to identify people in need of substance use and/or mental health treatment, as well as other essential needs. Each pilot site will also receive training and technical assistance to help implement the recommendations, seamlessly integrate the external support specialist(s) into the treatment court’s structure and processes, and facilitate collaboration between the support specialist(s) and court partners. Ultimately, the lessons learned from the pilot sites will be used to inform the development of recommendations that can be scaled statewide.

Scope of Work

The contracted community-based organization will be responsible for staffing and oversight of one full-time or two part-time support specialist(s). The support specialist(s) will work directly with the pilot site treatment court to conduct initial needs-based screenings and to refer clients to community-based organizations and agencies that can address the identified client needs. The community-based organization will be eligible to receive up to \$130,000 over a 24-month period (i.e., \$65,000 per year inclusive of fringe, salary, and supervision) beginning on October 1, 2024. This project provides funding for the support specialist(s) for two-years, ending September 30, 2026.

Responsibilities of the support specialist(s) include but are not limited to:

- Conduct pre-plea, court-based needs-based screenings to identify individuals with substance use and mental health disorders, as well as social determinants of health challenges such as housing, food insecurity, transportation, and healthcare.
- Facilitate referrals to appropriate treatment and supportive services.
- Collaborate closely with court staff, law enforcement, pretrial services, harm reduction agencies, diversion specialists, peers, and community-based organizations and agencies.
- Maintain accurate and timely records of screenings and referrals.
- Work towards overcoming barriers and limitations to treatment access for individuals involved with the criminal legal system.

The support specialist(s) will work for the contracted community-based agency.

Project Timeline

Following are important dates for organizations interested in responding to this RFP:

- Aug. 2: Deadline to submit questions for Q/A Zoom session
- Aug. 5: [Q/A Zoom session](#) for community-based organizations responding to the RFP
- Aug. 12: Deadline for community-based organizations to respond to RFP
- Aug. 26: Community-based organizations that are selected are notified
- Aug. 29: Selected community-based organizations post job listing for support specialists (the Center will share a draft job description)
- Sept. 30: Deadline for hiring support specialists
- Oct. 16: Support specialists start date
- Oct. 16-31: Support specialist(s) trained on recommendations and to use the screening questions
- Nov. 1: Support specialist(s) begins screening clients

REMINDER: All proposals are due by Monday, August 12, at 5pm EST.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants are limited to community-based organizations that serve pilot site communities. All applicants must be eligible to receive grant funds from the Bureau of Justice Assistance; funds under this program will be awarded through a subcontract with the Center. Additionally, the subcontractor will have the following qualities:

- A demonstrated understanding of the criminal legal system and the collaboration needed for information-sharing among partners
- A connection to community treatment and support service providers;
- A strong understanding of the behavioral health treatment landscape in the pilot site community;
- Ability to offer clinical supervision to the support specialist(s);

- Experience working with adults with criminal legal involvement that are experiencing substance use disorders, serious mental illnesses, and / or confronting social determinant of health challenges (e.g., food or housing insecurity, transportation limitations, etc.).

Proposal Content

Proposals must be no more than five pages double spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font in PDF form and must include:

- Relevant experience working with justice involved individuals with substance use or mental health disorders, and / or significant social determinant of health challenges
- Organizational and staffing structure for the proposed work, including resumes of proposed clinical supervisor and any management involved in implementation
- 24-month project budget (contract timeline subject to change based on the Center's subcontract)

Submission Instructions

Completed applications must be emailed to recoveryreform@innovatingjustice.org with the subject line Comprehensive Screening Project Proposal by 5pm EST on Monday, August 12, 2024.

The Center will host an informational Zoom session for all interested parties on Monday, August 5, from 12-1pm EST using [this link](#). All questions should be submitted to recoveryreform@innovatingjustice.org by Friday, August 2 at 5pm EST.

Final decisions about the awards are expected to be announced August 26, 2024.

Selection Criteria

The Center is committed to ensuring a fair and open process for awarding funds. Applications will be reviewed by a committee with representatives from the Center and the New York State Unified Court System's Division of Policy and Planning.

Reviewers will evaluate the following factors:

- Experience working with individuals with substance use disorders, mental illness, and co-occurring disorders.
- Experience engaging minoritized communities.
- Capacity to meet or connect clients to partner organizations that can meet the diverse needs of clients (housing, treatment needs, food insecurity, benefits enrollment, etc.)
- A demonstrated history of supervising staff and knowledge of the criminal legal system.
- The ability to hire and supervise a support specialist(s) within the timeline provided in this solicitation and throughout the term of the project.

General Conditions

1. Right to Amend RFP: The Center reserves the right to cancel or amend or supplement the RFP, giving equal information and cooperation by way of issued addendum to all applicants through email.

2. Bidder Incurred Costs: All costs incurred in the preparation and presentation of proposals in any way whatsoever shall be wholly absorbed by the bidder(s).
3. Acceptance of Proposals: Proposals will be assessed in light of the evaluation criteria specified in this RFP.
4. Evaluation of Proposals: Several members of the Center will evaluate all complete proposals. The right is reserved to make an award based directly on the proposals submitted or to negotiate further with one or more applicants.
5. Contract: The final terms, scope of work, funding, and conditions will be set in a contract between the selected vendor and the Center.