

# City of Philadelphia

## Department of Behavioral Health/ Mental Retardation Services

1101 Market Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19107



# Request For Applications (RFA)

## Communities of Recovery: NIATx Tools for Change

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Mental Retardation Services

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Informational Bidder's Conference – Tuesday, August 7, 2007, at 2:00 P.M.  
CBH Conference Center – 801 Market Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor

Deadline for Applications – Tuesday, September 4, 2007 at 5:00 P.M.

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**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER  
MINORITIES AND WOMEN ARE ENCOURAGED TO RESPOND**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>I</b>	<b>General Information for Prospective Applicants</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II</b>	<b>Application Requirements</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>III</b>	<b>Criteria for Selection</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Appendices</b>		
	<b>Appendix A - Application Cover Sheet</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>Appendix B – Letter of Commitment and Understanding</b>	<b>14</b>

## **SECTION I GENERAL INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS**

### **I.1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health/Mental Retardation Services (DBH/MRS) is responsible for administering a broad array of treatment, intervention and prevention programs for individuals and families experiencing difficulties related to mental illness, addiction and mental retardation. Historically, the Philadelphia behavioral health system has primarily served individuals who are experiencing significant problems with mental illness, substance abuse, or both.

Since the creation of the Department of Behavioral Health/Mental Retardation Services (DBH/MRS) within Philadelphia city government in October 2003, the Department has sought to transform the system of care in Philadelphia through a variety of initiatives. This transformation has been designed to promote a recovery-oriented service system for people with substance abuse and psychiatric disorders, encourage the use of evidenced based practices, improve the cultural competency of all providers of care throughout the system, eliminate behavioral health disparities and heighten sensitivity around the issue of trauma and its impact on the provision of behavioral health care.

In making these changes, DBH/MRS has attempted to improve public performance by creating a citywide culture based on expectations for high quality, client/consumer responsive services. DBH/MRS has also provided extensive ongoing training to the staff of its provider network as well as consultation to agencies whose clinical standards have needed strengthening.

Consistent with this emphasis on training, DBH/MRS is now undertaking a new initiative to improve clinical practices and processes in outpatient behavioral health treatment. The training is designed to foster systems change within provider agencies by looking at current practices as part of a process improvement model. This initiative is being undertaken in collaboration with the Network for the Improvement of Addiction Treatment (NIATx).

Founded in 2003, NIATx is based at the University of Wisconsin and is a partnership between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Paths to Recovery program, the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment's Strengthening Treatment Access and Retention (STAR) program, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, and a number of independent addiction treatment organizations. NIATx works with behavioral health treatment providers to make more efficient use of their capacity and shares strategies for improving treatment access and retention.

The NIATx program focuses on four aims:

- To reduce the wait time between a client/consumer's first request for service and the first treatment session
- To reduce client/consumer no-shows

- To increase admissions to treatment services
- To increase the treatment continuation rate between the first and the fourth treatment sessions

These four aims impact the client/consumers' "access" to treatment and "retention" in treatment. Through the work of the NIATx network, providers have improved their practices and their outcomes. While NIATx initially focused on agencies providing addiction treatment, its approach is equally applicable to all behavioral health organizations.

Since 2003, NIATx has helped treatment centers make dramatic improvements in access to and retention in treatment. NIATx's Founding Members have taken part in three programs – Paths to Recovery, Strengthening Treatment Access and Retention, and the State Pilot Project – to improve their operations and capacity.

Using the NIATx model of process improvement, and their existing resources, these Founding Members:

- reduced their wait times by 35 percent
- reduced their no-shows by 33 percent
- increased their admissions by 22 percent
- increased their continuations through treatment by 22 percent

The approach that NIATx employs is designed to help the participating organizations achieve new levels of excellence in access and engagement. It is important to emphasize that strong leadership is required and that organization-wide improvement is only possible when leadership is committed to improvement as a central business strategy. It is highly desirable to have the Executive Director and one other senior leader of each participating organization participating actively in this initiative, along with other key staff.

To learn more about the NIATx model, please visit their website at [www.niatx.net](http://www.niatx.net). Please review the primer on process improvement, as well as the other areas of this website, for more background on this model and to help understand the thrust of this initiative.

In terms of tangible benefits to participation in the pilot project, DBH/MRS believes that the process improvement techniques that will be made available to participating organizations will be of enormous benefit to those agencies, the clients/consumers they serve and the system as a whole. DBH/MRS also believes that those agencies that participate will be well positioned to become involved with future demonstration programs and innovations that DBH/MRS may subsequently implement.

## **I.2 APPLICATION PROCESS**

DBH/MRS is seeking to identify approximately 12-20 outpatient behavioral health providers to participate in a pilot program to demonstrate the efficacy of the NIATx principles in Philadelphia. **We want to emphasize that all outpatient behavioral health providers, including addiction and mental health agencies, are eligible and encouraged to apply.** While providers of all levels of care can benefit from the use of these principles, we plan to begin the pilot through this RFA with behavioral health outpatient providers. All behavioral health outpatient providers who are part of the DBH/MRS network are encouraged to apply as participants in this innovative program. Those programs that are selected will have the opportunity to work closely with NIATx staff and consultants and DBH/MRS staff to implement changes that can be extraordinarily beneficial to treatment providers.

Many of the organizations eligible to apply for this opportunity learned about this initiative during the Introductory Seminar and Information Session on June 22, 2007. The Introductory Seminar and Information Session focused on the background and contextual information about the project, the NIATx process improvement model and how other organizations have used the NIATx model to adapt to a rapidly changing environment. Again, for those providers who were unable to attend, we direct your attention to the NIATx website at [www.niatx.net](http://www.niatx.net) for more information.

Following the instructions in this RFA, applicant organizations will have until September 4, 2007 to submit an application. After applications have been submitted, DBH/MRS will then select up to twenty organizations to participate in the Demonstration Phase. The selected providers will work with NIATx consultants over a nine month period to use process improvement techniques and evidence-based organizational change principles to improve access and retention for clients/consumers.

This project will demonstrate how process improvement techniques and evidence-based organizational change principles can be used in meeting client/consumer needs and improving the provider's performance. The project will consist of several scheduled sessions with the NIATx consultants for guidance in initiating and managing process improvement within the organization.

Participation in this pilot program offers providers a unique opportunity and access to information that could significantly impact on the operations of provider agencies. Prospective applicants should understand that the designation of staff for this project must include a minimum of 4-5 key agency staff. This will include an Executive Sponsor (preferably the Executive Director), a change leader (high level manager) for the project, and at least two or three other key staff. Agencies will be required to commit staff time for meetings, trainings, conference calls, consultant visits and any other activities that may be required. Staff time that agencies must commit for this project will not be reimbursed. Thus, applicants for this program will not be required to submit a budget.

### **I.3 ISSUING OFFICE**

This RFA is issued by the City of Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health/Mental Retardation Services (DBH/MRS). DBH/MRS will be the sole point of contact in the City of Philadelphia with regard to any of the programmatic aspects of this RFA.

#### **I.4 INCURRING COSTS**

DBH/MRS is not liable for any costs incurred by applicants for work performed in preparation of a response to this RFA.

#### **I.5 REJECTION OF APPLICATIONS**

DBH/MRS reserves the right to reject any and all applications received as a result of this RFA.

#### **I.6 QUESTIONS / CONTACT PERSONS**

Any general or programmatic questions that you may have as a result of reading this RFA should be directed to Frank Gould at DBH/MRS. He will be the primary point of contact for answering these questions and will be available to respond to questions via e-mail or fax. His e-mail address is [frank.gould@phila.gov](mailto:frank.gould@phila.gov). His fax number is (215) 685-4977. In his absence, questions should be directed to Jennifer Dorwart. Her e-mail address is [jennifer.dorwart@phila.gov](mailto:jennifer.dorwart@phila.gov). Her fax number is (215) 732-2634.

#### **I.7 APPLICATIONS AND RESPONSE DATE**

All applications must be submitted to Jennifer Dorwart by Tuesday, September 4, at 5:00 P.M. **Any response(s) received after that date and time will not be reviewed.** We are also requiring you to submit, by the same deadline, one original signed application and eight (8) copies of your application. These should be submitted to:

Jennifer Dorwart  
801 Market Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

An official authorized to bind the applicant to all provisions of the application must sign the application cover page.

#### **I.8 PREPARATION OF APPLICATIONS**

Applications must be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of the applicant's ability to meet the requirements of the RFA. Each application must provide all the information detailed in this RFA using the format described in Section II. The applicant shall organize the proposal in the same order as presented in the RFA and clearly label each section and subsection with the headings as they appear in the RFA. Include a table of contents. Please follow the page limits indicated in Section II in your application.

The narrative portion of the proposal must be presented on standard 8.5"x11" paper, using a font size of 11 or larger. Margins, headers and footers should be at least one inch. Answers to each question must be numbered/lettered and correspond to the numbered/lettered questions in the RFA. Failure to number and letter the questions or to respond to all questions may result in the proposal's being considered non-responsive.

### **I.9 ORAL PRESENTATION**

Applicants may be required to make an oral presentation concerning various aspects of their application to DBH/MRS. Such presentations provide an opportunity for applicants to clarify their applications to insure a thorough and mutual understanding. DBH/MRS will schedule such presentations on an as needed basis.

### **I.10 DISCLOSURE OF APPLICATION CONTENTS**

Information provided in applications will be held in confidence and will not be revealed or discussed with competitors. All material submitted as part of the RFA process becomes the property of DBH/MRS and will only be returned at DBH/MRS' option. Applications submitted to DBH/MRS may be reviewed and evaluated by any person other than competing bidders. DBH/MRS retains the right to use any/all ideas presented in any reply to this RFA. Selection or rejection of an application does not affect this right.

### **I.11 SELECTION / REJECTION PROCEDURES**

Applicants whose applications are selected by DBH/MRS will be notified in writing as to their selection. Information will be provided in this letter as to any issues within the application that will require further discussion or negotiation with DBH/MRS. Applicants whose applications are not selected will also be notified in writing by DBH/MRS.

### **I.12 LIFE OF APPLICATIONS**

DBH/MRS expects to select up to 20 applicants as a result of this RFA within approximately 4-6 weeks of the submission deadline. Applications that are not approved will be kept on file for one year in the event that additional pilot trainings will be undertaken.

### **I.13 PILOT DEMONSTRATION TIME PERIOD**

The pilot demonstration resulting from this RFA will run for a period of approximately nine months. During that time, all selected organizations agree to participate in the demonstration in accordance with the timetable provided by DBH/MRS and its

subcontractor(s). DBH/MRS reserves the right to disqualify and terminate the arrangement with any provider agency that fails to adhere to the participation and timetable requirements.

#### **I.14 ADDENDA TO THE RFA**

If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFA through additions, deletions, or providing qualifying information, this information will be provided to all parties who attended the June 22nd Introductory Seminar and Information Session, along with any other outpatient providers who have indicated interest in participating in this pilot demonstration.

#### **I.15 NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The successful applicants, as a condition of participation with DBH/MRS through this RFA, agree to comply with all relevant sections of the Civil Rights Act of 1984, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, hereby assuring that:

The provider does not and will not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, handicap or disability in providing services, programs or employment or in its relationship with other contractors.

## **SECTION II APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND FORMAT**

All applications submitted in response to this RFA must be submitted in the format outlined below. To be considered, all sections of the application must be completed.

### **II.1 APPLICATION COVER SHEET**

All applicants must completely fill out, sign and attach the cover sheet (see Appendix A) as the first page of the proposal.

### **II.2 APPLICATION NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

This section provides the opportunity to describe why your organization is a good candidate to participate in the pilot demonstration. It should be written after careful consideration is given to the information provided at the Introductory Seminar and Information Session on June 22, 2007 and on the NIATx website. The information to be provided in this section should include:

#### **A. Organization Description**

Provide a brief description of your organization and the behavioral health services it provides. Please note that as this initial demonstration is targeting outpatient service providers, the emphasis on your response should be toward a description of outpatient services, even if you provide other services. Please include some simple data that reflect the size and scope of your outpatient services, such as the number of individuals serviced annually and number visits/service hours provided.

#### **B. Description of a Walk-Through of Your Agency**

As a prospective participant in this project, all agencies are being asked to conduct a walk-through. This was described at the Introductory Seminar and Information Session on June 22, 2007 and is also available on the NIATx website. The walk-through is designed to have agency staff take on the role of client/consumer in approaching the agency and going through the process of accessing services in order to develop a better understanding of the access and entry process. A walk-through is a required component of the application process.

In this section, please describe in detail the walk-through process that occurred in your agency, what was learned and, if possible, two salient observations from the walk-through exercise. Please also describe what, if any, changes you may consider as a result of the information gathered as part of the walk-through.

#### **C. Description of a “Small” Change Within Your Agency**

Following the walk-through, agencies are asked to implement a “small” change in their operations. This change should be such that it will affect an aspect of the

operation of your agency in some way and will affect both clients/consumers and the way at least some of the employees of your agency do their jobs.

In this section please describe in detail the change you implemented, the data used to assess the change and how it affected clients/consumers and staff members of the agency. The description should include feedback that was received from those affected and whether that feedback changed over time.

#### **D. Why Participate? Organization's Objectives for Participation**

After hearing more about this pilot demonstration project at the Introductory Seminar and Information Session on June 22, 2007 and/or reading about it on the NIATx website, we would like for you to describe what aspects of this project are of interest to you and why you think that this would be a good fit for your agency. Please be as specific as possible in terms of the aspects of your organization that could benefit from participation and what you see as anticipated outcomes from that participation.

#### **E. Agency Participants**

In this section, please indicate the names and positions of those individuals whom you are proposing to participate in this initiative. Specifically, we are looking for an executive level person, preferably the Executive Director; a director or supervisory level person, depending upon the structure of your agency; and at least 2-3 additional key staff. These 4-5 people at a minimum will form the team that DBH/MRS and the NIATx consultants will be working with on an ongoing basis.

The director or supervisory level person, with the support of the Executive Director, will likely fill the role of Change Leader for this project, so that person should be someone who is respected within the organization, has the ability to bring people together and can be a catalyst for change.

We are also seeking a statement of commitment in this section that the individuals who are designated to participate in this initiative will be available on a regular basis for all meetings, trainings, conference calls, consultant visits, submission of monthly update reports, and any other activities that may be required. In addition we are seeking a statement of understanding on your part that the staff time required to participate in this demonstration will not be reimbursed by DBH/MRS. This statement of commitment and understanding should be in the form of a letter of no more than 1 page, single spaced, from the Executive Director and should be attached to the application as Appendix B.

Sections A-E above should be in narrative form and the five sections together should be limited to a total of no more than 12 single spaced pages. Applications with more than 12 pages will be reviewed only through the first 12 pages. The letter of commitment and understanding described above and to be included as Appendix B in the application will not be counted in the 12 page limit.

### **SECTION III CRITERIA FOR SELECTION**

A DBH/MRS Application Review Committee will review all responses to this RFA. Based on that review, the Committee will make recommendations to the Director of DBH/MRS concerning those applications that are best able to meet the goals of the project. In reviewing the applications, the Committee will weigh all submissions according to the responses submitted to the five sections of the application narrative description above. Specifically, the quality and depth of the responses to Sections B, C and D, above, in terms of your desire to participate in the project, your understanding of the project and the work you have done in order to demonstrate your readiness to participate in the project will carry the most weight. The designation of individuals who will participate in the project and their role in your organization will also be strongly considered. For this review, individual weights will not be assigned to each area. Rather, your application will be reviewed in terms of the overall narrative that you provide.

# **APPENDIX A**

## **Application Cover Sheet**

**DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH/MENTAL RETARDATION  
SERVICES**

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

**COMMUNITIES OF RECOVERY: NIATX TOOLS FOR CHANGE**

COVER SHEET

CORPORATE NAME OF  
APPLICANT ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

CORPORATE ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN CONTACT PERSON \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ FAX # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF OFFICIAL AUTHORIZED TO BIND BIDDER TO ALL PROVISIONS OF THE APPLICATION TITLE

\_\_\_\_\_  
TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL IDENTIFIED ABOVE

# **APPENDIX B**

## **Letter of Commitment and Understanding**