



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
**DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES**

REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST

**BSCA**  
**Disaster Response Crisis Counselor**  
**(DRCC) County Grants**

February 1, 2024

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Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services

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## **I. Purpose and Intent**

The Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) is issuing a Request for Letters of Interest (RLI) to County Mental Health Administrators in the following New Jersey counties: Sussex, Warren, Middlesex, Cape May and Cumberland. This RLI will provide grant funding for Disaster Response Crisis Counseling (DRCC) programs. Through this RLI, County Mental Health Administrators can apply through a Letter of Interest (LOI) for funding to support their pre-existing county DRCC programs. DMHAS will award up to five (5) grants, one per named county.

Successful applicants must clearly describe through the post-award reporting process that their DRCC program is expanding by way of eligible volunteers and that activities are being performed that will sustain and enrich this vital volunteer workforce.

### **The purpose of the grant is to:**

1. Address the shortage of DRCCs Statewide; ensuring that New Jersey has a robust number of Crisis Counselors that can respond to natural and man-made disasters.
2. Encourage and enhance the recruitment of a trained and vetted DRCC volunteer workforce.
3. Support County Mental Health Administrators in engaging, training and sustaining DRCC's in their respective counties.

### **DMHAS will:**

- Provide up to \$30,000 to support each identified county that is selected for funding; DMHAS will award up to five (5) grants totaling up to \$150,000.
- Monitor successful applicant's efforts to recruit and maintain volunteers through a monthly reporting process.
- Collaborate with County Mental Health Administrators and support their efforts to enhance DRCC programs.

### **DRCC awardees will be expected to accomplish the following:**

1. Create and execute a plan to increase the number of DRCCs that are available to respond to community crises.
2. Conduct recruitment and engagement activities that result in the expansion of the DRCC volunteer workforce in your assigned county.
3. Provide opportunities for general and specialized training and/or exercise drills for new and existing DRCCs.

4. Maintain documentation that demonstrates the completion of activities such as training attendance sheets, receipts etc.
5. Comply with the programmatic and fiscal reporting schedule, updating DMHAS staff on activities and spending.

## II. The RLI timeline

The RLI timeline is anticipated as follows:

2/1/2024	Release of RLI
3/1/2024	Deadline for receipt of LOI no later than 4:00 pm ET
TBD	Announcement of awards

## III. Background

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) (P.L. 117-159) provides \$250 million in supplemental funding for the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant (MHBG), to enable States, the District of Columbia, and territories to expand access to mental health care. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has recommended that State behavioral health systems examine what is needed to address the need for mental health services in the aftermath of traumatic events in communities. As a part of these efforts, the State of New Jersey was awarded \$1,835,885.

The Disaster and Terrorism Branch (DTB) is a specialized behavioral health-focused unit within DMHAS. DTB is responsible for activating the State's behavioral health disaster response plan in coordination with the NJ Office of Emergency Management and the NJ Emergency Social Services Coordinators, during declared disasters. The services available through the Disaster and Terrorism Branch include but are not limited to:

- › Individual crisis counseling
- › Psychological First Aid
- › Disaster-specific psycho-educational information
- › Group crisis counseling
- › Consultation and training
- › Information and referral services
- › Toll-free warm line services

Each county (21 in total) in the State also maintains a county-specific all hazards behavioral health disaster plan. During times of disaster, the county's plan may also be activated by the County Mental Health Administrator in coordination with the County Office of Emergency Management and in collaboration with State partners.

In 2007, DTB began the DRCC Certification Program. DRCCs are trained and vetted (through an application process including a background check and interview) volunteers who are deployed county or Statewide in the immediate aftermath of a community crisis. With the help of BSCA funding, DTB plans to increase the number of volunteers and scope

of the DRCC program in order to have a more robust volunteer workforce and specialized crisis task force for specific response types such as mass casualty events. The development of such unique task force teams to deploy to incidents of mass casualties will require coordination with law enforcement, medical examiner offices and healthcare systems. The preparation of DRCC teams to respond to more complex anticipated and no-notice events is a vital part of response efforts. There has been a decrease over time in the number of available DRCC's Statewide, this impact is felt as fewer volunteers are available to respond when needed.

#### **IV. Funding Availability**

As disaster response is always local first, each county may be eligible for a grant to fund recruitment, exercise drills, training activities as well as engagement efforts for DRCC. Each county can be awarded up to \$30,000 as a result of this grant opportunity. The funds will be disbursed in one increment of \$30,000. The funding period began 10/2023, and successful applicants can expect their sole disbursement in 2024. The total allocated for this RLI is \$150,000, intended to benefit each New Jersey county named above. Based on the number of applicants, narrative and budget quality, successful applicants could receive more than the proposed \$30,000 award amount if all funds are not expended.

This funding is a time-limited opportunity to specifically address the need for a robust Disaster Crisis Counselor volunteer workforce in New Jersey. County Mental Health Administrators will submit a written narrative that proposes ways in which they plan to meet the outlined objectives as well as a proposed budget indicating ways in which funds will be spent.

#### **V. Eligibility Criteria and LOI Requirements**

To be considered for this opportunity, the following criteria must be met:

1. Applicant must be applying on behalf of one of the following New Jersey's counties: Sussex, Warren, Middlesex, Cape May and Cumberland
2. Applicant need to have a pre-existing DRCC program in which they agree to expand and enhance.

The LOI must be written in 12-point Times New Roman or Arial font and be no longer than four (4) pages, not including the budget. The letter must be double-spaced with one-inch margins and correspond to the numbering below. Your letter must:

1. State your county's current number of DRCCs (**5 points**).
2. Describe past or current successes and challenges with expanding or sustaining the DRCC workforce in your county (**10 points**).

3. Explain the DRCC needs in your county and sustainability plan if applicable (**20 points**).
4. Outline how potential DRCCs will be recruited, trained and sustained (**10 points**).
5. Attestation indicating you will comply with all reporting requirements, and that funding received from this initiative will not be used for other purposes (**5 points**).
6. Describe proposed plans to utilize the funds including a timeline of activities (**25 points**).
7. Clearly describe a proposed budget that includes categories of spending (**25 points**).

## **VI. Submission Instructions**

In addition to the LOI, all submissions must include the following:

A completed Attachment A – LOI Cover Sheet, as provided in this RLI.

A completed Attachment B – Budget Narrative Template, as provided in this RLI.

DMHAS will select successful applicants based on the responses to the information outlined in Section V of this RLI.

All LOIs must be submitted no later than 4:00 pm ET on Friday, March 1, 2024, by emailing: the Disaster & Terrorism Branch at **dmhas-dtb.programs@dhs.nj.gov**, please include the name of the county you represent in the email subject line.

DMHAS will notify selected applicants, after which time, DMHAS will contact the person named as the contact person on the LOI Cover Sheet (Attachment A).

## **VII. Review of LOIs:**

DMHAS assumes no responsibility and bears no liability for costs incurred in the preparation and submittal of the LOI. There will be a review process for all timely submitted LOIs. DMHAS will convene a review committee of public employees to conduct a review of each LOI accepted for review. The applicant must obtain a minimum score of 70 out of 100 points to be considered eligible for funding. In the event no bidder obtains the minimum required scores, DMHAS shall have discretion to award the contract to the highest scoring bidder(s). Award recommendations will be based on the review committee's scoring of the criteria identified in Section V. Eligibility Criteria and LOI Requirements. The review committee may invite applicants for interview and/or to review any programmatic or fiscal documents in the possession of DMHAS. DMHAS reserves the right to reject any and all LOIs when circumstances indicate that doing so is in its best interest. DMHAS' best interests in this context include, but are not limited to, avoiding loss of funding, ensuring

the ability of the applicant(s) to provide adequate services, safeguarding against any indication of misrepresentation of information and/or confirming compliance with State and federal laws and regulations, existing DHS contracts, and procedures set forth in DHS Policy Circular P1.04 <https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/olra/contracting/policy/>.

**Attachment A: LOI Cover Sheet**  
Date Received

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
**Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services**

Name of RLI: **BSCA DRCC County Grants**

Total dollar amount being requested (up to 30k per county): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

County Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mental Health Administrator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



## Attachment B: Proposed Budget Narrative Template

Please use this form to specifically describe the breakdown of funds proposed for each category, the total should not exceed \$30,000.

Budget Category	Proposed Budget Narrative
<b>Training</b>	Total Training: \$ (breakdown cost)
<b>Recruitment</b>	Total Recruitment: \$ (breakdown cost)
<b>Engagement</b>	Total Engagement: \$ (breakdown cost)
<b>Supplies</b>	Total Supplies: \$ (breakdown cost)
<b>Equipment</b>	Total Equipment: \$ (breakdown cost)
<b>Other</b>	Total Other: \$ (breakdown cost)
<b>Total</b>	