

**Request for Applications
for
Methadone Opioid Treatment Programs in
Louisiana**

Louisiana Department of Health

Office of Behavioral Health (OBH)

November 30, 2021



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Request for Applications on Methadone Opioid Treatment Programs in Louisiana

Vision

The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) has determined a need exists to expand Opioid Treatment Programs (OTP) in certain LDH administrative regions, specifically LDH Administrative Region III (with a priority area being the Terrebonne Parish and Lafourche Parish areas) and Region IX (with a priority area being Washington Parish) and is seeking applications from any entity interested and capable of providing opioid treatment services, specific to methadone clinics, within those areas.

Background

Methadone is a synthetic analgesic drug that is similar to morphine in its effects, but longer acting, and used in the treatment of opioid addiction (e.g., prescription painkillers, heroin). Methadone is a prescribed medication and operates to normalize brain chemistry, blocking the euphoric effects of opioids, relieving physiological cravings and normalizing body functions without the negative effects of the abused drug. Methadone treatment programs detoxify individuals with opioid use disorder (OUD) using a synthetic narcotic to achieve recovery with counseling and supportive services.

Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) have been established in Louisiana since the early 1970s. The Narcotics Rehabilitation Commission initially established and directed the pilot clinic programs for the administration of methadone under medical supervision. By the 1980s, this oversight transferred to the Office of Prevention and Recovery from Alcohol and Drug Abuse in the Department of Health and Human Resources, which was designated as the State Methadone Authority.

Act 308 in the 2013 Regular Session created a single license for behavioral health service providers, including the OTPs. LA Register Vol 36, No 3 March 20, 2010 prohibited the department from licensing any new OTPs unless the department determines a need for another OTP in a certain geographic location.

Effective January 20th, 2020, Methadone is covered by Medicaid for Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment. The State Plan was amended to reflect this change and was subsequently approved by CMS. A provider subspecialty code 8V was established for the OTP clinics as sole source providers. Using other states as a model, a bundled rate was developed to reimburse for OTP services. Bundled rates for the OTPs facilitate the practical needs of patient-centered treatment in the administration of Medication for Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) to integrate the provision of counseling and medical services. MAT strengthens recovery and decreases recidivism in patients diagnosed within the SUD spectrum. This rate is inclusive of the behavioral health treatment components, physical examinations and laboratory

services, and ancillary services offered by the OTPs. In addition to being Medicaid reimbursable, OTPs also accept self-pay.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 71 of the 2019 Regular Session, passed on June 14th, 2019, requests LDH to issue guidance to allow the establishment of new opioid treatment programs. As part of this charge, LDH assembled a working group to study the issue and make recommendations ultimately drafting a report reflecting recommendations. The data conveys an immediate need for OTP expansion in the Washington Parish area as well as the Terrebonne/Lafourche Parish region. LDH recognizes there will likely be an additional need for OTP expansion into 2022 and beyond.

Purpose of the RFA

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Applications is to identify qualified applicant organizations which can show a demonstrated ability to provide medication-assisted opioid treatment services in one or more of the listed geographic areas within a designated region or regions where OBH has determined that a need exists.

2. Overview

LDH has determined there is a need to establish opioid treatment programs in LDH Region(s) III & IX. LAC 48:I.Chapter 129 specifies once LDH has determined a need for new OTP services, LDH will issue a Request for Applications from qualified organizations who can offer the service.

This determination of need was developed based on data collected from the Louisiana Opioid Data and Surveillance System (LODSS), an initiative developed to map and monitor Louisiana's opioid problem. This system was made possible through a partnership between the LDH Office of Public Health, Bureau of Health Informatics and the CDC National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Cooperative Endeavor Agreement. In addition, the State Opioid Treatment Authority (SOTA) cross-referenced this data with opioid travel exemption requests, a tool by which a participant may request to receive a limited amount of take home doses to self-administer, which are granted when it is determined a patient's travel time places an undue burden on their recovery.

Response Instructions

The Office of Behavioral Health is inviting qualified applicants to submit applications to provide opioid treatment services in accordance with the specifications and conditions set forth herein.

The response submission must be in the format of the required Letter of Intent and official OTP Application addressing the below areas, be complete upon submission and include the original and eight complete copies including all attachments as required by the application.

Opioid Treatment Applications will be scored in the following areas:

1. Applicant's financial viability and availability of funds to support the proposed OTP
2. History of licensure/accreditation and work plan for accreditation and state licensure of proposed OTP
3. Range of services/program design
4. Community integration plan

Applicant Inquiries

LDH Office of Behavioral Health will consider written inquiries regarding the RFA requirements before the date specified in the Schedule of Events. To be considered, written inquiries and requests for clarification of the content of this RFA must be received at the e-mail address below by the date specified in the Schedule of Events. All questions directed to the RFA Coordinator will receive an official response in writing. Action taken as a result of verbal discussion shall not be binding on LDH Office of Behavioral Health. Only written communication and clarification from the RFA Coordinator shall be considered binding.

RFA Coordinator: Ashley Tillison, B.S., MSPH
Department of Health
Office of Behavioral Health
Email: Ashley.tillison@la.gov

Schedule of Events: LDH reserves the right to deviate from this schedule

Request for Applications for solicitation of potential OTPs released	November 30, 2021
Deadline for receipt of written inquiries	December 10, 2021
LDH response to written inquiries	December 17, 2021
Deadline for receipt of applications to RFA	December 28, 2021, 5 pm
Announcement of selected applicants	January 31, 2022
Expectation of finalizing licensure, accreditation	March 31, 2022
Anticipated opening of new OTPs	May 2022

Application Content

- A. Applicants interested in providing information requested in the RFA must submit their applications no later than the deadline for submission as stated in the Schedule of Events. Applicants should allow sufficient time to ensure receipt of submission by the time specified. The submission must be delivered at the applicants' expense to the RFA coordinator. It is solely the responsibility of each applicant to ensure their application is delivered prior to the deadline for submission. Applications not received by the deadline will not be considered.

Please note all responses are subject to Louisiana's public records law.

B. The following must be included in the submitted application:

1. A cover letter informing the LDH Office of Behavioral Health that the applicant is submitting an OTP Application for Review which shall include the following:
 - The name, address and telephone number of the applicant;
 - The name of the applicant representative, an individual authorized to respond to department questions regarding the application and who also signs the letter of intent;
 - The proposed location of the OTP; and
 - The proposed date of implementation.

2. Completed OTP Application for Review:

The evaluation of the applications will be based upon the criteria listed below. Evaluations will be conducted by the OTP Application Review Committee. Scoring will be based upon a possible total of 100 points weighted equally between the 4 sections.

- Financial viability and availability of funds;
 - Provide a statement of whether or not, in the last ten (10) years, the applicant or a predecessor company has filed (or had filed against it) any bankruptcy or insolvency proceeding, whether voluntary or involuntary, or undergone the appointment of a receiver, trustee, or assignee for the benefit of creditors. If so, provide an explanation providing relevant details including the date in which the applicant emerged from bankruptcy or expects to emerge. If still in bankruptcy, provide a summary of the court-approved reorganization plan. Include the applicant's parent organization, affiliates, and subsidiaries in this response.
 - Describe the applicant's general ledger and accounting system and how the system tracks and records revenue and expenses from separate funding streams, including location of system and records.
 - Describe the applicant's experience with audits from governmental agencies. Provide two examples of actual audit reports and the resulting corrective action plan.
 - Describe how the applicant's systems facilitate the auditing of individual claims. This submission must address a key internal control as well as financial and performance audits from outside companies to ensure the financial viability of the program.
- Licensure and/or accreditation:
 - Provide a detailed work plan, including timeline for accreditation and state licensure of proposed facility. This work plan shall include:
 - Expected date of application for accreditation and estimated timeline for obtaining full accreditation for the OTP at the location identified
 - Expected date of application for the Health Standards Behavioral Health Service Provider License
 - Work Plan should include additional details, such as:
 - Securing a location

- Activities related to obtaining the required approval from the Office of State Fire Marshal and Office of Public Health for the location.
 - Recruitment of required staffing as listed in BHS rule
 - Please describe if your organization has any history of achieving an accreditation, licensure and or certifications with whom, for how long and compliance with that accreditation, licensure and/or certification bodies related to the provision of healthcare services. In this response, provide the following:
 - Documents that show past/present accreditation, state licensure, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) certification. Dates of accreditation, state or federal licensure and/or certification. Information on the services provided under the accreditation, state licensure and/or certification, preferably behavioral health services.
 - Accreditation by an LDH approved national accrediting body: Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), Council on Accreditation (COA) or The Joint Commission (TJC).
 - Information on denials, loss of, or any negative changes in accreditation status associated with the organization or any affiliate who:
 - Owns or holds more than a five percent (5%) interest in the organization/company (either directly, or through one (1) or more intermediaries);
 - In which the organization/company owns or holds more than a five percent (5%) interest (either directly, or through one (1) or more intermediaries);
 - Any parent entity or subsidiary entity of the organization/company regardless of the organizational structure of the entity;
 - Any entity that has a common parent with the organization/company (either directly, or through one (1) or more intermediaries);
 - Any entity that directly, or indirectly through one (1) or more intermediaries, controls, or is controlled by, or is under common control with, the organization/company; or
 - Any entity that would be considered to be an affiliate by any Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) or Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulation, Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), or by another applicable regulatory body.
- Range of services and program design;
 - Describe how your program will integrate primary care and behavioral health services.
 - Describe program aspects that go above standard required program design as laid out in the Medicaid provider manual requirements.
 - Describe how your service array includes patient centered treatment plans with measureable goals and objectives.
 - Describe how you monitor progress of clients while maintaining confidentiality requirements and standards.

- Describe how you work with representatives from other agencies or service providers along with advocates and stake holders as appropriate to fully support clients and involve services that maintain recovery.
 - Describe evidence based practices and models you use within your program to provide quality of care relative to supportive counseling and psychotherapy. Include proposed measurable outcome data in your response.
 - Describe your organization’s policies and procedures relating to client treatment plans and how you utilize staff to facilitate independent living.
- Community integration:
 - Describe your methods to achieve community integration through a public relations plan, including how you will obtain buy in for locating the facility within that community.
 - Describe availability, accessibility, and appropriateness of the location of the proposed OTP site, specifically:
 - Accessibility to public transportation
 - Geographic location to healthcare providers
 - Location in relation to schools and playgrounds
 - Description of any applicable city ordinances that may affect operations or an attestation that none exists that would prohibit operations of a facility of this nature
 - Readiness of the proposed facility
 - Describe your organization’s policies and procedures utilized to address systemic stigma and discrimination related to recovery.
- C. Announcement of Award: LDH Office of Behavioral Health will notify the applicants as per the Schedule of Events.
- D. Other Logistics:
1. Contact after Solicitation Deadline: After the date for receipt of applications, no applicant initiated contact relative to the solicitation will be allowed between the applicant and LDH until the award announcement is made.
 2. Rejection and Cancellation: Issuance of this solicitation does not constitute a commitment by LDH Office of Behavioral Health to announce an approved application. LDH Office of Behavioral Health reserves the right to reject any or all applications received in response to this solicitation.
 3. Proprietary Information: Only information which is in the nature of legitimate trade secrets or non-published financial data may be deemed proprietary or confidential. Any materials within an application identified as such must be clearly marked in the application and will be handled in accordance with the Louisiana Public Record Act R. S. 44:1-44, and applicable rules and regulations. Any application marked as confidential or proprietary in its entirety may be rejected without further considerations or recourse.

Special notes to Applicants

Whenever possible, applicants are asked to draw their responses from objective, empirical, and actionable evidence and to cite this evidence within their submissions. References to evidenced-based practices and models used in other states relative to your submissions are appreciated. When possible, please reference data and/or lessons learned relevant to the implementation of the proposed practices or models.

REFERENCE MATERIALS. The following materials are available to aid in the development of a response to this RFA:

- a. Enabling Legislation (<https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/Law.aspx?d=98091>)
- b. Administrative Rule (<https://www.doa.la.gov/media/t5lpolvz/1003.pdf>)
- c. SAMHSA Accreditation Guidelines (https://www.govregs.com/regulations/expand/title42_chapterI_part8_subpartC_section8.12)
- d. State Licensing Standards (https://ldh.la.gov/assets/medicaid/hss/docs/BHS/LAC_48_1_CH_56_BHSP.pdf)
- e. Scope of Service: Medicaid provider manual standards for OTPs (<https://www.lamedicaid.com/provweb1/providermanuals/manuals/bhs/bhs.pdf>)

THIS IS A REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) ONLY. This RFA is issued solely for information and planning purposes; This RFA does not commit the State to contract for any supplies or services or make a grant award. Applicants are advised that the State will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response submission to this RFA; all costs associated with responding to this RFA will be solely at the interested party's expense.

Information obtained as a result of this RFA may be used by the State for program planning on a non-attribution basis. All submissions become State property and will not be returned. The State may publicly post a summary of the comments received or the actual responses.

Confidential Information, Trade Secrets, and Proprietary Information

All financial, statistical, personal, technical and other data and information relating to the applicant's operation and submitted pursuant to this RFA shall be not be considered confidential. The State shall not be required to keep confidential any data or information submitted in response to this RFA.

All material will be handled in accordance with the Louisiana Public Records Act, R.S. 44: 1-44 and applicable rules and regulations. Any offer marked as confidential or proprietary may be rejected without further consideration or recourse.

In addition, if the State receives a public records Request for Applications pursuant to the Louisiana Public Records Act, R.S. 44: 1-44 and a proposer wishes to assert that information is confidential, the proposer may seek a protective order from a court of proper jurisdiction preventing the release of such information. In such case, the proposer agrees to hold the State harmless for any and all costs or fees incurred, including attorneys' fees, related to the State's refusal to release documents or other information over which confidentiality has been claimed.