**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP (ACP)** #**01002**

**TITLE:** *Individual Placement and Support Supported Employment (IPS SE)*

**ISSUE DATE:** December 15th 2022

**FUNDING AGENCY:** Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (NCDVRS)

805 Ruggles Drive

2801 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699

**IMPORTANT NOTE****:** Indicate agency or organization (Contractor) name and ACP number on the front of the application or envelope or package, along with the date for receipt of applications specified below.

Applications, subject to the conditions made a part of hereof, will be received until 5:00 p.m., April 1st, 2023 for furnishing services described herein. Applications received by the deadline above will be in consideration for a November 1, 2023 award. Applications received after 5:00 p.m., April 1st 2023 will be considered for a future award date. Applications will be considered on an ongoing basis.

Agenices that are currently under contract with the NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (the Division) to provide IPS services are NOT required to send a complete *Application for Community Partnerships*. However, such organizations must submit a *Renewal Application for Community Partnership* by the deadline indicated above in order to have an executed contract in the next renewal cycle effective November 1, 2023.

SEND ALL APPLICATIONS ELECTRONICALLY AS WELL AS THE ORIGINAL SIGNED DOCUMENT AND TWO (2) COPIES DIRECTLY TO:

Direct all inquiries concerning this ACP to: Marcia Gibson Program Specialist for Behavioral Health at [dvr.ips.se.rfa@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:dvr.ips.se.rfa@dhhs.nc.gov)

**Mailing Address:** DVRS IPS SE ACP #01002

NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

2801 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, NC 27699-2801

**Street/Hand Delivery Address:**

DVRS IPS SE ACP #01002

NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

805 Ruggles Drive, Haywood Building

Raleigh, NC 27603

NOTE: Written questions concerning the specifications in the ACP will be received until close of business on January 15th, 2023. A summary of all questions and answers will be emailed to all Contractors requesting a copy of the questions and answers.

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# **INTRODUCTION**

Individual Placement and Support - Supported Employment (IPS SE) is a WRAP around person-centered behavioral health service with a focus on employment, that provides assistance in choosing, acquiring, and maintaining competitive paid employment in the community for consumers 16 years and older for whom employment has not been achieved or employment has been interrupted or intermittent. This service is co-located with an agency’s behavioral health treatment services to ensure consistent behavioral health integration. In the event that a Contractor of IPS SE does not offer behavioral health services in the IPS SE team service area the Contractor shall partner with one or two behavioral health services as eveidenced by a Memorandum of Agreement. The Contractor shall also have a current contract with the Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organization (LME/MCO), city and or county government(s), and or Federal grant from an agency such as Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to provide IPS SE.

The target populations for this model are individuals with serious mental illness/ severe and persistent mental illness (SMI/SPMI), and co-occurring disorders. This service is provided primarily by Employment Support Professionals (ESPs) and Employment Peer Mentors (EPMs) who are trained in national research standards that support the vocational needs of individuals and promote community connections and employment success.

The foundation for this service definition is the *Individual Placement and Support (IPS)* evidence-based Supported Employment model and SE Fidelity Scale developed by the Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center and promoted by SAMHSA. Additional approaches (Including Customized Employment, Self-Employment and Business-Led Internships) may be used under the umbrella of IPS SE to assist individuals in securing competitive employment in the community that fits their particular needs, interests, and skills while enabling workplace success. The eight (8) principles of IPS-SE are:

1. Focus on Competitive Integrated Employment
2. Eligibility based on consumer choice (zero exclusion)
3. Integration of rehabilitation and mental health services
4. Attention to individual preferences
5. Personalized benefits counseling
6. Rapid job search
7. Systematic job development
8. Time unlimited and individualized support

The Contractor shall use the most up to date state funded service definition for IPS SE in referencing the required components. Use the link below to find the latest requirements NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services (DMH/DD/SAS) published in January 2019:

<https://files.nc.gov/ncdhhs/State-Funded%20IPS%20for%20AMH-ASA%201.7.19%20FINAL%20for%20Posting.pdf>

The purpose of this ACP is to solicit qualified agencies or organizations (Contractors) to provide IPS SE to eligible Division consumers with SPMI/SMI to reach their employment goals.

The Contractor shall meet the following criteria in order to apply to be a Division approved IPS SE Contractor:

* Any public, for profit, or nonprofit organization that has a current contract to provide IPS SE with LME/MCO, county or city government, or a federal grant; **AND HAVE**
* Fulfilled the requirements of the Rules for Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Developmental Disabilities, found in 10A NCAC 27G, and provide a current copy of the license if agency is a behavioral health organization.

# **BACKGROUND**

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), North Carolina has over 350,000 individuals over the age of 18 with a severe mental illness. Research has historically shown that two thirds of this population want to work, yet less than 20% are employed. Individuals with severe mental illness exhibit functioning that is significantly impaired to interfere substantially with their capacity to remain without supports in the community. The disability of these individuals limits their functional capacities for activities of daily living including interpersonal relations, homemaking, self-care, employment and recreation. Those with schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, psychotic disorder, and borderline personality disorders are affected most severely. Studies continue to suggest that people with serious mental illness often report they feel excluded from society.

In State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2021 the North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (the Division) served approximately 27,434 overall program participants of which approximately 39%, were consumers with severe mental illness/severe and persistent mental illness (SMI/SPMI).

# **SCOPE OF SERVICES**

Each Contractor shall offer a full array of services required of this model and are included in the state service definition found at [IPS State Service Definition](https://files.nc.gov/ncdhhs/State-Funded%20IPS%20for%20AMH-ASA%201.7.19%20FINAL%20for%20Posting.pdf)

# **REIMBURSEMENT**

The Contractor shall meet the expectations defined in the milestones below and will be reimbursed for each milestone provided accordingly.

1. **Milestone 1: IPS Job Development and Retention:**

IPS Job Development and Retention involves consumer specific job development and placement and time spent analyzing information relevant to a consumer’s job development/placement. The Contractor shall locate jobs through networking with employers, businesses and community leaders resulting in securing a position that matches the skills, abilities, motivation, interests, needs, and goals of the consumer to ensure the greatest chance of success on the job. The consumer shall be hired and maintain employment for three (3) days with documented job supports provided during the three (3) days, consecutive or nonconsecutive, on or off site. The placement shall be in a position that matches the vocational goal on the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) or the amended/agreed upon vocational goal.

1. The IPS Contractor shall have scheduled face-to-face meetings at least monthly with Division counselors to discuss progress in job search.
2. The IPS Contractor shall provide to the Division a written summary of job development on the activities for each consumer through the Divisions electronic case management system which will include the MonthlyJob Development Summary Notes with Employer Contacts. The IPS SE Contractor shall notify the Division (in writing) when the consumer has accepted employment. Upon approval, the Contractor shall complete and submit the New Hire Form (or Job Start Form) to the Division through electronic case management system.
3. The Contractor shall provide supports for three (3) working days and will provide documentation of the 3 days on-the-job regarding the follow-along supports and interventions on the Follow-Along Support Plan. The Contractor shall submit the IPS Job Development and Retention Outcome and the required documentation through the Divisions case management system for payment within five (5) working days of the successful completion of the service.
4. **Milestone 2: IPS Job Support and Vocational Recovery:**

IPS Job Support and Vocational Recovery Milestone shall include the needed supports that are consumer driven in order to be successful on the job and are provided either on or off site. The length of time in this milestone is individualized based on consumer need and typically last at a minimum 30 days. However, a consumer may require more or less job support intensity when initially employed based on their work experience and disability. The results of these supports determine the beginning of vocational recovery which initiates the follow along supports.

IPS Job Support and Vocational Recovery shall meet the needs of the consumer and may include behavioral health intervention, ongoing benefits counseling, peer support services, coworkers, natural supports, and the Contractor. IPS Job Support and Vocational Recovery may be delivered on or off the job site, depending on the needs and requests of the consumer. IPS Job Support and Vocational Recovery may also include employment advocacy time (time spent advocating for the consumer with persons at the employment site, only if requested from the consumer), non-employment advocacy time, and community resource training.

Prior to establishing the beginning of Vocational Recovery, the Contractor shall meet at least weekly with the consumer either on or off the job site as determined by the needs and requests of the consumer. At a time agreed upon by the consumer and the Division, Vocational Recovery begins and Time Unlimited Supports start.

In all cases, the IPS Job Support and Vocational Recovery phase shall include the following elements and subsequent documentation:

* 1. The Contractor shall identify and/or provide different types of supports necessary for the consumer to be successful in employment. The Follow-Along Support Plan shall be maintained in the consumers file.
  2. The Contractor shall complete a written summary/notes documenting the consumer’s progress toward completing the Follow-Along Support Plan goals and objective. These are to be submitted through the Divisions electronic case management system on a monthly basis.
  3. Progress toward Vocational Recovery is made through the provision of interventions as outlined in the Follow-Along Support Plan. In consultation with the consumer, the Contractor shall inform the Division that Vocational Recovery has begun when the objectives on the Follow-Along Support Plan have been completed. Documentation to support the start date of Vocational Recovery shall be provided to the Division.
  4. The Contractor shall schedule and participate in monthly staffings with the Division to update progress towards meeting the consumer’s vocational goal with a written monthly summary report submitted to the Division through BEAM within five (5) working days of the staffing.
  5. The Contractor shall submit the IPS Job Support and Vocational Recovery Milestone and the required documentation (Follow-Along Support Plan and weekly job support notes/summaries) through the Divisions case management system for payment within five (5) working days of the successful completion of the service.

1. **Milestone 3: IPS 90 Day Placement:**

IPS 90 Day Placement Milestone is established when the consumer has worked at least 90 days after Vocational Recovery begins and shall include the following elements and subsequent documentation:

* 1. The Contractor shall submit 30, 60, and 90 day follow-along support notes and an updated Follow-Along Support Plan for the provision of time unlimited supports. Time unlimited supports are individualized services that are provided as often and as long as the person needs it to maintain successful employment. The Contractor shall submit the IPS 90 Day Placement Milestone and the required documentation through the Divisions electronic case management system within five (5) working days of the successful completion of the service.

The three milestones available for payment are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Milestone 1: IPS Job Development and Retention | $3,744 |
| Milestone 2: IPS Job Support and Vocational Recovery | $1,872 |
| Milestone 3: IPS 90 Day Placement | $2,340 |

# **FIDELITY REVIEW**

The Contractor shall be evaluated according to a standardized fidelity measure to evaluate the extent to which defining elements of the program model are being implemented. The Individual Placement Support Supported Employment Fidelity Tool, or its successor as approved by The NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) shall be used to evaluate the Contractor. The aim of these evaluations is not only to ensure that the model is being implemented as intended, but also to provide a mechanism for quality improvement feedback and guided consultation. The Contractor shall reference the IPS State Service Definition for additional detail:

<https://files.nc.gov/ncdhhs/State-Funded%20IPS%20for%20AMH-ASA%201.7.19%20FINAL%20for%20Posting.pdf>.

At a minimum, the Contractor shall meet and maintain a fair fidelity rating. If the Contractor meets fair fidelity, there shall be another fidelity review scheduled and conducted 6 to 12 months after receipt of the last submitted fidelity report. The fair fidelity rating range is 74-99 on the fidelity scale.

The Division shall track adherence to the IPS SE model requirements through participation on the administration of the IPS SE fidelity review, through monitoring the milestones described in the reimbursement section and through regular program and fiscal performance monitoring reviews.

# **PROGRAM PERFORMANCE**

The Contractor shall be held to specific performance measures once a contract with the Division is executed. The Contractor shall:

* Serve a negotiated minimum number of consumers with SPMI/SMI that will be calculated based upon Division data associated with the geographical areas served and the specific unit office(s) within that region.
* Meet at least fair fidelity within 11 months of the issuance of an IPS SE contract with the Division.
* Maintain at least fair fidelity during the contracted period once fidelity is met.
* Maintain a current contract with LME/MCO, county/city government, and/or Federal agency to provide IPS.
* Have behavioral health integration in each IPS team area.
* Have a signed and in force MOU/MOA with at least one behavioral health organization in each IPS team area to ensure behavioral health integration if the Contractor does not provide behavioral health services.
* Maintain policies and procedures designed to promote and document consumer input in program development and involvement and the rights of consumers.
* Maintain personnel policies and documented employee practices that that promote full program accessibility for each consumer.
* Maintain safety policies and a documented safety program that employs all generally reasonable precautions and any additional precautions indicated because of the limitations imposed by disabilities on consumers, staff or visitors.
* Maintain the confidentiality of all medical, psychological, and other consumer information shared by the Division.
* Maintain DMHDDSAS licensure if behavioral health organization.
* Adhere to the reimbursement expectations outlives in Section V Reimbursement.

# **APPLICATION PROCESS SUMMARY DATES**

* December 15th , 2022: Applications for Community Program Partnerships (ACP) announced
* January 15th, 2023: Questions concerning the specifications in the ACP will be received until close of business
* April 1st, 2023: Applications are due by 5:00 pm
* June 1st, 2023: Successful Contractors are notified of a contract award
* November 1, 2023 Contract proposed start date

# **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The application is worth a total of 100 points. The total point value for each section of the application is listed below. A multi-disciplinary committee will review the application for both content and quality of responses to each item on the application.

1. Organizational Information 5 points
2. Follow Along Supports 5 points
3. Proposed Services Plan 10 points
4. Organizational Policies 5 points
5. Job Descriptions for Staff 5 points
6. Sample Copies of Employment Forms 5 points
7. Actual Case Description 15 points
8. Supporting Documentation 50 points

# **THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS**

The following is a general description of the process by which a Contractor shall be selected

1. Written questions concerning the ACP specifications will be received until the date specified on the cover sheet of this ACP. A summary copy of all questions and answers will be emailed to all Contractors applying for this ACP.
2. Applications in one original and (at least two) copies will be received from each Contractor. The original must be signed and dated by an official authorized to bind the organization.
3. All applications must be received by the Division no later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of the ACP. Faxed applications will not be accepted.
4. At that date and time, the applications from each responding Contractor will be logged in. Budgets will be included as part of the application.
5. At their option, the evaluators may request additional information from any or all applicants for the purpose of clarification or to amplify the materials presented in any part of the application. However, the Contractor is cautioned that the evaluators are not required to request clarification; therefore, all applications should be complete and reflect the most favorable terms available from the Contractor.
6. Applications will be evaluated according to completeness, content, experience with similar projects, ability of the Contractor’s staff, cost, etc. The award of a contract to one Contractor does not mean that the other applications lacked merit, but that, all facts were considered and the selected application was deemed to provide the best service to the State.
7. Contractors are cautioned that this is a request for applications, and the Division reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all applications when such rejections are deemed to be in the best interest of the Division.

# **GENERAL INFORMATIOIN ON SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS**

1. **Award or Rejection**All qualified applications will be evaluated and award made to the Contractor whose combination of funding sources and service capabilities is deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency. The funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any or all offers if determined to be in its best interest. Successful applicants will be notified by June 1st, 2023.
2. **Decline to Offer**Any Contractor that receives a copy of the ACP but declines to make an offer is requested to send a written “Decline Offer” to the funding agency. Failure to respond as requested may subject the Contractor to removal from consideration of future ACPs.
3. **Cost of Application Preparation**Any cost incurred by a Contractor in preparing or submitting an application is the Contractor’s sole responsibility; the funding agency will not reimburse any Contractor for any pre-award costs incurred.
4. **Elaborate Applications**Elaborate applications in the form of brochures or other presentations beyond that necessary to present a complete and effective application are not desired.
5. **Oral Explanations**The funding agency will not be bound by oral explanations or instructions given at any time during the competitive process or after award.
6. **Reference to Other Data**Only information that is received in response to this ACP will be evaluated; reference to information previously submitted will not suffice.
7. **Titles**Titles and headings in this ACP and any subsequent ACP are for convenience only and shall have no binding force or effect.
8. **Form of Application**Each application must be submitted on the form provided by the funding agency and will be incorporated into the funding agency’s Performance Agreement (contract).
9. **Exceptions**All applications are subject to the terms and conditions outlined herein. All responses will be controlled by such terms and conditions. The attachment of other terms and conditions by any Contractor may be grounds for rejection of that Contractor’s application. Funded Contractors specifically agree to the conditions set forth in the Performance Agreement (contract).
10. **Advertising**  
    In submitting its application, Contractors agree not to use the results there from or as part of any news release or commercial advertising without prior written approval of the funding agency.
11. **Right to Submitted Material**All responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to or in reference to the ACP, and all reports, charts, displays, scheduled, exhibits, and other documentation submitted by the Contractor will become the property of the funding agency when received.
12. **Competitive Offer**Pursuant to the provision of G.S. 143-54, and under penalty of perjury, the signer of any application submitted in response to this ACP thereby certifies that this application has not been arrived at collusively or otherwise in violation of either Federal or North Carolina antitrust laws.
13. **Contractor Representative**Each Contractor shall submit with its application the name, address, and telephone number of the person(s) with authority to bind the agency or organization and answer questions or provide clarification concerning the application.
14. **Subcontracting**Contractors may propose to subcontract portions of work provided that their applications clearly indicate the scope of the work to be subcontracted, and to whom. All information required about the prime grantee is also required for each proposed subcontractor.
15. **Proprietary Information**Trade secrets or similar proprietary data which the Contractor does not wish disclosed to other than personnel involved in the evaluation will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by NCAC TO1:05B.1501 and G.S. 132-1.3 if identified as follows: Each page shall be identified in boldface at the top and bottom as “CONFIDENTIAL.” Any section of the application that is to remain confidential shall also be so marked in boldface on the title page of that section.
16. **Participation Encouraged**Pursuant to Article 3 and 3C, Chapter 143 of the North Carolina General Statues and Executive Order No. 77, the funding agency invites and encourages participation in this ACP by businesses owned by minorities, women and disabled including utilization as subcontractor(s) to perform functions under this request for applications.
17. **Contract**The Division will issue a contract to the recipient of the funding that will include their application. Expenditures can begin immediately upon receipt of a completely signed contract.

Please be advised that the successful Contractor may be required to have an audit in accordance with G.S. 143-6.2 as applicable to the agency or organization’s status. Also, the contract may include assurances/certifications the successful Contractor would be required to execute when signing the contract.

**Forms to be completed if awarded a contract:**

1. IRS Tax Exemption Status Letter (if applicable)
2. IRS Tax Exemption Verification Form (Annual) (if applicable)
3. Conflict of Interest Acknowledgement and Policy *(Source document must be on file, send new one if a new COI policy has been adopted by your entity)*
4. Conflict of Interest Verification (Annual)
5. Federal Certifications
6. State Certification
7. Proof of Insurance Form (or certificate of insurance)
8. State Grant Certification – No Overdue Tax Debts  \*\*\*
9. Federal Exclusion Certification
10. Proof of active SAM registration. Contractors can register at: <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/pages/public/index.jsf>
11. Entity must be registered with the NC Secretary of State
12. DVRS Internal Control Questionnaire
13. General Terms and Conditions will be required and inserted into the final contract

\*\*\* Indicates must be notarized

# **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Application Checklist

Attachment B: Application Face Sheet

Attachment C: Cover Letter Format

Attachment D: Contractor Application

## ***Attachment A: Application Checklist***

The following items shall be included in the application and assembled in the following order.

Number each page consecutively beginning with the Application Face Sheet. Each page shall have the Contractor’s name and ACP number in the upper right-hand corner.

Required Components:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1. | Completed Application Face Sheet |
|  | 2. | Cover Letter |
|  | 3. | Completed Individual Placement and Support/Supported Employment – Contractor Application with Supporting Documents for all New Applications OR Completed Renewal Applications with supporting documents noting significant changes since previous RACRP. |
|  | 4. | Copies of current Memorandums of Agreement or Understanding with Behavioral Health providers for behavioral health integration of IPS SE services |
|  | 5. | Copy of current Allocation letter from LME/MCO or county/city government, or grant award letter from applicable federal agency |

## ***Attachment B: Application Face Sheet***

Name of Agency or Organization (Contractor):  
Address:

Telephone Number:  
Fax Number:  
Email Address:

Status: ( ) Public ( ) Non-Profit, ( ) For Profit

Federal Tax ID Number:

Financial Reporting Year \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title of Contract Administrator:

Name of Program(s)

Service Delivery Site(s):

Area(s) to be served:

(Vice) President

Date

## ***Attachment C: Cover Letter Format***

A cover letter shall be on Contractor’s letterhead and signed by the lead administrator of the agency or organization submitting the application stating the desire to respond to this ACP.

Include in the cover letter:

1. Legal name of Contractor
2. The *Community Partnership (ACP)* number
3. The Contractor’s UEI number
4. The date of the application
5. Signed and dated by an individual authorized to legally bind the organization
6. The cover letter must also indicate a clear understanding of and strong commitment to providing a full program of IPS SE

## ***Attachment D: Contractor Application***

**Select one:**

### [**Application for Community Partnership (IPS SE)**](https://files.nc.gov/ncdhhs/Application-for-Community-Partnership--IPS-SE-.pdf)

### [**Renewal Application for Community Partnership (IPS SE)**](https://files.nc.gov/ncdhhs/Renewal-Application-for-Community-Partnership--IPS-SE-.pdf)