

Request For Proposal

The Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA) is seeking proposals from Alabama nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher learning to provide programs and services which positively impact the mental health of Alabama veterans and their families.

I. Introduction

The federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Public Law No. 117-2, 135 Stat. 4 (“ARPA”) was signed into law on March 11, 2021. ARPA amended the federal Social Security Act to add Section 602 to the Social Security Act, and by doing so, created the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund (hereinafter referred to as “FRF”). ARPA appropriated funds from the FRF to the State of Alabama and other states to support their response to the impact of COVID-19 on their communities, residents, and businesses; and to aid in efforts to contain COVID-19.

The State of Alabama received \$2,120,279,417 in FRF funding from the federal government. Section 2 of Alabama Act No. 2022-1 appropriates up to \$36,796,346 of such funds to be used to support the delivery of health care and related services to citizens of Alabama related to the coronavirus pandemic. Additionally, Section 1(a)(5) of Alabama Act No. 2023-1 appropriates up to \$25,000,000 of such funds to be used to support mental health programs and services. A total of \$7,000,000 of these funds has been delegated to ADVA to support mental health programs and services for veterans and their families.

ADVA is now accepting proposals for the award of one-time funding, not to exceed \$500,000 per organization, for programs and services designed to positively impact the mental health of Alabama veterans and/or their families.

II. Program Goals

The goal is to improve the social, emotional, and/or psychological well-being of Alabama veterans and/or their families.

III. Target Population

For the purposes of this opportunity, Alabama veterans are those individuals who are or have served in the Armed Forces of the United States, including those who served in Guard or Reserve units, who currently reside in the State of Alabama. Veteran families are their immediate families which usually includes parents, spouses, and children, sometimes including siblings and grandparents. The relationships are created via blood, adoption, and marriage. Where unusually strong ties exist, due to a veteran having been supported or educated by a person of some relationship other than those listed, this relationship may be recognized. Eligible family members must reside in the State of Alabama. Special consideration is to be provided to programs and services

targeting underserved populations. These populations may include but are not limited to veterans living in rural communities, women veterans, and minority veterans.

IV. Funding Source Considerations

Funds for this project were appropriated by the federal government under ARPA. As such, the federal government has established rules and guidelines which must be complied with by all programs and services. Additionally, the State of Alabama appropriated the funds to the Alabama Department of Finance. Programs and services will also be required to comply with applicable state procurement and grant award laws and guidelines along with laws and guidelines established specifically for these funds. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. To use the funds in accordance with Section 602 of the Social Security Act, the United States Treasury's Final Rule for FRF, ARPA, and other applicable federal and state law, further limited to the purposes set forth in this solicitation and for no other purpose;
2. To comply with the federal Uniform Guidance applicable to federal assistance funds including, but not limited to, complying with the State's applicable procurement laws;
3. To provide reports which include a monthly report by the 10th of each month for the duration of any agreement resulting from this solicitation detailing how the funds are being utilized and details of expenditures made since the preceding report, a quarterly report by the 15th of the first month of the next fiscal quarter, and interim reports and other information as determined necessary by the State; and
4. All funds not expended by June 1, 2026 will be forfeited and available for reallocation as the State determines.

V. Agreement Limitations

Any and all agreements resulting from this solicitation shall be annual. The State shall have the option of extending agreements for multiple periods not to exceed one year. All agreements shall be subject to availability of funds and continuation of this project. Continuation of this project is anticipated through June 1, 2026. Should the funding or service requirements relative to this project be altered, agreements will be amended accordingly.

The ADVA, as authorized by the State Board of Veterans Affairs, is offering this opportunity. The Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) will be responsible for administering the effort once the final selection is made. As such, all agreements resulting from this solicitation will be executed with ADMH and subject to their normal processes for such projects and the related requirements.

VI. Vendor Eligibility

Nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education located in Alabama are eligible for consideration. An organization is considered nonprofit where it is recognized as such by either the State of Alabama or the United States Internal Revenue Service or both. Special consideration is to be provided to small organizations. What constitutes a small organization is not specifically defined but will be left to the reasonable assessment of those evaluating the proposal largely based upon the average annual receipts of the organization.

VII. Proposal Requirements

ADVA is seeking proposals from Alabama nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education in Alabama to implement and/or continue programs and services aimed at improving the social, emotional, and/or psychological well-being of Alabama veterans and/or their families.

The information provided under each heading explains the intent of the section and/or describes the minimum information you are required to provide. Although minimum requirements must be addressed, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that each response thoroughly describes relevant information to ensure that the topic of the section is fully and distinctly addressed.

Information in **Bold Type** in each section provides the evaluation criteria for review and scoring on the application. The proposal should be single-spaced, using a standard 12-point font (Times New Roman is preferred) with 1-inch margins, and should **not exceed the page requirements listed below.**

Statement of Work

A. Cover Page

Applicant should provide a cover page that includes:

- Submitting organization's name;
- Primary and, optionally, secondary, contact person to include their name, title (if any), mailing address, phone number, and email address;
- Date of submission; and
- Amount of funding sought through this solicitation.

Not to exceed 1 page.

Review Criteria: 5 Points

The applicant organization provides the listed requirements within the page limit specified.

B. Organization Information

Applicant should provide a description of their organization to include:

- Name of the organization;
- Organizational structure such as sole proprietorship, limited liability company, incorporated company, etc.;
- Primary purpose, mission, and/or vision of the organization;
- Total annual budget amount including average annual receipts;
- Percentage of total annual budget allocated to administrative expenses;
- Number of fulltime employees and the number of parttime employees;
- How long the organization has been operating in Alabama in its current capacity; and
- The amount and date of the award of any other funding appropriated under ARPA awarded to the organization or reasonably expected to be awarded to the organization regardless of which program or service it supported or will support.

Applicants are encouraged to include a narrative or other information which demonstrates the organization's operational stability, ability to efficiently provide programs and/or services to the community, and their ongoing commitment to assisting the public particularly veterans and their families.

Applicants seeking to qualify as a small organization for the purposes of this opportunity are encouraged to include other information, if any, they believe demonstrates their qualifications which can be provided within the established page limit.

Not to exceed 3 pages.

Review Criteria: 15 Points plus 5 Points for small organizations

The applicant provides the listed requirements within the page limit specified and demonstrates a stable, efficient organization committed to addressing the needs of the public, particularly veterans and their families. Applicants may be awarded up to 5 points in addition to the maximum 15 points based upon their being considered a small organization.

C. Program or Service Information

Applicant should provide a description of their program or service to include:

- Name or expected name of the program or service;
- Goal or primary objective of the program or service;

- Description of the program or service to include any evidence-based methodologies to be utilized supported by appropriate citations;
- How long the organization has been providing the program or service or if this is a new program or service;
- Geographic area expected to be impacted;
- Demographic characteristics of the expected populations impacted;
- How success is or will be measured;
- Results previously achieved (for existing programs and services);
- Expected number of individual veterans and family members to be impacted;
- Expected fee amount charged for individuals to access the program or service or whether the program or service will be offered at no charge;
- Other grants received for the program or service within the last two years;
- Amount of funding sought by this proposal;
- Other funding available for the program or service over the next two years;
- As this is one-time funding, will the program end with this funding or how will it be funded in the future;
- If full funding is unavailable, would partial funding still be of use; and
- Ramifications if this proposal is not selected for this opportunity to include community impact and ability of the organization to implement or continue the program or service.

Applicants are encouraged to include a narrative or other information which fully and concisely explains their program or service and the expected impact. It should explain how their program or service will improve the mental health of Alabama veterans and their families and explain the importance of addressing the targeted need, service gap, or issue.

Applicants seeking to qualify as targeting underserved populations for the purposes of this opportunity should include other information, if any, they believe demonstrates their qualifications.

Not to exceed 5 pages.

Review Criteria: 50 Points plus 5 Points for serving underserved populations

The applicant organization provides the listed requirements within the page limit specified and demonstrates its program or service will efficiently and effectively improve the mental health of veterans and/or their families by addressing a specific need, reducing or eliminating a service gap or otherwise addressing an issue negatively impacting their mental health. Applicants may be awarded up to 5 points in addition to the maximum 50 points based upon their intent to target underserved populations.

D. Budget

Applicant should provide a detailed budget that demonstrates by line item the costs expected to be incurred. These should include the operational expenses of the service or program (development of material, information dissemination, training, counseling costs, etc.), travel expenses, contractual expenses, and other administrative expenses. A narrative justifying the travel, contractual, and other administrative expenses should be included.

Not to exceed 2 pages.

Review Criteria: 20 Points

The applicant's program or service budget is provided within the page limit specified, reflects realistic costs for the provision or implementation of the program or service, clearly delineates funds that will be used to implement the project within the parameters provided, and reflects a good cost/benefit ratio. Cost/benefit ratios, generally, should reflect travel expenses which do not exceed 5% of total budget and other administrative expenses which do not exceed 15% of total budget.

VIII. Evaluation Process

Proposals failing to include evidence sufficient to ADVA that the organization is a nonprofit organization located in Alabama or an institution of higher education located in Alabama will not be considered. All proposals which satisfactorily meet the submission requirements specified in item "X Submission Requirements" will be evaluated based upon the criteria indicated in each section of the Statement of Work described in item "VII Proposal Requirements".

A review committee will examine each eligible proposal submitted. The ADVA may elect to conduct interviews with finalists. From the final evaluation, a slate of awardees, which may include some suggested partial funding, will be presented first to the State Board of Veterans Affairs Grant Committee and then to the full State Board of Veterans Affairs for final approval. ADVA expects a final selection on or around January 15, 2024.

IX. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals which fail to include sufficient proof of the applicant's eligibility as a nonprofit organization in Alabama or an institution of higher education in Alabama will not be considered.

Proposals will be evaluated based on their responsiveness to the items contained in each section of the Statement of Work described in item "VII Proposal Requirements".

Cover Page	5 Maximum Points
Organization Information	20 Maximum Points
Program or Service Information	55 Maximum Points
<u>Budget</u>	<u>20 Maximum Points</u>
100 Total Possible Points	

Evaluation of proposals may include consideration of other factors to be developed by ADVA, which may include but is not limited to:

- The capability of the organization to provide the program or service based upon the need for specialized expertise, capabilities, technical competence, etc. as demonstrated by the proposed approach and/or methodology of the program or service.
- Resources available to perform the work, including any specialized services within the specified time limits for the project.
- Record of past performance, quality of work, ability to meet goals, etc.
- Criticality of the need, service gap, or issue to be addressed within Alabama's veteran community.
- How impactful the proposed program or service is expected to be in addressing the need, service gap, or issue.

X. Submission Requirements

Each proposal is to contain specific responses to each of the requests. Applicants are encouraged to respond fully to each inquiry but to be as concise as possible. As some of those evaluating the proposals will not have a specific clinical background, the proposal should be written to be understandable to an educated layman.

Proposals should be submitted in the following written format:

COVER PAGE:

See section A of Item VII found on page three (3) of this solicitation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Page numbers shall be listed for each of the major sections of the proposal.

SECTION DIVIDER

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION:

See section B of Item VII found on page four (4) of this solicitation.

SECTION DIVIDER

PROGRAM OR SERVICE INFORMATION:

See section C of Item VII found on page four (4) of this solicitation.

SECTION DIVIDER

BUDGET:

See section D of Item VII found on page six (6) of this solicitation.

SECTION DIVIDER

PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY:

All proposals shall include proof, sufficient to the ADVA, of their eligibility for this program. This includes proof of their status as a nonprofit or institution of higher education and proof that they are located in Alabama. Proposals which fail to include sufficient proof will not be considered.

XI. Submission Instructions

Instructions must be followed or responses will not be evaluated.

Applicants are to provide one (1) original printed proposal, two (2) paper copies, and one (1) complete electronic copy on a thumb drive.

Proposals must be received at the ADVA HQ office no later than 2:00 pm CDT on Friday, December 1, 2023. Proposals being submitted by hand, commercial carrier, or carrier service should be directed to:

Beverly Gebhardt
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
RSA Union Building
100 North Union Street, Suite 570
Montgomery, AL 36104-3719

Proposals being sent through the United State Postal Service should be directed to:

Beverly Gebhardt
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
P.O. Box 1509

Montgomery, AL 36102-1509

Proposals must be clearly marked **Supporting Alabama's Veterans Grant Program**. All proposals received after the deadline will be discarded unopened. **Postmarks of the date mailed are insufficient to meet the submission deadline.**

XII. INQUIRIES

All inquiries, except for questions regarding bidding procedures, must be made in writing and must be submitted no later than November 10, 2023 to:

Beverly Gebhardt
Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs
P.O. Box 1509
Montgomery, AL 36102-1509

Responses provided to individual inquiries will be posted to ADVA's website: www.va.alabama.gov.

XIII. Disclaimers

The ADVA reserves the right to request necessary amendments, reject any and all proposals received, or cancel this solicitation according to the best interest of the ADVA.

The ADVA also reserves the right to waive irregularities in any proposal, request clarification of any information, and negotiate with the applicant submitting the proposal to secure more favorable conditions, providing such shall in no way modify the solicitation requirements or excuse the applicant from full compliance with the agreement.

This announcement does not commit ADVA to award any funding and ADVA assumes no responsibility for expenses incurred in the preparation of proposals. Any and all award(s) shall be based upon the proposal(s) most advantageous to ADVA.

This is an announcement of a grant opportunity. As such, neither ADVA nor ADMH are required to comply with rules exclusively for typical requests for proposals to including those setting certain time requirements. Election by either agency to adhere to a portion of those rules does not imply an intent to be bound by all rules governing requests for proposals.

In the event it becomes necessary to revise any portion of this solicitation, ADVA will post these changes on its website: www.va.alabama.gov.