

**Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Ombuds program**  
**Request for Proposals**  
**2018-2019**

Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), the Community Service Society of New York (CSS) invites non-profit community-based organizations to participate in a newly established independent Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Ombuds program (“Ombuds”). The Ombuds will assist individuals with a substance use disorder and/or mental illness with navigating and accessing healthcare insurance and benefits so that they are able to secure the treatment they need. Through this RFP, CSS anticipates awarding four to five contracts to local organizations to assist with providing education and outreach to individuals with mental health and substance use disorder needs, their families, providers and local public health entities. **Agencies serving the North Country, Long Island, Staten Island, and Western New York are highly encouraged to apply.** The grant award is \$20,000-\$30,000 for a 6-month period during the first contract year. The grant amount awarded in the first contract year will serve as the basis for an annualized award in the subsequent fiscal year, ranging between \$40,000 to \$60,000. CSS expects to announce the award on November 8, 2018 via the CSS website, [www.cssny.org](http://www.cssny.org). The contract is expected to begin on January 1, 2019 and likely end on June 30, 2019, with the expectation of renewal for a 12-month period subject to New York State budget appropriations. **Project grant and dates are contingent upon a State award to CSS and receipt of State funding.**

In March 2018, Section 33.27 of the New York State Mental Hygiene Law was enacted to establish the independent substance use disorder and mental health ombuds program, referred to in this RFP as the Ombuds, that will be supervised by the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), in consultation with the Office of Mental Health (OMH). OASAS contracts with CSS to administer the Ombuds and provide services to consumers through a helpline and a network of non-profit agencies. CSS will operate the Ombuds in partnership with five specialist agencies: Legal Action Center, NYS Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, Empire Justice Center, Medicare Rights Center and The Legal Aid Society. These specialist agencies will provide technical assistance and/or provide assistance to consumers and health care providers.

CSS and the specialist agencies seek to establish a network of 4 to 5 community-based organizations with experience reaching and assisting individuals with substance use disorders and/or mental health issues. These organizations will provide education and outreach to consumers who have substance use disorders and/or mental illness about their rights to access care and to use their health insurance effectively. They will conduct community presentations on health insurance and healthcare access as a way to identify consumers in need of Ombuds services and conduct outreach in the community to promote the Ombuds. Selected organizations might also assist consumers on a one-on-one basis with their health insurance questions and needs. Organizations with experience providing OASAS and/or OMH-certified services is a plus. CSS seeks to fund organizations that serve diverse populations, including but not limited to organizations that serve consumers from culturally, geographically and

linguistically isolated communities, as well as organizations that serve people with mental and physical disabilities, people who are LGBT, veterans and other vulnerable populations, including individuals with criminal justice histories. Organizations that have expertise doing outreach and providing healthcare information and assistance are also encouraged to apply.

**Eligibility Criteria**

Applicants must be non-profit organizations, membership associations, or other mission-driven organizations that have demonstrated experience serving healthcare consumers with behavioral health needs in New York State.

CSS will not fund:

- organizations or individuals that have a conflict of interest, such as individuals or companies that sell insurance or insurance-like products, including discount plans; or
- the provision of direct healthcare services, including outpatient and specialty visits with a provider.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate financial viability to carry out services based on information required in this RFP. In addition, any information deemed confidential or proprietary shall be specified as such by applicants. Should a proposal be accepted, however, all claims to confidentiality are subject to the terms of any prime agreement that may be entered into with CSS and approved by OASAS governing the Ombuds.

**Important Dates**

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Release of RFP	September 24, 2018
Questions About This RFP Due	October 3, 2018
Answers Posted	October 8, 2018
Application Due	October 29, 2018
Award Announcements	November 8, 2018
Projected contract start date	January 1, 2019
Awardee Orientation and Two-day Intensive Training in Albany	January 16-17, 2019 (exact date TBD)

## Introduction

For over 175 years, CSS, a not-for-profit organization, has been a leader of public policy innovations. CSS’s mission is to promote policies that advance the economic security of low- and moderate-income New Yorkers by bringing their perspectives to the policy conversation. CSS’s historic legacy also includes a specific focus on healthcare, which includes the establishment in 1863 of the Society for the Ruptured and Crippled, which is now known as the Hospital for Special Surgery and the New York City Children’s Health Clinics.

Today, CSS operates the Community Health Advocates (CHA) program, which has served more than 300,000 clients since its inception in 2010 through one-on-one counseling sessions and educational workshops instructing clients how to sign up for, use, and keep health insurance. CHA is an “all-payer” program, helping people with public and private insurance as well as the uninsured. CHA works with a network of 27 community-based organizations throughout the State and offers services in 14 different languages. In addition to operating CHA, CSS also leads an In-Person Assister/Navigator network and ICAN, New York’s managed long-term care/FIDA ombuds program.

The Ombuds will be built on the successful model employed for CHA. After training and with the support of CSS and the Specialists Agencies, organizations funded under this RFP will engage in outreach and educational activities to promote the Ombuds Helpline and help New Yorkers with substance use disorders and/or mental illness understand their rights to access Ombuds services and treatment, and to effectively use their health insurance or otherwise access healthcare. Outreach and educational activities will include information about consumer and provider rights under federal and state parity laws and related laws. Funded organizations will refer clients who need assistance enrolling in health insurance through the New York State of Health (the Marketplace) to Navigators.

### Organizational Structure

The Ombuds will operate under a “hub and spokes” model and is composed of three types of organizations: CSS’s central hub; community-based organizations; and Specialist Agencies.

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION	RESPONSIBILITIES
Central Hub: CSS	Manage and organize RFP process; oversee and provide administrative services; operate live central toll-free helpline for direct assistance to consumers and providers; provide technical assistance and training; perform data collection and quality assurance; develop educational materials and presentations; make program reports to policy makers,

	administrators, and the State on consumers' experiences with the health insurance system as identified by helpline staff, Specialists, and community-based organizations.
Specialist Agencies: Legal Action Center, NYS Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, Empire Justice Center, The Legal Aid Society, Medicare Rights Center	Provide legal support, technical assistance, and training; assist with tracking of and advocacy on systemic issues; produce educational materials and trainings; advise network organizations on cases and take referrals of complex cases; assist network organizations through regular case review meetings; conduct periodic policy updates on relevant issues.
Community-Based Organizations	Provide education and outreach to consumers who have substance use disorders and/or mental illness about their rights to access care and to use their health insurance effectively. CBOs will conduct community presentations on health insurance and healthcare access as a way to identify consumers in need of Ombuds services, and conduct outreach in the community to promote the Ombuds. CBOs may potentially also assist consumers with their health insurance needs and questions including post-enrollment issues and other health insurance issues not handled by Navigators.

Services

The organizations awarded funds pursuant to this RFP must complete a mandatory two-day intensive training in Albany and will receive regular monthly trainings and support from CSS and the Specialists.

The organizations will then be expected to provide the following services in an accessible, culturally and linguistically appropriate manner, including options for telephone, web, email, mail, and in-person assistance:

- **Community Outreach and Presentations:** The organization will be required to provide community presentations designed to educate consumers, family groups, advocates, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders about the Ombuds, how to secure payment and authorization of mental health and substance use disorder health services from a health insurance plan, and

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mental health and substance use disorder parity laws and other regulations that protect consumers' rights to access those health services. Venues for these presentations may include but are not limited to: religious institutions, community centers or groups, health centers, community healthcare providers, social service organizations, schools, or the organization's sites. Presentation audiences may include mixed audiences of consumers, family groups, advocates, and healthcare providers.

- **Client Stories:** The organization will identify consumers who have benefited from the Ombuds and are willing to share their stories with the public and will submit their stories to CSS following CSS protocols.
- **Individual assistance cases:** Depending upon their capacity, some CBOs may additionally counsel and assist consumers individually on health insurance (e.g., Medicaid, Essential Plan, Child Health Plus, Medicare, employer-sponsored) and healthcare access issues relative to substance use disorder and mental healthcare.

Examples of cases include:

- Helping consumers understand how to use and access their health insurance benefits.
- Resolving medical billing and debt issues.
- Identifying violations of state and federal mental health and substance use disorder parity laws and helping consumers and providers file appeals, complaints, and requests for information.
- Helping secure prior authorizations, access to specialists and out-of-network services, and hospital and prescription financial assistance programs when needed.

The level of a network organization's assistance and involvement in a case may vary depending on the circumstances.

- **Sentinel function:** CSS expects that the organization will be ready, willing, and able to collaborate with other organizations in the network to identify trends and issues affecting individuals within the healthcare and health insurance arenas in New York State.

### Organization Requirements

The organizations selected will be provided with a subcontract and a Policies and Procedures Manual for the program. Generally, the agency should expect the following requirements:

#### *1. Staffing and Responsibilities*

The organization will agree to designate a Program Coordinator and will be responsible for:

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- attending program meetings;
- remaining current on health policy as it pertains to the services provided;
- overseeing other program staff at his/her organization, including reviewing cases and monitoring presentations;
- collecting and reporting data as directed by CSS on a timely basis;
- collecting client stories during the contract period with appropriate media releases;
- coordinating with CSS to create and implement corrective action plans, as appropriate; and
- cooperating with CSS to ensure that any program staff at his/her organization is adequately trained and competent to provide services.

## 2. *Reporting*

The organization will agree to:

- collect and report data, via the internet-based CSS database, about activities performed, consumers and employers served, health-related issues addressed, and services provided following CSS guidelines in the subcontract and Policies and Procedures Manual. Organizations must currently have computers with internet access, printers, telephone, and email;
- adhere to appropriate confidentiality procedures for health consumer assistance, including any applicable heightened confidentiality procedures for substance use disorder and mental health information;
- cooperate with monitoring by CSS, which may include site visits, observations of community presentations, and reviews of individual and small business assistance services reported through the database; and
- encourage consumer participation in any program evaluations, as deemed necessary by CSS, including client satisfaction surveys, presentation participant evaluations, and surveys.

## 3. *Performance Measures for Services*

The organization must comply with the following:

- provide high quality services;
- ensure that data entry accurately and completely reflects services provided;
- ensure continuity and appropriateness of staff and organization competence in providing services;
- timely compliance with contractual requirements;
- timely data entry; and
- cost-efficiency.

## 4. *Feedback and Assessment*

The organization will agree to:

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- provide feedback on consumer, small employer, and advocate materials, presentations, and other special projects to advance program goals upon CSS’s request; and
- participate in evaluations and assessments of the program and its components on an as-needed basis.

Range of Award

The amount of the grant awarded to the organization is contingent upon an award to CSS and depends upon the scope of work and services proposed by applicants. CSS anticipates awarding a \$20,000-\$30,000 grant for a 6-month period during the first contract year. The grant amount awarded in the first contract year will serve as the basis for an annualized award in the subsequent fiscal year, ranging between \$40,000 to \$60,000.

Grants consist of two components:

1. Baselines, which refer to the numbers of individual assistance cases and outreach/training events the organization is contractually obligated to achieve on a monthly basis; and
2. Deliverables that include attendance at CSS meetings and presentations, timely reporting, and quality services.

The organization must meet both requirements to receive full payment.

An organization that is awarded a \$30,000 grant in the first 6-month contract period will typically commit to either: (1) conducting 10-15 outreach/training events and serving 20-30 individual consumers during the 6-month period; or (2) conducting at least 20 outreach/training events during the 6-month period.

**Evaluation criteria include:**

- **Mission:** The mission of the organization aligns with this program.
- **Diversity:** The organization itself adds to the diversity of the program network.
- **Capacity:** The organization will be ready to provide services upon receiving the award.
- **Population Served:** Organization’s plan to target consumers with substance use disorders and/or mental illness in need of Ombuds services in the sought coverage area.
- **Outreach:** Organization’s outreach plan strategy and proposed number of outreach events.
- **Advocacy:** Organization’s demonstrated ability to identify and document systemic problems and to collect clients’ stories that can be shared with the public.
- **Reporting:** Organization’s demonstrated ability to report services promptly.
- **Casework (optional):** Proposed number of individual cases and feasibility of said goal.

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- **Sustainability:** The organization expressed willingness to work for the program’s long-term sustainability.

## **Content of Proposal**

All items listed in sections A to F below must be included in each proposal to be deemed complete. Proposals missing any component will not be considered.

### **A. Cover Form (Form Attached)**

Complete and submit the cover form, signed and dated by: (1) the organization’s Executive Director or (2) the President or Leader of the organization’s Board of Directors or governing board (and of the organization’s fiscal sponsor, if applicable). Include the organization’s Employer Identification Number (EIN).

### **B. Letter of Commitment from the organization’s Executive Director or President of the Board of Directors**

### **C. Financial Statements & Legal Documents**

- Proof of not-for-profit status (if applicable): (i.e., 501(c) tax-exempt verification);
- A copy of the organization’s most recent audited financial statement with the management letter from the auditors;
- A copy of the organization’s most recent CHAR500 and proof of filing (if available);
- A copy of the organization’s most recent IRS Form 990 and proof of filing (if available);
- Anti-discrimination attestation;
- Conflict of Interest attestation: As noted above, CSS cannot fund organizations that sell insurance or insurance-like products, including discount plans, and/or provide direct healthcare services. However, if an organization’s healthcare services are incidental to its primary activities and would not create a conflict of interest, it may be funded at CSS’s discretion. Any organization that fits this circumstance should complete the enclosed attestation.

### **D. Proposal Narrative (not to exceed 6 pages):**

1. Tell us about your organization’s mission and experience helping consumers and/or providers with substance use disorders and/or mental illness navigate their health insurance and/or healthcare-related issues.
2. Tell us about your organization’s experience conducting outreach:

- Please describe how the organization will market and do outreach to consumers and providers about consumers' rights and the new Behavioral Health Ombuds program and otherwise promote services.
  - Please describe any media experience your organization may have.
3. Tell us about the consumers you will serve:
    - Geographic area;
    - Population description, including: primary languages, race/ethnicity, and other unique characteristics of the organization's service population (e.g. individuals in recovery, people with substance use disorder and/or mental illness, rural populations, veterans, formerly incarcerated, LGBT populations);
    - Health coverage, insurance or care (e.g. commercial insurance; public insurance such as Medicaid, Medicare, the Essential Plan or Child Health Plus), hospital financial assistance) they use; and
    - Income status and sources.
  4. Describe the organization's policy regarding confidentiality and protecting health-related information as required under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and 42 CFR Part 2 regulations. Please provide copies of written policies, if any.
  5. Are there any restrictions on the organization's ability to advocate freely and vigorously on behalf of consumers? If so, please describe.
  6. Can the organization report service data to funders in a timely fashion? Describe current data tracking capacity.
  7. Describe any experience the organization has in advocating for systemic changes on behalf of the service population or constituency. Describe any experience using clients' stories to advocate for systemic changes.
  8. Deliverables and staffing:
    - Number of outreach/training events the organization will provide each month and the number of potential attendees at these events. Describe the target audiences for these events. Describe the staffing that will be dedicated to the grant to provide these services, including the background, experience, and current duties of any personnel already on staff who will deliver or supervise services under this project.

- (Optional) Number of individual assistance cases and outreach events it will handle per month. Describe the staffing that will be dedicated to the grant to provide these services, including the background, experience, and current duties of any personnel already on staff who will deliver or supervise services under this project.

9. Accessibility:

- Where will the organization provide outreach presentations?
- If the organization will provide individual assistance, how will this assistance be provided?
- Are sites where services will be provided accessible to most consumers by public transportation? If not, how will consumers access these services?
- Are sites where services will be provided accessible to people with disabilities? What reasonable accommodations are made for people with disabilities so they may access services? Please provide copies of written policies, if any.
- Describe if the organization is accessible via phone, email, web application, and in-person.
- Please list all office locations and hours where in-person assistance services will be provided, if applicable.

10. Sustainability:

- Please tell us about your organization’s ability to participate in sustainability activities like educating community leaders about the need for ombuds program services in your community.

**E. Budget (1 page) & Budget Narrative (1 to 2 pages)**

The information requested in this section will be used to evaluate your proposal’s cost-effectiveness, as compared to proposals from other applicants. CSS reserves the right to negotiate these terms with awardee.

- Propose a grant amount for the project period.
- Provide a line item budget for a 6-month term, describing how the amount proposed will be used for this project. Include:
  - Personnel expenses (consistent with staffing listed above);
  - Other than personnel expenses; and
    - Note: Organizations may be required to return any equipment purchased with grant funds to New York State at the end of the contract period.
  - In-kind or other organizational contributions.

- Provide a detailed budget narrative. If you propose a significantly higher or lower cost as compared to the typical grant in relation to services proposed, explain the cost difference.

**F. Two Letters of Reference (not to exceed one page, single-spaced)**

Each applicant must provide two reference letters from persons or organizations familiar with the organization and its work.

**Conditions**

CSS reserves rights to postpone or cancel this RFP; reject all proposals; request additional information; negotiate with applicants individually; modify the number of awardees and dollar amounts of grants; amend specifications; eliminate requirements; accept only those proposals that serve the best interests of the program; terminate subcontracts for poor performance or in the best interest of the program; and amend terms of subcontracts to serve best interests of the program. The organization selected will be asked to provide evidence of general liability insurance, workers compensation, disability, and errors and omissions insurance upon signing a subcontract with CSS.

**Organization subcontracts awarded through this RFP are contingent on the award and availability of funds provided by New York State.**

**Questions**

Questions about this RFP should be **emailed** by 5:00 pm on October 3, 2018, to klopez@cssny.org. The subject line should be Ombuds RFP Questions. Responses to common questions will be posted on the CSS website, [www.cssny.org](http://www.cssny.org), by 5:00 pm on October 8, 2018.

**Instructions for Submission**

**CSS requests that all organizations submit their proposal electronically to CSS no later than 5:00 pm on October 29, 2018, in addition to mail or hand delivery. Emailed proposals should be sent to klopez@cssny.org.**

In addition, applicants should submit one proposal marked ORIGINAL and signed by the appropriate individuals (see Contents of the Proposal, Cover Form). Mailed proposals must be postmarked by October 29, 2018, and/or hand-delivered proposals must be received by CSS no later than 5:00 pm on October 29, 2018. Proposals may be stapled but should not be bound. **Please use 12-point font, one-inch margins and double spacing, unless otherwise indicated.**

Proposals should be mailed or hand-delivered to:

Karla Lopez

Supervising Attorney, Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Ombuds program

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Community Service Society of New York  
633 Third Avenue, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10017

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**Proposal Checklist**  
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- \_\_\_ Cover Form, signed and dated by organization's Executive Director or leader of its Board of Directors
- \_\_\_ Letter of Commitment from the organization's Executive Director or leader of its Board of Directors
- \_\_\_ Proof of Not-for-Profit Status (if applicable)
- \_\_\_ Organization's board-approved budget and actuals for the current fiscal year
- \_\_\_ Organization's most recent audited financial statement(s) with the management letter from the auditors
- \_\_\_ Copy of the organization's most recent CHAR500 and proof of filing (if available)
- \_\_\_ Copy of the organization's most recent IRS Form 990 and proof of filing (if available)
- \_\_\_ Anti-Discrimination Compliance Attestation
- \_\_\_ Conflict of Interest Attestation (if applicable)
- \_\_\_ Proposal Narrative (not to exceed 6 pages)
- \_\_\_ Proposed 12-month program budget (not to exceed 1 page)
- \_\_\_ Proposed program budget narrative (not to exceed 2 pages)
- \_\_\_ Two Letters of Reference (each not to exceed 1 page, single-spaced)

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Please note that this form must be signed by the organization's Executive Director or equivalent operational leader (and fiscal conduit, if applicable) and the President or Leader of the Board of Directors or governing board (and the fiscal conduit, if applicable). This form and the entire original application are due by the due date indicated in the Important Dates section.

**NAME OF ORGANIZATION:**

Address:

Telephone Number:

Fax Number:

Email Address:

EIN:

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** (or equivalent operational leader) print name and title:

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PRESIDENT OR LEADER OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS** (or governing board) print name and title

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**\*\*\*Only fill out this form if organization uses a Fiscal Conduit\*\*\***

**FISCAL CONDUIT (if applicable):**

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Telephone Number:**

**Fax Number:**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (or equivalent operational leader) print name and title:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PRESIDENT OR LEADER OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS (or governing board) print name and title**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Anti-Discrimination Compliance Attestation**  
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	Yes	No
Organization abides by all Federal Equal Employment Opportunity regulations, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975		
Organization abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990		
Organization abides by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973		
Organization will provide services that are linguistically and culturally appropriate		

I hereby attest that the above is true and accurate.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Conflict of Interest Attestation Form**  
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**NAME OF ORGANIZATION:**

1. Describe the organization's primary activities.
  
2. Does the organization sell any insurance products or insurance-like products, including discount plans?
  
3. Does the organization receive any direct or indirect consideration from a health insurer? If yes, then please describe the terms and conditions for receipt of such consideration.
  - a. Explain why the organization's provision of services or products, or the relationship described will not create a conflict of interest or potential for non-objective performance of the ombuds program activities.
  
4. Is the organization a provider entity that provides direct healthcare services to consumers, including outpatient and specialty visits with a provider?
  
5. If applicable, describe the healthcare services or products that the organization currently provides or anticipates providing. If the organization has a fiscal or legal relationship with a healthcare provider, state the name of the provider and describe the relationship with the applicant organization.
  - a. Explain why the organization's provision of services or products, or the relationship described will not create a conflict of interest or potential for non-objective performance

of the ombuds program activities.

By signing below, I represent that the above statements are factually correct, and I am authorized to sign and bind my respective organization to the statements herein.

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

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_