

CHESTER UPLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

School-Based Mental Health and Behavioral Health Services

For District Students in Grades K-12

Solicitation Information	District Entry
RFP Number	2701
Issue Date	August 7, 2026
Questions Due	August 14, 2026
Questions Submitted To:	Dr. Dana Bowser – dbowser@chesteruplandsd.org
Proposal Due	August 21, 2026
Anticipated Award	August 28, 2026
Initial Contract Term	September 1, 2026 through September 30, 2027
Renewal Options	Up to two additional one-year terms, at the District's sole option

Procurement Contact

Monique Hales | Chester Upland School District | 1350 Edgmont Avenue, Chester, PA 19013
mhales@chesteruplandsd.org | 267-415-8830

RFP at a Glance

Requirement	District Expectation
Purpose	Select one or more qualified providers to deliver integrated, trauma-informed school-based mental health and behavioral health services.
Service Model	In-person services during the school day, with after-school, summer, family, crisis, and telehealth options only when authorized by CUSD.
Students Served	Students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, multilingual learners, students experiencing homelessness or foster care, and other students with barriers to learning.
Core Personnel	Licensed mental health professionals; master's-level clinicians working within lawful scope and supervision; family engagement coordinators; and optional creative arts therapists or other approved specialists.
Award Structure	CUSD may make a single award, multiple awards, partial award, or no award. No minimum caseload, hours, positions, referrals, or compensation is guaranteed.
Funding	Services may be supported by local, state, federal, Medicaid/Medical Assistance, or other funds. Contractor must comply with requirements applicable to each funding source.

Procurement Schedule

Event	Date / Time
RFP issued	August 7, 2026
Deadline for written questions	August 14, 2026
District addendum, if any	TBD
Proposals due	August 21, 2026
Interviews/presentations, if requested	NA
Anticipated approval	August 28, 2026
Services begin	September 1, 2026

Submission Checklist

- ☐ Signed Proposal Cover Sheet (Attachment A)
- ☐ Narrative response in the required order
- ☐ Staffing and implementation plan
- ☐ Qualifications, licenses, resumes, and supervision plan
- ☐ Three school-district references
- ☐ Cost Proposal (Attachment B)
- ☐ Required Certifications (Attachment C)
- ☐ Exceptions to District terms, clearly identified
- ☐ Sample reports, outcome dashboard, and proposed service agreement, if any
- ☐ Insurance certificate or evidence of insurability
- ☐ Federal certifications when applicable

1. District Background and Purpose

Chester Upland School District (CUSD or District) is a public K-12 school district in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. The District seeks a responsive, culturally competent and sustainable continuum of school-based mental health and behavioral health services that reduces barriers to learning, strengthens student and family engagement, supports safe schools, and complements—not supplants—the responsibilities of District personnel and community systems.

The District intends to establish a pool or contract with one or more providers capable of promptly staffing qualified professionals across District schools. Services will be driven by District-authorized referrals, student need, available funding, school calendars, and written work orders. The successful contractor must coordinate with District leadership, school administrators, counselors, Student Assistance Program (SAP) teams, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) teams, special education teams, school nurses, safety personnel, and community partners as directed.

1.1 Objectives

- Provide timely, accessible, evidence-informed mental health supports in school settings.
- Improve student attendance, engagement, coping, emotional regulation, relationships, and readiness to learn.
- Provide early identification, brief intervention, individual and group counseling, family engagement, crisis support, referral and warm handoffs.
- Ensure services are trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, disability-inclusive, and aligned with student and family strengths.
- Establish measurable service, fidelity, access, satisfaction, and outcome reporting without compromising student privacy.
- Maintain continuity of services through effective recruitment, supervision, vacancy coverage, and transition planning.

1.2 No Guarantee and Non-Exclusivity

This RFP does not guarantee an award or any minimum number of positions, students, referrals, days, hours, or payments. CUSD may use District employees, other contractors, public agencies, or community partners for the same or similar services. No services may begin without a fully executed agreement, required approvals, and a District-issued purchase order or written notice to proceed.

2. Contract Term and Award

The anticipated initial term is September 1, 2026 through September 30, 2027. CUSD may renew the agreement for up to two additional one-year terms, subject to satisfactory performance, continued need, available funding, mutually acceptable pricing, and all required District approvals. Any renewal must be in writing; there is no automatic renewal.

The District may award by service category, position, school, grade band, funding source, or in any combination that serves the District's best interests. CUSD may negotiate scope, staffing, rates, deliverables, and terms with one or more highest-ranked proposers.

3. Scope of Services

3.1 Service Continuum

- Universal prevention and psychoeducation for students, staff, and families.
- Targeted short-term individual and group counseling based on authorized referrals and appropriate consent.
- Screening, needs identification, care coordination, case consultation, and referral to higher or specialized levels of care.
- Crisis prevention, de-escalation, risk assessment within professional scope, safety planning, postvention, and coordination with District protocols and emergency/community resources.
- Family outreach, education, engagement, and warm handoffs to community-based services.
- Consultation and capacity-building for school teams regarding trauma, grief and loss, anxiety, depression, emotional regulation, resilience, healthy relationships, coping skills, mindfulness, motivational interviewing, and other evidence-informed practices.
- Optional creative arts therapy or other specialized modalities when proposed, properly credentialed, and authorized by CUSD.
- Summer and extended-day services when requested through a written work order.

3.2 Staffing Categories

Category	Minimum Role Expectations
Licensed Mental Health Professional	Maintain a current Pennsylvania license appropriate to assigned duties (such as LCSW, LPC, LMFT, licensed psychologist, or other approved license); provide assessment, counseling, crisis support, consultation, care coordination, documentation, and supervision as permitted.
Master's-Level Mental Health Professional	Hold a relevant master's degree; work only within lawful scope and under documented clinical supervision where required; provide counseling, skill building, groups, care coordination, and documentation.
Family Engagement Coordinator	Build family-school connections; conduct outreach; support consent, navigation, referrals, resources, attendance and follow-through; maintain confidentiality and work under program/clinical protocols.
Creative Arts Therapist - Optional	Hold appropriate education, certification and/or licensure for the modality; provide structured, therapeutic arts interventions as approved by CUSD and integrated with the student support plan.
Clinical/Program Supervisor	Provide accessible clinical and administrative oversight, case consultation, fidelity monitoring, documentation review, staff development, crisis consultation and at least monthly on-site quality review, or more frequently when required.

CUSD will identify the number, location, schedule, and category of positions through contract documents or written work orders. Proposers must provide pricing for each staffing category offered.

3.3 Referral, Consent, and Service Planning

- Accept referrals only through District-authorized pathways.
- Prioritize students as directed by CUSD, including students continuing from prior services, students with urgent needs, and students identified by SAP, MTSS, counseling, attendance, or school leadership teams.

- Obtain and document parent/guardian consent and student assent when required; explain confidentiality and its limits in age-appropriate language.
- Develop a concise service plan with presenting need, goals, frequency, expected duration, interventions, discharge/transition criteria, and referral needs.
- Immediately follow District procedures for suspected child abuse, threats, self-harm, harm to others, medical emergencies, and other safety concerns.
- Never independently change a student's educational placement, IEP, Section 504 plan, disciplinary status, or District safety determination.

3.4 Required Activities and Deliverables

- Maintain an on-site schedule aligned with the CUSD calendar and building hours, except for preapproved provider training or meetings.
- Provide individual, group, classroom, family, and consultation services only as authorized.
- Participate in SAP, MTSS, student support, attendance, re-entry, crisis, IEP/Section 504, or other meetings when invited and legally appropriate.
- Provide timely feedback to authorized District personnel and parents/guardians while protecting confidential clinical information.
- Maintain daily service/encounter logs, referral status, attendance, contact attempts, disposition, and aggregate service data in a District-approved format.
- Submit monthly invoices with position, staff name/identifier, school, dates, authorized rate, days/hours delivered, vacancy deductions, and sufficient support for allowability.
- Submit monthly program reports and quarterly outcome reports; immediately report critical incidents and vacancies.
- Provide transition plans and transfer authorized records upon staff reassignment, contract expiration, or termination.

3.5 Performance Standards

Measure	Minimum Standard / Proposer Response
Initial staffing	Proposer states realistic lead time; CUSD preference: all approved positions filled before the service start date.
Vacancy notification	Written notice within one business day of known vacancy or extended absence.
Replacement plan	Qualified replacement proposed within [5] business days; final placement requires CUSD approval.
Referral acknowledgment	Within one school day.
Initial contact/triage	Urgent: same day under District protocol; routine: within [3] school days.
Documentation	Completed within one school day unless CUSD approves another standard.
Monthly reporting/invoice	Received by the [10th] calendar day of the following month.
Critical incident notice	Immediate verbal notice followed by written notice within 24 hours, consistent with law and District policy.
Supervision	Documented clinical supervision consistent with licensure and at least weekly for unlicensed clinical staff.

Measure	Minimum Standard / Proposer Response
Quality review	At least monthly review of staffing, caseload, timeliness, documentation, outcomes, concerns, and corrective actions.

4. District and Contractor Responsibilities

4.1 District Responsibilities

- Provide reasonable access to confidential service space, District systems and students as authorized and available.
- Identify a District contract/program contact and building contacts.
- Provide relevant District policies, calendars, safety procedures and referral processes.
- Facilitate access to parents/guardians and student support teams as appropriate.
- Review staffing candidates, deliverables and invoices; District review does not transfer employer or clinical responsibility to CUSD.

4.2 Contractor Responsibilities

- Recruit, employ, compensate, supervise and retain all contractor personnel; provide substitutes and vacancy coverage at no additional recruitment fee.
- Provide all clinical materials, equipment, secure technology, transportation, training and supplies unless expressly assigned to CUSD in writing.
- Ensure personnel follow building schedules, identification, dress, attendance, safety, technology, confidentiality and professional-conduct requirements.
- Remove and replace personnel upon District request. CUSD need not establish employee-discipline cause to request removal from a District assignment.
- Prohibit subcontracting or assignment without prior written District approval; remain fully responsible for approved subcontractors.
- Maintain a clinical escalation contact available during all service hours.
- Avoid conflicts of interest, improper solicitation of students/families, and conversion of District referrals to private services without written authorization and informed family choice.

5. Personnel Qualifications, Clearances, and Training

Before any individual has direct contact with students or access to student information, the contractor must provide CUSD documentation satisfactory to the District. No candidate may begin based solely on a pending clearance, license, or credential.

- Current professional license, certification and/or degree appropriate to the assigned role; primary-source verification when requested.
- Pennsylvania State Police criminal history report (Act 34/Section 111), Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Certification (Act 151), FBI fingerprint-based federal criminal history (Act 114), and Act 168 employment history review documentation, all in the form and recency required by law and CUSD.
- Mandated reporter training under Act 126 and other training required by law or District policy.
- Current CPR/first aid and crisis prevention/de-escalation training when required for the assignment.

- Experience serving school-age children and adolescents; public-school and high-needs community experience preferred.
- Cultural responsiveness, disability inclusion, trauma-informed practice, ethical boundaries, suicide prevention, threat/safety protocols, FERPA, HIPAA as applicable, and secure documentation.
- Annual and new-hire orientation to CUSD policies and procedures.

The contractor must monitor expiration dates and provide updated documents before expiration. The contractor shall immediately notify CUSD of arrests, charges, founded/indicated reports, license actions, exclusions, or other events that may affect eligibility or fitness for assignment, to the extent permitted or required by law.

6. Clinical Quality, Supervision, and Continuity

- Use evidence-informed practices and document the rationale for selected interventions.
- Provide written supervision structure, supervisor credentials, frequency, availability, escalation procedures and coverage.
- Use caseload standards that protect quality and timely access; disclose proposed maximum caseloads and productivity assumptions.
- Conduct chart/documentation audits and fidelity reviews; provide aggregate findings and corrective actions to CUSD.
- Maintain a continuity plan for absences, turnover, emergency closure, summer transition, and contract closeout.
- Do not use students for experimentation, research, marketing, fundraising, publicity, photography, recording or product development without specific prior written District approval and all legally required consent.

7. Data, Records, Confidentiality, and Security

The contractor must comply with FERPA, applicable Pennsylvania student-record requirements, HIPAA and HITECH when applicable, professional confidentiality laws and ethics, District policies, and any data-sharing or business associate agreement required by CUSD. CUSD will determine the contractor's authorized access and the system of record.

- Use student information solely to perform authorized CUSD services and only on a need-to-know basis.
- Apply administrative, technical and physical safeguards, including role-based access, strong authentication, encryption in transit and at rest, secure backups, workforce training and documented incident response.
- Do not sell, monetize, mine, advertise against, train artificial-intelligence models on, or otherwise repurpose District data.
- Do not place personally identifiable student information into public or consumer artificial-intelligence tools. Any AI-enabled system requires prior written CUSD approval and contractual safeguards.
- Notify CUSD immediately, and no later than 24 hours after discovery, of suspected or confirmed loss, unauthorized access, disclosure, ransomware, security incident or breach; cooperate with investigation, notice, mitigation and remediation.
- Do not disclose District or student information to a subcontractor or host it outside the United States without prior written CUSD approval.
- Return or securely destroy District data at CUSD direction and certify destruction, except records lawfully required to be retained; retained records remain protected.

- Preserve records for the period stated in the final agreement and longer when required by a litigation hold, audit, funding rule, professional rule, or law.

8. Reporting and Outcomes

The proposer must include a sample de-identified dashboard. Final measures will be established with CUSD and may include:

Domain	Illustrative Measures
Access	Referrals, referral source, students served, wait time, declined/unreachable referrals, consent status, school/grade distribution.
Service delivery	Individual/group/family contacts, minutes/hours, cancellations, no-shows, modality, caseload, discharge and referral disposition.
Student progress	Goal attainment, validated screening change when authorized, coping/self-regulation indicators, student/family feedback.
School connection	Attendance, engagement, behavior or course indicators only when approved, appropriate and interpreted with caution.
Equity	Access and timeliness disaggregated only as authorized and with small-cell/privacy protections.
Workforce/quality	Positions filled, vacancies, turnover, supervision, training, documentation timeliness, incidents, complaints and corrective actions.

Contractor shall not represent correlation as causation and shall not use District outcomes publicly without prior written authorization. Reports must protect small groups and exclude unnecessary personally identifiable information.

9. Pricing, Invoicing, and Funding Compliance

- Submit fully loaded rates using Attachment B. Rates must include wages, benefits, supervision, recruitment, clearances, travel, materials, technology, overhead, profit, reporting and all other costs unless separately identified and accepted by CUSD.
- Offer firm pricing for each proposed contract year. Identify any annual escalation as a fixed amount or percentage; unspecified charges will not be paid.
- Invoice only for authorized, satisfactorily delivered services. Positions must be prorated for vacancies, absences, late starts and unworked days.
- No overtime, travel, mileage, lodging, cancellation charge, administrative fee, minimum guarantee or pass-through expense is reimbursable unless expressly authorized in writing.
- CUSD may withhold disputed amounts while paying undisputed amounts and may offset overpayments, unsupported charges, substitute costs or other amounts due.
- Cooperate with cost/price analysis, time-and-effort or personnel documentation, audit, monitoring and funding-source requirements.
- Where federal funds are used, comply with applicable provisions of 2 CFR Part 200 and Appendix II, including debarment/suspension, anti-lobbying, remedies, termination, and other clauses applicable to the award and dollar value. Contractor must maintain active SAM.gov registration when CUSD requires it.
- No cost may be charged to CUSD if it is unallowable, inadequately documented, allocated to another payer, or already reimbursed from another source.

10. Insurance and Risk Allocation

Before services begin and throughout the contract, the contractor must maintain insurance from carriers acceptable to CUSD. Final limits are subject to District and solicitor approval. Proposer shall identify any inability to meet the following proposed minimums:

Coverage	Proposed Minimum
Commercial General Liability	\$1,000,000 per occurrence / \$2,000,000 aggregate
Professional / Errors and Omissions Liability	\$1,000,000 per claim / \$2,000,000 aggregate
Cyber / Privacy Liability	\$1,000,000 per claim and aggregate
Automobile Liability	\$1,000,000 combined single limit, when vehicles are used
Workers' Compensation	Statutory
Employers' Liability	\$1,000,000 each accident/disease
Abuse and Molestation Liability	\$1,000,000 per occurrence / \$2,000,000 aggregate

CUSD, its Receiver, Board, officers, employees and agents shall be named as additional insureds where commercially and legally appropriate. Coverage must be primary and noncontributory, include waiver of subrogation where available, and provide notice of cancellation as required by the final agreement. Claims-made coverage must include an acceptable retroactive date and extended reporting period.

The final agreement will include indemnification obligations. CUSD does not accept reciprocal indemnification unless expressly approved by the District solicitor and authorized governing body.

11. General Contract Requirements

- Independent contractor status; contractor personnel are not CUSD employees and are not entitled to District wages, benefits or employment protections.
- Compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws, professional standards, District policies and lawful directives.
- Nondiscrimination and equal opportunity, including Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504, ADA and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, as applicable.
- Right of CUSD and authorized funders/auditors to monitor performance and review relevant records.
- Pennsylvania law governs; venue shall lie in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, unless controlling law requires otherwise.
- Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law cooperation; proposer should clearly identify information claimed to be confidential but understands CUSD determines disclosure obligations under law.
- No assignment, change of control affecting performance, or subcontracting without prior written approval.
- No publicity, use of CUSD name/logo, or public statement regarding students or services without prior written approval.
- No gratuities, contingent fees, collusion or conflicts of interest.
- Compliance with District purchase-order requirements; contractor proceeds without authorization at its own risk.

11.1 Termination and Remedies

The final agreement may be terminated by CUSD for convenience upon [30] days' written notice; immediately or after a stated cure period for cause; immediately when student safety, loss of licensure/clearance, confidentiality, funding, debarment, fraud, or material nonperformance warrants. CUSD will owe only allowable amounts for accepted services delivered through the effective termination date. Contractor must provide orderly transition assistance and return District property and records.

12. Proposal Instructions

Submit ONE SIGNED ORIGINAL, 2 COPIES, AND ONE ELECTRONIC COPY emailed to mhales@chesteruplandsd.org by the deadline on the cover. The outside package or electronic subject line must state: "School-Based Mental Health Services RFP – 2701. Late proposals may be rejected. Faxed proposals will not be accepted unless an addendum expressly permits them.

Questions must be submitted in writing only to the procurement contact by the stated deadline. Oral explanations are not binding. Only a written District addendum may modify the RFP. Proposers must acknowledge all addenda.

12.1 Required Proposal Organization

1. Transmittal letter signed by an authorized official.
2. Attachment A - Proposal Cover Sheet.
3. Executive summary and service model.
4. Implementation and staffing plan, including recruitment timeline, vacancy coverage and proposed assignments.
5. Clinical approach, referral/consent workflow, crisis protocol, supervision and quality assurance.
6. Data security, records, reporting and outcome-measurement plan.
7. Organizational qualifications, licenses/accreditations, financial and operational capacity.
8. Resumes for proposed key personnel and representative credentials for each staffing category.
9. Three comparable K-12 references, preferably Pennsylvania public school entities.
10. Attachment B - Cost Proposal.
11. Attachment C - Certifications and Disclosures.
12. Requested exceptions, shown in a separate table citing the RFP section, requested language and rationale. Silence constitutes acceptance for evaluation purposes, subject to the final agreement.

12.2 Proposal Validity and Costs

Proposals must remain valid for 120 days after the due date unless extended by mutual written agreement. All proposal preparation costs are the proposer's responsibility. Submitted materials become District property, subject to applicable law.

13. Evaluation and Selection

CUSD intends to use the following evaluation framework. The District may verify information, contact references, request clarifications, conduct interviews, require best-and-final offers, and consider past performance. An incomplete, nonresponsive, unsafe, unlicensed or legally noncompliant proposal may be rejected regardless of score.

Criterion	Points
Program design and responsiveness to scope	25
Staff qualifications, supervision and workforce capacity	20
School-based experience, references and past performance	15
Implementation, continuity and customer service	10
Data security, reporting, outcomes and quality assurance	10
Cost and overall value	20
Total	100

Award will be made to the responsible proposer(s) whose proposal is determined to provide the best value and serve the District's interests. Lowest price alone will not control. CUSD reserves the right to reject any or all proposals; waive minor irregularities; request additional information; negotiate; make one, multiple, partial or no award; and cancel or reissue the solicitation.

Attachment A - Proposal Cover Sheet

Field	Proposer Response
Legal name	
Doing-business-as name	
Business address	
Primary contact / title	
Telephone	
Email	
Website	
Entity type / state of formation	
Federal EIN	
SAM.gov UEI, if applicable	
Years providing school-based mental health services	
Authorized signer / title	

By signing below, the proposer confirms that the signer is authorized to bind the proposer; the proposal is valid for 120 days; all information is true and complete; the proposer accepts the RFP except for expressly listed exceptions; and the proposer has not colluded or offered anything of value to influence this procurement.

Signature	Date

Attachment B - Cost Proposal

Provide a fully loaded rate for every category proposed. Attach additional detail if needed. Do not leave assumptions unstated.

Service / Staffing Category	Year 1 Rate	Year 2 Rate	Year 3 Rate	Unit
Licensed Mental Health Professional				Per FTE / day / hour
Master's-Level Mental Health Professional				Per FTE / day / hour
Family Engagement Coordinator				Per FTE / day / hour
Creative Arts Therapist - Optional				Per FTE / day / hour

Service / Staffing Category	Year 1 Rate	Year 2 Rate	Year 3 Rate	Unit
Clinical / Program Supervisor				Included / separate
Summer / Extended-Day Services				Hourly / daily
Other (describe)				

Minimum billable increment:

Proposed annual escalation:

Included supervision frequency:

Included materials/technology:

Cancellation/no-show terms (if any):

Other charges or assumptions:

Prompt-payment discount (if any):

Certification: These rates are fully loaded and include all costs except those expressly identified above.

Authorized Signature	Printed Name / Title	Date

Attachment C - Certifications and Disclosures

The proposer certifies, represents and agrees that:

- ☐ It has read and understands the RFP and can perform the proposed services.
- ☐ Its proposal is accurate, complete and independently developed without collusion.
- ☐ It and its principals are not suspended, debarred or otherwise excluded from participation in applicable government programs; it will promptly report any change.
- ☐ It will maintain required licenses, credentials, clearances, training, insurance and legally required supervision.
- ☐ It will comply with student privacy, data security, mandated reporting, nondiscrimination and District policy requirements.
- ☐ It has disclosed all actual or potential conflicts of interest and relationships with CUSD officials or employees.
- ☐ It has disclosed all material litigation, investigations, sanctions, license actions, contract terminations for cause, security incidents and government findings during the past five years, or attached an explanation.
- ☐ It will not use contingent fees, gratuities or lobbying paid with prohibited funds to obtain an award.
- ☐ It will comply with federal grant clauses and provide certifications when applicable to a purchase order or funding source.

Exceptions or explanations attached? Yes / No

Conflict-of-interest disclosure: _____

Litigation/regulatory disclosure:

Security incident disclosure: _____

Legal Name	Authorized Signature	Printed Name / Title	Date

Attachment D - References

Reference	Organization / Contact	Services and Dates	Phone / Email
1			
2			
3			

Attachment E - Proposed Staffing and Implementation Plan

Role / Candidate	Credential	School / Coverage	Available Start	Backup / Vacancy Plan

Role / Candidate	Credential	School / Coverage	Available Start	Backup / Vacancy Plan

Implementation Narrative

Describe the first 30, 60 and 90 days of implementation.

Response: _____

Describe recruitment, screening, onboarding and CUSD approval of personnel.

Response: _____

State maximum caseload/productivity assumptions and how schedules protect quality.

Response: _____

Describe supervision, crisis consultation and after-hours escalation.

Response: _____

Describe coverage for vacancies, absences and staff turnover.

Response: _____

Describe family engagement and culturally/linguistically responsive practice.

Response: _____

Describe data systems, security safeguards, reporting and outcome measurement.

Response: _____

Identify all proposed subcontractors and their responsibilities.

Response: _____
