

City of Seattle Department of Education & Early Learning (DEEL)
**Telehealth Services for Students and Youth
Request for Information (RFI) Overview**

INTRODUCTION

The City of Seattle's Department of Education & Early Learning (DEEL) is seeking information from qualified telehealth service providers to support the mental well-being of Seattle's diverse student population. Our goal is to identify services that are culturally specific and responsive and tailored to meet the unique needs of our community. This RFI is intended to gather information to assist in developing a potential Request for Proposal (RFP) in the future. **The RFI will be open for submissions from Wednesday, June 26 to Wednesday, July 24, 2024.**

This RFI is for information-gathering purposes only and does not constitute a formal solicitation or an obligation to issue a future RFP. Responses to this RFI will be used to inform our decision-making process regarding a future RFP for telehealth services for middle and high school Seattle Public School students, and Seattle youth up to age 24, expected to launch within School Year 2024-25. DEEL's review of RFI responses will focus on identifying potential vendors who meet the Criteria & Objectives outlined below. **DEEL will consider awarding funds to multiple vendors via the RFP process, dependent upon the results of the RFI analysis.**

Organizations interested in participating in future DEEL RFP processes related to student telehealth services MUST complete the RFI process.

BACKGROUND

DEEL is implementing student mental health services in response to CB 119950 which directed funding to DEEL to expand educational supports at Seattle Public Schools (SPS), prioritizing mental health services including, but not limited to, school-based mental health counselors and culturally specific and responsive programming from community-based organizations. Telehealth is part of a multi-faceted City-wide youth mental health investment strategy that delivers supports for youth across the mental health continuum, that reaches youth in ways that are culturally responsive, localized to their communities, evidence-based, and informed by youth and family needs.

Research and stakeholder engagement shows there are population-specific mental health challenges based on school level, socio-economic and housing status, race, color, national origin, ethnicity, language, or immigration status, sex, LGBTQI+ status.

- Youth from lower-income households are less likely to access health care and more likely to experience significant mental health symptoms.
- Based on race and ethnicity, youth experience differences in severity of mental health symptoms. Black teens have disproportionately higher rates of suicide than White teens.
- There are differences among communities, by race and ethnicity, in the extent to which individuals seek, access, and use mental health services.

- Prior to the pandemic, youth who identify as LGBTQI+ and students with disabilities both experienced unique stressors such as emotional distress, symptoms of anxiety and depression, hopelessness, self-harm, alcohol/substance abuse, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior at rates higher than heterosexual, cisgender and non-disabled youth.

There is critical gap in service for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) students in receiving effective, healing-centered, culturally specific and responsive mental health supports.

DEEL and SPS serve a diverse population of students and youth from various cultural, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. We are committed to providing equitable health services that respect and honor the cultural identities of our community members.

A telehealth model universally available to all Seattle Public Schools middle and high school students, and Seattle youth up to age 24, that is subsidized by the City of Seattle addresses many of the barriers stated above. Telehealth services should be accessible, inclusive, and adaptable to the needs of all students, especially those who may face barriers to accessing mental health services.

CRITERIA & OBJECTIVES

We are seeking telehealth service providers that can:

1. Deliver high-quality mental health and behavioral health services, offered by therapists and counselors licensed to provide telehealth services in WA state, to youth in middle and high school and beyond, up to 24 years old.
2. Offer culturally responsive care that considers the diverse backgrounds of students attending Seattle Public Schools and youth in Seattle communities.
3. Provide services in multiple languages or offer translation services.
4. Ensure confidentiality and privacy for all users.
5. Offer flexible scheduling to accommodate the varied needs of students and their families.
6. Utilize technology and platform design that is accessible and user-friendly for youth.
7. Provide an option of accepting insurance.
8. Show documented results of reducing depression and anxiety for participating youth.
9. Demonstrate capacity to provide services to an increased number of youth, beginning with youth in middle school and up to 24 years old.
10. See patients with a variety of mental health needs, including those in crisis, with no rule-out criteria for accepting new patients.

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Event	Date/Time
Request for Information (RFI) Opens	Wednesday, June 26, 2024
Technical Assistance/Information Session	Wednesday, July 10, 2024 at 4:00pm Click here to Join the July 10 Teams meeting Meeting ID: 257 523 352 345 Passcode: hjQnbk
Question and Answer Period	Wednesday, June 26 – Monday, July 22, 2024
Application Deadline	Wednesday, July 24, 2024 by 4:00pm
Application Review Period & Development of RFP	Thursday, July 25 – Friday September 13, 2024
Notification of Qualified Applicants	Friday, September 13, 2024
RFP Issued	Monday, September 16, 2024
Qualified Applicants Invited to Apply for RFP	Monday, September 16, 2024

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Please submit your responses via the Submittable platform. All applicants will need to sign up for a Submittable account here: [Seattle DEEL Submission Manager \(submittable.com\)](https://www.submittable.com).

Signing up is easy and free. You will just need to provide your name, email address, and a password. Once you sign up, you will be able to access the online application.

To sign up, click on the Submittable link above, scroll to the bottom of the page, click on the orange “Create Your Account” box (see screenshot below), and follow the prompts.

We use Submittable to accept and review our submissions.

[Create Your Account](#)

[Have An Account? Sign In](#)

LANGUAGE SUPPORTS

If you require additional language supports, DEEL can provide assistance. Please reach out to DEEL Funding at DEELfunding@seattle.gov.

FURTHER INFORMATION

All information and application documents for this grant program can be found on the DEEL funding opportunities webpage: [http://www.seattle.gov/education/for-providers/funding opportunities](http://www.seattle.gov/education/for-providers/funding-opportunities). For any questions or further information, please contact us at DEELfunding@seattle.gov.