



**RHODE ISLAND HEALTH CENTER ASSOCIATION  
Outreach and Enrollment Support Program**

**Request for Proposals – ASSISTER ENTITIES**

**Introduction**

The Rhode Island Health Center Association (RIHCA), under its Outreach and Enrollment Support Program (OESP) Network Manager contract with the State of Rhode Island, on behalf of the Division of the Rhode Island Health Benefits Exchange (Exchange) and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), is soliciting proposals from qualified entities who wish to enter into subcontracts with RIHCA to provide community-based outreach, and application and enrollment assistance to individuals and families wishing to enroll in health coverage. The initial contract period will begin October 1, 2017 and end on August 31, 2018. Contracts may be renewed for up to three 12-month periods depending upon subcontractor performance and availability of funds.

**Background**

Rhode Island operates a health benefits exchange in accordance with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) for the purpose of providing individuals, families and small businesses with affordable access to Qualified Health Plans (QHPs). The 2017 open enrollment period will begin on November 1<sup>st</sup> and is expected to end on December 31<sup>st</sup>.

The ACA requires state-based exchanges to establish a navigator program to assist prospective enrollees with understanding the availability of coverage through the exchange, including the availability of advance premium tax credits and cost-sharing subsidies, and eligibility for Medicaid and CHIP. Rhode Island's Outreach and Enrollment Support Program, with RIHCA as Network Manager, will include both Navigators and Assisters. While both roles will provide for a "no wrong door" approach and will educate and assist anyone presenting or requesting their services, this request for proposals is for entities interested in identifying and managing staff to act in an Assister capacity for their organizations.

Assisters will be available to help everyone who comes to them and will be available to work on a one-to-one basis with individuals and families to provide information regarding the exchange, the QHPs and publically funded insurance, explain options available and directly assist with the on-line application/enrollment process. All information that Assisters provide will be unbiased and impartial, and they will sign a statement pledging their impartiality.

Assisters will also be required to staff and support an agreed upon minimum number of HSRI community enrollment events during the open enrollment period and a minimum number of enrollment events during the special enrollment (e.g., non-open enrollment) period.

Particular emphasis will also be placed on outreach efforts to identify and enroll the approximately 43,000 Rhode Islanders who remain uninsured. The demographics of this population are:

- Hispanics/Latinos
- Minority males, ages 19–44
- Childless adults
- Rhode Islanders not born in the US

Starting in 2018, Assisters will also be expected to provide customers with post-enrollment assistance. This includes assistance with:

- understanding eligibility appeals (though not representing the consumer in the appeal);
- filing shared responsibility exemptions;
- providing basic information regarding the reconciliation of premium tax credits and,
- understanding basic concepts and rights related to using health coverage.

Assister entities will be responsible to collect and report specific data points related to enrollments and customer contacts, and to identify a point of contact for this reporting function.

The number of Assister entities will be carefully structured with the need for geographical coverage, access and quality services in mind. Successful entities will have experience with the targeted populations stated above and will collectively provide optimal geographic coverage. Experience in performing assister-like functions and the demonstrated ability to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services will be highly valued.

Each selected entity will be responsible for determining the number of Assisters needed to fulfill the terms of their contract and will be expected to provide their Assisters with any technological or other equipment/supplies necessary to carry out Assister activities at their agencies. This includes, but may not be limited to, internet access and the ability to scan documents for submission on behalf of the applicants. The ability to provide Assisters with laptops and cell phones when they support external community enrollment events is also highly valued. All Assisters will be required to attend an initial training provided by RIHCA and successfully complete Assister certification testing. Periodic training updates and annual refresher training/re-testing is also required.

Successful Assister entities will be required to secure appropriate liability insurance for the accidental or intentional acts of employees that cause or could potentially cause harm to enrollees or prospective enrollees. Such insurance shall include professional liability and errors and omissions with coverages of not less than one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence. Participation by each entity in periodic meetings with RIHCA OESP staff to review performance and discuss opportunities for improvement and sharing of best practices is also required.

#### **Lead Agency Pilot**

Once the network of Assister entities is in place, RIHCA will look to launch a pilot of the “Lead Agency” model with one of the entities. This Lead Agency will serve as both the community and communication hub for all citizens and Assisters in their geographical region and will receive a separate, additional monthly payment for these enhanced responsibilities. The Lead Agency concept has been successfully utilized in other state-based exchanges and is expected to result in closer ties to the community and

stronger communication. RIHCA will provide more information on this new opportunity once the network is finalized.

**Commented [KM1]:** Mary...feel free to choose your own words but I would, at a minimum, explain that more info will be provided once the network is in place.

#### **Funding**

Contracted entities will be placed into one of three payment tiers, which will be determined by the total number of FTEs committed to Assister services, as well as level of Assister support committed to community enrollment events. The exact dollar amount of the monthly payments will depend upon the final number of subcontracted entities, as well as tier placement. The payment range across the tiers is anticipated to be minimally between \$1,000 and \$3,000 per month. In order to assure fair and equitable compensation, tier placement will be reassessed periodically to assure each entity's stated staffing level and support at external events are being met.

#### **Allowable Expenses**

No services reimbursed under this Outreach and Enrollment Support Program can be claimed for reimbursement under any other agreement, grant or contract that the entity may hold that provides funding from state or federal sources.

#### **Evaluation and Selection**

RIHCA's review team will evaluate all proposals that are complete and submitted on time. Only entities meeting the minimum requirements, as reflected in their responses to the Technical Proposal, will be considered for participation. RIHCA will then carefully structure the composition of the Assister entity network with the need for geographical and targeted population coverage, access and quality services in mind.

#### **Questions?**

- Between September 5<sup>th</sup> and September 11<sup>th</sup>: please contact Mary Evans at [mevans@rihca.org](mailto:mevans@rihca.org)
- On September 12<sup>th</sup>: please contact Jane Hayward at [jhayward@rihca.org](mailto:jhayward@rihca.org)

#### **Proposal Submission**

Responses should be emailed to: [info@rihca.org](mailto:info@rihca.org)

**Complete responses to the Technical Proposal are due no later than 5:00 PM on Tuesday, September 12, 2017.**