



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

KEVIN DEHMER
Acting Commissioner

May 9, 2024

To: Dr. Gerry Benaquista
Township of Union School District
2369 Morris Avenue
Union, New Jersey 07083

From: Luiz Pereira, Director
Office of Student Support Services
Division of Educational Services

Re: Opportunity for Grant Agreement Modification to Support Full-Time Staff Hiring and expand on allowable activities under the School-Based Mental Health Services Grant Program

As the Program Director for the School-Based Mental Health Services Program, I am reaching out to present an opportunity to fortify the support structure offered by the New Jersey Department of Education through the School-based Mental Health Services Grant program. This initiative underscores our commitment to enhancing mental health services within our schools, thereby fostering a supportive and resilient educational environment for our students.

In recognition of the evolving needs within our educational institutions, especially concerning mental health support, we are offering grantees the opportunity to request a modification to their existing grant agreement. This modification aims to allocate new funding and/or reallocate existing funding to expand upon approved activities and/or hire full-time staff to implement activities encompassed by the School-Based Mental Health Services Grant program. Allowance to hire full-time staff follows updated guidance provided by the United States Department of Education.

- Purpose and Intent:** The core objective of this solicitation is to provide your agency with the necessary resources, an additional \$60,000, to strengthen your school-based mental health services. New funding can be used to add dedicated full-time staff or expand upon activities already allowable per the parameters described in the existing NGO. The Department believes this step is crucial in addressing the pressing mental health needs of our student population.

The Department believes that a full-time staff member assigned specifically to assist the implementation of School-Based Mental Health Services Program can provide additional continuity for the remainder of the program as this staff member has increased likelihood of remaining with the district for the duration of the program.

2. **Guidance and Assistance:** For any inquiries or guidance regarding this opportunity, Jeannie Weaver, serves as the department's point of contact and is available to assist you. You may contact Jeannie at Jeannie.Weaver@doe.nj.gov
3. **Modification Criteria:** Eligible modifications under this solicitation are confined to programmatic and/or budgetary adjustments necessary for accommodating changes to the previously approved activities or program staffing. It is imperative that modifications adhere strictly to the scope defined herein.
4. **Submission Requirements:** All modification requests must be submitted through the Electronic Web-Enabled Grants (EWEG) system by June 3, 2024.
5. **Consequences of Non-Response or Declination:** It is important to note that failing to respond or declining this solicitation will impact your agency's ability to hire staff during Project Period 2 of the School-Based Mental Health Services Program. Consequently, this decision may reduce your district's capacity to meet the comprehensive needs of your students regarding mental health support. We strongly encourage you to consider this opportunity thoughtfully.

Action Required

Your prompt attention to this solicitation is requested. Should you decide to pursue this grant agreement modification, please initiate the process through the EWEG system.

We are eager to support your efforts in expanding and enhancing school-based mental health services. Together, we can make a significant difference in the lives of our students by ensuring they have access to the critical mental health support they need.

Thank you for your dedication to the well-being of New Jersey's students. We look forward to your partnership in this vital endeavor.

Sincerely,

Luiz Pereira
Director
Office of Student Support Services
New Jersey Department of Education