

**RFP#064-23**

**Contract No. 5770.ZAAS.1014**

DOUGLAS COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
FINANCE DEPARTMENT, PURCHASING DIVISION  
Solicitation Number: RFEI #064-23

Mental health First Aid Certification and Instructor Trainings

DOUGLAS COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
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## SECTION I: Background

### I.A. About the National Council for Mental Wellbeing

The National Council for Behavioral Health dba National Council for Mental Wellbeing (National Council) is a membership organization that drives policy and social change on behalf of more than 3,400 mental health and substance use treatment organizations and the more than 10 million children, adults and families they serve. We advocate for policies to ensure equitable access to high quality services. We build the capacity of mental health and substance use treatment organizations. And we promote greater understanding of mental wellbeing as a core component of comprehensive health and health care. Through our Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) program, we have trained more than 3 million people in the U.S. to identify, understand and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges.

### I.B. Introduction to Mental Health First Aid

MHFA is a public education program that introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health and substance use disorders, builds understanding of the importance of early intervention and reviews common resources. The course uses roleplaying and simulations to demonstrate how to offer initial help in a mental health or substance use crisis through a five-step action plan, with the goal of connecting people to appropriate professional, peer, social and self-help care. The program also teaches the common risk factors and warning signs of specific types of illnesses like anxiety, depression, substance use disorders, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

MHFA is proven to be effective. Peer-reviewed studies show that individuals trained in the program:

- Grow their knowledge of signs, symptoms, and risk factors of mental health and substance use challenges.
- Can identify multiple types of professional and self-help resources for individuals with mental health or substance use challenges.
- Have increased confidence and are more likely to help an individual in distress.
- Show increased mental wellness themselves.

A study conducted by Georgetown University showed that MHFA reduces the social distance created by negative attitudes and perceptions of individuals with mental illnesses. By helping reduce stigma, we help connect people to the support they need to live mentally healthy lives. More than 3 million Americans

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have been trained as Mental Health First Aiders by more than 15,000 instructors. Additionally, MHFA can foster skills for building resilience in employees both on the job and in their communities. In the next decade, we anticipate that MHFA will be as common as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

### Adult MHFA Certification

MHFA for Adults teaches people how to recognize signs of mental health or substance use challenges in adults ages 18 and older, how to offer and provide initial help and how to guide a person toward appropriate care if necessary. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, psychosis and addictions.

- Why MHFA?
  - Trainings help to address common mental health concerns encountered by adults
  - Reduces the stigma associated with mental health challenges
  - Teaches strategies for family members, friends and peers to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health or substance use challenges and offer support.
  - Offers self-help strategies for staying mentally well.
- Delivery Methods
  - In-person (2nd Edition) – Learners receive their training during a 7.5-hour, Instructor-led, in-person session.
  - Blended – Learners complete a 2-hour, self-paced online course, and participate in a 4.5- to 5.5-hour, Instructor-led training. This Instructor-led Training can be a video conference or an in-person class.

### Community Specific Curricula (CSC)

MHFA offers a range of comprehensive skills-based early-intervention courses for specific audiences. These community specific curricula (CSC) are tailored to meet the needs and cultural considerations unique to distinct populations. They can only be delivered by instructors in-person and cannot be delivered in a virtual format.

- Older Adults - Improve quality of life and learn how to assist and support older adults who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge by getting certified in an evidence-based, early intervention training program.
- Higher Education – An early-intervention course developed for students, professors, faculty and staff to teach them how to assist and support those in higher education settings who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge.
- Military, Veteran’s and Their Families – This training specifically addresses the relevance of mental health to military culture, information on risk factors such as mental and physical trauma faced by many service members and their families, how to break down stigma and how to reach out to those who suffer in silence and are reluctant to seek help.
- Rural Communities – In rural communities, there are significant challenges in accessing mental health care. MHFA for Rural Communities helps adults acknowledge and begin to address those disparities, as well as to identify the many unique strengths that come from living in a community of supportive neighbors, friends and families.

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- Public Safety – This evidence-based training promotes open dialogue, reduces stigma and encourages officers to seek support when needed. Offering MHFA for Public Safety can help create a healthier, more resilient and productive department.
- Fire/EMS – An early-intervention course developed for firefighters and EMS personnel to teach them how to assist and support a peer or someone in the field who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge.
- Corrections Professionals – This course equips staff with the knowledge and skills to identify, understand and respond to mental health and substance use challenges in their peers. By providing the necessary support and resources, correctional facilities can help staff members cope with the challenges they face, reduce burnout and promote a positive work environment that ultimately benefits both staff and the individuals they serve.

### I.C. Tenets of Fidelity (Quality Control)

The MHFA USA program uses the term ‘fidelity’ to describe the core elements of the original MHFA kept intact in its adaptation for American cultures. The elements outlined below are expected to be honored by those providing the program throughout the United States.

**Presentation.** The course is to be facilitated by one or two certified instructors. Facilitators should present to a group size which they are comfortable managing, and which includes enough participants to foster group discussion. The recommended course size is 15-25 participants, although instructors do have flexibility based on their experience to determine a course size which fits the above criteria and works for their needs.

**Delivery.** The MHFA USA curricula are specifically designed to appeal to adult learners. The teaching notes offer a variety of suggestions for discussion topics, exercises, and other activities designed to keep participants attentive and actively engaged in the course. This is specifically designed so the pace of the course changes on a regular basis and requires participants to be involved in the content. As such, instructors not only focus on keeping the content and discussions moving forward at appropriate intervals, but also ensure that all participants are in an environment where they can be involved in discussion.

MHFA is delivered in three different formats at this time: in-person, a blended learning format including time spent online in a learning management system and in-person, or fully virtually including time spent online with the instructor-led portion of the course delivered through a virtual platform such as Zoom.

**Content.** The curriculum is divided into seven sessions covering nine topic areas. While the program is not scripted, to allow for flexibility of discussion, instructors are expected to present all non-optional slides, exercises and program videos in the order which they are presented in the teaching notes. Additional content added for local purposes is allowed but should be limited to helpful resources and minimal tailoring for audiences in exercises. Modifications or supplements to the curriculum slides are not permitted.

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*Spirit.* Mental Health and substance use issues can often be viewed as somber, serious or ‘heavy’ topics. The program itself is designed to give appropriate weight to the severity of certain mental health and substance use disorders while still emphasizing hope for recovery and presenting the material in a relaxed, comfortable environment for course participants. In addition, instructors reinforce the boundaries of the first aider role as helper in connecting others to professional or other support throughout the course content.

*Evaluation.* Consistent with the National Council’s Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP), we develop and administer participant evaluations that align with learning objectives. These evaluations seek both quantitative and qualitative feedback and are a standard component to the MHFA certification training. The QASP will outline performance standards, surveillance methods and acceptable quality levels described for each task.

## SECTION II. Scope of Work

### II.A. Implement Adult Mental Health First Aid Instructor Certification Training

Instructors are on the frontlines of the program and train people in their communities in MHFA. Only certified Instructors can teach the MHFA course to the public. They must provide MHFA participant manuals to all those who attend the course. Certified Adult and Youth Instructors are required to teach the course at least three times per year, to maintain their credentials.

Instructors also create, market and coordinate their classes while supporting their learners along the way. Instructors teach from a national curriculum, tailor discussions to their participants and compile a list of local resources for help.

The primary role of Instructors is to teach the MHFA course with fidelity to the core program model and key messages, including fidelity to systems and course reporting required by MHFA USA. Each Instructor has a set of materials to help guide them through course facilitation. Instructors typically team up with another certified Instructor to teach the course but may also choose to teach on their own. Presenting a course involves much more than just showing up and teaching it. Instructors frequently have organizational support to help them with other tasks related to the program, such as:

- Strategic planning (e.g., creating business plans, forming community partnerships, outreach)
- Setting a course schedule
- Setting and collecting course fees
- Marketing and media outreach
- Course creation and registration of attendees
- Event planning (e.g., purchasing materials, catering, logistics)
- Seeking grants
- Evaluation and analysis of program’s success
- Reporting course to MHFA USA

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The National Council is the sole entity providing MHFA Instructor trainings in the United States and U.S. territories with the exception of Maryland and Missouri. A copy of our sole source letter has been included in this proposal.

### Research and Evidence Based

Over the past decade, there has been a growing body of research on the efficacy of MHFA in various populations across the United States. Forty-five US-based peer-reviewed studies published over the past 10 years show major findings that individuals trained in the program have:

- Increased mental health literacy, including knowledge of signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental health and substance use challenges and ability to identify appropriate types of professional and self-help resources for individuals with a mental health or substance use challenge.
- Increased confidence and self-efficacy and likelihood to help an individual in distress.
- Reduced stigma and increased empathy toward individuals with mental health challenges.
- Continued use of MHFA skills after training.
- Increased likelihood to seek therapy or mental health care for themselves.

## II.B. Deliver Adult MHFA Trainings

The National Council will deliver direct delivery MHFA virtual and in-person training sessions for Douglas County community audiences, as needed. The National Council will also collaborate with our member organization, the Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council (CBHC) to deliver Adult MHFA curricular in local communities.

*Virtual.* The National Council will provide a web-based virtual delivery platform that is accessible through a variety of web browsers. The platform is compatible with Google Chrome, Apple Safari, Microsoft Edge, and Firefox.

We will provide online registration for attendees and maintain a list of training registrants. Registration will open at a minimum of 14 business days before the scheduled delivery date; however, we recognize that a shorter lead time may be requested by Douglas County.

We will provide outreach and marketing materials to assist Douglas County with promoting training to the community. These materials include instructor bios, course descriptions and any recognizable graphics or logos identified with the curriculum no later than 14 business days prior to the scheduled training date.

*In-Person.* The National Council will provide in-person, direct, on-site/off-site MHFA training sessions as needed.

We will provide online registration for attendees and maintain a list of training registrants. Registration shall open at a minimum of 14 business days before the scheduled delivery date; however, a shorter lead time may be needed and we will work with Douglas County to adjust accordingly. The National Council

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will respond to registrant inquiries within one business day. All training content and course materials will be provided in accordance with the training plan.

The National Council will provide outreach and marketing materials to assist Douglas County with promoting training to the community. These materials include instructor bios, course descriptions and any recognizable graphics or logos identified with the curriculum no later than 14 business days prior to the scheduled training date.

We will issue a "Certificate of Completion" to each attendee completing the training and provide a list of Certificates issued within 5 business days from completed training.

### Course Content

Table 1. 5.5-hour Blended/Virtual Adult MHFA Course
Topic or Activity
<b>SEGMENT 1</b>
Introductions
Segment Introduction: Welcome to Mental Health First Aid
Course Agenda and Learning Objectives
Ice Breaker
Course Materials
Learning Agreement
Parking Lot
<b>SEGMENT 2</b>
Segment Introduction: MHFA Self-paced Introduction Recap
Recap Activity: Part 1
Recap Activity: Part 2
Recap Activity: Part 3
<b>SEGMENT 3</b>
Segment Introduction: Role of the Mental Health First Aider and Self-Care
MHFA Action Plan (ALGEE)
A: Assess
TA: Approach & Assist
L: Listening Nonjudgmentally
G: Give Reassurance & Information - Reflection
E1: Encourage Appropriate Professional Help
E2: Encourage Self-Help & Other Support Strategies
Knowledge Check



<b>SEGMENT 4</b>
Segment Intro: MHFA for Early Signs & Symptoms
Importance of Early Intervention
Recognizing Early Signs & Symptoms
Boxing <b>Video</b> : Part 1
Scenario 1 ( <i>breakouts</i> )
Knowledge Check
<b>SEGMENT 5</b>
Segment Intro: MHFA for Worsening Signs & Symptoms
Importance of Early Intervention
Recognizing Worsening Signs & Symptoms
Boxing <b>Video</b> : Part 2
Scenario 2 ( <i>breakouts</i> )
Knowledge Check
<b>SEGMENT 6</b>
Segment Intro: MHFA for Crisis Situations
What is a Crisis?
Crisis Situations: Safety, Your Role, De-escalation Strategies
Types of Crisis Situations
Panic Attacks, <b>Video</b> : "The New Job"
Aggressive Behaviors
Traumatic Events
Non-Suicidal Self-Injury
Medical Emergencies
Suicidal Thoughts & Behaviors, <b>Video</b> : "Shining a Light"
Substance Use Crisis (reference Boxing video recovery position)
Severe Psychosis States, <b>Video</b> : "Neighbors"
Scenario 3: Crisis Signs & Symptoms ( <i>breakouts</i> )
Knowledge Check
<b>SEGMENT 7</b>
Segment Intro: Self-care for the Mental Health First Aider
Privacy
Anonymizing a Situation
Self-Care for Adults

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Self-Care Action Plan: Revisit
Knowledge Check
Reflection
Congratulations & Call to Action
<b>TOTAL</b>

## II.C. Pricing Table

Below are fixed prices for providing private hosted instructor training, Adult/Youth MHFA, Military, Veterans and Families, Older Adult and Higher Education Community Courses.

Description	Price Per Training (in-Person - 25 learners)	Price Per Training (Virtual - 25 learners)	# in-Person	# Virtual	Total
Adult/Youth MHFA	\$5,500	\$4,500	15	5	<b>\$105,000</b>
Higher Education CSC	\$5,750	\$4,500	9	8	<b>\$87,750</b>
Older Adult CSC	\$5,750	\$4,500	6	6	<b>\$61,500</b>
Rural Communities Module	\$5,750	\$4,500	1	1	<b>\$10,250</b>
Military, Veterans and Families	\$5,750	4500	TBD	TBD	<b>TBD</b>
Douglas County Additional TBD based on agency interest	\$5,500	4500	5	9	<b>\$68,000</b>
Hosted Instructor Trainings (up to 16 learners)	\$24,500	\$24,500	1		<b>\$24,500</b>
			<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$357,000</b>

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## APPENDIX I. Sole Source Letter



December 27, 2023

Douglas County Government Health  
100 Third Street, Suite 130  
Castle Rock, CO 80104

To Whom it May Concern:

This letter confirms that the National Council for Mental Wellbeing is the sole entity providing Mental Health First Aid Instructor Trainings in the United States and U.S. territories with the exception of Maryland and Missouri.

Should you need additional information, please contact our Mental Health First Aid team at [MHFAatwork@thenationalcouncil.org](mailto:MHFAatwork@thenationalcouncil.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles Ingolia".

Charles Ingolia, MSW – President and CEO