



EngageWell IPA'S FCC Connected Care Pilot Program: The "Care Your Way" Initiative

Request for Qualifications: IT Vendors for Network Equipment / Broadband Infrastructure

Background

EngageWell Independent Practice Association (IPA) is a start-up entity launched in 2016 to enable not-for-profit, community-based organizations an opportunity to participate in New York State Medicaid's transition to value-based payment (VBP) arrangements with health care payers interested in controlling rising healthcare costs (Medicaid Managed Care organizations, medical IPAs, hospitals and others). EngageWell, in partnership with its 16 participating provider organizations, is seeking to increase access to services that advance the dignity and well-being of marginalized populations, particularly those with chronic medical conditions and behavioral health (BH) issues, including mental health and substance use disorders. Together, EngageWell and its providers are developing innovative interventions to address complex behavioral, medical and long-term care needs that drive a large volume of high-cost Medicaid services in all five boroughs of New York City.

With a decades-long history of serving people with HIV/AIDS, EngageWell providers understand the devastating impact emerging infectious diseases can have on low-income communities. However, no one was ready for the unprecedented impact COVID-19 had on NYC's health and safety-net systems. EngageWell providers quickly realized that their clients may experience higher rates of COVID-19 infection/death than the general population due to higher rates of poverty, homelessness, and pre-existing chronic health issues. They are especially concerned for clients with BH issues because social distancing and isolation can trigger mental health symptoms and/or substance use relapse.

In response to COVID-19, EngageWell's service providers have transitioned to provide both in-person and remote/virtual services to accommodate client needs and maintain a high level of safety for staff and clients. This change has introduced a variety of new challenges for community-based organizations and the clients they serve, such as ensuring staff and clients have reliable access to proper hardware and software, adopting new communication strategies, and supporting staff through remote administrative and clinical supervision. During these unprecedented times, EngageWell is seeking ways to ensure staff and clients remain healthy, informed, and protected, while establishing new policies/procedures that help us prepare for future COVID-19 outbreaks and other city-wide emergencies. EngageWell also seeks to create a future where telehealth increases client access to services, improves health outcomes, and decreases health disparities among marginalized populations.

Scope of Project

EngageWell was recently awarded Connected Care Pilot Program funds from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to support the development of connected care services, defined as telehealth, remote patient monitoring technology, and access to broadband internet service. Over the next three years, EngageWell, with the help of various stakeholders, will use FCC funds to invest in and launch state-of-the-art connected care services that provides clients and staff virtual access to clinical and non-clinical services across the network. Currently, EngageWell has 33 health care provider (HCP) in its consortium. Please see a chart at the bottom of this document for the full HCP list. In the end, EngageWell hopes to demonstrate the role connected care services have on controlling healthcare costs and improving patient and provider satisfaction. When complete, EngageWell's suite of face-to-face and virtual health and social services will revolutionize our network's system of care, ensuring expedient and equitable access to life-saving care for some of NYC's most marginalized communities.

EngageWell's "Care Your Way" Initiative

The EngageWell IPA will utilize the Connected Care Pilot Program funds to support its "Care Your Way" Initiative, a network-wide intervention and hybrid care delivery model that provides Medicaid beneficiaries and other low-income patients diagnosed with chronic medical and behavioral health conditions a choice in how and where they receive their care. The IPA network has dozens of brick-and-mortar community-based clinics and programs, and the "Care Your Way" Initiative will augment face-to-face, outpatient care with virtual, connected care services via telehealth visits, store-and-forward technology, and remote patient monitoring tools. Specifically, clients who enroll in the "Care Your Way" pilot program will be eligible to receive wireless internet access free of cost to support their engagement in outpatient medical and behavioral health care and virtual services and reduce ER visits, urgent care, and hospitalizations. Clients who enroll in the "Care Your Way" initiative will also be able to address common social barriers to medical care and behavioral health treatment, including food insecurity and financial hardship, all offered through state-of-the-art, connected care technology.

Request for Proposals

EngageWell IPA is soliciting proposals from qualified **Vendors and Data/IT Company** to help support non-profit health and human service organizations address broadband infrastructure needs to support delivery of synchronous telehealth video visits with their members. Agencies may require support with assessing broadband infrastructure needs, sourcing hardware and software, and installing and maintaining their broadband network.

The FCC defines Network Equipment as follows: *Certain network equipment necessary to make newly acquired or upgraded Internet service for the Health Care Provider/Patient for the Pilot Program functional (e.g., routers) or necessary to manage, control, or operate a supported broadband service.*

Examples of allowable equipment/services:

- Equipment that terminates at a carrier's or other provider's transmission facility and any router/switch that is directly connected to either the facility or the terminating equipment.

- Network equipment that helps manage, control, or operate a supported broadband service (consortia applicants only)
- Servers used exclusively for eligible broadband services
- Routers
- Switches
- Installation, Activation, and Initial Configuration (including implementation and integration costs necessary to integrate eligible information services with existing systems).
- Fees and charges that are a necessary component of an eligible service, including Shipping charges, Taxes, surcharges, and other reasonable charges incurred in obtaining an eligible product or service.

Vendor Requirements

The hired vendor will be asked to provide key technical and functional requirements, described below.

- The company/vendor must have experience implementing telehealth solutions and working with healthcare providers that follow strict HIPAA-compliant and 42 CFR Part 2 privacy and security regulations.
- The company/vendor must be able to provide on-site support to approximately ten (10) medium-sized healthcare providers located within the greater New York City metropolitan area.
- The company/vendor must be willing to work with different agency IT teams to implement a customized broadband infrastructure plan for each site that considers:
 - Differing number of employees working on-site and remotely
 - Differing number of clients connecting to services virtually
 - Differing service provider types (i.e. group counseling telehealth sessions, medical services)
 - Sites with diverse care management and EHR systems and varying degrees of modern technology and infrastructure
 - Flexible and scalable infrastructure so that agencies can scale as needed over time without having to create new infrastructure
 - Creation of real time low latency for video telehealth connections

Proposal/Qualifications Format

Please limit responses to five (5), single-spaced pages. In your response to this RFP, please address the following topics/questions:

Section I: Candidate Profile and Professional Experience

- a) Identify key staff/account executive(s) to lead the project, including a summary of experience and relevant qualifications.
- b) Provide an overview of your company, including number of years in business; your ownership structure; special populations served; and relevant certifications held.

- c) Provide three (3) references for current clients that provide healthcare services and receive broadband infrastructure support. Ideal references include healthcare providers in New York City that you have helped with broadband infrastructure development and maintenance.

Section II: Case Study & Technical/Functional Capabilities and Services

Please read the following case study and respond to the questions that follow:

Case Study
ABC Agency provides outpatient counseling services to clients with mental illness and substance use disorders. They recently implemented a new telehealth platform to conduct remote counseling services with clients via synchronous video visits and quickly realize that video visits are often failing. Providers and patients have reported dissatisfaction with quality of the visits, stating that video is pixelated, audio is 'choppy' and not in sync with video, and visits are dropping frequently. The telehealth vendor believes the agency's broadband infrastructure may require an update. You are brought in to help diagnosis the problem(s), make recommendations, and help source any needed hardware or software.

Please answer the following questions:

1. Provide an overview of your approach to 'diagnosing' internet connectivity issues and the upgrade requirements of a broadband network. Please include steps you take to ensure that a site's equipment is "scalable" over time, with client and provider growth.
2. Discuss how you source hardware and software to create broadband infrastructure that is appropriate to the needs of the customer site. If you have partners you regularly work with to source hardware/software, please include their names/website/contact info.
3. Describe the installation and maintenance services you provide relating to broadband infrastructure.
4. Provide examples of how you prepare a customer's IT team to handle ongoing maintenance of infrastructure after installation.
5. Given this is a 3-year project, describe how you support customers after broadband systems/equipment are installed.
6. Describe your proposed approach/methodology in achieving the project scope over the first 12 months. Include a high-level, project workplan and timeline, including role/responsibilities of key implementation team members for the project.
7. Describe any Year 2 and Year 3 network/equipment performance management procedures required.

Section III: Fees

Please complete the chart below with estimated costs for each category of network equipment or software. (We understand this is not an exhaustive list, but these items are common to any modern broadband network). Assume that the health care provider site has approximately 150 staff, 25 of whom will be engaging in regular synchronous video visits with patients.

Eligible Broadband Equipment	Year 1 Estimated Cost	Year 2 Estimated Cost	Year 3 Estimated Cost
ISP Installation & Activation (including routers) (Year 1)		n/a	n/a
<i>ISP Service/Maintenance Fee (Year 2 & 3)</i>	n/a		
Firewall Installation (Year 1)		n/a	n/a
<i>Security Subscription Fees (Year 2 & 3)</i>	n/a		
Distribution Switches Installation (Year 1)		n/a	n/a
<i>Service & Update Fees (Year 2 & 3)</i>	n/a		

Non-profit or 501(c)3 discounts

All health care providers participating in this Connected Care Pilot Program are non-profit, 501(c)3 entities. Please confirm if you offer discount prices for such entities.

Additional Fees

Please describe any additional **one-time or recurring fees the consortium should be aware of**, including but not limited to:

- Assessment/diagnostic fees to measure broadband needs;
- Creation of a customized broadband infrastructure plan, if applicable;
- Any applicable staff training fees;
- Ongoing technical assistance or support service fees post-installation;
- Year 2 and Year 3 re-assessment and/or hardware/software maintenance costs.

Proposal Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated by a committee of EngageWell's participating health care providers based on the following factors:

Evaluation Metric	Description	Weight
Prior experience, including past performance	Includes the Proposer's experience and history providing the requested scope of work for small and medium NYC-based, non-profit health and human service organizations or networks/organizations of diverse providers like EngageWell.	10%
Technical Support	Includes Proposer's ability to clearly outline their approach to the technical and functional requirements per Section II.	20%
Project Management Plan	Includes Proposer's implementation methodology and Project team for a phased implementation.	20%
Cost	Includes the total cost to EngageWell consortium for the scope of work outlined in this RFP and ability to provide detailed estimates for network equipment (hardware and software).	50%

Vendor Selection Process

All RFPs will be posted publicly for 28 days following FCC approval. EngageWell anticipates selecting a vendor by the end of Sept 2022. Selected vendor costs will be included in EngageWell's final budget submission to the FCC Connected Care Pilot Program, expected submission in September 2022. FCC is expected to make Award Commitments in Fall 2022; EngageWell anticipates executing a contract with all selected vendors on or before 9/30/2022.

Executed Service Agreements will request 3-year contract terms, October 2022-September 2025.

EngageWell Contact

Please submit proposals the USAC website. You can reach out to Christopher Joseph, Executive Director, christopher@engagewellipa.com, with specific questions to this RFP. Due to high-volume of questions, please be patient for a response.

EngageWell's FCC-Approved Health Care Provider Sites (HCPs)

Approved HCP	HCP Identifier	Approved HCP	HCP Identifier
Acacia – La Casa De Salud Health Center	99558	BOOM!Health	82713
Acacia – Ramon Velez Health Center	110116	Diaspora Health Home	109111
Acacia – La Casa de Salud D&TC (966 Prospect Ave)	110112	FSNNY Broadway	83974
ACQC 161st Street	85172	FSNNY Brownsville	83966
ACQC Central Ave	85179	FSNNY Bushwick	83954
ACQC Jamaica Ave	85187	FSNNY St Albans	83961
ACQC Woodside Ave	85183	GMHC	82339
Alliance CASA	82319	Harlem United SEP Lenox	82987
Alliance Keith Haring	83531	Harlem United W 124	82762
Alliance LES	83558	Harlem United W 133	82787
Alliance Midtown	83566	Housing Works 2640 Pitkin	83261
Alliance Pelham	83582	Housing Works 57 Willoughby + SEP	83264
Argus 156 Street/Melrose	82454	Housing Works E 9th Street	83263
Argus 160 Street	84145	Housing Works W 37th Street	83266
Argus ARU W 145th Street	83259	NADAP Health Home	106195
BAC Broadway	82565	NYHRE	82492
BAC Church Ave	82895	SACHR	82169
Bailey House	82316	WHCP	82531