

Consultant Opportunity with Vital Strategies

Public Health Surveillance of Youth Mental Health and Digital Media Use in the United States

Background

Vital Strategies is an international public health organization. Its programs strengthen public health systems and address the world's leading causes of illness, injury, and death. Vital Strategies currently works in 80 countries, supporting data-driven decision-making in government, advancing evidence-based public health policies, and mounting strategic communication campaigns. Vital Strategies' priorities are driven by the greatest potential to improve and save lives. They include non-communicable disease prevention; injury prevention; and environmental health. Our work in the United States includes drug overdose prevention in multiple states and NCD and injury prevention in several cities. Please visit our website at www.vitalstrategies.org to find out more about our work.

Purpose and Scope of the Consultancy

Vital Strategies is conducting an activity to review and provide recommendations on strengthening public health surveillance systems on youth mental health and its intersections with digital media use. We are seeking competitive proposals from qualified independent contractors to conduct a series of activities in support of the project. The project will involve desk reviews and structured interviews and engagement of subject matter experts and advisors to ensure findings are grounded in real-world use cases and needs.

Specific deliverables are:

- **Deliverable 1:** Landscape review of existing data collection activities (surveillance, research, other such activities) on youth mental health and on digital media use at national, state, and local levels.
- **Deliverable 2:** Establish a network of experts and advisors by identifying and recruiting up to 15 subject matter experts spanning public health surveillance, youth mental health, digital media, research and data science to participate in 1:1 and remote and group meetings to help steer the project and its findings.
- **Deliverable 3:** Compilation of key indicators, defining specific sets of indicators spanning mental health outcomes, digital media use, and cross-cutting/intersectional indicators to guide current and future surveillance efforts.
- **Deliverable 4:** Develop a surveillance-oriented framework linking digital media use and mental health.
- **Deliverable 5:** Generation of recommendations on best practices for relevant surveillance system strengthening, translating findings from deliverables 1 -4 into actionable recommendations: drafting recommendations, prioritizing recommendations based on feasibility and impact, circulating draft recommendations amongst subject matter experts and incorporating feedback, and developing an implementation roadmap.
- **Deliverable 6:** Draft report synthesizing findings and recommendations.

Assignment

This is a consultant position with an anticipated level of effort of up to 45 days over a 6-month period, beginning in September 2026 through March 2027 with a fixed price, deliverables-based payment structure.

Qualifications and experience

It is expected that the consultant will have the following qualifications and experience:

- Post-graduate degree in a relevant field (public health, epidemiology, mental health, etc.) from a recognized university
- Minimum of 5 years of relevant work experience preferred.
- Proficiency and fluency in English, written and oral
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office suite (MS word, Excel, Outlook)
- Familiarity with public health surveillance systems, including CDC guidance for surveillance system evaluation
- Understanding and knowledge of digital media platforms and content
- Experience with qualitative research methods;

Expressions of Interest

Interested persons should submit a cover letter, including the proposed rate, and CV to youthhealthsurveillance@vitalstrategies.org by **September 30, 2026**. The cover letter should describe your interest and relevant expertise and experience.