

United Way of Monmouth & Ocean County
On Behalf of
Monmouth County Homeless System Collaborative
Request for Proposals

Request for Proposals to Serve as the Monmouth County Homeless System Collaborative
Homeless Service System Housing Navigator Agency

Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Proposals is to secure an organization to serve as the Housing Navigator Agency for the Monmouth County Homeless System Collaborative (HSC).

Background

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has established an initiative to end homelessness in the United States, with an established priority for persons experiencing chronic homelessness and other vulnerable persons. As part of this initiative, HUD implemented the Continuum of Care under the Homeless Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009 (HEARTH Act). The mission of the Monmouth HSC is to ensure that every resident of Monmouth County who experiences homelessness or is at imminent risk of homelessness will have access to community and system resources to resolve the immediate housing crisis and facilitate the transition from homelessness to stability in permanent, affordable and safe housing. To facilitate this mission, the HSC has recently reorganized its homeless system into a “Housing First” single point of entry model. This model will serve to prioritize households with the greatest need and barriers to housing.

The United Way of Monmouth and Ocean, on behalf of the Monmouth County Homeless System Collaborative, seeks proposals from qualified housing and service providers to serve as the Housing Navigator Agency for the community’s newly reorganized Homeless Service System. Monmouth County’s Homeless Service System exists to serve those who are currently, or at risk of becoming, homeless and seeking assistance. This system will feature central points of entry and exit from, the homeless service system. The Monmouth County Division of Social Services, as the (current) Centralized Intake Agency, acts as the point of entry from which clients will be referred to the Housing Navigator Agency and other providers. The Housing Navigator Agency’s role will be to assist households in exiting the system by obtaining stable permanent housing. In order to accomplish this, the Housing Navigator Agency shall:

- Maintain a listing of affordable housing opportunities in Monmouth County
- Manage a prioritized waiting list of clients seeking housing

- Provide appropriate services to walk clients seeking assistance through the process of obtaining permanent housing

Permanent housing can take many forms, including supportive housing, rapid re-housing and affordable housing.

The Continuum has set aside \$142,595 of funding for the Housing Placement Agency to cover approved expenses, including staff, transportation, and administrative costs. All funds awarded are subject to the availability of federal appropriations from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In addition, a portion of funds must be used to cover a HMIS/data entry position that will serve as the liaison to the Monmouth County Division of Social Services, and ensure that client data is entered into HMIS. This person will also be responsible for outreach, to ensure clients that are less engaged with HSC programs (such as the unsheltered population) are not overlooked by the system.

The funds will be awarded for one year followed by a one year renewable option. The renewable option will be executed based on review by the Collaborative.

Project Goals and Target Audience

The primary goal of the Monmouth County Housing Placement Agency is to provide seamless housing placement and stabilization services for individuals and families assessed with barriers to housing; providing a fluid set of services that follows the individual or family from their current housing or lack of housing situation, through the placement process, into available housing in Monmouth County, New Jersey.

The Housing Placement Agency shall provide housing search and placement services to individuals and families referred through the Centralized Intake Agency. The target population will have high service needs and barriers to housing. While particular needs and barriers will differ for each client, the typical needs/barriers may include: Fear of living independently, feeling unprepared to live independently, lack of interpersonal skills which may have resulted in miscommunication and misunderstandings with third parties, e.g. former landlords, inability to locate suitable housing (particularly for family members with a disabling medical condition), mental health issues, substance abuse issues, disabling medical issues, criminal background.

Scope of Services

The key to this “Point of Exit” model will be the continued presence of familiar Housing Support Staff throughout the placement and stabilization process. The three components will be: 1) engagement/assessment, 2) placement into housing and 3) stabilization services.

1. Client Engagement/Assessment:

- The selected contractor will complete a prioritization assessment and maintain a Countywide waiting list of homeless households seeking assistance based on the locally approved prioritization process;
- The selected contractor will assess clients for housing and housing-related care needs, and work with the centralized intake agency and sheltering programs to assess the individuals' and families' barriers to securing housing;
- The selected contractor will assist homeless households in developing housing placement plans that are specific to the household needs and works to connect them to housing as quickly as possible.

2. Client Placement Process:

- The selected contract will develop and maintain a portfolio of appropriate housing options throughout Monmouth County for referral and placement of assessed households. The housing portfolio must include a variety of housing options in order to provide for individual household needs;
- The selected contractor will work with appropriate Monmouth County Housing Agencies to streamline the referral and placement process, which will include the requirement to secure Memorandums of Agreement (MOU);
- The selected contractor's focus is to prepare the client for, and assist them through the housing search and selection process. Housing Navigator Agency staff will assist households in identifying and securing permanent housing through the provision of services such as completion of housing applications, assistance gathering required documentation, landlord negotiation, and other necessary steps;
- The selected contractor will work with households, and sheltering agencies as applicable, to coordinate the move in process once housing has been secured.

3. Stabilization Services Once Client is Placed into Housing:

- The selected contractor will develop interim stabilization plans with all households placed in housing based on household needs. The stabilization plans will identify the areas of concern related to housing stabilization with the goal of providing support for a 30 day period;
- Once in housing, the selected contractor will connect households with community based support services related to housing stabilization according to household needs identified in the housing stabilization plan;
- The selected contractor shall transition households to community based and/or housing based services/case management using a "warm hand-off" approach. Follow-up of all households placed must be completed 30-days after placement.

Applicant Qualifications

- Eligible applicants are nonprofit organizations with proven experience serving homeless populations in case management and housing search services.
- Applicants should have an awareness of existing resources and services within the HSC region
- The Housing Placement Agency should have several means of accessing services for those households that are referred through the Centralized Intake Agency. The Housing Placement Agency should be accessible by phone and through office locations located throughout the County.
- The selected agency must be willing to work in partnership with the HSC, the Division of Social Services, and sheltering Agencies to ensure the success of the Homeless Service System.
- The selected agency must be willing to work with chronically homeless and similar populations with high service needs and barriers to housing.
- The selected agency should be familiar with various permanent housing strategies, including rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, and rental assistance.
- The selected agency should incorporate Housing First principles and other evidence-based practices
- The selected agency must be a licensed user of HMIS or engaged in the process of becoming a licensed HMIS user.
- The selected agency must enter data into HMIS and ensure client privacy is maintained.

Application Instructions

Please provide the following information as part of your proposal:

1. Experience
 - Number of years of experience in providing services comparable to those required by this RFP
 - Narrative demonstrating your experience with clients and projects similar in size, scope and complexity
2. Need
 - Describe the anticipated population to be served.
 - Identify anticipated service needs related to housing stabilization.
3. Scope of Services
 - Provide an estimate of the number of households to be served at a point-in-time and within a 12-month timeframe
 - Narrative addressing the scope of the project, demonstrating how you will fulfill the requirements identified in the scope of services.
 - Describe any additional services (if any) you will provide to augment the scope and success of the program

- Describe how you will operationalize a Housing First philosophy in program implementation
 - If applicable, identify any other evidence based practices you will employ: describe the practice, discuss how it will be implemented in your program design, and explain how the practice will enhance service provision/program implementation
4. Staffing/Capacity
- Describe anticipated staffing at full capacity providing an organizational chart and basic job descriptions which include responsibilities and qualifications.
 - Discuss your capacity to use HMIS and safeguards to be put in place (or currently in place) to protect client data/privacy
 - Describe any relevant professional memberships, certifications, and/or trainings completed by your agency/staff
5. Community Collaboration
- Describe current partnerships/collaborations with relevant community partners. Identify specific partners and describe the type of partnership in place, how they are relevant to the program, and the specific ways in which you work with them.
 - Provide support letters from all partners identified describing the type of partnership and how they currently work with your agency and/or how they will work with this program.
 - Discuss your current level (or proposed level) of participation in the Monmouth HSC planning process.
6. Implementation Timeline
- Describe the implementation timeline from contract signing date to full program implementation. Please include the following:
 - Staffing (identifying and/or hiring staff for program. If staffing is phased in please describe your phase-in plan)
 - Training (identify anticipated training needs and timeframe for completion according to anticipated staffing plan)
 - Service provision (according to the scope of services described in your proposal, identify the timeframe when each service will become available)
7. Budget
- Please complete the attached budget based on the full cost of project implementation.
 - Include a budget narrative which describes the staffing & rates for each identified line item and briefly describes the activities/costs to be covered
 - Indicate the matching and leveraging resources secured for the project. Please include letters of commitment for every match or leverage resource identified.

Application Deadline: All applications must be submitted by close of business on November 9, 2016

Technical Assistance

Applicants must attend a mandatory Bidders Conference on October 18th at 2:00 at the Monmouth County Human Services Building
3000 Kozloski Road
Freehold, NJ 07728
First Floor Conference Room

Submission: Submit eight (8) copies of the application and one set of attachments to:
The United Way of Monmouth & Ocean Counties
1415 Wyckoff Road
Wall Township, NJ 07727

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on a 120 point scale. Evaluation criteria will include the following:

- Agency qualifications and experience – 30 points
- Understanding of need – 10 points
- Scope of Services – 15 points
- Staffing & Capacity – 25 points
- Community Collaboration – 15 points
- Implementation Timeline – 10 points
- Budget – 15 points

Contact

If you have questions, please submit them in writing to:

Kathy Weir
Monmouth County Department of Human Services
Kathleen.Weir@co.monmouth.nj.us

or

Taiisa Kelly
Monarch Housing Associates
Tkelly@monarchhousing.org