

UNITY of Greater New Orleans
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS #14-3
Permanent Supportive Housing for Chronically Homeless
Rental Assistance and Case Management Project
September 26, 2014

UNITY of Greater New Orleans, the lead agency managing the homeless Continuum of Care for New Orleans and Jefferson Parish, is seeking proposals for two nonprofit organizations to provide case management services and tenant-based rental assistance to chronically homeless persons residing in Orleans and Jefferson Parish.

It is anticipated that a total of \$2,400,000 will be available for this project, if funding is provided by HUD in the upcoming national CoC competition. If awarded by HUD through the competition, this Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Project would fund three or four agencies to serve as project sponsors with a grant of approximately \$500,000-\$1,000,000 each for a one-year period expected to begin in the Summer or Fall of 2015. At least two applicants will be selected which have the ability to bill Medicaid or other health care systems for PSH services through 1915i, FQHC or another method. At least one applicant may be selected which does not currently bill Medicaid for PSH services but can demonstrate the capacity to become, and commits to becoming, a Medicaid PSH provider within two years.

It is anticipated that this grant would be renewed annually for the project sponsor assuming that it is in good standing with UNITY regarding program and fiscal compliance. The persons eligible to be served in this PSH project are chronically homeless individuals/families who are in need of ongoing supportive services in order to become and remain stably housed. Clients will be referred to the program through the Coordinated Assessment System which prioritizes clients for placement into the program.

Nonprofit or governmental agencies are eligible to apply; agencies that are currently members of the UNITY Service Providers and Professionals Association as well as those agencies not currently receiving funds through the CoC are equally encouraged to apply.

Threshold criteria:

- Non-profit 501(c)3 Organization or Government Agency
- Applicant must provide 25% match for services, administrative costs and rental assistance.
- Applicant must provide 200% leveraging.

-----**PROPOSALS ARE DUE BY OCTOBER 13, 2014 BY NOON**-----

Applications must be emailed by noon, Monday, October 13 to proposals@unitygno.org. Agencies will be notified by October 17 whether they were selected as a project sponsor for the HUD application. Notification of funding by HUD is expected in the Spring of 2015. Anticipated project start date is Summer or Fall 2015.

-----BACKGROUND-----

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is affordable and permanent rental housing linked to supportive services designed to enable a homeless person to become and remain stably housed. National studies show that PSH is a cost-effective solution to chronic homelessness and that it can successfully house and stabilize vulnerable persons living on the street who previously often were believed to be beyond help. UNITY expects the selected project sponsor to follow “Housing First” principles and to persevere in providing housing and services to each client despite the difficulties of doing so.

The agency selected as project sponsor must:

- Provide ongoing leasing assistance and case management services to 40 or 80 chronically homeless individuals or families in apartments found in the private rental market.
- Accept chronically homeless persons/families referred from the UNITY Coordinated Assessment System which prioritizes homeless persons eligible for PSH based on their acuity and length of time homeless. All participants for this project would be referred by the Coordinated Assessment System.
- Be willing to find housing for participants in either Orleans or Jefferson Parish depending on the participant’s preference and the availability of rental units. Rent amounts for the housing units may not exceed the current area Fair Market Rents.
- Be willing to “front rents” for a period not expected to exceed 6 weeks until reimbursement is received from UNITY. This amount may average about \$32,000 monthly once the program reaches full capacity.
- Once receiving funds from the Continuum of Care, maintain dues-paying membership in the UNITY Service Providers and Professionals Association.
- HUD defines chronic homelessness as follows:

“A chronically homeless person is an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who 1) has been continuously homeless for a year or more OR 2) has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. Disabling condition is defined as a diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions. To be considered chronically homeless, persons must have been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., living on the streets) or in an emergency homeless shelter during that time.”

Successful applicants will demonstrate their commitment and ability to administer a highly effective “Housing First” program in which chronically homeless and vulnerable homeless persons with complex problems are successfully stabilized and housed without being required to comply with treatment as a condition of receiving housing. Successful applicants will demonstrate their ability to quickly obtain full Medicaid and SSI for clients, who will have been pre-screened by UNITY to determine their likely eligibility. Applicants must also demonstrate ability to provide Medicaid-reimbursable 1915i supportive services or leverage other Medicaid providers in the provision of supportive services for clients in the program.

-----**PROPOSAL NARRATIVE**-----

All proposals must address the following:

- 1) **Organizational Experience-** Describe the organization’s relevant experience providing supportive services in a Housing First Permanent Supportive Housing program for persons who have mental and physical disabilities and substance addictions. The applicant should indicate good standing with HUD, UNITY and other funders, which means that the applicant does not have any open monitoring findings or history of slow grant expenditures.
- 2) **Plan for Effective Case Management and Housing Stability–** Describe the plan to provide effective case management services for the tenants so they can remain permanently housed. Include how the organization will assess and document tenant progress, assist clients to obtain benefits, and support independent living. Also describe participation in the coordinated assessment system and the organizational process to quickly house a client from the street into permanent housing. Describe the job duties and qualifications of the employees that will be hired to provide services and attach a resume of the person who will supervise staff.
- 3) **Housing First Approach-** Describe briefly how case management services would address a situation in which a dually diagnosed client is engaging in extremely challenging behaviors interfering with the rights of others in an apartment complex, threatening the essential functioning of the apartment building, such as making threats to other tenants, causing severe and permanent damage to his or her apartment, or engaging in illegal activity in the building. Outline the plan to address these and other challenging behaviors.
- 4) **Implementation Timeline –** Describe the plan for rapid implementation, specifically how the project will house the first program participant within 1 month of the award and have full enrollment within 5 months.
- 5) **Leveraging of Mainstream Resources –** Describe specific activities which are in place to identify and enroll all Medicaid-eligible participants into Medicaid. Describe past experience to enroll clients in Medicaid including outcome information. Describe how the organization will include Medicaid-financed services including: case management, tenancy supports, behavioral health services, or other services important to housing stability.

Please attach a) evidence of COA or CARF accreditation; b) evidence of ability of bill Medicaid for PSH services or your plan for being able to do so by April 2015; c) evidence of other partnerships with Medicaid providers.

- 6) **Budget –** Include a brief budget narrative describing the budget for providing supportive services, administration, and rental assistance for 40 or 80 households. The budget can be submitted as an attachment that is referred to by the budget narrative.

Eligible supportive services for this project can include the following line items:

- Case Management
- Case Manager Cell Phone and Travel

Housing Search
Client Food and Transportation
Utility Deposits

Supportive services must be no more than 30% of the rental assistance budget. For more information about eligible expenses in these lines, see 24CFR 578(e). Budgets of selected applicants may be revised in consultation with UNITY upon notification of selection.

Administrative budget can include direct costs of administration of the project that are no more than 3.5% of the combined supportive services and rental assistance budget.

- 7) **Financial Capacity** - The project sponsor will be providing rental assistance to clients in the program on a monthly basis. Because funding is reimbursement based, the project sponsor should demonstrate capacity to pay rents for two months prior to reimbursement.

The project sponsor must also demonstrate a commitment to provide 25% match of services or administrative costs towards the total project budget, including rental assistance. Leverage should also be provided to indicate additional 200% of project costs.

Attach documentation of match and leveraging which includes the following information for each funding source:

- Match or Leverage
- Type of Source: government or private
- Method: Cash or In-kind
- Date of Commitment
- Source of Match/Leverage
- Use for Match/Leverage

- 8) **Program Enhancement** – Describe what the agency will “bring to the table” to add value to this program through the provision of other resources, programs, or volunteers.

- 9) **Other Areas To Be Considered in Scoring of Proposals (DO NOT COMPLETE THIS SECTION. This is for information purposes only.)** Each proposal is eligible for additional points to be determined by an independent Review Committee which will consider other factors in deciding which proposers would make a good project sponsor. These areas include:
- Contract compliance with previous UNITY-funded projects regarding spending, timely billing, HMIS data quality, submission of required reports, findings and concerns, etc.
 - Performance results from Annual Progress Reports and monitoring reports.
 - Participation at SPPA meetings, on CoC committees, etc.
 - Consumer Feedback and Collaboration with UNITY Welcome Home Outreach Program

The proposal narrative should be limited to no more than 10 pages. **Proposals must be addressed to Martha Kegel, Executive Director of UNITY, and submitted to proposals@unitygno.org no later than noon on Monday, October 13, 2014.** Do not submit proposals by any other method.

Submission should include:

- 1) Narrative – no more than 10 pages
- 2) Budget
- 3) Documentation of Non-Profit Status (501(c) 3 IRS letter)
- 4) Two most recent financial audits
- 5) Documentation of match and leverage
- 6) Documentation of CARF or COA Accreditation (if available)
- 7) Documentation of ability to bill Medicaid (if available)

If you have questions about the RFP, please contact Valerie Coffin, Director of Continuum of Care Programs, at vcoffin@unitygno.org or 504-821-4496x112. Please visit UNITY's homepage at www.unitygno.org periodically to see if answers to any questions submitted by you or others have been posted.