

# **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS #14-1 TO PROVIDE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES TO FORMERLY CHRONICALLY HOMELESS PERSONS IN PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING BUILDINGS**

**June 24, 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 one or two nonprofit organizations to provide on-site case management services to formerly chronically homeless and vulnerable homeless persons residing in two Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) apartment buildings in New Orleans that are owned and operated by UNITY.

Both buildings are replications of the mixed-population developments pioneered by Community Solutions (formerly Common Ground) and which are specifically designed to meet the needs of the chronically homeless and re-integrate them into the community. The first building, the **Sacred Heart Apartments**, is the former Sacred Heart School and Malta Square assisted living complex at 3222 Canal Street. This building is currently being rehabilitated into a Permanent Supportive Housing apartment complex to open fall 2014 with special emphasis on providing housing to homeless veterans. That complex will include a total of 109 apartments, including 30 PSH Shelter Plus Care (S+C) apartments, 25 VASH apartments to be served by the VA, and 54 apartments for the working poor. The second building is the award-winning **Rosa F. Keller Building** at 2222 Tulane Avenue, which has been operating for two years, and includes 30 PSH Shelter Plus Care apartments for the formerly chronically and vulnerable homeless, in addition to 30 non-PSH apartments for the working poor.

Service providers can apply to provide services to the S+C tenants in one building or both buildings. The S+C tenants, nearly all of whom are unaccompanied adults, have mental or physical disabilities, often co-occurring with substance use disorders, and are moving into the buildings directly from the streets, abandoned buildings, or emergency shelter. (The selected service providers will not be providing services to the non-PSH tenants, nor to the VASH tenants, who will be provided services directly by the VA.)

## **Important Dates**

**Applications must be emailed by 5:00 p.m., Thursday, July 17 to [proposals@unitygno.org](mailto:proposals@unitygno.org). Agencies will be notified of whether they were selected by July 23. Staff should be hired, in place and ready to serve clients by September 1.**

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 also demonstrate their ability to quickly obtain full Medicaid and SSI for all S+C clients, who will have been pre-screened by UNITY to determine their likely eligibility.

Initial funds for the supportive services will be provided by 1) the HUD Continuum of Care funds already awarded to UNITY and 2) hurricane recovery CDBG funds through the state PSH program. The HUD Continuum of Care funds are considered to be annually renewable upon demonstration of good performance. The hurricane recovery CDBG funds, however, must be replaced by Medicaid and/or other sources. Therefore, successful applicants must demonstrate their ability to qualify to provide Medicaid-reimbursable 1915i supportive services and/or obtain other permanent sources of funds that can replace the revenue provided by the initial three-year hurricane recovery CDBG grant.

All S+C tenants of the buildings will be selected by UNITY using the PSH Registry and approved by the state PSH program. All S+C tenants will be persons with mental or physical disabilities, including addictive disorders, who have been living on the streets, in abandoned buildings, or in emergency shelters or who originally came from those places. Most of the S+C tenants will be chronically homeless persons. 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.”**

**Applicants should indicate whether they are applying to provide services at a) 3222 Canal Street, b) 2222 Tulane Avenue, or c) both buildings.**

### **3222 Canal Street (Sacred Heart Apartments)**

The former Sacred Heart School and Malta Square assisted living complex at 3222 Canal Street is being rehabilitated into a Permanent Supportive Housing apartment building to open September 2014 with special emphasis on providing housing to homeless veterans. Because of its size, prominent location and the significant history of the building, this complex is expected to be the flagship PSH building in New Orleans. That complex will include a total of 109 apartments, including 30 PSH Shelter Plus Care (S+C) apartments, 25 VASH apartments to be served by the VA, and 54 apartments for the working poor. It is expected that some veterans who do not qualify for VASH may

be served with the S+C vouchers. UNITY will manage the building in partnership with HRI Property Management.

The selected service provider will provide supportive services for the persons living in the 30 S+C apartments, which will be scattered throughout the complex. (The selected provider will not provide services to the 25 VASH tenants, who will be served directly by the VA, nor to the tenants living in the non-PSH affordable units.) The selected service provider will employ two full-time case managers on-site and a part-time supervisor to serve the S+C clients. Office space for all three staff members will be provided on site. The staff should be hired, in place, and ready to provide services to clients by September 1, 2014. It is expected that some of the clients will move in during the month of September.

Agencies applying to provide services for the 3222 Canal Street building must demonstrate that they have current COA or CARF certification, and that they will be able to become certified to provide PSH services under the state PSH program and be able to bill Medicaid for providing PSH services, no later than August 1, 2017, and preferably sooner. Agencies must also demonstrate that they will provide health insurance benefits for their staff.

See attached description of the budget, which applicants may modify so long as the total proposed does not exceed the total listed in the attachment.

### **3222 Tulane Avenue (Rosa F. Keller Building)**

The award-winning Rosa F. Keller Building has been operating since April 2012. It includes 30 PSH Shelter Plus Care (S+C) apartments for the formerly chronically and vulnerable homeless, in addition to 30 non-PSH apartments for the working poor. The selected agency will provide supportive services to the S+C tenants only. The building is fully occupied and has not had any evictions since its opening. UNITY will continue to manage the building in partnership with HRI Property Management.

Since the building is the first of its kind in New Orleans, UNITY has been directly providing the supportive services to the S+C tenants as of the building's opening, in order to ensure that the building got off to a strong start. Now UNITY is ready to subcontract the services to an experienced and successful Housing First provider. This RFP requires that the selected agency take over employing one current UNITY employee who is an existing case manager providing excellent services, in order to provide continuity for the tenants. This RFP also requires that the selected agency hire a second case manager, in addition to hiring or designating existing agency staff for a part-time supervisor position, and that new staff be in place providing services on September 1.

Since the building has been in operation for over two years, and we are already into the third year of the hurricane recovery CDBG grant, agencies applying to provide services at the building must demonstrate that they have current COA or CARF

certification and that they are can bill Medicaid for PSH services and will be certified to provide PSH services under the state PSH program by April 1, 2015.

See attached description of the budget, which applicants may modify so long as the total proposed does not exceed the total listed in the attachment.

**All proposals must address the following:**

- 1) Please indicate whether you are applying to provide services at 3222 Canal Street, 2222 Tulane Avenue, or both buildings. (If you apply to provide services at both buildings, it is possible that you may be selected for only one building or for both buildings.)
- 2) Your organization's relevant experience in providing supportive services in a Housing First Permanent Supportive Housing program for persons who have mental and physical disabilities and substance addictions.
- 3) Please describe briefly how your case management services would address a situation in which your dually diagnosed client, a Shelter Plus Care tenant of the building, is engaging in extremely challenging behaviors interfering with the rights of others or 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. Please outline your plan for addressing these and other challenging behaviors.
- 4) Your plan for providing effective case management services for the tenants so that they can remain permanently housed, including how you will work with tenants at the time of move-in and how you will promote, document and evaluate tenant progress. Please describe the job duties and qualifications of the employees you will hire to provide these services and include a resume of the person who will supervise this staff.
- 5) Please attach a) evidence of COA or CARF certification and b) evidence of ability of bill Medicaid for PSH services or your plan for being able to do so by April 2015 (if applying to provide services at 2222 Tulane Ave) or September 2017 (if applying to provide services at 3222 Canal Street).
- 6) A budget for providing services at each building for which you are applying. The budget for each building should not exceed the total listed for each building in the budget attached to this RFP. Budgets of selected applicants may be revised in consultation with UNITY upon notification of selection.
- 7) Please discuss what your agency will "bring to the table" to add value to this program through the provision of other resources, programs, or volunteers.

8) Evidence of your organization's nonprofit tax-exempt status.

Please limit your proposal to no more than 10 pages (not including the evidence of certification, Medicaid billing ability, and tax-exempt status). **Proposals must be addressed to Martha Kegel, Executive Director of UNITY, and submitted to [proposal@unitygno.org](mailto:proposal@unitygno.org) no later than 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 17, 2014.** (Please do not submit proposals by any other method.)

If you have questions about the RFP, please contact Valerie Coffin, Director of Continuum of Care Programs, at [vcoffin@unitygno.org](mailto:vcoffin@unitygno.org). Please visit UNITY's homepage at [www.unitygno.org](http://www.unitygno.org) periodically to see if answers to any questions submitted by you or others have been posted.