

UNITY of Greater New Orleans

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS #16-2

Safe Haven for Women and Transgender Persons with Severe Mental Illness

April 22, 2016

UNITY of Greater New Orleans, the lead agency for the homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) for New Orleans and Jefferson Parish, is seeking proposals for a Safe Haven for women and transgender people, a low-barrier temporary housing program which will serve as a bridge to Permanent Supportive Housing. The proposal will fund one project sponsor which may partner with another agency. The program will be operated out of the building located at 2407 Baronne Street, 3rd floor. The applicant must be able to operate a no-barrier, temporary safe haven to provide shelter for women and transgender people living on the street or in abandoned buildings who have serious mental illness and/or substance use disorders, while they await Permanent Supportive Housing placement. The funds are available through a U.S. Housing and Urban Development grant to provide both supportive services and operating funds. It is anticipated that future funds for this project would be renewed annually for the applicant selected to administer the program, assuming that it is in good standing with UNITY regarding program and fiscal compliance. It is anticipated that a per-diem would be available through Metropolitan Human Services District as partial match. It is possible that at some point in the next 5-10 years UNITY might move this project to a different location suitable for also serving male clients, in addition to female and transgender clients. Nonprofit or governmental agencies are eligible to apply; agencies which are currently members of UNITY's Service Providers and Professionals Association as well as those agencies not receiving funds through the Continuum of Care are equally encouraged to apply.

Proposals are due Friday, May 20 by noon

The primary goal of this program is to provide a safe haven and voluntary stabilization services for women and transgender people with serious mental illness who have been living on the streets or in abandoned buildings, while they are rapidly navigated into a Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program, typically within 30-60 days. Most clients will be chronically homeless or high acuity as scored on VI-SPDAT. All program participants will be referred to the safe haven through the Coordinated Entry System.

Services and expectations include:

- Accept referrals from the Coordinated Entry System into the program.
- Operate a 24 hour/7 day per week low-barrier facility for women and transgender people to enter the program at any given time
- Link participants to MHSD and Medicaid funded mental health services
- Navigate clients to obtain documentation needed for Permanent Supportive Housing
- Assist participants in obtaining Medicaid, food stamps, and SSI using SOAR
- Link participants to community and mainstream resources
- Input all data into ServicePoint HMIS and submit quarterly and annual reports
- It is expected that the successful applicant will be eligible to serve MHSD clients through the per diem program which would provide matching funds.

The project will serve 23-25 women at any given time including persons who are transgender. If

awarded through the selection process, this safe haven, low barrier program would fund one agency for an 7-month period (July 1, 2016 – January 31, 2017) at a total award amount of \$298,988 (\$278,895 supportive services; \$9,213 in operating funds; \$7,880 in administrative costs). The match requirement for the initial grant term \$ 73,997.

The grant is annually renewable through the CoC program for a 12-month operating year beginning February 1, 2017. The 12-month budget of \$507,408 includes: \$478,105 supportive services; \$15,794 operating funds; and \$13,509 administrative costs. The match requirement for the 12-month operating year is \$150,747.

The project sponsor is not responsible for general operating costs for the facility. UNITY is responsible for the general operating costs of the facility through an operating budget separate from the subrecipient agreement. These operating costs provide for overnight security, meals for residents, electric, water, and general building maintenance and repairs.

For continuity for existing clients, UNITY expects the project sponsor to offer positions to existing staff at the facility who have experience and wish to continue to work with the program for a period of at least 90 days.

If your agency has a project partner, attach an MOU describing the role of each agency for this project. The budget should specify the expenses and match for the sponsor and project partner.

NARRATIVE: Include the following information in your proposal, which should not exceed 8 pages.

1) Organization and Staff Experience (15 points)

- a. Provide organization’s experience and past performance in providing low barrier and low demand housing for the specific population to be served, as well as experience with supportive stabilization and crisis management services to that specific population.
- b. Provide detailed accounts of your organization working with severe mentally ill persons who are unwilling to receive services and how you were able to overcome those obstacles in assisting with housing-related services.
- c. Provide information on the organization’s ability to support the capacity of a 24/7 facility based program. Describe why your organization is interested in serving unsheltered women with serious mental illness or substance abuse.
- d. Provide information about your organization’s experience and ability to provide a welcoming and safe environment for transgender people.

2) Program Implementation (30 points)

- a. Describe your organization’s commitment to the “Housing First” philosophy, as well as other evidence based practice models, in order to ensure homeless people have a safe place to reside without requiring compliance with service, treatment, or medication.
- b. Describe your current work with the Coordinated Entry System and how it would play a pivotal role in program implementation, particularly in serving women who are living on the street or in places not fit for human habitation.
- c. Provide as comprehensive a listing as possible of 1) the admissions requirements and criteria to be utilized by your program; and 2) the grounds for terminating assistance and occupancy to be utilized by your program.
- d. Briefly describe how your organization will provide services and with what

organizations you will partner.

- e. Provide a description of the staffing pattern to operate a 24/7 facility and provide medication management services. Include qualifications of staff.
- f. Provide a description of the implementation steps needed in order for your organization to move into, as well as operate, this 24/7 facility and program.
- g. Describe your agency's work on trauma informed care as it relates to serious mentally ill persons, including those who are transgender and those who may have been victims of domestic violence.
- h. Describe the date on which your organization will be able to launch this program and begin using the grant and the building. (If possible, we prefer to fund programs that can launch quickly.)
- i. Describe how your program will work to reduce the length of time that residents spend in the program (the HEARTH Act requires reducing the length of time that people spend homeless or in temporary housing programs) and how it will work to prevent residents' return to homelessness.
- j. Describe your organization's commitment and ability to operate this program on a sustained basis, assuming the UNITY grant is sustained annually.

3.) Cultural Competence (5 points)

- a. Describe your organization's cultural competence. Include experience in serving people who are racially, ethnically and religiously diverse; who speak languages other than English; who have a range of physical and mental disabilities; and serving the LGBTQ community.
- b. Describe the diversity of your board and staff, as well as your organization's non-discrimination policies.
- c. Describe how your organization will ensure that your staff meet the needs of clients with particular sensitivity toward clients' varied cultural and life experiences, including transgender persons.
- d. Describe how homeless or formerly homeless persons are involved in the decision making process at your organization.

4.) Operational and Program Budget (50 points)

- a. Provide a detailed budget and budget narrative for both the 8-month grant and the 12-month grant (see below). A sample budget format is attached.
- b. Describe the organization's sources of funds for operations. Programs that have evidence of the ability to provide and raise significant supplemental funding beyond the funds UNITY is able to offer will receive priority.
- c. Demonstrate that your organization will be able to meet HUD's requirement of providing a minimum of 25% match of the budget.
- d. If your agency has a project partner, specify budget expenses and match for each agency in the proposal.

7-month grant (July 1, 2016- January 31, 2017)	
Category	Amount
Supportive Services	\$ 278,895
Operating Costs	\$ 9,223
Administration	\$ 7,880
7 month CoC Award	\$ 295,988
Total Match Required	\$ 73,997

12-month budget at anticipated renewal (February 1, 2017- January 31, 2018)	
Category	Amount
Supportive Services	\$ 478,105
Operating Costs	\$ 15,794
Administration	\$ 13,509
12 month CoC Award	\$ 506,246
Total Match Required	\$150,747

5.) Attachments

- a. Attach proof of nonprofit tax-exempt status, if your agency is a non-profit organization.
- b. Attach copy of your most recent audit or last 2 years of financial statements with summary of findings.
- c. Letters of commitment from other sources of funds.
- d. Attach project budget, including other sources of funds that will allow your organization to effectively run the program.
- e. Attach resumes of key personnel who will be responsible for the implementation and launch of the program.
- f. Memorandum of Understanding if the applicant has a project partner. This Memorandum should specify roles and responsibilities for each agency involved in the program.

Informational Meeting Information

An RFP Informational Meeting will be held: on Wednesday, April 27, 9 am at 2475 Canal Street, New Orleans, First Floor Annex Conference Room.

Deadline for Safe Have Request for Proposal

Deadline for submitting proposal to UNITY is Friday, May 20, at noon.

Applicant will be selected and notified no later than May 26.

Applicants are expected to begin the project as soon as possible and no later than July 1.

Submission Guidelines:

- a. Format: Please limit your proposal to no more than eight pages. Attachments are not counted toward page limit.
- b. Deadline: Proposals should be received at UNITY by noon Friday, May 20.
- c. Submission: Proposals MUST be submitted by email to: proposal@unitygno.org. If you do not receive an immediate receipt, please contact Valerie Coffin at 504-821-4496 x112 or vcoffin@unitygno.org. DO NOT submit proposals by mail, fax or hand delivery. Proposals should be clearly labeled with the name of the project being applied for. Address submissions to Martha J. Kegel, Executive Director.

For more information contact Valerie Coffin, Director of CoC Programs, at 821-4496 ex. 112 or vcoffin@unitygno.org.

