Contents

Request for Proposals Introduction

Overview

This Request for Proposals is being issued jointly by the Baltimore Continuum of Care Board and the City Government of Baltimore to identify a new Management Entity to direct homeless services within the City of Baltimore.

The purpose of this RFP is to identify a nonprofit applicant to become the new Management Entity of homeless services within Baltimore to provide leadership and innovation in ending homelessness. This entity will support the Federal Continuum of Care (CoC) program in carrying out the mission and vision of the Journey Home Plan to End Homelessness and meeting the performance standards outlined in the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act.

The new Management Entity will provide grant oversight for a variety of different funding sources, serve as the Collaborative Applicant for HUD CoC funds, oversee required data collection and reporting through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), and support and facilitate the goals of the CoC and the CoC Board.

Local leaders are undertaking this major initiative in an effort to improve services for homeless persons, to align and integrate funding streams for greater impact, to bring in new partners and new resources to fuel expansion of proven programmatic strategies, and to increase community input and participation in decision-making.

History and Background

The CoC Program (24 CFR part 578) is designed to promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness, provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, States, and local governments to quickly re-house homeless individuals, families, persons fleeing domestic violence, promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs, and to optimize self-sufficiency among those experiencing homelessness. In Baltimore, as with some other large US cities, responsibility for managing the CoC program has rested exclusively with the Baltimore City government since these funding programs began.   Over time, CoC responsibilities have evolved from traditional grants management to a more holistic view of addressing and ending homelessness.

Congress embodied this outlook in the HEARTH Act, which was passed in 2009. The purposes of the HEARTH Act are to consolidate homeless assistance programs, codify the Continuum of Care planning process, and establish a goal of ensuring that families who become homeless return to permanent housing within 30 days.

Additionally, its intent is to transform homeless services into a coordinated system of service delivery. The HEARTH Act emphasizes that communities should develop more formal and inclusive governance processes and create their CoC Boards for executive decision-making. It also focuses on communities moving towards the use of data to make allocations based on proven performance, and to set and work toward strategic allocation of resources.

Recognizing that Baltimore's CoC can do more

In 2016, the CoC Board evaluated the CoC's current capacity to meet the responsibilities of the HEARTH Act. Concerns arose surrounding Baltimore's ability to respond directly to the HEARTH

requirements to develop a systemic response to reshape and improve the delivery of homeless services.   The Board reviewed results and best practices from other communities' efforts to reduce the incidence of homelessness.

This analysis convinced the CoC Board that to improve Baltimore's response to homelessness, much more needed to be done. Additionally, the analysis suggested that the vision and goals Baltimore wants to achieve were not possible under the existing publicly-managed CoC framework. Identified areas for improvement included:

- Strengthening governance to support community-driven decision processes and workgroups.
- Improving the use of data to ensure program- and system-level performance.
- Create meaningful connections to mainstream agencies to address gaps in service provision to individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Expand private fundraising and exploration of public resources to increase the level of funding available.
- Improved community engagement and participation in the CoC.
- Implementation of best practices and innovative solutions to end homelessness.

The CoC Board determined that achieving major systemic improvement was not possible within the current constraints of Baltimore City government. During this same period, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and her senior team reviewed performance and outcomes of the current arrangement, whereby the Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Human Services was responsible to serve as Collaborative Applicant and HMIS Lead, and came to a similar conclusion.

The CoC Board voted in June 2016 to go through a Request for Proposals process seeking to move management of the CoC programs and funds, along with other homeless funding programs, to a high-capacity nonprofit organization.

In order to increase transparency and objectivity in its process, the CoC Board held public discussion sessions to explore the potential benefits of a new Management Entity and solicit public feedback. The Request for Proposals (RFP) mechanism was chosen for this purpose and the development and execution of the RFP is subject to the approval of the CoC membership.

Through this RFP, the CoC seeks to restructure homeless service leadership and oversight in Baltimore City. The intent is to move from a government-centered model to a public/private model.

Award Information

Available Funds

The Baltimore Continuum of Care and the City Government of Baltimore intend to make available approximately $1.6 million in funding through this Request for Proposals for the performance of Management Entity.

Number of Awards

The Continuum of Care may make one award for the available funds to an applicant that best meets the requirements of this Request for Proposals.

Period of Performance

The intended Period of Performance for this effort will be 36 months. However, only the first year (12 months) will be authorized for the selected applicant. Each of the following two years will have an annual option to extend based on satisfactory performance in the prior twelve months and approval by the CoC Board. The estimated start date will be XX-XX-XXXX.

Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must be a nonprofit (501(c)3) and have an active DUNS number and SAM registration.

Match Requirement

The Continuum of Care recognizes that it may not be possible to cover all costs of conducting activities outlined here and elsewhere within this RFP for the administrative funding that will be available. Thus, the applicant will be asked to detail its plan to provide 25% match of the funding retained by the Management Entity (see Budget section) in cash and non-cash resources to ensure its capacity. Specific sources and purposes for match should be detailed in the Budget form required as part of the submission.

Please note that this requirement is different than the project-level match that subrecipients are required to provide under the CoC program. That requirement will remain for subrecipients.

Threshold Eligibility Requirements

Applicants who fail to meet any of the following threshold eligibility requirements will be deemed ineligible. Applications from ineligible applicants will not be evaluated.

- Timely Submission of Applications: Applications submitted after the deadline stated will be marked late. Late applications will be deemed ineligible and will not be considered.
- Line of Credit: The applicant must demonstrate a line of credit equal to 25% of the CoC Program Award (approximately $21 million).
- Submission of two most recent years of OMB A-133 audit reports
- Applicants must be eligible to receive grants from the federal government. Applications will be deemed ineligible if submitted by a debarred or suspended applicant, or those proposed to be debarred or suspended from doing business with the Federal Government.

Elements of the RFP

In recent years, HUD has put emphasis on improved relationships and coordination with other funding streams that are delivering services to individuals experiencing homelessness. This coordination and strategic alignment of funding allows for a more coordinated response and the ability to better leverage additional resources. Thus, the CoC decided to use this opportunity to consolidate multiple funding streams and programs under the management and oversight of a single nonprofit entity. Bringing together homeless-oriented but differentiated funding programs allow for a community-driven, strategic resource allocation process, and support sophisticated service delivery processes. For example, the new entity would be able to direct restricted CoC funds to optimize

funding for permanent housing and housing-based services, while using more flexible private funds to pay for supportive services and leverage mainstream partnerships for enhanced service coordination.

Programs Included in the RFP

The Consolidated Homeless Management RFP includes federal, state and locally-administered funds. As a consequence, this RFP is jointly offered by the Continuum of Care and the City of Baltimore. Funding components are as follows:

1. HUD Continuum of Care Program: The Management Entity will take on the roles of Collaborative Applicant and HMIS Lead for the Baltimore City Continuum of Care [MD-501]. The Management Entity will be responsible to carry out all required activities for the Collaborative Applicant and HMIS Lead, as outlined in the Continuum of Care Interim Rule, effective August 30, 2012. The CoC Planning Grants and HMIS grants will transfer to the new Management Entity. Details about the Continuum of Care program and its uses should be read closely.

2. HUD Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program: The City of Baltimore will remain the Recipient of ESG funds.   In this capacity the City will retain responsibility for drawing funds quarterly, entering program and expenditure data into HUD's Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS), and overseeing the Management Entity's performance and fiscal/program compliance with ESG requirements.   These requirements are outlined in the Emergency Solutions Grants Program Interim Rule, effective December 5, 2011. While the funds will continue to flow to the City, which will retain oversight, the Management Entity will have a contract with the City and be empowered in turn to subcontract ESG funds based on strategic priorities.

   The Management Entity will be responsible for strategically coordinating ESG funds with the CoC program. These funds can be used to fill gaps in the homeless service delivery system. The Management Entity will subcontract out these funds to service providers, retaining responsibility for financial and grants management, including monitoring and subrecipient support.

3. State of Maryland: All state funds available for the purposes of emergency shelter, transitional housing, outreach and coordination.

Programs Not Included in the RFP

Funding components that will remain with the City will be the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS and Emergency Shelters. These programs will continue to be managed and administered by the City.

Key Activities and Expectations for Consolidated Management Entity

The responsibilities outlined in this RFP are substantial. A nonprofit organization will need to have the knowledge, experience, and capacity to manage a large portfolio of grants, along with the ability to handle complex financial management and subrecipient oversight responsibilities.

Additionally, the Management Entity will be expected to fulfill all three Appointed Entity roles (Collaborative Applicant, HMIS Lead, and Support Entity), as outlined in the [Continuum of Care Governance Charter and Bylaws.](#) Applicants should be familiar with all of the associated responsibilities of the Appointed Entities and demonstrate their capacity to carry out, support, and oversee all activities included therein.

Staff and leadership of the Management Entity will need to demonstrate their capacity to move quickly into addressing a range of HEARTH and local requirements including:

- Managing a large grants portfolio with accuracy, speed, knowledge and sufficient staff for active subrecipient relations, including training and monitoring.
- Effectively utilizing the capacity of financial management system and staff to track and monitor grants across multiple funding sources with varied reporting requirements
- Working closely with City departments and agencies to coordinate efforts and address concerns that intersect with CoC goals and funding. Also, establishing the role of the Management Entity to collaborate with City leadership and solidify the connection to the Mayor's Office to ensure high level participation of both entities in all efforts to address homelessness in the City.
- Creating and supporting a framework for community-wide strategic priority setting and governance, staffing and supporting CoC committees and an active CoC membership.
- Utilizing HMIS and other local data to drive planning, including sharing findings with the larger community and using dashboards to strengthen performance.
- Reaching out to potential programming/funding partners and crafting new agreements.
- Increasing private and public funds available to support existing and new initiatives.
- Coordinating with other systems of care that serve homeless individuals and families, including sources of funding other than the CoC Program including Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY), Head Start programs, Child Care (Child Care and Development Fund), home visiting (Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting, or MIECHV), Healthy Start, Public Housing Authorities, victim service providers, and other housing and service programs.
- Implementing and championing Housing First principles that reduce barriers for individuals entering housing.
- Demonstrating need for new housing and supportive service resources including Rapid Rehousing, permanent supportive housing, access to benefits, and other needs.

The Management Entity must facilitate a competitive and fair process for service providers to access information, request support and resources, and apply for funding. Applicants, particularly those that offer direct services themselves, will be expected to demonstrate their capacity to facilitate these processes in a transparent manner and ensure that no one agency, including the Management Entity itself, will have preferential or biased access to information and resources.

Programmatic Priorities

Collaborative Applicant

The applicant will need to demonstrate its understanding of the varied responsibilities spelled out in the HEARTH Act and the CoC Interim Rule. Additional questions related to grants management experience and capacity must be answered in detail.

The HEARTH Act and the accompanying regulations published in the Continuum of Care Program Interim Rule also articulate requirements for a CoC governance structure, system operations and planning, designating and operating the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), and designing and implementing a Coordinated Entry system. These source legislative documents also formalize the requirement and responsibility for a Collaborative Applicant to perform a variety of managerial and implementation duties related to supporting the goals of ending homelessness in the CoC.

The Management Entity will ensure the Coordinated Entry system of assessment and referral will continue to be developed as the centralized intake process for a community-wide, systemic response to homelessness. The Coordinated Entry integration into the Homeless Management Information System has begun and is currently going through beta testing with community providers. The Management Entity will be expected to appropriately staff and lead this process with continued community input and guidance.

The Collaborative Applicant serves as a lead coordinating entity and implementation arm for homeless services. The Collaborative Applicant is defined in the HEARTH Act to mean an eligible applicant that has been designated to perform the following functions by HUD:

HUD Required Activity

- Submit the Consolidated Homeless Application including the CoC application, project listing, and corresponding project applications
- Apply for and administer CoC Planning funds
- Develop a grant management system that includes contract development and conduct program monitoring for all subrecipients receiving funds
- Conduct an annual Point-in-Time count and gaps analysis
- Participate in the Consolidated Plan for Baltimore City
- Ensure operation of, and consistent participation by, project sponsors in a community-wide Homeless Management Information System
- Measure performance across programs including homeless assistance programs that are not funded through the CoC process.

Additional duties assigned to the Collaborative Applicant in Baltimore

Service Coordination
- Develop and implement a Coordinated Entry process for the Continuum of Care
- Coordinate service provision with mainstream agencies
- Periodically provide training opportunities to the CoC membership to enhance the quality of service provision in Baltimore
- Coordinate with the appropriate City agencies on winter and emergency planning, shelter operations, and communication
- Coordinate and communicate with emergency shelter providers to establish their role within the work of the Management Entity and CoC; ensure the effective utilization of data to assess outcomes and inform allocation of resources

- Staff the CoC Board and subcommittees listed in the CoC Governance Charter
- Convene regular CoC meetings
- Conduct outreach to new CoC members; Develop and maintain CoC membership list and contact information
- Coordinate with mainstream and private partners
- Develop and maintain a homeless CoC website with pertinent information for the community and service providers

Grant Management
- Act as the grant recipient for the majority of HUD CoC funds that are presently awarded to the City of Baltimore
- Complete financial and program monitoring for all HUD subrecipients
- Implement written standards for all levels of the Continuum of Care

HMIS Lead & Using Data to Guide Planning and Allocation

A Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a local information technology system used to collect client- and systems-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. Each Continuum of Care is responsible for selecting an HMIS lead to administer a software solution that complies with HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards. The HEARTH Act specifies a number of key areas of responsibility that an HMIS Lead organization must have the capacity to carry out. The ability to produce useful, timely data from a client database to support CoC priority setting and rating/ranking is a bottom line responsibility.

The HEARTH Act requires that all communities have an HMIS with the capacity to collect unduplicated counts of people experiencing homelessness. Through the HMIS, Baltimore is able to collect information from projects serving homeless people to use as part of their needs analyses, measure system/program performance and to establish funding priorities. The Act also codifies into law certain data collection requirements integral to HMIS. With enactment of the HEARTH Act, HMIS participation became a statutory requirement for recipients and subrecipients of the CoC Program and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) funds. Additionally, Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH), Runaway Homeless Youth (RHY) and Veterans homeless programs must also enter client information into the HMIS.

HUD encourages all agencies serving homeless people to participate in the HMIS regardless of whether or not the agency receives federal funding. However, at a minimum, all federally-funded agencies are expected to participate, with the exception of domestic violence agencies, which are prohibited from entering data into HMIS by the Violence Against Women Act.

In Baltimore, the CoC Board is responsible for the designation of a single HMIS software and to ensure the participation of required federally-funded agencies. The CoC Board is also responsible for identifying an HMIS Lead entity to manage the HMIS grant, provide oversight, conduct planning, monitor compliance, train service providers, execute system administration, complete reporting, and approve a privacy, security and data quality plan complying with all relevant federal data standards.

In addition, a critical aspect of the HEARTH Act is a focus on viewing the local homeless response as a coordinated system of homeless assistance options as opposed to homeless assistance programs and funding sources that operate independently in a community. To facilitate this perspective, the

Act now requires communities to measure and report their performance as a coordinated system using HMIS data.

The Baltimore CoC utilizes ClientTrack for its HMIS software provided by Ecovia. The Baltimore CoC will not be changing software at this time. Presently, the Baltimore CoC receives $493,012 in HMIS funds through a HUD CoC HMIS Grant. $138,000 of the award *must* go towards the software solution, hardware costs, and licensing fees. The remaining budget may be reorganized to support personnel. The CoC Management Entity would take over the contractual relationship with Ecovia and be required to use HMIS funds to pay for the system, training, project planning and reporting responsibilities provided herein.

HMIS and the Maryland Statewide Homelessness Data Warehouse (MSHDW): Each provider throughout all 24 jurisdictions in the state contributes client data to their local HMIS system. Each recipient of state grant funds from the Departments of Human Resources (DHR), Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) are required by their grant agreements to share HMIS data with the MSHDW. Collection and sharing of the universal data elements within HMIS enables the state of Maryland to draw conclusions about our progress towards supporting the homeless population across our state. Therefore, all recipients of DHR, DHCD, and DHMH grand funding for homeless services are required to comply with data sharing to the MSHDW and will continue to do so under a new Management Entity.

HMIS Lead Responsibilities

Oversight and Planning

- HMIS project management & staffing
- Coordinate HMIS Strategic Planning Process (HMIS Data Committee provides approval)
- Oversee and ensure data security and confidentiality; legal responsibility to ensure that all HMIS data meets security standards
- Ensure HMIS compliance with federal data standards
- Confirm Software Compliance
- Support and staff the Data & Performance Committee and related activities
- Establish & track project milestones
- Incorporate user feedback into planning HMIS project administration
- HMIS grant management
- Maintain agency agreements
- Ensure all agencies have privacy policies in place
- Manage software vendor payments
- Develop & manage HMIS budget, submit annual CoC HMIS application, and complete timely APR reporting
- Maintain data sharing agreements
- Manage communication with HMIS vendor
- Implement Coordinated Entry Assessment and prioritization through the HMIS

HMIS Monitoring

- Ensure individual agency HMIS participation for each homeless program: CoC, ESG, HOPWA PATH, RHY, VA
- Enforce data and system security standards
- Monitor agency participation; support resolution of findings
- Identify training needs and coordinate the provision of regular trainings
- Develop and monitor agency compliance with the CoC's data quality plan

- Review/Submit Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to HUD
- Review/Submit Point-in-Time & Housing Inventory Chart reports to HUD (CoC Board provides final approval)
- Review/Submit HUD's System Performance Measures
- System operation & maintenance
- New agency set up
- Provide prompt help desk support
- Provide CoC-level & NOFA reporting
- Compile system performance measurement reports for the CoC Board and funders
- Support individual agency reporting needs for homeless programs: CoC, ESG, HOPWA, PATH, RHY, VA
- Support data collection and reporting related to federal and local initiatives aimed at ending homelessness
- Implement the technical aspects of Coordinated Entry Assessment and prioritization through the HMIS

The HMIS lead may choose to subcontract out functions related to the technical aspects of system administration, reporting, and monitoring. **The HMIS lead may not subcontract out oversight and planning functions, its designation as HMIS lead, or its function as grantee of record for the grant.** Major subcontracting activities should be reviewed and approved by the Data and Performance Committee.

Support Entity

The Support Entity coordinates the work of the Continuum members, the Continuum Board, and committees and workgroups as they implement HUD policies and the Journey Home plan. As indicated in the Governance Charter and Bylaws, its role and corresponding responsibilities are discrete from the other appointed entities.

Emergency Solutions Grant and State Funds

The Applicant will need to demonstrate its understanding of ESG responsibilities spelled out in the HEARTH Act and the ESG Interim Rule published in 2012. The Management Entity will need to provide data to the City periodically to support the development of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan. One of the critical elements outlined by HUD is the need to coordinate ESG funds with CoC funds. ESG funds should support CoC priorities and both funding sources should be used collaboratively to meet federal and local priorities. The Management Entity must ensure that all ESG subrecipients enter information into the HMIS and comply with Coordinated Entry and Written Standard requirements of the CoC.

The Management Entity should work collaboratively with the CoC and the CoC Board to develop a competitive strategy to award these funds to ensure that they are used strategically towards common homelessness objectives.

CoC Priorities

Leadership in Planning, Communication and Coordination

Acting as the Collaborative Applicant, HMIS Lead, and Support Entity for Baltimore City's CoC, the Management Entity will play a critical leadership role, facilitate the coordination and communication around all CoC activities, and act as an important public convener of collaborative community processes. Additionally, the Management Entity must demonstrate the capacity to fulfill this leadership role acting under the guidance and directives provided by the CoC Board and CoC. At its base, the contract with the Management Entity requires more than operational excellence; the Management Entity is expected to support appropriate governance of the CoC and community planning activities that improve system-wide results and processes. This will include the capacity to:

- Support community-led efforts to address complex, community-level challenges.
- Build multiple connections to City agencies, foster direct connection to City leadership, and build a presence at leadership tables
- Support and grow a robust community process for awarding and reallocating funds.
- Lead community processes through support to the CoC Board and its committees to identify program priorities and conduct transparent, performance-based processes to rate and rank projects to align with the Journey Home mission and vision.
- Build community capacity through the incorporation of knowledge on best practices, national studies, and new strategies, focused on ending homelessness. These best practices and strategies that have worked elsewhere must be considered in the context of the Baltimore CoC.

As the Entity helps the CoC to increase its capacity in system-level activities – including coordination, service delivery, strategic alignment, partnering with and leveraging other resources, and using data to guide allocation – the relationship will continue to evolve. In particular, the Management Entity will need to demonstrate the capacity for intensive collaboration with City agencies to ensure the effective coordination of homeless services.

Leadership in strategic planning efforts and guiding the CoC is a vital piece of the Management Entity's role. Staying at the forefront of national best practices, federal and state funding shifts and the local environment, the Management Entity will need to support a dynamic and strategic CoC that will allow Baltimore to navigate these environments to remain competitive. It will be critical that the CoC is aware of these dynamics and resourced to make key decisions and have wider community support.

Beyond the baseline operational capacity required to support and monitor programs within the CoC, the Management Entity should demonstrate its capacity to elevate the CoC through its leadership in the arenas of community-based decision making, fundraising, resource development, advocacy, and innovation.

Commitment to Community-Based Decision Making

In line with the HEARTH Act, Baltimore's Continuum of Care will be greatly strengthened through a concerted effort that increases knowledge and raises community participation in public decisions related to homelessness. The 2016 CoC Governance Charter and Bylaws formalize CoC membership responsibilities, articulate decision-making authority, and increase participatory processes in order to elevate opportunities for engagement throughout the CoC.

Supporting the growing engagement of CoC members will be part of the Management Entity's responsibilities. The Management Entity must demonstrate the capacity to elevate the role of individuals with experience of homelessness, including but not limited to the development of a

Consumer Advisory Workgroup. Outlining relevant experience and a strategic approach in this area of community engagement and governance will be a key part of this RFP.

Fundraising & Resource Development

The most effective CoCs work hard at broadening their base of support and diversifying revenues. In order for the Baltimore CoC to meet its goals of ending homelessness, much greater resources need to be identified to support the mission and services of the Continuum of Care. The CoC Board is seeking an applicant that can assume a leadership role in broadening the base of support and diversifying revenues for the CoC by expanding private fundraising; developing collaborations and partnerships with both public and private entities; advocating for systems changes that provide additional public resources for the homeless population, and being a convener for focused and coordinated efforts of the CoC to develop new resources. These efforts will include the development of an active, effective Fundraising Committee.

The Management Entity will fulfill the above roles, working with CoC committees and leaders to identify programmatic priorities and assisting in the development and implementation of detailed plans with specific goals and financial targets where appropriate.   The Management Entity will also support CoC leadership recruitment efforts aimed at increasing funds and broadening investment in Baltimore's response to homelessness.

The expectation of the Management Entity will be:

- Identifying federal, state, and private sources the Continuum of Care Board and its partners should pursue to fund the goals and strategies outlined in the Journey Home Plan;
- Identifying the most appropriate applicant(s) for each funding source (e.g., Collaborative Applicant, nonprofit service provider) and appropriate partners (e.g. other city and state government entities, nonprofit service providers);
- Providing training/technical assistance to the Board to increase capacity for fundraising, including actively supporting the work of the CoC's Development Committee to raise funds and recruit new supporters;
- Articulating key assets, messaging, and data sources that should be promoted in grant applications.

Advocacy

The Management Entity must adeptly and appropriately orchestrate advocacy efforts for and with individuals who experience homelessness and service providers to ensure that homelessness is rare and brief. The Management Entity is expected to support advocacy to:
- Local community: Educate community stakeholders, build a robust public presence, and guide a community campaign to reduce stigma and foster support
- Local, state, and federal government: Research, provide data, and recommend legislative and policy positions; develop partnerships with public officials, guide public testimony, and support the Board to develop and communicate positions
- Local agencies: Develop partnerships with key agencies and coalitions who may strengthen homeless service delivery

Diversity and Cultural Competency

The Management Entity must exemplify the CoC's commitment to diversity, lead efforts to ensure cultural competency, and support efforts to confront and address all forms of discrimination. Baltimore is a unique place with a language, attitude, and history all to itself. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of and respect for the diverse cultures, identities, and experiences of the people it serves and demonstrate its capacity to infuse that understanding into the development of programs and provision of services. The applicant must articulate knowledge and skills related to cultural sensitivity and cultural competency, as well as its capacity to address implicit biases about homelessness, and more importantly, the various groups that make up the homeless population. With a specific emphasis on Baltimore City, applicants must identify specific strategies to partner with the Continuum to address institutional racism within and outside of systems of care that disproportionately disenfranchise people of color.

Current Best Practices, Innovative Strategies & New Solutions

The applicant must support a comprehensive plan and response to homelessness utilizing best practices and demonstrate adeptness in incorporating current best practices, including but not limited to the incorporation of a community-wide outreach plan and increased production of permanent housing throughout Baltimore City. The ideal applicant will also present new and innovative strategies and solutions to increase our impact and effectiveness. The applicant will be asked to respond specifically to identified needs and propose additional strategies or innovative solutions that will work to end homelessness within Baltimore City.

Financial and Grants Management

The City of Baltimore's Homeless Services Program, housed in the Mayor's Office of Human Services, has administered the majority of the Baltimore Continuum of Care grants, and all of its ESG grants. In this capacity, the City has:

- Applied to HUD for funding for all of the CoC's projects.
- Entered into grant agreements with HUD for CoC and ESG funds.
- Entered into legally binding agreements with subrecipients.
- Reviewed and approved all invoicing for federal funds.
- Required subrecipients to establish fiscal controls.
- Monitored subrecipients, including imposing consequences or corrective action plans where indicated.
- Fulfilled federal reporting requirements.

These significant staff responsibilities will transfer to the Management Entity. The financial management oversight will be extensive. Applicants will be asked to demonstrate their organization's capacity to administer a diverse grants portfolio, especially federal funding, as well as their capacity to administer multiple grant awards to subrecipients. Furthermore, applicants should demonstrate their understanding of SNAPS Fund Accounting, the OMB Circular, and the HEARTH Act regulations.

Organizational Structure and Staffing Plan

Considerable management and oversight capacity will be needed to support the various grants, programs and community processes that will be transferred via the Consolidated Homeless Management RFP. Applicants will need to clearly describe how the Homeless Management Entity will fit into its organizational structure, including lines of responsibility and oversight.

Note: A detailed staff chart, narrative and budget for a transition year and ongoing operations will be required.

Transition Planning

The financial management responsibilities associated with the $21 million in CoC grants encompass 30+ individual awards. These awards have start dates scattered throughout the year. Applicants should understand that while grant management responsibility will begin immediately for those projects transitioning at the beginning of the Management Entity's contract, grant management duties will continually expand over the course of that first operating year. It is important that financial and grant management systems are in place that can be relied upon in the first transition year.

Importantly, receipt of the administrative funds that the Management Entity may recoup for these functions will also be staggered based on the different grant start dates. Therefore, the Management Entity will need to demonstrate that it has the financial capacity to take on these financial and grant management responsibilities in the face of this start-up year's gap in administrative compensation.

Applicants should also closely review the total administrative award that comes with CoC program and fiscal management responsibilities and CoC planning funds to determine whether the funding available is enough to meet the ongoing responsibilities set forth in the RFP. Applicants are encouraged to analyze the various grant portfolios carefully and will be asked to provide a detailed budget outlining operating costs for all programmatic and financial support and management; sources for any gap funding required must be identified and explained thoroughly.

The Management Entity must demonstrate the financial capacity to cover costs associated with delays in the distribution of federal funding, including providing access to funds via a line of credit, as detailed below.

The Management Entity will need to be ready for rapid growth to provide uninterrupted program support and a growing area of data analytics and strategic priority setting, including the capacity to partner effectively with the Mayor's Office of Human Services and its Homeless Services Program to ensure continuity. Bidders will need to think through and communicate their plan for transition and implementation as part of their response.