

Ocean County Homeless Prevention and Assistance Coalition

The Ending Homeless Group On Behalf of Ocean County Homeless Prevention and Assistance Coalition Request for Proposals

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Request for proposals to serve as the Ocean County Homeless Prevention and Assistance Coalition Coordinated Assessment Agency

Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Proposals is to secure an organization to serve as the Coordinated Assessment Agency for the Ocean County Homeless Prevention and Assistance Coalition (HPAC).

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 Ocean County HPAC is to ensure that every resident of Ocean 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 HPAC is reorganizing 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.

Coordinated Assessment System (CA) is a community-wide system to standardize and expedite the process by which people experiencing homelessness access housing and homeless resources. Through CA, people experiencing homelessness will be matched to available services and housing based on their level of need and availability of resources. Standardizing the intake and assessment process across the region, sharing information in real-time, and adopting uniform prioritization policies are all at the core of a high-performing CA system.

The Ending Homelessness Group, on behalf of the Ocean County Homeless Prevention and Assistance Coalition, is seeking proposals from qualified housing and service organizations to serve as the Ocean County HPAC’s Coordinated Assessment lead agency. The CA Lead Agency selected through this RFP will be the organization that has the strongest application showing a clear vision and plan for how they will implement a high performing CA system in collaboration with the HPAC. The HPAC has the ability, if deemed necessary, to reissue this RFP if they do not feel that a qualified provider has submitted a proposal to serve as the CA Lead Agency.

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The Coordinated Assessment Lead Agency's role in the Ocean County Homeless system will be to assist households in exiting the system by obtaining stable permanent housing. In order to accomplish this, the Coordinated Assessment Agency shall:

- Administer the Housing Prioritization Tool on all clients that are considered literally homeless in Ocean County. The Housing Prioritization Tool will be created and approved by the HPAC
- Manage a Housing Prioritization List of all clients with whom the tool has been completed
- Provide appropriate referrals to all housing providers with CoC Permanent Supportive Housing Programs as well as any provider who has agreed to accept referrals through the Coordinated Assessment System
- Facilitate case conferencing with all relevant HPAC partners to assist households with finding permanent housing outside of CoC funded PSH units

The Ocean County Homeless Prevention and Assistance Coalition has set aside \$94,787 for the Coordinated Assessment Agency, with the possibility of additional funding upon implementation if awarded. All funds awarded are subject to the availability of federal appropriations from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). If awarded, the agency will be responsible for carrying out all activities associated with the Continuum of Care grant, including a required 25% match (cash or in-kind) of the grant funding.

The funds will be awarded for one year followed by a one year renewable option based on availability of funding. The renewable option will be executed on review by the HPAC.

Detailed Scope of Services

The key to the Coordinated Assessment System is standard assessment and referral to client appropriate service and housing opportunities in the community. Services and outcomes that will be expected of the Coordinated Assessment agency are as follows:

1. **Administer the Housing Prioritization Tool to all clients that are considered literally homeless in Ocean County.** Literally homeless clients are those that are staying in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program (including a hotel/motel paid for by an agency), or are currently unsheltered (living on the streets, abandoned building, etc.). To complete this activity, it is expected that the agency will:
 - a. Establish a physical site where applicants can meet with a case worker to complete the HPAC established Housing Prioritization Tool
 - b. Establish a call line where eligible clients can call and remotely complete the Housing Prioritization Tool
 - c. Define a process for after-hours where agencies can educate the client on where and when they can complete a Housing Prioritization Tool
 - d. Enter all clients being assessed using the Housing Prioritization into the Ocean County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), including any updated information that may be collected on clients after their initial assessment

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2. **Manage a Housing Prioritization List of all clients with whom the tool has been completed.** In order to maintain a Housing Prioritization List the agency will:
 - a. Use HMIS to create a standard Housing Prioritization List that is prioritized based on the criteria established in coordination with the HPAC.
 - b. Ensure all information in the list is accurate and households are prioritized based on their level of need and barriers to housing.
3. **Provide appropriate referrals to all housing providers with CoC Permanent Supportive Housing Programs as well as any provider who has agreed to accept referrals through the Coordinated Assessment System.** In order to effectively provide referrals, the Coordinated Assessment agency must:
 - a. Familiarize themselves with the housing sources and criterion for all programs participating with the Coordinated Assessment System
 - b. Execute Memorandums of Understanding with all participating providers to establish the appropriate referral process for each program and to ensure all programs will keep the CA abreast of current and pending vacancies
 - c. Educate and provide assistance to possible eligible consumers on the documentation needed to submit a successful application to the housing providers
 - d. Stay up to date on current resources outside of the permanent housing providers that are participating with the Coordinated Assessment System to provide outside referrals where appropriate
 - e. Maintain an updated database of housing resources to be submitted to HPAC along with
4. **Facilitate case conferencing with all relevant HPAC partners to assist households with finding permanent housing outside of the CoC funded PSH units when available.** To ensure all clients are given opportunities for permanent housing even when there are not PSH units available, the CA agency must:
 - a. Be an active member of the Homeless Prevention and Assistance Coalition, including attending bi-monthly meetings
 - b. Be an active member of the Permanent Housing Committee and attend all PH subcommittee meetings.
 - c. Facilitate at minimum, quarterly case conference sessions with relevant HPAC partners about the top prioritized clients that need access to permanent housing assistance.
 - i. The purpose of this case conferencing is continuously seeking alternative permanent housing opportunities for consumers on the Housing Prioritization List even when a CoC permanent supportive housing unit is not available.
 - ii. Case conferencing can be more frequent as client circumstances and needs require.
 - d. Collect appropriate release forms from all clients that will be discussed at the case conferencing sessions.
 - i. It can be up to the HPAC and CA agency how many clients can be discussed at case conferencing sessions and how long the sessions will take place based on the number and complexity of clients on the Housing Prioritization List

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Applicant Qualifications

- Eligible applicants are nonprofit organizations with proven experience serving homeless populations in case management.
- Applicants should have an awareness of existing resources and services within the Ocean County community.
- The coordinated assessment agency must be accessible by phone and/or through the official office location as established by the CA.
- 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 willing to engage in the process of becoming a licensed HMIS user.
- The selected agency must enter data into HMIS and ensure client privacy is maintained
- The selected agency must provide monthly reports to HPAC which include the number of calls received, detailed data on the nature of calls, demographics of clients, number of individuals served, and type(s) of service(s) provided.
- An updated database of available housing resources must be maintained and submitted to HPAC with the monthly statistics report.

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

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- 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 those which are 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(s) 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 Ocean County HPAC 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 proposed 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 describe the activities/costs to be covered
 - Indicate the anticipated matching and leveraging resources to be secured for the project. Please include letters of potential commitment for every match or leverage resource identified.

Application Deadline: All applications must be submitted by close of business on **April 30, 2019.**

Submission:

Submit 1 (one) electronic copy to ehg@oceanhpac.org

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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 – 20 points
- Staffing & Capacity – 30 points
- Community Collaboration – 15 points
- Implementation Timeline – 10 points
- Budget – 5 points

Additional Resources

For further information regarding the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requirements around coordinated entry, please visit the following website:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/toolkit/responsibilities-and-duties/#coordinated-entry>

Contact

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

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