

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTENT OF THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

The Merced County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) is launching this Request for Proposal (RFP) to seek a qualified provider(s) of ten (10) housing units including long-term management of units that will provide Permanent Supportive Housing for persons living with a serious mental illness and/or are dually diagnosed that are Chronically Homeless. The goal of this RFP is to identify a Bidder who demonstrates compassion, a profound respect for, and comprehensive understanding of, persons living with a serious mental illness and/or are dually diagnosed that are Chronically Homeless, and to provide safe, habitable units for these persons to live and receive supportive services.

Permanent Supportive Housing is designed to promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; to quickly rehouse homeless individuals, families, persons fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and youth while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness; to promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families, and to optimize self-sufficiency among those experiencing homelessness.

This RFP supports HUD's Strategic Plan for FY 2022-2026 to accomplish HUD's mission and vision. Each of the five (5) goals in the Strategic Plan includes what HUD hopes to accomplish, the strategies to accomplish those objectives, and the indicators of success. HUD will pursue two (2) overarching priorities focused on increasing equity and improving customer experience across all HUD programs. Five (5) strategic goals and several objectives undergird the Plan, however, the following goals are applicable to this RFP:

- Strategic Goal 1: Support Underserved Communities
- Strategic Goal 2: Ensure Access to and Increase the Production of Affordable Housing
- Strategic Goal 3: Advance Sustainable Communities

1.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Merced County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services was awarded CoC HUD funding for a CoC program of Permanent Supportive Housing. These funds are a combination of project renewal funds and funds recaptured from unspent CoC programs. The CoC program is authorized by Subtitle C of Title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, (42 United States Code 11381–11389) (the Act), and the CoC Program rule found in 24 CFR Part 578 (the Rule). The funds used for this opportunity are from recaptured unspent CoC program funds that are available for reuse.

24 CFR 578.9 requires CoCs to design, operate, and follow a collaborative process for the development of an application in response to a NOFO issued by HUD. As part of this collaborative process, Merced CoC was required to hold a local competition to determine which projects will be included in the consolidated application, along with their relative priority. The results of the local competition, were overseen and approved by the CoC Board, dictate which projects moved forward in the funding process.

Ending homelessness cannot be achieved by homeless service organizations alone. It requires coordination with a variety of other stakeholders, including owners of units, property managers, affordable housing developers, mainstream service providers, the business community, victim service providers, political leaders, healthcare providers and mental health care providers.

REQUIREMENTS

1.3 SCOPE

Bidder shall utilize the following information when developing their Permanent Supportive Housing unit/management RFP response:

1.3.1 Units

The Bidder will provide at least ten (10) studio or one-bedroom units which meet HUD Housing Quality Standards, Rent Reasonableness, and do not exceed Fair Market Rents.

1.3.2 Property Management

The Bidder will provide property management services for the ten (10) permanent supportive housing units including but not limited to:

- Drafting occupancy agreements for each unit.
- Confirm move-in date with occupant and case manager.
- Review occupant guidelines with occupant regarding rental payment terms, required property maintenance, housekeeping guidelines, and whom to call.
- Ensure all agreements have been properly executed.
- Perform detailed move-in inspection with occupant and have occupant sign a report verifying the condition of the property prior to

move-in. Provide copy to occupant, case manager, and program supervisor.

- Complete rent/security deposit calculations, collect occupant portion of rent and security deposit.
- Inspect unit and fill out a report on the property's condition when the occupant moves out.
- Provide occupant, case manager, and program supervisor with a copy including estimated damages.
- Return the balance of the security deposit to the occupant.
- Hold in reserves any portion of the deposit for repairs.
- Clean unit and perform and needed repairs or upgrades to ready for next participant.
- Calculate rent payments based on the CoC HUD funded Permanent Supportive Housing Projects rules.
<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/coc-esg-virtual-binders/coc-rent-calculation/rent-calculation-process/step-8-determine-the-amount-of-resident-rent/>
<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5654/coc-program-rent-determination-tools/>
- Complete occupant income verification just prior to move in and annually thereafter, a reexamination shall also happen if there is a change in family composition or a decrease of occupant income, provide copy to case manager.
- Perform monthly inspections (inside and outside) looking for repair needs, safety hazards, code violations, occupancy violations, etc. Make necessary repairs.
- Provide proper notice to occupants of the inspection dates and include case manager for support of occupants. Send County periodic reports on the condition of the property.
- Report any occupancy concerns/behaviors which could cause occupant to receive official notices prior to notices being served.
- Accept requests for maintenance and repairs and act on them timely.
- Complete pest control of the interior of the units on a regular basis.

- Provide provisions of household supplies (including cleaning supplies), equipment, furniture, and food as required to establish, to maintain, and to accustom the occupant to productive patterns of residential living. The occupant should have a voice on what items they need.
- Collection of rent.
- Work with occupant and case manager regarding late or non-rent payments to set up a payment plan.
- Accept notices and requests from occupants such as thirty (30) day notice to vacate and act on them as appropriate.
- Issue official notices.
- Initiation of eviction proceeding in consultation with the County.

1.3.3 Housing First and Low Barriers

The Housing First approach is an evidence-based, client-centered practice for serving individuals experiencing homelessness. This approach operates under the premise that establishing housing is a necessary precursor to making other voluntary life changes, such as seeking treatment or medical care. Therefore, priority is placed on providing housing to individuals and families quickly with as few obstacles or barriers as possible.

Key features: maintaining minimal programmatic prerequisites, admission policies that support low barriers to access, rapid and streamlined entry into permanent housing, voluntary and engaging supportive services, and a focus on housing stability. Entry to program and project participants is regardless of their income, current or past substance use, criminal records, or history of domestic violence. Programs and projects are not to terminate participants regardless of whether or not they participate in supportive services, make progress on a service plan, lose their income, or based on other activities not covered in a lease agreement typically found for an unassisted person in the program/projects' geographic area. Limited exceptions to the adoption of a housing first model for situations where it conflicts with funder requirements or local/state law (e.g., restrictions on serving people who are listed on sex offender registries).

1.3.4 Equal Access and Non-discrimination

Everyone deserves the right to equal and fair treatment, and access to housing is no exception. The Fair Housing Act protects individuals from

discrimination when renting or buying a home, getting a mortgage, seeking housing assistance, or engaging in other housing-related activities based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), familial status, and disability. Additionally, the Equal Access to Housing Final Rule² ensures equal access to housing is given regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. BHRS housing opportunities shall be made available to all eligible participants without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability, and actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. The people who present together for assistance, regardless of age or relationship, are considered a household and are eligible for assistance as a household. Programs or projects that serve families with children must serve all types of families with children. The age and gender of a child under 18 must not be used as a basis for denying any family's admission to a program.

1.3.5 Habitability Standards

- Permanent supportive housing units must meet CoC Housing quality Standards (HQS)
- CoC Housing Quality Standards located here: <https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/coc-esg-virtual-binders/coc-leasing-rental-assistance-requirements/codes-and-standards/>

1.3.6 Project Participants/Occupants

Project participants in Permanent Supportive Housing Units must enter a lease (or sublease) agreement for an initial term of at least one (1) year that is renewable and is terminable only for cause. Leases (or subleases) must be renewable for a minimum term of one (1) month.

Permanent supportive and Transitional housing for hard-to-house populations of homeless persons must exercise judgment and examine all extenuating circumstances in determining when violations are serious enough to warrant termination so that a program participant's housing is terminated only in the most severe cases.

1.3.7 Connecting with Community Resources:

The Bidder will assist individuals and families in accessing local community resources for behavioral health needs. This could involve collaboration with local mental health centers, clinics, and organizations to ensure a seamless referral process.

1.4 SPECIFIC COMPLIANCE

The Bidder agrees to comply with all State and Federal laws, rules, and regulations that pertain to health and safety, labor, fair employment practices, equal opportunity, Code of Federal regulations (CFR), and all other matters applicable to the HUD and the CoC Program 24 CFR 578. additionally, the bidder will abide by all applicable Local, State, Federal laws and regulations, including, but not limited to:

- HIPAA Regulations
- California Code of Regulations (CCR)
- Title 9, CCR, Section 1820.205, Section 1830.205, Section 1830.210
- California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal OSHA) Requirements
- Behavioral Health Services Act Principles and Guidelines
- Bidder agrees to maintain books, records, documents, and other evidence necessary to facilitate contract monitoring and audits pursuant to Title 9, Section 640, of the CCR and DHCS policy.
- Selected bidder(s) who receive funding for lease, supportive services, operation, or work that may disturb painted surfaces, of pre-1978 housing must comply with the lead-based paint evaluation and hazard reduction requirements of HUD's lead-based paint rules (Lead Disclosure and Lead Safe Housing (24 CFR part 35)), and the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) lead-based paint rules (e.g., Repair, Renovations and Painting; Pre-Renovation Education and Certification; and Lead Training and Certification (40 CFR part 745)). When providing education or counseling on buying or renting housing that may include pre-1978 housing, bidder(s) must inform clients of their rights under the Lead Disclosure Rule (24 CFR part 35, subpart A,), and, if the focus of the education or counseling is on rental or purchase of HUD-assisted pre-1978 housing, the Lead Safe Housing Rule (subpart B, R, and, as applicable, F-M).