

RFP-2122-85 Operator for Low-Barrier Emergency Shelter

Section 1: Proposal Background

Introduction

The City of Norman is initiating this Request for Proposal (RFP-2122-85) to solicit proposals to enter into an agreement to create and operate new emergency shelter resources. The RFP is intended for applicants with the necessary capacity and experience to successfully deliver shelter and case management services to individuals experiencing homelessness.

The deadline to submit all applications and required attachments is Thursday, June 30, 2022, 5:00 p.m. Submissions must be in PDF format and emailed to Lisa.Krieg@NormanOK.gov. Late, Incomplete, or hand delivered submissions will not be considered. Questions may be submitted. Please submit any questions pertaining to this proposal by 5:00 p.m. on June 20, 2022 to same address. A Pre-Proposal Conference will be held on Wednesday, June 22, 2022 at a time and date to be determined, attendance is not mandatory. If no questions are received, the Pre-Proposal conference will be cancelled.

This project will fund the creation and operation of new emergency shelter resources including: new congregate shelter facilities that serve households without children or the addition of new beds in existing shelter facilities. Due to state regulations governing programs that house individuals under the age of 18, this project will not fund congregate shelter resources for youth or households with children.

The RFP is intended for applicants with the necessary capacity and experience to successfully deliver services to individuals who are unsheltered in a way that aligns with the 2022 HomeBase Strategic Plan. This document may be found at [Homelessness Strategic Plan | City of Norman, OK \(normanok.gov\)](#).

Available funds must not supplant existing programs or services but provide new and/or expanded services.

This low-barrier emergency shelter is required to be located in Norman, Oklahoma. The funding is for a one-year grant period beginning approximately August 2022.

The City of Norman reserves the rights to recommend contract amounts less than the proposed budget and to reject any proposal that is incomplete or non-responsive to this Request for Proposals. This RFP does not obligate the City of Norman to pay any costs incurred by respondents in the preparation and submission of their proposal. Furthermore, the RFP does not obligate the City of Norman to accept or contract for any expressed or implied services. Successful applicants will work with City of Norman staff to negotiate formal contracts with specific deliverables, timelines, and outcomes. The City of Norman will be responsible for monitoring all recipients of funds to ensure alignment with fund requirements and contract deliverables.

Program Description

This request for proposal is for the operation of a low-barrier emergency shelter(s) based on a low-barrier, Housing First model that focuses on assisting unsheltered households to move to permanent housing. The program shall provide safe shelter, basic needs, and navigation services to move clients out of homelessness and into permanent housing opportunities.

Low-barrier shelters operate differently from traditional emergency shelters. These shelters are designed to serve the most vulnerable households who may have extensive behavioral and medical issues, and as a result, may face significant barriers to housing. Therefore, low-barrier shelters require more extensive staffing than traditional shelters especially in regards to general management, case management, and security services.

This request is an opportunity for local homeless housing providers to partner with local governments, the business community, non-profit organizations, the faith-based community, and other community groups who are interested in supporting chronically homeless individuals in our community. The hope is that the new shelter will be achieved through the pairing of City funding and partnerships with the public, private, faith-based, and community-based sectors.

Section 2: Program Components

Target Client Population

Low-barrier shelter services must be available for all individuals experiencing homelessness. More specifically, eligible clients must be living outdoors, in a place not meant for human habitation, or fleeing domestic violence. However, it is acceptable for multiple low-barrier shelter providers to specialize in certain subpopulations. It is anticipated that approximately 35 - 50 individuals on any given night may require low-barrier emergency shelter services. Of those individuals, it is estimated that approximately:

- 20-30 may be single men
- 15-20 may be single women

In order to meet the client demand, these services may be provided by multiple service providers within Cleveland County. However, if multiple providers are selected, it is expected that these providers will form partnerships in order to:

- Maximize service effectiveness
- Avoid duplication of services
- Provide shelter services to serve the needs of all potential shelter clients as long as space is available and the client is able to meet the low-barrier entry requirements.

Program Elements

- The selected applicant must adhere to the following Housing First principles:
 - Access to a program is not contingent on sobriety, minimum income requirements, lack of a criminal record, completion of treatment, participation in services, or other unnecessary conditions.
 - Support services are available but are voluntary, client-driven, individualized, and flexible.
 - Services are informed by a harm-reduction philosophy that recognizes that drug and alcohol use are a part of people's lives. Clients are engaged in non-judgmental communication regarding drug and alcohol use and are offered support regarding ways to minimize risky behaviors and engage in safer practices.

- At a minimum, the proposed program will meet the following criteria which are based on evidence-based practices for low-barrier emergency shelter programs:
 - ADA accessibility
 - Accommodates service and companion animals
 - Does not discriminate based on protected classes
 - Sobriety* and treatment are voluntary
 - Does not exclude people with criminal convictions, poor credit, or eviction histories
 - Does not require documentation of identification, custody, or citizenship
 - Does not turn away clients because of a lack of income or the appearance of an unwillingness to participate in services or employment

**Note: Low-barrier shelters may establish requirements that limit the use of drugs and alcohol in common or shared areas of the facility. In addition, facilities should establish behavioral expectations that limit disruptive or violent behavior resulting from intoxication. However, the requirement to abstain completely from alcohol or drug use is not a component of low-barrier facilities.*

- The shelter's primary focus is to assist clients to move to permanent housing as quickly as possible. Providers will facilitate and support progress and activities that support housing and stability for clients. Services are voluntary and client-centered and organized to quickly route clients into housing or other long-term placement through supportive services, case management, and housing placement services.

- Hours of operation: At a minimum, overnight shelter is required. Priority will be given to shelters with 24/7 support or, if not 24/7, then some degree of enhanced hours. This can be achieved by providing overnight shelter and day shelter services together (either directly or through partnerships).

- The staffing model requires more intensive levels of program supervision, case management services, and security services including some type of 24/7 supervision of the site to address loitering outside of the hours of operation.

- Applicants must describe how they plan on utilizing and creating strong partnerships with community organizations that deal frequently with chronically homeless individuals (i.e. homeless outreach programs, law enforcement, mental health providers, and hospitals) in order to identify and target potential shelter clients.

Facility Layout Options

There is no specific facility layout design required. The shelter may be housed in a new facility or may be established through designating or expanding beds at an existing facility (or multiple partner facilities), or a combination of all. Any location proposed must comply with all City of Norman municipal codes and ordinances with fire, safety, and physical facility, including appropriate zoning. In addition, the program must adopt the following facility policies:

- Each shelter will develop and maintain a written disaster response and recovery plan. These plans include provisions for tiered responses concomitant to the level of disaster. All plans include provisions for evacuation, business resumption and periodic testing.
- Each shelter will maintain a written policy governing the storage and use of toxic substances.
- Shelters' housekeeping and maintenance functions may be performed by paid staff, residents, contract service companies or some combination.
- Effective pest control will be maintained at each shelter.
- Smoking – Where operationally feasible and practical, shelters will provide protected smoking areas for residents. Recognizing their obligation to be good neighbors in their respective communities, shelters will endeavor to provide smoking areas away from public view and off neighborhood common areas like sidewalks.
- Secure storage – Where operationally and financially feasible, shelters will provide secure storage facilities for their residents' belongings. In those cases where the shelter provides secure storage, access to the storage facilities will be strictly limited and each shelter will have some method for maintaining accountability of items stored.
- Bars and bans – Sometimes, in order to protect the health and safety of residents and staff, it may become necessary for a shelter to bar or ban an individual from accessing the shelter. Where shelters employ bars or bans, they will do so under the aegis of a clear, written policy that is available to residents upon request. Written policies governing the use of bars and bans will include some mechanism for appeal, as well as some mechanism to redress or make amends for the infraction or behavior that caused the ban. The policy may include descriptions of some behaviors for which there is no remedy.
- Good Neighbor Agreements – Positive relationships with nearby property owners and the broader community are critical to successful shelter operations. Good Neighbor Agreements clearly state what adjacent and nearby property owners can expect from an

emergency homeless shelter and provide property owners with a mechanism to air their complaints and have them addressed timely in a cooperative atmosphere.

- Development of written standards for the administration of medication. Where medications are dispensed by staff, the written standards comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws. Shelters that facilitate residents' self-administration of medication have written standards governing the shelter's role and the liability of shelter staff.

Scope of Work

The description outlined above in the Program Elements section identifies the key program elements and services the selected applicant should provide. In addition, applicants should indicate if they will be able to provide all of the program components to the quantity of clients listed above. If not, applicants should describe what level of service they will be able to provide while also maintaining the highest level of program quality.

Applicants may also propose to subcontract one or more elements of their program to other sub-grantees, provided that those partners have been identified and described in the proposal.

Partnerships and Collaborations

The establishment of community collaborations and partnerships (both formal and informal) are a critical and required component of the program. Applicants are encouraged to plan creatively to utilize existing community resources to provide program services. Applicants must be able to demonstrate partnerships with existing services, both internal to their own organization and within the broader community to best maximize the use of existing resources, avoid duplication of services, and expand options for those served. In particular, partnerships to increase access to services for physical health and disabilities, trauma support, mental health treatment, and substance abuse treatment are often necessary to support this population. Additional partnerships to assist with meeting basic client needs (i.e. government benefit applications, food support, transportation, clothing and toiletries) are also encouraged.

Performance Metrics

The City of Norman expects the provider to submit a monthly report on the scope of services, HMIS Activity, and budget/expenditures to be presented in a written report.

Funding & Eligible Activities

Proposers should include in their response a funding plan outlining the estimated cost of leasing the proposed facility, any improvements necessary for the property and facility to accommodate the shelter use, and the any additional sources for ongoing operations outside of the proposed contract. The funding may be allocated between the following categories: Facility support, program operations, and administration.

Capital projects are not eligible under this RFP.

RFP Qualifications

- Applicants must be a local government, housing authority, behavioral health organization, registered nonprofit with 501(c)(3) status, or federally recognized Indian Tribe that is currently engaged in providing homeless services.
- Applicants must have adequate foundational capacity including administrative infrastructure and ability to manage grant on a reimbursement basis and manage funding over the course of the grant term.
- Applicant has or will obtain General Liability Insurance with limits not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence, \$2,000,000 General Aggregate. Both the General Liability must name the City of Norman specifically as an additional insured under the policy on a separate endorsement page. The City of Norman includes its officials, employees, and volunteers. Certificate of Insurance will be required prior to contract execution.
- Applicant shall maintain automobile insurance in an amount not less than \$1,000,000 combined single limit for each accident. Certificate of Insurance will be required prior to contract execution.
- Requirement to use the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) for client data management.
- Requirement to participate in Norman/Cleveland County Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry system.

Successful applicants will preferably demonstrate experience/knowledge of the following areas:

1. Providing services to homeless individuals in an emergency shelter setting with an emphasis on reducing barriers to securing and retaining permanent housing.
2. Providing housing and case management services to the target population.
3. Demonstrated capacity to serve individuals with medical conditions, developmental/physical disabilities, behavioral health issues, or substance abuse issues and to make referrals to a diverse team of medical professionals in the community.
4. Demonstrated partnerships with providers of mainstream resources, services, and benefits.
5. Accounting for public/grant funds and complying with federal, state, and local funding requirements.

Program Staffing

- Applicants should propose a staffing structure/level that best meets the requirements of the proposal and maintains a staff-to-resident ratio that ensures the safety and security of both personnel and clients.
- All program staff should be trained in Housing First principles. Program case managers should be trained in and actively employ evidence-based practices for client engagement such as trauma-informed care and motivational interviewing.
- Applicants will be required to provide written standards pertaining to that that include:
 - Required background checks for all paid and volunteer staff
 - Required drug screening for all staff and implementation of a written substance abuse policy for staff.

Low Barrier Emergency Homeless Shelter RFP-2122-85 Project Checklist

The deadline to submit all applications is Thursday, June 30, 2022, 5:00 p.m. Submissions must be in PDF format and emailed to Lisa.Krieg@Normanok.gov . Late, incomplete, or hand delivered submissions will not be considered.

Required Forms

- Application/Cover Sheet
- Project Budget (Excel workbook – make sure to complete all tabs)
- Conflict of Interest Questionnaire and Limits to Primarily Religious Organizations

Required Supporting Documents

- Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws
- Federal Tax Exemption Determination Letter
- List of Board of Directors
- Project Organizational Chart (must include name, title, email, and phone for each staff position at project – this is a requirement for the grantors)
- Most Recent Independent Financial Audit
- As a means to measure established relationships and the extent to which community resources are pooled to provide more effective and efficient services to clients across the Continuum’s partners, please provide letters of support, MOU’s, or other documentation of community collaborations.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The following questions are focused on the project description and are to be submitted as responses to each question in a narrative format not to exceed a total of 10 single spaced pages of 11 point type.

1. Provide a detailed description of the project scope, including the target population, number of clients served, types of services provided, frequency with which services will be provided, and the location where services will take place.
2. Describe your experience working with individuals who have behavioral health needs, domestic violence survivors, trauma survivors, or other vulnerability factors (as applicable for proposed project population).
3. Note any evidence-based, best, promising practices, or otherwise innovative practices your organization uses to ensure the best quality and targeted services are available to clients in a cost effective way. Discuss why the service delivery model you describe will help individuals establish and maintain housing stability.
4. Describe how you will engage clients in organizational and program planning, policy and decision making.
5. Describe how you plan to collect and track evaluation performance measures.
6. Is the program currently operational? If so where is the facility located? If this is a new program have you identified a facility location? If yes, please indicate the location. If no, please describe your plan for identifying and obtaining a suitable location.
7. Describe how the program will be sustained long-term and will you pursue supplemental funding for this program?

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The following questions are focused upon the organizational capacity and are to be submitted as responses to each question in a narrative format not to exceed 3 single spaced pages of 11 point type.

1. Describe the organization's mission, as well as a brief overview of the primary programs and services offered by your organization. Provide evidence of your agency's experience and capacity to implement the project.
2. Describe the organization's leadership and management, their ability to supervise the project and staff, and the organization's history in ensuring program effectiveness and fidelity to funding agreements.
3. Describe your agency's internal systems, including your fiscal management system, case/client record management system and recordkeeping procedures. Describe any auditing findings or concerns during the last 24 months as well as the resolution of each.

PROJECT WORK PLAN

Please provide sufficient technical detail for reviewers to gain a clear understanding how the project will be modeled and operate in the first year. Answers are to be submitted as a response to each question in a narrative format not to exceed 3 single spaced pages of 11 point type.

1. What are the proposed hours of operation for the facility? What time of the day will participants be able to enter the facility? How late will they be allowed to stay in the morning?
2. Are participants allowed to enter and leave the facility as needed or will there be a curfew in place?
3. How will site security be addressed during the hours of operation? How will the site be monitored during non-hours of operation to avoid loitering?
4. What supportive services or case management will be offered and the hours of availability for client access?
5. Describe the sleeping accommodations that will be proposed. Beds, cots, mats, etc.

6. How does your proposed program support participants in the goal of transitioning to permanent housing?
7. Describe how clients will meet their hygiene, laundry, and nutritional needs while participating in the program?
8. Please provide an overview of the proposed program rules and how will noncompliance be addressed?

PROJECT STAFFING

Provide an overview of the staffing plan for the project by submitting a proposed organizational chart for the operation of the facility. For each staff position anticipated to be involved in the project: state the title of the position , a brief description of the tasks and responsibilities, indicate the percentage of time dedicated to this project, and indicate the required education, training, and/or credentials and experience required of this position (social work, mental health, medical, etc.).

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND LEVERAGING

Answers are to be submitted as responses to each question in a narrative format not to exceed 3 single spaced pages of 11 point type.

1. Please describe your commitment and participation in the Cleveland County Continuum of Care, including current level of participation in committees and initiatives.
2. Describe how your agency is collaborating with other homeless service providers and mainstream service providers. How do these collaborative efforts help minimize or avoid the duplication of service and effort? How do you include leveraged services and resources available in Cleveland County in your service plan?
3. Describe the extent to which you intend to leverage in-kind donations and volunteers for the project.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND LIMITS TO PRIMARY RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Conflict of Interest

Applicants must avoid any conflict of interest in carrying out activities funded by City, State, and Federal grant dollars. Generally, this means that a person who is an employee, otherwise in a decision-making position, or has information about decisions made by the organization (such as an agent, consultant, volunteer, Board member, officer or elected or appointed official of the grantee or recipient) may not obtain a personal or financial interest or benefit from the organization's activity, including through contracts, subcontracts, or agreements. This exclusion continues during the employee's tenure and for one year following employment.

As part of general guidelines for the procurement of goods and services using Federal funding, organizations are required to have a "code of conduct" or "conflict of interest" policy in place that prohibits employees, officers, agents, or volunteers of the organization from participating in the decision-making process related to procurement if that person, or that person's family, partner, or any organization employing any of the above has a direct financial interest or benefit from that procurement. In addition, these persons may not accept any gratuity, favors, or anything of monetary value from a contractor, consultant, or other entity whose services are procured for the organization. Organizations should develop standards for avoiding such apparent or potential conflicts. Such standards must include written policy that is part of the employee policies. Employees, board members and volunteers are required to sign a statement indicating that they have read the policy and will comply.

Limits on Funding to Primary Religious Organizations

In order to uphold the basic provisions of separation of church and state, a number of conditions apply to the provisions of funding to organizations that are primarily religious in nature. These provisions generally require that when funded under the project, the religious organization will provide services in a way that is free from religious influences and in accordance with the following principals:

- The organization will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of religion, and will not limit employment or give preference in employment on the basis of religion.
- The organization will not discriminate against, limit services provided to, or give preference to any person obtaining shelter, other service(s) offered by the project, or any eligible activity permissible under the project on the basis of religion and will not limit such service provision or give preference to persons on the basis of religion.
- The organization will not provide religious instruction, counseling, religious services, worship (not including voluntary nondenominational prayer before meetings), engage in religious proselytizing, or exert other religious influences in the provision of shelter or other activities.
- Requiring that a program participant attend religious services or meetings as a condition of receiving other social services at the organization (such as shelter or a meal) is not allowed under this provision. Allowing participant to choose to take part in services or meeting offered by the organization as they wish, separate from the funded activities provided, is allowable.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are there any member(s) of the applicant's staff or any member(s) of the applicant's Board of Directors or governing body who currently is/are or has/have been within one year of the date of this application a City employee or consultant, or a member of the City Council?

Yes No If yes, please list the names(s) below:

2. Will the funds requested by the applicant be used to award a subcontract to any individual(s) or business affiliate(s) who currently is/are or has/have been within one year of the date of this application a City employee, consultant, or a member of the City Council?

Yes No If yes, please list the name(s) below:

3. Is/are there any member(s) of the applicant's staff or member(s) of the applicant's Board of Directors or other governing body who are business partners or family members of a City employee, consultant, or a member of the City Council?

Yes No If yes, please list the name(s) below:

If you have answered "YES" to any of the above, a disclosure notice must be submitted with this proposal to determine whether a real or apparent conflict of interest exists.

Name of Organization: _____

Name of Applicant's Authorized Official: _____

Authorized Official's Title: _____

Signature of Authorized Official: _____