

Request for Proposals

Family Rapid Re-Housing March 2020

Community Shelter Board
355 E. Campus View Blvd, Suite 250
Columbus, OH 43235

Part 1: Request for Proposals

1. Purpose

Community Shelter Board (CSB) is seeking proposals for a program providing rapid re-housing (RRH) services for families who are homeless in Columbus and Franklin County, starting July 1, 2020. CSB may, at its discretion, renew funding for the program as part of the annual Gateway funding process. RRH is an intervention designed to help people quickly exit homelessness, return to permanent housing in the community, and not become homeless again immediately after exiting services or in the near term.

2. Target Population

a. Minimum Program Eligibility

The RRH program will serve families who are initially engaged and enrolled while residing in a family emergency shelter funded by CSB. This includes families that are enrolled in the RRH program and then subsequently exit shelter to either an unsheltered location or to an institution, such as a hospital or jail, for a period of 90 days or less. This also includes families who experienced homelessness and entered emergency shelter and then moved to temporary situations with family/friends while working to secure and stabilize in permanent housing. This means the program will continue to assist homeless families while they remain homeless and until they are permanently housed or otherwise are no longer literally homeless.

At minimum, eligible homeless families served by the program will be those who are unable to successfully exit homelessness on their own or through other assistance within a short period (typically within 5 days of *initially* becoming homeless) and who need focused, individualized assistance to quickly secure and stabilize in permanent housing. Prioritized families may also be those that have had repeated episodes of homelessness within the past two years. To be eligible for CSB Direct Client Assistance (DCA, i.e., financial assistance), families served must also have income below 35% of the Area Median Income (AMI) as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

b. Priority Sub-Populations

The RRH program funded through this RFP will prioritize RRH assistance for families entering emergency shelters who need higher levels of financial assistance and higher intensity supportive services to exit homelessness into permanent housing. The RRH program funded through this RFP will assist homeless families in shelter that are unable to quickly and successfully exit to and stabilize in permanent housing. This may be because of barriers related to housing history, credit, income, and/or other factors. Prioritized families may also be those that have had repeated episodes of homelessness within the past two years. Specific targeting and prioritization criteria for this program will be developed by CSB, in consultation with the successful applicant. CSB will work with the successful applicant and existing family RRH programs to develop a standardized screening and prioritization process in collaboration with other system partners to determine which family RRH program is most appropriate.

3. Program Specifications

The following describes program specifications the successful applicant will meet and adhere to throughout the term of the funding award.

a. RRH Core Components

While the program must have all three RRH core components below available, it is not required that a participating family use them all.

Housing Identification

- ⟨ Recruit landlords to provide housing opportunities for families experiencing homelessness.
- ⟨ Address potential barriers to landlord participation such as concerns about the short-term nature of rental assistance and household qualifications.
- ⟨ Assist families to find and secure appropriate rental housing that meets habitability standards.

Rent and Move-In Assistance (financial assistance via CSB's DCA program)

- ⟨ Provide assistance to cover allowable move-in costs, deposits, and the rental and/or utility assistance necessary to allow households to move immediately out of homelessness and stabilize in permanent housing.
- ⟨ CSB's DCA program will administer the costs for the first month's rent and security deposit. The program will administer the costs for subsequent months' rent and request reimbursement from CSB for these costs.

RRH Case Management and Services

- ⟨ Help households develop and maintain an Individualized Housing Stabilization Plan (IHSP) that includes housing search and placement goals initially and is then updated, once the family is housed, to include housing stabilization and retention goals.
- ⟨ Help households identify and select among various permanent housing options based on their unique needs, preferences, and financial resources.
- ⟨ Help households address issues that may impede access to housing (such as credit history, arrears, and legal issues).
- ⟨ Help households negotiate manageable and appropriate lease agreements with landlords.
- ⟨ Make appropriate and time-limited housing-related services and supports available to households to allow them to stabilize quickly in permanent housing.
- ⟨ Monitor households' housing stability and be available to resolve crises, at a minimum during the time RRH assistance is provided.
- ⟨ Provide or assist households with connections to resources that help them stabilize in housing, improve their safety and well-being, and achieve their long-term goals. This includes providing or ensuring that the household has access to resources related to benefits, employment, and community-based services (if needed/appropriate) so that they can sustain rent payments independently when rental assistance ends.
- ⟨ Use CSB's standardized Case Review and Closure Checklist to determine when to adjust RRH assistance, when the household has achieved housing stability, and when services can be discontinued.
- ⟨ Ensure that services provided are participant-directed, respectful of people's right to self-determination, and voluntary. Households understand that RRH assistance is premised on their active involvement with RRH case management to achieve their IHSP. RRH staff in turn actively work to engage households in problem-solving and goal achievement, including use of evidence-based practices, such as Motivational Interviewing, when members of the household are not engaging in case management.

b. RRH Program Standards

The program will adhere to the [RRH Program Standards](#) published by the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH). (NOTE: applicants should disregard the RRH performance benchmarks included in the NAEH document. CSB will establish a Program Outcomes Plan (POP) that includes applicable performance measures and goals for the program). RRH is fundamentally a Housing First intervention providing housing and voluntary services for people experiencing a housing crisis without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety). The program should use a progressive assistance approach that seeks to help households end their homelessness as rapidly as possible, despite barriers, with the least amount of financial assistance and services needed to quickly resolve the housing crisis and avoid an immediate return to homelessness.

c. Program Staffing, Training, and Supervision

Applicants should propose the number of case managers and housing specialists they believe can be supported with available funding, accounting for type, intensity, duration of services, and other necessary staffing and program costs. Applicants should describe the roles and responsibilities for case managers and housing specialists. Program staffing and services will ensure a single, primary case manager is assigned to families throughout program enrollment and that there is adequate and regular case supervision and program management.

Case managers will have an average case load size of 13-18 households that may be in various stages of being assisted to secure or stabilize in permanent housing. Applicants must have a staffing plan that will assure continuity of care, and full program active case load capacity throughout the funding term (e.g., over hiring based on expected staff turnover to assure consistent level of case management staffing).

All program staff will have appropriate education, experience and training necessary to provide high quality, effective services. Applicants must describe in the proposal the training each staff person will receive upon hire (e.g., RRH core practices, Housing First, motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, harm reduction, domestic violence, community resources, etc.), along with the timelines within which this training will be completed (e.g., within 90 days of hire).

Final decisions around program design and staffing configuration must be made in consultation with and be approved by CSB post-award and prior to July 1, 2020. See Section 6. RFP Schedule for additional information.

d. Screening, Triage, Assessment, and Housing Plans

The need for RRH services will be determined via a standardized screening tool and process approved by CSB and used by all system partners that accounts for program eligibility and prioritization factors.

Screening and referral to the program will occur following a brief period (typically 5 days) that first allows families that experience homelessness to resolve their homelessness on their own or with other assistance. Screening and referral to the RRH program will be completed by shelter staff in coordination with CSB staff overseeing system triage functions. Screening and referral decisions will also account for additional information not collected in the standardized screening tool, such as through case conferences and referring shelter staff observations.

Following referral and program intake, case managers will conduct a housing barrier and service needs assessment using a standardized assessment tool. The assessment will focus on housing barriers and other history, characteristics, and service needs directly relevant to quickly obtaining

and stabilizing in permanent housing and will form the basis for an initial IHSP. The assessment and initial IHSP will typically be conducted where the family is staying (e.g., in shelter) or where otherwise practical for the family. The assessment and an initial IHSP will be completed no later than two (2) business days following program referral and intake.

e. Program Services

Household members will be actively engaged in identifying their housing barriers and other critical service needs, developing their IHSP, and deciding which housing options and services best meet their needs. The program will strive to honor household choices while also actively engaging household members, using Motivational Interviewing and other strategies, in making choices that quickly resolve their homeless crisis. This may involve strongly encouraging or limiting housing options for which financial assistance may be provided to those that are practical, safe, and at least reasonably sustainable. In all cases, households will be assisted with creating an IHSP upon exiting the program that addresses ongoing housing needs and potential future housing crises.

Staff will provide transportation or coordinate transportation for families. Staff will be scheduled to work during hours when they are most likely to contact household members, including during evening and weekends as necessary.

Staff will cultivate relationships with landlords and develop a successful process for accessing safe, sustainable housing on behalf of families. Staff will work closely with landlords to address landlord concerns about leasing to a family and address tenancy issues to avoid eviction and maintain landlord satisfaction. Staff will coordinate with the CSB Community Housing Manager to engage landlord partners.

Once housed, program staff will continue actively working with families, including making in-home visits and assisting household members with understanding and meeting lease obligations. As necessary, staff will continue assisting families until the household is able to maintain housing without further program assistance or the maximum term of assistance is reached, whichever occurs sooner. Staff will use CSB's standardized Case Review and Closure Checklist periodically (e.g., monthly) to determine service needs, type and intensity of assistance, and whether services can be discontinued.

f. Service Limitations

All families will be offered a basic, initial package of assistance:

- < Housing search and placement assistance at an amount and intensity sufficient to achieve rapid placement in permanent housing and that supports overall POP achievement.
- < Financial assistance for initial, allowable move-in expenses via CSB DCA and an average of 3 additional months financial assistance for allowable housing costs determined on month-to-month basis according to documented financial need and CSB's standardized Case Review and Closure Checklist. Financial need means the household lacks necessary financial resources to pay for housing costs and, absent assistance will immediately be subject to eviction and return to literal homelessness.
- < RRH case management and services post-housing placement determined on a month-to-month basis according to documented need related to resolving housing retention barriers and CSB's standardized Case Review and Closure Checklist.

Additional assistance beyond the initial basic package described above must be based on 1) an updated housing barrier and service needs assessment, and 2) may only be offered on a month-to-month basis according to program resources and household financial need and needs related to

resolving housing retention barriers, as indicated by CSB's standardized Case Review and Closure Checklist.

4. Qualifications and Performance

CSB is seeking proposals that will demonstrate the ability to create a sustainable program that will achieve all expected outcomes. The agency should have experience with providing some or all of the services described in the RRH Core Components.

CSB will work with the successful applicant to develop a POP based on the following minimum expectations:

- < 100% of families that complete a program intake will complete a housing barrier and service needs assessment and initial IHSP within two (2) business days of RRH program intake.
- < 100% of families receiving program assistance will receive direct services (in-person or via phone) from their assigned case manager at least once per week until they obtain permanent housing or otherwise exit homelessness.
- < The *average* length of stay in shelter and/or the streets (program entry to permanent housing residential move-in date) for families will not exceed 32 days.
- < At least 80% of participating families will achieve a successful housing outcome.
- < The recidivism rate for families that successfully exit to permanent housing will not exceed 10%.
- < The applicant should propose an average length of program participation.

5. Contract Amount and Terms

CSB will contract with the successful applicant for an initial twelve (12) months (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021). CSB may contract with the successful applicant earlier, dependent on CSB's receipt of the grant agreement from the funder of this program. The estimated funding amount (pending funding award to CSB and CSB Board approval) for the program is \$500,000 annually. The annual funding includes financial assistance for families. The successful applicant should account for the initial, allowable move-in expenses to be processed through the CSB DCA process. For example, if annual move-in expenses are estimated at \$100,000, CSB will award the successful applicant \$400,000 and retain \$100,000 to use for DCA for the households participating in the program. The successful applicant is required to estimate both the move-in expenses CSB will retain from the available funding in the budget and the subsequent monthly costs that the applicant will administer. The program budget should only include funding for space costs if actual additional costs are incurred. Applicants may use match funding for space costs.

6. RFP Schedule

Key Dates	Activities
3/13/2020	Request for proposals released
4/3/2020	Completed proposals due to CSB by 5 pm
4/6 - 4/17/2020	Applicant selection
4/20/2020	Award announcement
7/1/2020 or earlier	Contract issuance
7/1/2020 or earlier	Program fully staffed and operational

7. Review Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed based upon the following:

- < Administrative Capacity: Does the applicant have the capacity to comply with [CSB Partner Agency Standards](#) and the [Homeless Crisis Response System Policies and Procedures](#)? Does the applicant demonstrate the experience and capacity to achieve the goals and objectives described in the RFP?
- < Application Completeness: Is the RFP responsive? Is the application complete?
- < Program Design: To what extent is the project design clear, reasonable, and consistent with RRH core components, RRH practice standards, and RFP requirements? Does the applicant adequately describe the project?
- < Cost Efficiency: Is the requested budget reasonable? Are project costs adequately explained and reasonable? To what extent does the project leverage other community and CSB investments?

8. Questions and Submission Requirements

Please direct any questions to Grants and Compliance Director Heather Notter (hnotter@csb.org, 614-715-2542). Responses to all questions submitted will be provided to all applicants that submit questions or express interest in this RFP. Please notify Heather Notter via email by March 30, 2020 if you would like to receive responses to submitted questions.

Completed and signed applications are due electronically to Heather Notter no later than **5 pm on April 3, 2020**.