Request for Proposals

Homelessness Prevention for Families
Rapid Re-Housing for Families and Single Adults
August 2020

Part 1: GUIDELINES

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

1. Purpose

Community Shelter Board (CSB) is seeking proposals for programs providing 1) homelessness prevention (HP) services for families and 2) rapid re-housing (RRH) services for families and/or single adults who are homeless in Columbus and Franklin County, starting September 1, 2020. Applicants can apply to provide HP services, RRH services for families, RRH services for single adults, or any combination of these services. CSB may award funds to one or multiple partners.

HP is an intervention designed to stabilize in housing families that will become homeless in the next 14-21 days. 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

HP programs will serve families at imminent risk of homelessness who call the Coordinated Point of Access/Homeless Hotline (CPOA/HH) and who are referred by Gladden Community House's Family Diversion program. Programs will prioritize assistance for households with children that will imminently lose their housing; have no alternative, safe, and appropriate housing; and have no other resources to obtain or maintain housing. Families imminently at-risk of literal homelessness within 14 days, families with school-age children, and/or families residing in a household with one or more additional families are prioritized for services.

RRH programs will serve families and/or single adults who are initially engaged and enrolled while residing in an emergency shelter funded by CSB. This includes households that are enrolled in a 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 means the programs will continue to assist homeless households while they remain homeless and until they are permanently housed or otherwise are no longer literally homeless. At minimum, eligible homeless households served by RRH programs 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.

Programs will prioritize RRH assistance for households entering emergency shelters who 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. **For family RRH specifically, CSB is looking for proposals that will increase the current assistance provided to families in RRH programs from 3 to 4 months to 4 to 6 months.**

To be eligible for CSB Direct Client Assistance (DCA, i.e., financial assistance for rent and security deposits), households must have income below 35% of the Area Median Income (AMI) as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

3. Program Specifications

a. HP Core Components

Targeted HP programs prioritize and direct assistance to families at the greatest risk of becoming homeless, providing problem-solving and stabilization services, including rental assistance to prevent families from entering emergency shelter, and helping them regain housing stability. HP staff will include case managers who will help households maintain their current housing, if appropriate, by engaging with landlords, providing case management and services, and linking households to community supports, such as access to benefits, employment resources, food pantries, and child care. If the household's current housing is not appropriate or the landlord is unwilling to work with

the household, case managers will help identify and secure alternate housing and will provide moving and transportation assistance and utility deposits, as needed, preventing the household from becoming homeless. Staff will help households develop and maintain an Individualized Housing Stabilization Plan (IHSP) that includes housing stabilization and retention goals.

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

HP Case Management and Services
⟨ 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 HP 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 HP 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 HP assistance is premised on their active involvement with HP case management. HP 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 Core Components
Programs 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. While programs must have all three RRH core components below available, it is not required that a participating household use them all.

Housing Identification
⟨ Recruit landlords to provide housing opportunities for households experiencing homelessness.
⟨ Address potential barriers to landlord participation such as concerns about the short-term nature of rental assistance and household qualifications.

⟨   Assist households to find and secure appropriate rental housing that meets habitability standards.

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

c. Program Staffing, Training, and Supervision
Applicants should propose the number of case managers they believe can be supported with the proposed 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 other staff. Program staffing and services will ensure a single, primary case manager is assigned to households throughout program enrollment and that there is adequate and regular case supervision and program management.

HP case managers will have a case load size of 20-25 households and RRH case managers will have a case load size of 15-20 households. Applicants must have a staffing plan that will assure continuity of care, and full program active case load capacity throughout the funding term.

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., 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 for program design and staffing must be made in consultation with and be approved by CSB post-award and prior to September 1, 2020.

d. Screening, Triage, Assessment, and Housing Plans
The need for HP services will be determined via a standardized screening process. People at risk of experiencing homelessness contact the CPOA/HH, which conducts a preliminary triage and assessment and explores diversion possibilities via a standardized Housing Crisis Assessment and diversion process. If diversion from literal homelessness is not possible, CPOA/HH places the family on a standby list that is monitored throughout the day by Gladden Community House Family Diversion program. Family Diversion staff call all families on the standby list and attempt to divert the family again. If the family still cannot be diverted, Family Diversion staff schedules a face-to-face meeting with the family to explore additional diversion options. If a family has a place to stay that night, but is at imminent risk of homelessness, Family Diversion staff will refer the family to a HP program for services and financial assistance.

The need for RRH services will be determined via a standardized screening tool and process completed by shelter staff and CSB. Screening and referral to the program will occur following a brief period (typically 5 days) that first allows households to resolve their homelessness on their own or with other assistance. 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, RRH 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 in shelter, via phone, 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 households. Staff will be scheduled to work during hours when they are most likely to contact household members, including during evening and weekends as necessary. Electronic and telephonic communicate are encouraged during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Programs will cultivate relationships with landlords and develop a successful process for accessing safe, sustainable housing on behalf of households. Programs 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. Programs will coordinate with the CSB Housing Department to engage landlord partners. Once housed, staff will continue actively working with households on service needs and to help household members understand and meet lease obligations.

For both HP and RRH programs, households will exit from the program when they have stabilized in housing, are able to sustain their housing, and are connected to community-based services they need and desire. Programs will use CSB's standardized Case Review and Closure Checklist to help staff determine when to exit households. Programs will offer only what the household needs and wants and only as long as necessary to achieve the goal of ending the housing crisis and avoiding literal homelessness or a near-term return to homelessness.

4. Qualifications and Performance

CSB is seeking proposals that will demonstrate the ability to create a sustainable program that will achieve all expected outcomes. Agencies should have experience with providing some or all of the services described above.

For HP programs, CSB will work with successful applicants to develop a POP based on the following minimum expectations:
- ⟨ The successful applicant should propose the number of families to be served during the grant term.
- ⟨ 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 achieve housing stability, either in their current housing situation or in new housing.
- ⟨ The average length of participation in the program will be 120-180 days. The successful applicant should identify the desired average length of participation within this timeframe.
- ⟨ At least 80% of participating families will achieve a successful housing outcome.
- ⟨ The recidivism rate for families that successfully exit the program will not exceed 10%.

For RRH programs, CSB will work with successful applicants to develop a POP based on the following minimum expectations:
- ⟨ The successful applicant should propose the number of families and/or single adults to be served during the grant term.
- ⟨ 100% of households 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 households 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.
- ⟨ The *average* length of stay in shelter and/or the streets (program entry to permanent housing residential move-in date) for single adults will not exceed 35 days.
- ⟨ The average length of participation in the program will be 120-180 days. The successful applicant should identify the desired average length of participation within this timeframe.
- ⟨ At least 80% of families and 60% of single adults will achieve a successful housing outcome.
- ⟨ The recidivism rate for households that successfully exit to permanent housing will not exceed 10%.

5. Contract Amount and Terms

The programs will be supported using various sources of funding through June 2022. The total amount of available funding is$6,236,033 and is non-renewable. The grant includes federal Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding. CSB will contract with successful applicants for twenty-two (22) months (September 1, 2020 – June 30, 2022). CSB may, at its discretion, reduce the successful applicant's allocated funding for FY2022, if spend-down benchmarks are not met.

Applicants should apply for the amount of funding that can reasonably be spent through June 2022, including financial assistance. Applicants should account for the initial, allowable move-in expenses to be processed through the CSB DCA process. Successful applicants are required to estimate both the move-in expenses CSB will retain from the total program funding and the subsequent monthly costs that the applicant will administer and request reimbursement for from CSB. 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. Schedule

Dates	Activities
8/10/2020	Request for proposals released
8/24/2020	Completed proposals due to CSB by 5 pm
8/31/2020	Award announcement
9/1/2020 - 9/7/2020	Contract issuance, with a 9/1/2020 effective date
10/15/2020	Program fully staffed and operational

7. Review Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed based on 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 HP and/or RRH core components, HP and/or 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 August 21, 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 August 24, 2020.**