

# Request for Proposals

## Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program January 7, 2019

# PART 1: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## 1. Purpose

In July 2018, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded Community Shelter Board (CSB) a Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) grant. The Youth Core Team, Youth Action Board (which includes youth with lived experience of homelessness), and multiple workgroups have conducted a needs assessment and developed a plan for a comprehensive system to address youth homelessness. The goal is to prevent youth homelessness, or if it can't be prevented, to ensure that it is rare, brief, and one time.

CSB is managing the Request for Proposals (RFP) process for the YHDP funds, on behalf of the Youth Core Team, Youth Action Board, and Columbus and Franklin County Continuum of Care. We are seeking proposals for programs serving youth experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness for FY 2020 – FY 2021 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021). CSB may renew funding as part of the annual Gateway and Continuum of Care funding process, at CSB's discretion and in consultation with the Youth Core Team, Youth Action Board, and Continuum of Care.

The program types listed in this RFP represent only part of our community's response to youth homelessness. For additional information on both the entire system, the program types included in this RFP, and their role in the youth homeless crisis response system, please see [Columbus and Franklin County's Coordinated Plan \(CCP\) to Prevent and End Homelessness among Youth](#).

## 2. Target Population

Youth are defined as individuals up to and including the age of 24 who are either unaccompanied or pregnant and/or parenting. To be eligible for YHDP-funded assistance, youth must be literally homeless or imminently at-risk of literal homelessness within 14 days.

### ***Literally homeless***

- < In shelter including emergency shelter, transitional housing, or hotel or motel paid by government or charity; OR
- < On the street or another place not meant for human habitation (e.g., car, garage, park, abandoned building); OR
- < In an institution (e.g., jail, hospital, juvenile detention) that the youth is exiting and where youth was resident for 90 days or less AND the youth resided in emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately prior to entering that institution; OR
- < Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and who lack resources and support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

### ***At-risk of literal homelessness***

- < In own housing, but being evicted within 14 days; OR
- < In a hotel or motel paid for by the youth, family, or friends and cannot stay for more than 14 days (often due to lack of ability to continue paying); OR
- < With family or friends and being asked to leave within 14 days; AND
- < Have no safe alternative housing, resources or support networks to maintain or obtain permanent housing.

### 3. Program Requirements and Standards

The successful applicant will meet and adhere to the below overarching and program-specific requirements and other applicable [CSB Partner Agency standards](#) throughout the term of the award.

#### Overarching Requirements

Applicants must propose programs that are consistent with and incorporate the following principles and approaches.

- < Involve youth with lived experience in program design and continuous improvement efforts.
- < Utilize Positive Youth Development (PYD) and Trauma Informed Care (TIC) principles and approaches across all facets of programming.
- < Provide family engagement strategies and services, when appropriate, to support family reunification and/or to strengthen family involvement and support in achieving youth-driven outcomes.
- < Adhere to Housing First practices, including facilitating immediate access to housing with no re-housing assistance preconditions.
- < Adhere to system-wide coordinated access, assessment, prioritization, and referral protocols, including use of common screening and assessment tools that identify current housing status, housing barriers, prioritization for different homeless crisis response interventions, and other critical needs and services.
- < Promote youth choices in the services and housing assistance they receive.
- < Ensure individualized and youth-driven supports across all types of program services.
- < Support youth with positive and lasting social and community connections. When possible, link youth with trained [youth peer support specialists \(YPSS\)](#), near-peer staff with lived experience who focus on relationship-building and system navigation.
- < Coordinate with system partners and other systems to create and maintain a collaborative approach to assisting youth. This includes, but is not limited to, organizations and resources serving minors, youth of color, LGBTQ youth, pregnant and parenting youth, restored-citizens, child welfare-involved youth, and youth who are new Americans.
- < Ensure a safe and affirming experience and environment including, but not limited to: allowing young people to self-identify their name, gender, pronouns, and sexual orientation; ensuring public and private spaces (including restrooms) affirm youth and their identity; and other best practice standards relevant to successfully supporting LGBTQ youth. Programs will develop and implement inclusive policies and procedures consistent with HUD requirements and best practices.
- < Support youth directly and through partnerships with other system and community providers in making positive and lasting gains related to four core outcomes: **stable housing; permanent connections; education/employment; and social-emotional-physical well-being.**

Successful applicants will propose and implement programs that meet the requirements stated in this RFP, including the principles, approaches and goals outlined above and further described in the CCP. Successful applicants will also propose and implement programs that adhere to CSB's [Partner Agency standards](#), [Columbus and Franklin County HEARTH Policies and Procedures](#), and HUD regulation [24 CFR Part 578](#).

Applicants must agree to work with CSB to fully develop, implement and continuously improve programs, including developing and maintaining detailed program policies and procedures. 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, 2019.

## **Program Types and Requirements**

Applicants may apply for one or more program types listed below. Joint proposals that include two or more qualified agencies with one serving as lead applicant are welcome.

### **A. Coordinated Access and Rapid Resolution Team (CARR Team)**

The CARR Team is a mobile team of youth specialists who will engage and assist youth who are literally homeless or imminently at-risk of homelessness. The CARR Team will work with youth in a variety of settings, such as community-based access points (e.g., libraries, recreation centers), drop-in centers (e.g., Star House), unsheltered locations, and emergency shelters, as well as remotely via phone, email, text, and social media. Youth assisted by the team will include those needing more individualized support to successfully navigate community and youth homeless crisis system resources to quickly resolve their crises and address other critical needs. Core services include:

#### **Screening and rapid resolution assistance**

- ⟨ Work as integral member of Coordinated Point of Access (CPoA), including the Homeless Hotline, to engage, screen, and assist targeted youth who are homeless or imminently at-risk and in need of individualized support. The team will be available via phone, text, and in-person, during hours to be determined in coordination with system administrators. The Team must identify and report common locations for youth experiencing homelessness and provide in-reach to known locations with high youth presence.
- ⟨ Use a common screening tool to facilitate immediate and coordinated access to prevention, emergency shelter, re-housing assistance, and other needed assistance.
- ⟨ Provide individualized, strengths-based problem-solving, mediation, family re-unification (when appropriate and safe) and other assistance to quickly prevent loss of housing for youth who are imminently at-risk of homelessness or identify safe alternative housing options to prevent the need for a shelter placement or other literal homeless experience.
- ⟨ As needed, the Team will provide basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, transportation support, hygiene kits, blankets, etc.) as youth are being connected to services, shelter and housing solutions.

#### **Assessment and prioritization for youth dedicated interventions, and related tracking**

- ⟨ Conduct youth-specific vulnerability and service needs assessment using standardized system assessment tool with targeted youth to identify their service needs, housing barriers, and preferences.
- ⟨ Track all literally homeless youth, including those who are assessed and prioritized for transitional and permanent housing interventions, as well as other targeted assistance, as part of coordinated access processes for youth.

#### **Facilitated access to youth dedicated interventions and other resources**

- ⟨ Provide individualized information, referral, and navigational support for targeted high need/high vulnerability youth to access community-based prevention resources, targeted homelessness prevention, emergency shelter, rapid re-housing, transitional housing, family re-unification assistance (when appropriate and safe), host homes, permanent supportive housing, mainstream benefits and cash assistance, and other needed and desired assistance.

In addition to core services, the youth CARR Team will:

- < Have sufficient staffing to respond to program participants within 24 hours. Applicants for the CARR Team should propose the number and specific types of staff team members that will be employed for the team based on available YHDP and match funding and after accounting for other necessary program and staffing costs.
- < Coordinate closely with outreach teams, emergency shelters, and other community partners.
- < Have comprehensive knowledge of the resources available to youth experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness and be able to appropriately and effectively match youth to services and programs.
- < Provide transportation assistance to youth as needed.
- < Facilitate access to limited financial assistance for youth through CSB's Direct Client Assistance (DCA) Program, when youth are not otherwise being assisted by a program capable of facilitating access to DCA. The program will work closely with CSB's DCA Program Manager, execute a DCA Memorandum of Agreement with CSB, and receive DCA training.

## **B. Rapid Re-Housing**

Rapid re-housing (RRH) provides individualized, time-limited assistance for people experiencing literal homelessness to help them quickly obtain permanent housing and achieve housing stability. RRH assistance for youth also ensures that youth receive assistance forming connections with desired and needed community-based services and supports that help youth maintain housing, establish healthy permanent connections with peers and supportive adults, and achieve their educational, employment, and health-related goals.

At minimum, eligible youth served will be those who are unable to successfully exit homelessness on their own or through other assistance within a short period (typically within 5-7 days of *initially* becoming homeless) and who need focused, individualized assistance to quickly secure and stabilize in permanent housing and address other developmental needs. YHDP-funded RRH will not have sufficient capacity to serve all youth who meet minimum eligibility requirements. RRH programs will target and prioritize assistance for youth who are most vulnerable according to a standardized assessment that will be implemented system-wide in July 2019.

Programs will adhere to the [Rapid Re-Housing Program Standards](#) published by the [National Alliance to End Homelessness \(NAEH\)](#). (NOTE: applicants should disregard RRH performance benchmarks included in the NAEH document. CSB will establish a Program Outcomes Plan (POP) that includes applicable performance measures and goals.) Applicants must review and develop RRH for youth in a manner consistent with this RFP and that includes the following core components:

- < Housing identification, including individualized housing search and placement assistance;
- < Move-in and time-limited rental assistance; and
- < Case management and services.

While the RRH must have all three core components available, a participant is not required to use all of them. In addition to the RRH core components, programs will also include the following features:

- < Staff will work closely with youth homeless crisis response system partner agencies and CSB to identify, prioritize, and enroll youth who are eligible and a priority for RRH according to youth coordinated access policies and procedures. Staff will engage and

assist youth who are literally homeless on-site at emergency shelters, drop-in centers, and in unsheltered locations. Staff will continue to assist youth participants while they remain literally homeless and until they are permanently housed or otherwise are no longer literally homeless. As needed, staff will closely coordinate with street outreach, drop-in center, and shelter providers to ensure continuity of care and non-duplication of services.

- < With CSB input, programs will develop a brief, standardized assessment tool to use with youth once enrolled in RRH to identify their needs, assets, and preferences related to:
  - Immediate basic and other critical support necessary while being re-housed;
  - Youth experience in housing and housing barriers;
  - Educational aspirations;
  - Employment aspirations, current income and benefits;
  - Family connections and other social supports (including other providers);
  - Physical, social and emotional well-being.
- < All RRH services will be individualized, flexible, youth-driven, and voluntary, with the exception of the HUD requirement that program participants meet with a case manager not less than once per month to help the participant maintain long-term housing stability.
- < Case managers will have caseloads that allow for individualized assistance and will not exceed 17 active cases at one time.
- < Case managers will meet youth where they are, including home visits, if the youth so chooses. Case managers will focus on establishing a housing stabilization plan, accessing needed services in the community, and providing referrals, advocacy, assistance with budgeting and household management, and parenting, and other life skills necessary to maintain housing and improve well-being. Services will also support youth to build and rebuild family and community support networks, address youth-identified education, employment/income, and healthcare related goals, and connect to mainstream benefits and community services.
- < RRH staff will include at least one Housing Specialist who will work closely with CSB's Community Housing Manager to recruit and maintain relationships with a broad array of landlords who are willing to house youth with high barriers (e.g., little to no income, prior evictions, no rental history, criminal record, etc.). RRH staff will collaborate with landlord partners to provide shared housing options for youth who desire and would benefit from shared housing.
- < RRH staff will facilitate access to limited financial assistance for youth directly and/or through CSB's Direct Client Assistance (DCA) Program. Final decisions around DCA administration and budget will be made during the application review and selection process. Financial assistance can be used for rental arrears, security deposits, utility deposits, time-limited utility assistance, and time-limited rental assistance.
- < The length of participation should generally be 3 to 6 months, but may be longer based on the needs of youth participants relative to maintaining housing and achieving other critical developmental goals.
- < Per HUD requirements:
  - Program participants may only receive tenant-based rental assistance (i.e., youth must hold the lease).
  - The lease agreement must be for a term of at least one year.
  - Program participants may receive no more than 24 months of rental assistance and may continue to receive supportive services for up to 6 months after rental assistance ends.

**C. Joint Transitional Housing/Rapid Re-Housing (Joint TH/RRH)**

Joint TH/RRH meets the immediate needs of youth who are literally homeless and need more youth-centered, safe, and low-barrier TH while they are assisted in obtaining permanent housing. Youth staying in the TH component of the program will receive a safe place to stay – crisis housing – and have access to wrap around supportive services as needed by program participants, as well as access to the RRH component or other permanent housing assistance to help them move to permanent housing as quickly as possible.

TH may be individual apartments in the same building or private rooms that offer shared spaces and group services. TH for unaccompanied youth may be a group residential environment accessible 24 hours/day, 7 days/week in a safe and structured setting, with access to a cooking space, laundry, and storage. More independent TH options should be available for pregnant/parenting youth. Where possible, independent housing units will convert to an independent lease between the youth and landlord to minimize disruption, with or without further assistance under the RRH component. Stays in the TH portion of the program will be brief and without housing preconditions, and participants should quickly move to permanent housing with or without RRH assistance.

The RRH component of the program will provide housing identification and placement assistance, access to financial assistance for move-in costs and time-limited rent assistance, and RRH case management and services. RRH will focus on helping youth quickly obtain permanent housing, achieve housing stability, address developmental needs, and form connections with desired and needed community-based services and supports. RRH provides safe and stable housing for youth who are able to maintain housing stability independently and have a lease in their name. The RRH component will provide the same services and supports and include all of the same features of RRH described in the previous section of this RFP and further described in NAEH's [Rapid Re-Housing Program Standards](#). Where the YHDP RFP requirements contained herein and the NAEH standards do not align, applicants should adhere to the YHDP RFP requirements.

Applicants must be able to provide both components to all participants, including the units supported by the TH component and the tenant-based rental assistance and services provided through the RRH component. A program participant may choose to receive only the TH assistance, or the assistance provided through the RRH component.

Joint TH/RRH programs will also include the following features:

- < Staff will work closely with youth homeless crisis response system partner agencies and CSB to identify, prioritize and enroll youth who are eligible and a priority for joint TH/RRH according to youth coordinated access policies and procedures.
- < The program will allow youth to readily move from TH to permanent housing via RRH assistance and, when needed, allow youth to move back to TH to support continuity of care while a new permanent housing plan is established. The program will provide enough RRH assistance to ensure that at any given time a program participant may move from TH to permanent housing.
- < With CSB input, programs will develop a brief, standardized assessment tool to use with youth once enrolled in the joint TH/RRH program to identify their needs, assets, and preferences related to:
  - o Immediate basic and other critical support necessary while being re-housed;
  - o Youth experience in housing and housing barriers;
  - o Educational aspirations;
  - o Employment aspirations, current income and benefits;

- Family connections and other social supports (including other providers);
- Physical, social and emotional well-being.
- < The overall length of participation should generally be 9-12 months, but may be longer based on the needs of youth participants relative to maintaining housing and achieving other critical developmental goals.
- < Per HUD requirements:
  - Program participants may only receive up to 24-months of total assistance across both TH and RRH components and program participants may continue to receive supportive services for up to 6 months after rental assistance ends.
  - Program participants in the TH component must have a lease or occupancy agreement for a term of at least one month.
  - Program participants in the RRH component may only receive tenant-based rental assistance (i.e., youth must hold the lease) and the lease agreement must be for a term of at least one year.

#### **4. Program Staffing, Training, Productivity, and Supervision**

Programs must employ sufficient personnel to ensure high-quality delivery of the services outlined in the proposal. Applicants should propose the number of personnel they believe can be supported with available funding, after accounting for other necessary staffing and program costs. Applicants should describe a staffing plan that will assure evaluation of the applicant's capacity to provide culturally relevant and responsive services; and their cultural awareness as it relates to engaging with LGBTQ, other marginalized communities, and intersectional identities. Staff interviews should include questions directly relating to the individual's opinion of LGBTQ identities. The staffing plan should include capacity to maintain full staffing and ongoing compliance with all requirements, policies, and procedures.

All program staff must have appropriate education, experience, training, and supervision necessary to provide high-quality services. Applicants must describe in the proposal the training service provider will receive upon hire and periodically thereafter, along with the timelines within which this training will be completed. Training and staffing must include plans to maintain robust cultural competency in serving youth and specifically knowledge in serving disparate populations (e.g. LGBTQ, youth of color). For all program types, staff must be multi-lingual and/or have access to translation services. Staff must be trained in de-escalation, trauma informed-healing centered practices, positive youth development, strengths-based practices, and understanding intersectional identities. Staff qualifications must be included in the response to the RFP.

Programs will establish, track, and report direct service productivity standards for all RRH case managers. Direct client services are those where the case manager meets face to face with the client or when the case manager speaks to the client by phone. Case managers will be expected to maintain at least a 60% direct client service productivity. This productivity standard applies to the proportion of time dedicated to providing case management-related services and applies to all staff providing case management direct services. For example, if a program manager is expected to maintain a small caseload and apply half of their full-time hours to serving as a case manager, then at least 60% of the 20 hours (i.e., 12 hours) they spend per week serving as a case manager must be spent providing direct services for participants, as defined above. A 60% direct service productivity standard is adequate to support an average caseload size of 17 and allows for close to 1.5 hours, on average, of direct service contact per participant per week.



## 5. Qualifications and Performance

YHDP funding is subject to the HUD regulations detailed in [24 CFR Part 578](#). CSB will monitor use of funds carefully, in the same way that CSB monitors current HUD Continuum of Care funding. Proposals that include rental assistance must ensure that rents are within HUD's [Fair Market Rent](#) standards and are reasonable, per 24 CFR Part 578.51. Please see *HUD Continuum of Care Eligible & Ineligible Costs* located on CSB's website [here](#) for more information.

All programs (except domestic violence programs) must participate in the community's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). HMIS contains information on every person served in any homelessness program across the system. CSB administers HMIS and will provide training for successful applicants.

CSB has extremely robust data, monitoring, and performance evaluation capabilities. Programs will be evaluated based on performance outcomes and compliance with [CSB's Partner Agency Standards](#). Applicants must be able to meet these standards and work with CSB to achieve set outcomes and ensure compliance with federal rules. Goals and compliance requirements will be included in annual funding contracts. CSB will work with successful applicants to develop POPs. Potential performance measures, depending on the proposal, include:

- ⟨ **CARR Team:** number of households served, successful diversion outcomes, diversion recidivism, shelter referrals, hotline wait times, number of unsheltered youth
- ⟨ **RRH and Joint TH/RRH:** number of households served, average length of participation, successful outcomes, housing stability, connection to education and employment, change in income

The applicant will work with CSB, Youth Core Team, and Youth Action Board to fully develop and implement the programs and to develop and maintain detailed system Policies and Procedures that will guide youth programs.

## 6. Contract Amount and Terms

Upon recommendation from the Youth Core Team and Youth Action Board, the Continuum of Care approved the following two-year allocation of HUD YHDP funds. **HUD requires that all programs provide 25 percent in matching funds.** Applicants are not required to apply for the entire amount of funds. Applicants can propose programs *up to* the amounts listed below for the two year period beginning 7/1/2019 (7/1/19-6/30/21).

Project type	HUD YHDP funds	Minimum Match	Total	Estimated Annual # of Youth Served*	Estimated Youth Served for Grant Term*
CARR Team	\$448,000	\$112,000	\$560,000	TBD	TBD
RRH	\$1,732,934	\$433,234	\$2,166,168	350	700
Joint TH/RRH	\$3,255,534	\$813,884	\$4,069,418	139	278

\*Final estimated number of youth served and included in the FY2020-21 Program Outcomes Plan may be adjusted based on final youth coordinated access targeting and prioritization criteria for each project type.

## 7. Review Criteria

CSB will review each proposal and present them to the Youth Core Team and Youth Action Board. Proposals must meet the minimum requirements stated in this RFP to receive full consideration and review. No proposal will move forward in the process without Youth Action Board approval. The Youth Core Team and Youth Action Board will review and rank each proposal, and then will present recommendations to the Continuum of Care for review and approval.

Proposals will be reviewed based upon the following:

- < Administrative Capacity: Does the applicant have the capacity to comply with CSB Partner Agency Standards? Does the applicant have the capacity to track and invoice costs correctly? Does the applicant demonstrate the experience and capacity to achieve the requirements described in the RFP?
  
- < Application Completeness: Is the application responsive to the requirements in the RFP? Is the application complete?
  
- < Program Design: To what extent is the proposed program design clear, reasonable, and consistent with coordinated entry core components, practice standards, and RFP requirements? Does the applicant adequately describe the project? Is the program aligned with the goals, principles and approaches of the Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness Among Youth? To what extent were youth involved in the program design? Are staff training and supervision adequate and consistent with requirements?
  
- < Cost Efficiency: To what extent is the requested budget reasonable? Are proposed program costs adequately explained and reasonable?

## 8. Schedule

Dates	Activities
1/7/19	Request for proposals released
1/16/19	Bidders' conference (mandatory for prospective applicants)
TBD	Webinar on CCP and Q&A for applicants
February- Mid-March	Upon request: 1 hour of technical assistance available from CSB staff and/or 2 hours of technical assistance available from Youth Action Board members
<b>3/31/19</b>	<b>Completed proposals due to CSB by 5 pm</b>
April 2019	CSB, Youth Core Team, Youth Action Board, Citizens Advisory Council, and other stakeholders review of proposals and interview qualified applicants
May 2019	Youth Core Team and Youth Action Board development of recommendations for Continuum of Care
May 2019	Continuum of Care review and approval of proposals
May 2019	Applications submitted to HUD
June 2019	HUD funding awards announced
June 30, 2019	FY20-FY21 CSB contracts issued with 7/1/19 effective date, pending completion of HUD contract with CSB

## 9. Submission Requirements

Completed and signed applications must be submitted electronically to CSB Grants and Compliance Director Heather Notter ([hnotter@csb.org](mailto:hnotter@csb.org)) no later than **5pm on March 31, 2019**.