

C – RFA SCOPE OF WORK

I. Introduction

The Austin Public Health (APH) seeks applications in response to this Request for Application (RFA) from qualified social services providers (Applicants) to provide Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) supportive services to individuals and households experiencing chronic homelessness.

II. Background & Purpose of Funding

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded [Emergency Housing Choice Vouchers](#) to the Austin community through the local Public Housing Authorities (PHA) including the Housing Authority of the City of Austin and the Housing Authority of Travis County in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To meet the community need of increased PSH capacity, APH will award up to \$1.05 million dollars via one or more contracts to the highest evaluated community-based organization(s) to provide PSH Supportive Services and financial assistance to approximately 70 households, employing a ratio of approximately 1 case manager to 13 clients.

Awarded agencies will provide funded services to clients referred through the Coordinated Entry System, managed by Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO). Client services provided will be client-directed and collaborative, with the homeless household, the case manager or direct service provider, and public housing authority staff. All referred households will have been awarded ongoing rental assistance vouchers from area Public Housing Authorities, either the Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) or the Housing Authority of Travis County (HATC). The awarded agency will rapidly find housing for the referred household.

HACA will dedicate Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) to eligible households and has a goal of December 31, 2021 for housing placement utilizing those vouchers. Should sufficient Emergency Housing Choice vouchers not be available, other rental assistance subsidies will be identified by community PHAs via the homeless preference for the Housing Choice Voucher program, and/or the Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinated Entry (CE) System, from dedicated rental subsidy allotments.

Through the pairing of available rental assistance subsidies with robust supportive services, this funding will provide Permanent Supportive Housing for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.

III. Funding and Timeline

Department: Austin Public Health

Available Funding: \$1,050,000 total

Anticipated Number of Awarded Agreements: Austin Public Health anticipates awarding up to three Agreements with a minimum amount requested of \$350,000.

Contract Term: The initial term shall be 12 months with up to three twelve-month extensions contingent on performance, for a total agreement term of 36 months. The Agreements is expected to

have an effective start date in November 2021. All extension options are conditional upon City Council approval of the Budget.

Applicants responding to this RFA may respond on behalf of their own organization or may respond as the lead organization with formal subgrantees. Any grant agreement resulting from this RFA will be executed between the City of Austin and the Offeror.

Awarded programs may be structured as a reimbursable-based agreement or a deliverables-based agreement, as defined below:

- Reimbursable Agreement- An Agreement where an agency is reimbursed for expenses incurred and paid through the provision of adequate supporting documentation that verifies the expenses.
- Deliverable Agreement- An Agreement where an agency is reimbursed for a report or product that must be delivered to the City by the grantee (or by the Subgrantee to the Grantee) to satisfy contractual requirements. This can include goods or finished works, documentation of services provided or activities undertaken, and/or other related documentation.

IV. Services Solicited

A. Eligible Services:

The awarded agency will provide necessary services to support households to find and maintain housing. Eligible activities include:

- 1) Eligibility Determination
Outreach Services
- 2) Housing Search and Location
Housing Search Assistance
Landlord Engagement & Incentives
Housing Barrier Identification
- 3) Rental Assistance
Application Fees Assistance
Security Deposit Assistance
Utility Deposit Assistance
Rental Arrears
- 4) PSH Supportive Services – See [SAMHSA.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov) for more details
Tenant orientation
Tenant councils
Case management
Service planning
Counseling
Behavioral Health Counseling
Substance Abuse Counseling
Referrals
Crisis intervention



- Peer Support
- Support groups
- Social Security (SSI/SSDI) Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR)
- Recreational and socialization services
- Legal Assistance
- Transportation
- Food
- Dispute Resolution (including negotiating payments for delinquent rent or resolving lease violations)
- Furnishings
- 5) Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Costs
HMIS User License

B. Principles of Service Delivery

- 1) Awarded agencies must comply with the Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care (CoC) Written Standards as approved by the Homeless Response System Leadership Council. Should service delivery expectations outlined in the Scope of Work conflict with CoC Written Standards all other CoC Written Standards apply.
- 2) The City of Austin seeks service providers with a strong understanding of the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness, and a demonstrated history of client centered care and culturally competent service delivery.
Recipient(s) are expected to adhere to the following principles of service delivery:
 - a) Housing First principles of service delivery and program design.
 - b) Low-barrier access to housing (remove unnecessary barriers and improve access to those who need it most).
 - c) Ongoing, robust case Management available to all clients, with a staff to client ratio of no more than 1:15 (or 1:13, if that is the decision staff has made). However, utilization of services is not a condition of ongoing tenancy.
 - d) Use of evidence-based practices such as Critical Time Intervention, Motivational Interviewing, Trauma-Informed Care, and Harm Reduction.
 - e) Proactive engagement with property management to address potential lease violations.
 - f) Ongoing data monitoring and quality improvement efforts to reduce time from referral to housing, promote housing stability, and enhance well-being

C. Other Requirements

Awarded Agencies will enter into an Agreement with Austin Public Health, committing:

- a) To adhere to all laws, statues, and ordinances of the City of Austin;
- b) To monitor and report the progress of the project to Austin Public Health staff;
- c) To ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that individuals and families with lived experience of homelessness are meaningfully involved, through employment, volunteer opportunities, or otherwise, in the design and management of contracted services

D. City of Austin Client Eligibility Requirements

- 1) **Client eligibility must be documented, and any proposed alternative requirements explained. See Section D – APH Client Eligibility Requirements.**

- 2) This project will provide Permanent Supportive Housing, through the combination of available rental assistance subsidy and project provided supportive services to households who meet the following definition:
“Chronically homeless” is defined in section 401(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, [42 U.S.C. 11360](#) (McKinney-Vento Act or Act), as an individual or family that is homeless and resides in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter, and has been homeless and residing in such a place for at least 1 year or on at least four separate occasions in the last 3 years.
The statutory definition also requires that the individual or family has a head of household with a diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, post-traumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from a brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability.
- 3) Additional Key Requirements and Considerations:
 - a) The Emergency Housing Vouchers which may be available via this RFA have lower criminal screening than typical Housing Choice Vouchers or Mainstream housing vouchers. Detailed information on household eligibility can be found in [Section 8 of PIH Notice 2021-15](#).
 - b) A family that does not include a person 18 years or older or emancipated minor is ineligible for an Emergency Housing Voucher.

V. Collecting and Reporting Data

A. Key performance Measures

To evaluate the effectiveness of permanent supportive housing supportive services, awarded Agencies’ performance will be measured against the performance of other PSH projects within the community. These measures will be reviewed annually and updated to align with new data at least every 3 years.

B. Data Collection and Reporting Requirements

Projects will be required to fulfill the following requirements by stated timelines:

1. Comply with all requirements of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data submission, Coordinated Assessment (CA), CoC and related regulatory requirements. Full information on metric assessment and logic can be found in the [CoC APR and ESG CAPER HMIS Programming Specifications](#).
2. Use the Coordinated Entry System established by the Austin / Travis County Continuum of Care. A victim service provider may choose not to use the Continuum of Care's Coordinated Entry System, provided that victim service providers use a centralized or coordinated assessment system that meets HUD's minimum requirements.
3. To follow the written standards for providing services developed by the Continuum of Care
4. To follow the Policies and Procedures of the Austin / Travis County Continuum of Care to record service delivery in the Homelessness Information Management System (HMIS).
5. To assist individuals with the collection of documentation to determine eligibility for both project participation and rental subsidy assistance, including appeals of rejection of eligibility, if applicable.
6. Use of [Performance Scorecard](#) PSH utilized in collaboration with ECHO, HACA, APH, and said awardee agency with

- a) Maintain an average bed/ unit utilization amount of at least 90% of units and beds annually.
- b) Annually de-obligate no more than 10% of awarded funds
7. Performance Reporting: The City’s fiscal year begins on October 1st and ends on September 30th. The awarded agency shall have the ability to provide routine quarterly and annual report data to coincide with this cycle.
8. Performance Measures: Performance measures shall align with the City’s *Austin Strategic Direction 2023* indicators for homelessness and HUD’s System Performance Measures. Austin Public Health staff will work with recipient staff to develop and track meaningful, measurable performance measures.
9. HMIS: Organizations receiving funding from the city for homelessness prevention and homeless intervention services are required to utilize the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track and report client information for individuals who are at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness.
10. The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) currently serves as the local HMIS administrator and manages all user licenses. HMIS related expenses may be included in the program budget.

VI. Application Evaluation

A total of 100 points may be awarded to the application. All applications will be evaluated as to how the proposed program aligns with the goals of this RFA and whether each question has been adequately addressed.

RFA #006 PSH Services 2021 MS Evaluation Rubric		
Form 1:	Offer Sheet - Applicants must print, sign, scan and upload signed forms.	No points, but Applicant must submit signed form
Form 2: RFA Application		
Part 1: Fiscal and Administrative Capacity	Agency Information	No points awarded, but Applicant must pass threshold defined in Applicant Minimum Qualifications below.
Scored Application Part II - VI		
Part II. Executive Summary and References	Executive Summary References	5 points 5 points 10 points total
Part III. Personnel and Cost Effectiveness	Organization chart, Subcontractors Staff Positions, Experience	5 points 5 points
Form 3:	Program Budget and Narrative	5 points 15 points total
Part IV. Experience and Cultural Competence	Agency Experience Performance Reports Racial Equity	15 points 15 points 10 points

	CLAS Standards	40 points total
Part V: Service Capacity	Service Capacity	15 points
	Data Management	10 points
		25 points total
Part VI: Sample Documents	Client Eligibility Policies and Procedures	5 points
	Data System General Program Performance	5 points
		10 points total
		Total: 100 Points
Form 4:	COA Certifications and Disclosures- Applicants must print, sign, scan and upload signed forms.	No points, but Applicant must submit signed form

VII. Applicant Minimum Qualifications

In the application, these items are evaluated in different sections. In Part 1 – Fiscal and Administrative Capacity and Part 4 – Experience and Cultural Competency. In Part 1, no points are assigned to questions in this section, but a response is required for each question. These questions will be used to better understand the agency and to determine if your organization is eligible to contract with the City of Austin. All Applications must have satisfactory answers in this section in order to be evaluated for potential award. An evaluation will be made of this section before the application will be forwarded to the evaluation team. In Part 4, this section will be evaluated per the evaluation points stated above.

- A. **Agencies, board of directors or leadership staff submitting an Application must** have a minimum of two (2) years established, successful experience providing services to the homeless populations that may include providing permanent supportive housing services, case management, and housing search and location.
- B. The agency must have existing housing search and location services as well as existing relationships with housing providers or be willing and able to demonstrate the ability to increase capacity quickly.
- C. Experience using the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track and report client information for individuals who are at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness with a demonstrated high level of data quality. Victim service providers must have experience using an alternate system that meets HUD's minimum requirements
- D. Experience with making and receiving referrals through the centralized or coordinated assessment system

All agencies applying for funding must:

- E. Be a non-profit organization able to conduct business in the State of Texas, and legally contract with Austin Public Health and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- F. Have submitted all applicable tax returns to the IRS and the State of Texas (e.g. Form 990 or 900-EZ and state and federal payroll tax filings)
- G. Be eligible to contract and not debarred from contracting, according to SAM.gov and City Debarment information
- H. Be current in its payment of Federal and State payroll taxes

- I. Not owe past due taxes to the City
- J. Have the ability to meet Austin Public Health's Social Services Insurance Requirements
- K. Have an active Board of Directors that meets regularly and reviews program performance, financial performance, and annually approves the agency budget. The Board of Directors shall have a strong commitment to fundraising to ensure well-funded, sustainable programs and operations.

VIII. Additional Information and References

- A. [The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition \(ECHO\)'s Action Plan](#) includes recommendations from ECHO and the Bloomberg iTeam.
- B. The [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#), and other community partners and stakeholders.
- C. Information on Permanent Supportive Housing can be found at the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Permanent Supportive Housing Evidence – Based Practices](#)
- D. The Austin / Travis County Continuum of Care [Written Standards for Program Delivery](#); [Written Standards for Coordinated Entry](#); [Written Standards for Permanent Supportive Housing](#); [Housing First in Permanent Supportive Housing](#)
- E. [Austin Strategic Direction 2023 \(SD2023\)](#) informs the City of Austin's 6 pillars and direction for 5 years. .
- F. The [Summit to Address Unsheltered Homelessness in Austin](#) is a working document of the city's plan presented on March 2021.
- G. The Barbara Poppe and Associates Report of July 2020, [Investing for Results: Priorities and Recommendations for a Systems Approach to End Homelessness](#), provides consultant recommendations for the City of Austin's plan to end homelessness.
- H. [ECHO's Addressing Racial Disparities in Austin / Travis County](#) reported on September 9, 2019 provides an overview and analysis of racial disparities in Austin/Travis County.
- I. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) [Permanent Supportive Housing Evidence-Based Practices \(EBP-KIT\)](#) is a toolkit that outlines the essential components for supportive housing services and programs for people living with mental illness disorders.
- J. SAMHSA's [Assertive Community Treatment](#) is a toolkit of evidence-based practices of customized, community-based services for people living with mental illness disorders.
- K. National Coalition for the Homeless defines [Trauma-Informed Care](#) for homeless services as a structure that emphasizes understanding, compassion, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma.
- L. [Critical Time Intervention](#) is a time-limited case management model designed for people experiencing homelessness with mental illness after a discharge from hospitals, shelters, prisons, and other institutions.
- M. SAMHSA's [Client Centered Approach to Homeless Services and Behavioral Health](#) provides definitions and suggested services for agencies providing services to people experiencing homelessness and behavioral health disorders.
- N. Partnership for Opening Door's [summit on integrating employment and housing strategies to prevent and end homelessness](#).