**SECTION I**

**Introduction:**

The City of Austin (City) seeks applications in response to this Request for Applications (RFA) from qualified nonprofit or government providers (Applicants) to provide Bridge Housing to clients of the Downtown Austin Community Court (DACC) Intensive Case Management (ICM) program. Bridge Housing is a hybrid of emergency shelter and transitional housing to serve the target population that requires short-term housing and supportive services to achieve self-sufficiency or to access available permanent housing options. Applicants should have background providing this temporary housing solution and/or working with the target population. Agencies with experience serving the target population that seek to create a new program, or that have a background providing Bridge Housing that could benefit the target population are encouraged to apply.

The proposed program shall target individuals enrolled in the DACC’s ICM program and referrals into the proposed program will come solely and directly from DACC ICM staff.

The Austin City Council has directed that all programs funded through this competitive solicitation be consistent with the priority outcomes of the Austin Strategic Direction 2023. Most notably the priority outcomes listed under Economic Opportunity & Affordability; Safety; Health & Environment; and Government That Works For All. The Austin Strategic Direction 2023 can be found at:

<https://assets.austintexas.gov/financeonline/downloads/Austin-Strategic-Direction_2023_webfinal.pdf>

Additionally, all programs funded through this competitive solicitation should be consistent with other community plans, if any, in which the proposed service(s) would fall under.

**Purpose**:

The purpose of this competitive solicitation is to establish grant agreements with one or multiple qualified nonprofit or government entities for Bridge Housing with the overall objective of assisting the DACC ICM staff in successfully meeting the short-, intermediate-, and long-term needs of their clients. DACC ICM staff will provide the majority of all supportive services to the clients served through this funding opportunity while the successful Applicant will be responsible for providing the short-term housing. Programs eligible for funding in this RFA include:

* Bridge Housing which includes:
	+ Sober living housing
	+ Board and care housing
	+ Shared housing
	+ Single room occupancy housing
	+ Other types of short-term housing options that meet the objectives of this competitive solicitation

If the City determines that multiple grant agreements are needed, the City will award one or more additional grants agreements to the Applicant(s) submitting the next highest rated Application(s).

**Funding and Timeline:**

Up to $222,046 in total funding is available for an initial thirteen-month program period beginning September 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022, with up to two 12-month extension options not to exceed $233,148 for the first extension option, and not to exceed $244,806 for the second extension option, for a total grant period not to exceed 37 months and total funding not to exceed $700,000. The initial month of the program period beginning September 1, 2021 will be used to establish staffing, supplies, and/or program infrastructure, and access to services for clients will begin October 1, 2021.

**Alignment with Community Plans:**

**CONNECTION TO AUSTIN STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2023:**

Strategic Direction 2023 is inspired by Imagine Austin, which flourished from an extensive community engagement process that laid out a 30-year vision for our community. (View the Imagine Austin Dashboard, highlighting its eight Priority Programs and related indicators, at austintexas.gov/imagineaustin/indicators)

**The Austin Strategic Direction 2023 vision statement states (from Imagine Austin):**

*“Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity, and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its citizens, and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all.”*

Strategic Direction 2023 strategic outcomes, as they relate to the Downtown Austin Community Court, are as follows:

**Economic Opportunity & Affordability**: Having economic opportunities and resources that enable us to thrive in our community.

**Safety**: Being safe in our home, at work, and in our community.

**Health & Environment**: Enjoying a sustainable environment and a healthy life, physically and mentally.

**Government That Works For All**: Believing that city government works effectively and collaboratively for all of us—that it is equitable, ethical and innovative.

**Any program(s) awarded funding through this solicitation will align with Strategy 8 under Economic Affordability and Opportunity:**

“*Define and enact our response to homelessness focusing on efficient and effective use of our resources to address disparities, prevent homelessness, and support housing stability*.”

**CONNECTION TO AUSTIN’S ACTION PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS:**

The Austin City Council passed Resolution 20180426-030 endorsing Austin’s Plan to End Homelessness, which is available here: <https://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=297137>.

This plan outlines five System Components that work together to end homelessness for individuals and families in Austin/Travis County and make the community stronger for all. These system components include:

1. Outreach and Shelter
2. Housing & Support Services
3. Addressing Disparities
4. System Effectiveness
5. Community Commitment

**Any program(s) awarded funding through this solicitation will align with the Vision of Objective 2.2 under Housing and Support Services**:

**“***Persons experiencing homelessness have immediate access to existing rental housing units that are:*

* *Affordable*
* *Low-barrier*
* *Geographically dispersed, including high opportunity areas.”*

**This will help achieve the Desired Outcome for Objective 2.2 under Housing and Support Services to create:**

“*More affordable, low-barrier housing units available for persons experiencing homelessness.*”

**SECTION II**

**Application:**

Please provide a response in the boxes provided for each item below. **It is preferable to be repetitive rather than to leave an item incomplete as evaluation preference can only be awarded based on the response to the item being evaluated.**

**ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

No points are assigned to this section, but a response is required for each items below.

**ITEM** **1.1**: Please provide a brief description of the Applicant (agency applying for this solicitation). (*250 word limit*)

**Response to Item 1.1**

**Applicants must meet all of the following criteria to be eligible for a grant award through this solicitation process.**

1. Applicants shall be a nonprofit or government entity that can legally contract with the City of Austin (City)
2. City policy does not permit entering into an agreement with an entity that owes taxes to the City.
3. The Applicant and its principals may not be currently suspended or debarred from doing business with the Federal Government, as indicated by the United States General Services Administration list of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Non-Procurement Programs, the State of Texas, or the City of Austin.
4. Applicants shall be able to meet the City’s insurance requirements for social services grantees. See the insurance requirements in Section 0400 of the RFA.
5. The Applicant’s Board of Directors shall:
	1. Have specific terms delineated by a beginning and ending date
	2. Meet in person a minimum of four times per fiscal year
6. Within the last five years, the Applicant shall have a minimum of two years successful experience working with the proposed target populations and/or providing the proposed service(s) to clients.

**ITEM 1.2:** Describe how the Applicant meets criteria a-d listed above. ~~(please note that a copy of the Board of Directors bylaws & roster, the most recently filed IRS Form 990 or 990 EZ, current & previous fiscal year budget, and Board of Directors minutes are required documents as discussed in Section 0600 – Response Preparation Instructions and Evaluation Factors of this application).~~ (*200 word limit*)

**Response to Item 1.2**

**ITEM 1.3:** Provide the following contact information for the person in your organization authorized to negotiate Agreement terms and render binding decisions on Agreement matters.

1. Name
2. Email address
3. Mailing address
4. Telephone number

**Response to Item 1.3**

**PART I – PROGRAM OVERVIEW & STRATEGY Total points: 80**

**BACKGROUND:**

DACC was established by the City in 1999 as one of the first community courts in the nation and the first in Texas. It is charged with adjudicating “quality of life” offenses committed in the downtown Austin area. DACC is a problem-solving court that seeks to administer justice equitably and compassionately to foster trust and accountability, and to utilize a client-centered and housing-focused intensive case management model to help individuals experiencing homelessness achieve long-term stability. Toward that end, DACC is comprised of both a traditional court staff and a staff of licensed clinical social workers.  DACC also funds and manages social service contracts for housing-focused support services the DACC ICM staff use to provide wraparound supports to help resolve their clients’ housing crises and connect individuals experiencing homelessness to safe, stable, long-term housing.

**PROGRAM STRATEGIES & TARGET POPULATION:**

The Applicant proposing a housing solution may include expanding existing programs or implementing new programs.

The target population includes individuals who have experienced or are experiencing homelessness and present themselves to the DACC ICM staff where it is determined that a referral to the successful Applicant would be beneficial in assisting the client to transition from homeless to housing. Historically, DACC ICM clients:

* Are high users of public services such as homeless shelters, EMS, hospital emergency rooms, Austin State Hospital, jails, and courts;
* Have a history of substance use that is periodically disabling;
* Have a persistent mental illness that is periodically disabling;
* Have ongoing physical health issues that present barriers to employment; and
* Have a criminal history ranging from Class C misdemeanors to felonies

**PROGRAM STRATEGY:**

**ITEM 1.4:** Describe the model of the program and the activities and content of the proposed program, including how the program will be delivered, by whom, and other relevant information that clearly illustrates how the program will meet the purpose of this funding opportunity. This should include a description of the type(s) of housing units included in the program, as well as any onsite staffing, if applicable. (*600 word limit*)

**Response to Item 1.4**

**ITEM 1.5:** It is expected that units will be available for the entirety of the program period, and the lease and/or ownership of the properties will remain in the Applicant’s name throughout the agreement. There may be short periods where units are not occupied, and Applicants should be able to place individuals into existing units within 72 hours of referral from DACC. Describe the intake process from the time a referral from DACC is made through placing an individual into an available unit. (*200 word limit*)

**Response to Item 1.5**

**ITEM 1.6:** Describe what would cause a client to be involuntarily discharged from the program and the discharge process. (*150 word limit*)

**Response to Item 1.6**

**ITEM 1.7:** Describe any barriers and/or challenges your agency may encounter securing and/or maintaining housing, and how your agency will overcome them. (*200 word limit*)

**Response to Item 1.7**

**ITEM 1.8:** If the proposed program will be leasing housing, explain how the Applicant will coordinate with the property owner(s) and DACC ICM staff to navigate and deescalate any issues that may arise. (*200 word limit*)

**Response to Item 1.8**

**ITEM 1.9:** Utilities and otherservices are an allowable expense under this agreement, and participants of the proposed program should be able to access these services without having to set up personal accounts. Describe how utilities and other essential services will be provided. (*200 word limit*)

**Response to Item 1.9**

**ITEM 1.10:** Describe successful experience within the last three (3) years providing housing units that is identical or similar to those proposed in this application. If proposing a new program, describe relevant experience or expertise within your agency that you anticipate will help the program succeed. (*150 word limit*)

**Response to Item 1.10**

**POPULATION(S) SERVED:**

**ITEM 1.11:** Describe your experience providing housing opportunities for the target population outlined in this funding opportunity. (*200 word limit*)

**Response to Item 1.11**

**ITEM 1.12:** Describe any barriers and/or challenges the target population(s) may encounter accessing the proposed program and how these barriers and challenges will be mitigated. (*200 word limit*)

**Response to Item 1.12**

**ITEM 1.13:** Describe any subpopulation(s) of the target population outlined in this funding opportunity that would be excluded from proposed program. (*200 word limit*)

**Response to Item 1.13**

**ITEM 1.14:** If the Applicant is proposing a program with any direct service to DACC clients, describe how the Applicant’s policies and practices will align with the following National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards in Health and Health Care (<http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&lvlID=15>) to ensure cultural and language differences are not a barrier to participating in the proposed program. (*200 word limit*)

1. Educate and train governance, leadership, and workforce in culturally and linguistically appropriate policies and practices on an ongoing basis.
2. Offer language assistance to individuals who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs, at no cost to them, to facilitate timely access to all health care and services.
3. Inform all individuals of the availability of language assistance services clearly and in their preferred language, verbally and in writing.
4. Ensure the competence of individuals providing language assistance, recognizing that the use of untrained individuals and/or minors as interpreters should be avoided.

*Agencies are encouraged to implement all 15 CLAS Standards listed on the website identified*

**Response to Item 1.14**

**ITEM 1.15:** Using Section 0645 – Program Staff Positions and Time, list all program staff that will provide support for the proposed program, whether funded through this funding opportunity or funded through other sources. Please include any staff that will be responsible financial or performance management. (*200 word limit*)

**Response to Item 1.15**

**DATA MANAGEMENT AND PROGRAM EVALUATION:**

**ITEM 1.16:** Data are often used for identifying problems in strategies, program structure, and expenditures, which informs how to improve practices and program effectiveness. Describe how you’ll build on past experience and program performance to improve the stability of housing units, create strong relationships with property owners, and/or other approaches that will strengthen this program. (*200 word limit*)

**Response to Item 1.16**

**AGREEMENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

**ITEM 1.17:** Downtown Austin Community Court uses a standard boilerplate agreement for social service grants in addition to negotiated work statements, budgets, performance measures, and other contract exhibits that are specific to each program. Please review all portions of Section 0710 – Standard Agreement Boiler, andconfirm that your organization will be able to comply with all terms and conditions included in the document. Please also describe any previous successful experience you have with managing agreements with similar requirements. (*100 word limit*)

**Response to Item 1.17**

**OUTCOMES & OUTPUTS:**

Downtown Austin Community Court measures outcomes as part of social services grant agreements to track performance and results for clients. The following table provides an example of the format expected for program outcomes.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **OUTCOME EXAMPLE** | **Total Program Annual Goal** |
| **Proposed Outcome Measure**  |  |
| Number of DACC clients successfully completing substance use treatment program (numerator) | 42 |
| Number of DACC clients exiting substance use treatment program (denominator) | 65 |
| **Percent of individuals successfully completing substance use treatment program** (outcome rate) | **64.6 %** |

**ITEM 1.18:** Please propose a numerator, denominator, and rate for the **short-term** **outcome** in the table below, and provide additional context that explains how this number was determined and why these figures are appropriate and accurate for the proposed program(s). (*250 word limit*)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Total Program Performance – OUTCOME**  | **Total Program Annual Goal** |
| **Proposed Outcome Measure**  |  |
| Number of clients housed within 72 hours of referral from DACC (numerator) | **#** |
| Number of clients referred from DACC for housing (denominator) | **#** |
| Percent of clients housed within 72 hours of referral from DACC (outcome rate) | **%** |

**Additional Information for Item 1.18**

**ITEM 1.19:** Please propose a numerator, denominator, and rate for the **long-term** **outcome** in the table below, and provide additional context that explains how this number was determined and why these figures are appropriate and accurate for the proposed program(s). (*250 word limit*)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Total Program Performance – OUTCOME**  | **Total Program Annual Goal** |
| **Proposed Outcome Measure**  |  |
| Number of clients who successfully exit the program into stable housing (numerator) | **#** |
| Number of clients who have exited the program (denominator) | **#** |
| Percent of clients who successfully exit the program into stable housing (outcome rate) | **%** |

**Additional Information for Item 1.19**

**All successful Applicants will also be required to track the following high-level outputs:**

*Output 1: Number of unduplicated clients served per 12-month agreement period*.

*Output 2: Number of housing units maintained for DACC clients*.

**ITEM 1.20:** The number of individuals served will be dependent on length of stay for DACC referrals, which may vary depending on each individual’s situation and when long-term housing units become available. The Applicant should be able to project how many Bridge Housing units will be available annually based on the proposed program structure and budget. Please provide a proposed goal for;

* The number of housing units available for DACC clients during a 12-month period

Please also include any additional context that explains the proposed annual unit goal. The annual goal should be based on past performance experience, budgeted program costs, and/or best estimates.

(*150 word limit*)

**Response to Item 1.20**

**Part II – Cost Effectiveness Total points: 20**

It is required that Applicants complete Section 0650 – Program Budget and Narrative prior to responding to the items in this section of the application.

Applicants shall also provide responses to the following items to describe the budget necessary to accomplish the proposed program strategy/strategies. The application will be evaluated on how well it addresses **all** of the following items:

**BUDGET:**

**ITEM 2.1:** Provide the total amount of City funding requested and a summary description of the budget justification for the program strategy/strategies. All expenses should be identifiable, reasonable, and necessary. Each extension option includes a 5% funding increase from the previous program period to accommodate increased program costs such as higher rent, utility increases, and other program expenses. In your response, describe how this increase in funding for each extension will be used to benefit the program. Please note that Applicants must use Section 0650 – Program Budget and Narrative to provide the required budget information for the first program period. (*250 word limit*)

**Response to Item 2.1**

**ITEM 2.2:** Using Section 0650 – Program Budget and Narrative, provide an overview of all funding sources the Applicant will use for the proposed project. Please provide additional context for the funding sources below. (*100 word limit*)

**Response to Item 2.2**

**COST PER UNIT:**

**ITEM 2.3:** Provide the average cost per housing unit from all funding sources for the entire proposed program. The response should include housing units paid for by all funding sources including the requested City funding.

Please note that an agency may have multiple programs, and this section is requesting the cost per housing unit only for the proposed program in this application.

 Cost per unit = Total program funding (City funding requested & all other funding sources)

 Total units available through program

For reference, the Fair Market Rent in the Austin/Metro area is established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. There are situations that may require higher rent. For instance, there may be barriers for particular clients, such as criminal histories that make it difficult to find units within this price range.

In addition to providing the cost per unit, please also provide additional context to explain why the proposed cost per unit is an appropriate amount to successfully implement and sustain the proposed program. (*150 word limit*)

**Response to Item 2.3**

**Item 2.4:** For the purpose of the solicitation, “leveraging” is specifically defined as using non-DACC funding in an effort to enhance or expand the proposed program to provide additional services and/or housing opportunities for the target population. Leveraged funding could include in-kind, non-cash revenue such as time, expertise or commodities that specifically enhance or expand the proposed program. If applicable, describe how you plan to leverage other funding to enhance or expand the proposed program. *(100 word limit)*

**Response to Item 2.4**

**Part III – Bonus Evaluation Points Total points: Up to 15**

1. **Austin Homelessness Advisory Council Questions for Bridge Housing Programs:**

**Maximum 15 points**

**This section will be scored by the Austin Homelessness Advisory Council (AHAC).** AHAC, previously named the Austin Homelessness Advisory Committee, is a group of approximately 15 individuals with lived experience with homelessness in Austin. AHAC is facilitated and administratively supported by DACC and meets on a biweekly basis to provide input on processes, programs, and practices impacting and serving individuals experiencing homelessness. During the COVID-19 pandemic, AHAC has transitioned to a survey format to continue their work safely.

Applicants may be eligible for up to 15 bonus points on their Application scores based on AHAC’s assessment of the following questions. AHAC will only see the responses to the following questions; please be sure your responses represent a complete picture of the proposed program. You may use similar or identical information provided in previous responses if appropriate.

**ITEM 3.1:** Please provide a general overview of your proposed program. This should include a description of the type(s) of housing units included in the program, as well as any onsite staffing, if applicable (*500 word limit*)

**Response to Item 3.1**

**Item 3.2:** Please describe how your program will address common housing and program barriers for individuals housed through your program. (*300 word limit*)

**Response to Item 3.2**

**Item 3.3:** Please describe how any housing issue(s) that arise throughout the implementation period of the proposed program will be addressed. Housing issues include items like pests, maintenance needs, excessive external noise, or other items impacting habitability of the housing units. Your response should include information about how you will communicate with the individuals housed in the proposed program as well as DACC ICM staff working with the clients housed. (*300 word limit*)

**Response to Item 3.3**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**Proposal Acceptance Period:** All responses are valid for a period of one hundred and eighty (180) calendar days subsequent to the RFA closing date unless a longer acceptance period is offered in the response.

**Proprietary and Confidential Information:** All Applications received and opened by the City are subject to the Texas Government Code, Ch. 552, and will be made available to the public. Applicants seeking to keep any portions of their Offer confidential shall mark each such portion as “Proprietary”. The City will, to the extent allowed by law, endeavor to protect such information from disclosure. The City may request a review and determination from the Attorney General’s Office of the State of Texas, of any Application contents marked as “Proprietary”. A copyright notice or symbol is insufficient to identify proprietary or confidential information.

**Application Preparation Costs:** All costs directly or indirectly related to preparation of a response to the RFA or any oral presentation required to supplement and/or clarify an offer which may be required by the City shall be the sole responsibility of the Applicant.

**Compliance:** The Applicant agrees to compliance with terms of this RFA and with all applicable rules and regulations of Federal, State, and Local governing entities

**Contract Adjustments:** The City of Austin reserves the right to adjust the agreement amount or scope of work over the contract period based on community needs, Applicant’s ability to expend funds in a timely manner or any other factor. When the City determines adjustments need to be made, the City will provide at least a 90-day notice to the Grantee.