

Mecklenburg County Community Support Services

Request for Proposal

Housing for Good – Domestic Violence Rapid Rehousing & Rental Subsidy

Released on December 4, 2019
Proposals Due Date: January 17, 2020 5:00PM EST



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

This document serves as official notice that Mecklenburg County is soliciting and receiving proposals for short-term, supportive housing, as outlined in the following specifications. This Request for Proposal (RFP) is part of Mecklenburg County's Rental Subsidy Funding and Board of County Commissioners' key priority of Affordable Housing. This RFP establishes *Housing for Good (H4G)* which is a Rapid Rehousing program for families fleeing domestic violence. The primary intent of this RFP is to select and contract with a qualified service provider who demonstrates competencies in best practices and client outcomes for this target population, ensures health and safety for clients, and demonstrates ethical and responsible practices. This process is the means by which Mecklenburg County will determine which service provider is most qualified to meet the supportive housing needs of this extremely vulnerable population. The award of this RFP is to provide funding to a provider(s) to assist up to 15 families who are fleeing domestic violence and lack access to safe, affordable housing. There is the possibility to increase the number served in future years.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Domestic violence and homelessness frequently intersect. Across the nation, studies show that as many as 57% of all homeless women identify domestic violence as the immediate cause of their homelessness (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing & Homelessness Dashboard, 2018). The National Center for Children in Poverty published a study in 2009 finding that 80% of homeless women with children had previously experienced domestic violence. During the Point in Time Count conducted in Mecklenburg County in 2019 to obtain a census of the local homeless population, 7% of those surveyed said they were experiencing homelessness because they were fleeing domestic violence. The number of domestic violence survivors seeking emergency shelter and housing in the Mecklenburg County area consistently exceeds shelter and housing supply. Between July 2018 and June 2019, Safe Alliance's 80-bed Domestic Violence Shelter provided a total of 43,800 shelter beds on 37,296 total nights. Safe Alliance referred out 42 survivors during this time due to lack of space. Survivors of domestic violence may turn to homeless service programs in search of a safe, temporary place to stay after fleeing an abusive relationship. Others may turn to homeless service programs because they lack the economic resources to secure or maintain their own housing after leaving an abusive relationship.

The most pressing need of a survivor fleeing domestic violence is safety. Some survivors may be able to stay safely in their own homes with financial support, while others may require emergency shelter or transitional housing before re-establishing their own independent housing. Short- or long-term rental and utility assistance can help survivors regain stability. Having an affordable place to call home is crucial for reducing the risk of homelessness and future violence. Research indicates that families who receive a housing subsidy after exiting homelessness are far

less likely to experience interpersonal violence than those who do not. Beyond immediate safety and housing needs, survivors of domestic violence often require supportive services to address trauma, strengthen economic security, and promote overall well-being.

To support the needs of domestic violence survivors through a Rapid Rehousing approach, Mecklenburg County Community Support Services will provide funds for supportive services, case management, and tenant-based rental and utility subsidies. Applicants must have existing access to or a plan to gain access to appropriate housing units. Applicants must demonstrate ability to secure appropriate housing and move families into housing quickly and safely. Applicants must present a clear plan for engaging landlords and provide a letter(s) of interest from property owners and/or landlords who have rental properties in the applicable area to demonstrate their ability to identify and secure housing units for program participants. Funds may not be used to supplement or supplant existing services attached to a supportive housing project.

Individuals and families served through this initiative will have complex needs. Applicants must demonstrate experience providing services to individuals and families impacted by domestic violence. Applicants must define and demonstrate a written understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence and application of specific research-based theoretical approaches and interventions such as the Duluth model, trauma-informed care, voluntary services, danger/risk assessment, strengths and needs assessment, and individualized comprehensive safety planning. Applicants must demonstrate knowledge of homelessness, housing instability, domestic violence, and the unique considerations that apply to survivors of domestic violence who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Applicants must demonstrate knowledge of and experience with the local continuum of care available to survivors of domestic violence. Applicants must demonstrate ability to support survivors of domestic violence, recognize their autonomy, and connect them with community resources as needed. Successful applicants to this RFP will develop programs that reflect values and practices consistent with the Housing First model and demonstrate a holistic, trauma-informed approach to supporting individuals in their safety, recovery and well-being.

1.3 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Mecklenburg County is issuing this RFP as part of its rental subsidy funds and the Board of County Commissioners' affordable housing priority area. This RFP is designed to provide access to safe, affordable rapid rehousing for individuals and families fleeing domestic violence. Rapid rehousing is a housing intervention combining permanent housing placements with up to 24-months of rent and utility subsidy assistance. The purpose of this RFP is to create supportive services, case management, and short-term financial assistance for domestic violence survivors via rental and utility subsidies. Rental subsidy amounts shall be based on the community's fair

market rates. Baseline fair market rental rates for 2- and 3-bedroom apartments are estimated as follows:

- \$864 (two bedroom)
- \$1,173 (three bedroom)

For this RFP, Community Support Services (CSS), a department of Mecklenburg County, is requesting the submission of Proposals and Project Plans from eligible organizations interested in providing support services and permanent housing to families who meet the H4G criteria of fleeing domestic violence and lacking access to safe, affordable housing. (Appendix A: Program Definitions).

Submitting organizations, either singly or in collaboration with other non-profit entities, must be part of an effort to create safe housing, to assure the affordability of the units and their access by the target population, and to provide appropriate support services that assist with housing stability and child safety, welling, and permanence. Selected organizations will be eligible to receive annual funding through CSS as described in this RFP, subject to project feasibility and the availability of funding.

The contract will be for three (3) years unless terminated pursuant to the terms and conditions of the contract. The proposed cost will be negotiable based upon proposed budget. Refer to Form B (Housing for Good Proposed Budget) in order to demonstrate projected costs for the course of the project.

1.4 GOAL OF HOUSING FOR GOOD

Housing for Good (H4G) is part of Mecklenburg County's Rental Subsidy Funding which specifically addresses domestic violence survivors' need for pathways to permanent housing. The H4G funding award will be granted for the purpose of developing and implementing a domestic violence-focused rapid rehousing program. Selected organizations will blend subsidized housing with supportive services for individuals and families fleeing domestic violence. The ultimate goal of H4G is to support survivors' successful transition from abusive households and homelessness to safe, stable, permanent housing that survivors can sustain on their own following a limited period of financial assistance. Additional goals of H4G include increasing survivors' safety, helping survivors obtain housing quickly, strengthening survivors' self-sufficiency, and supporting survivors' ability to stay housed long-term.

Selected applicants shall work collaboratively and communicate regularly with Mecklenburg County Community Support Services (CSS) to ensure the safety, housing stability, and well-being of program participants. Applicants should include research-based and trauma-informed services as integral components of the service model. Applicants must offer H4G services without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety) and

should tailor resources and services to the needs of each program participant. Applicants should demonstrate how the proposed project addresses the three components of rapid rehousing:

Housing Identification

Assist domestic violence survivors to find safe, affordable, quality housing quickly.

Rent and Move-In Assistance

Provide assistance with the costs associated with getting into housing including relocation expenses, application fees, rental subsidy, and utility subsidy.

Case Management

Connect individuals to services and supports as needed, once housed.

Applicants must demonstrate how they will make all three components of rapid rehousing available either through direct service provision or strategic partnerships. Applicants must describe clearly in writing how they will accomplish the following:

- Designate housing identification staff members
- Designate supportive service/case management staff members
- Find and recruit landlords continuously
- Match domestic violence survivors to appropriate housing
- Prioritize individual choice in housing selection
- Prioritize safety considerations in housing selection
- Tailor financial assistance to unique needs
- Help domestic violence survivors navigate housing barriers
- Help survivors gain stability once housed
- Assess and address survivors' holistic needs
- Perform ongoing safety assessment and safety planning
- Connect survivors to services and supports including but not limited to mental health and substance use services, childcare, parenting support, employment assistance, educational advancement, medical care, legal assistance, court advocacy, financial literacy, and life skills
- Monitor survivors' ongoing eligibility and need for rapid rehousing assistance
- Prepare survivors to transition out of the rapid rehousing program and self-sustain
- Continue case management, safety planning and follow up after program exit, if appropriate or requested

1.5 QUALIFICATIONS

Submissions will be entertained from incorporated not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organizations only. Applicants must have existing operations in Mecklenburg County. Applicants must have a minimum of three (3) years' experience providing domestic violence services with demonstrated professional training and a track record in the delivery of housing and supportive services. Applying organizations must be in good financial standing and provide audited finance statement from a Certified Public Accountant prior to award receipt.

CSS encourages the formation of partnerships and collaborations between organizations that will enhance the ability to provide a combination of housing placement services, supportive services, and domestic violence-specific services. In the case of collaborative submissions, Applicant must clearly define respective roles and responsibilities between the joint submitting organizations. Strategies for coordinating the activities of team members must be clearly defined. The service fiduciary must be clearly identified and must assume primary responsibility for the success of the service program plan.

A successful applicant must be willing to participate in a structured program monitoring process that will include tracking of client outcomes and documentation of units of service, cost per unit of service delivered, and costs of services delivered. Outcomes to be tracked may relate to safety, housing retention, tenant income and employment, quality of life, and client satisfaction.

Selected applicants must utilize a secure database to collect all HUD and County-required data and documentation. If applicants utilize the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) database, applicants must not include domestic violence-related information in the HMIS database. Applicants utilizing a comparable database to HMIS will be expected to follow all data guidelines for HMIS within the comparable domestic violence database. Applicants are expected to be knowledgeable about all applicable local, state, and federal confidentiality and privacy laws and guidelines pertaining to domestic violence-related information. Selected applicants are expected to participate actively in the local Continuum of Care.

Selected applicants must complete all training deemed appropriate and necessary by CSS and maintain training expectations. Required training topics include but are not limited to: domestic violence danger/risk assessment, safety planning, trauma-informed care, person-centered-care, domestic violence dynamics, Housing First, and Motivational Interviewing.

2 GENERAL PROCEDURES

2.1 INFORMATION SESSION

An Information Session for all prospective service providers regarding this RFP will be held on

Thursday, December 19, 2019 at 9:00AM
 Mecklenburg County Community Support Services
 Valerie C. Woodard Center
 3205 Freedom Drive, Suite 4000, Charlotte, NC, 28208

Attendance at this meeting for prospective service providers is required.

2.2 TIMELINE FOR REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND AWARD

Activity	Date
Public notice announcing RFP	December 4, 2019
RFP Information Session (Attendance <u>is required</u> for prospective service providers)	December 19, 2019
Proposal submission deadline	January 17, 2020
Proposal evaluations complete	January 24, 2020
Service agency selection and award	January 31, 2020

2.3 SUBMISSION OF QUESTIONS

If an error or omission is found in this RFP or supplemental documents provided, immediately notify the County of such potential discrepancy in writing via email as noted above, and a written addendum will be made available, via the Internet, if the County determines clarification necessary.

Any questions about this RFP must be submitted in writing. All questions shall be directed to: Carole Ward, Management Analyst via Carole.Ward@mecklenburgcountync.gov, no later than 5:00PM EST, January 16, 2019.

2.4 SUBMISSION DATE

Proposals must be received by Carole Ward at Mecklenburg County Community Support Services, Valerie C. Woodard, 3205 Freedom Drive, Suite 2000, Charlotte, NC, 28208 by **5:00pm EST on January 17, 2020**. Proposals or additional required documents will not be accepted after this date.

2.5 PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

a. Electronic Copy:

Interested service providers are to submit e-mail containing one PDF attachment of all non-confidential information and one PDF attachment of all confidential information to Mecklenburg County Community Support Services Carole Ward, Management Analyst via Carole.Ward@mecklenburgcountync.gov

b. Hard Copies:

Five (5) copies of the proposal application are required and are to be submitted to **Carole Ward at Mecklenburg County Community Support Services, 3205 Freedom Drive, Suite 2000** no later than the submission date. All proposals are to be submitted in the assigned order as indicated below.

NOTE: All information contained and submitted in the proposal that is not identified as confidential shall become public property and after final award of the RFP, copies of non-confidential portions of each proposal submitted may be provided to parties requesting copies of the request for proposal submissions.

2.6 PROPOSAL FORMAT

All proposal responses must meet the following requirements:

- All proposals shall be 8 1/2" x 11" formatted with all standard text no smaller than eleven (11) points;
- PDF files must be submitted.

- The (5) hard copies must be printed double-sided;
- Materials must be submitted in a format that allows for easy removal and recycling.

If a service provider chooses to provide additional materials in their proposal beyond those requested, those materials should be included in a separate section of the proposal. CSS reserves the right to accept or reject any or all submittals. CSS also reserves the right to investigate the financial capability, reputation, experience, location, references, history, integrity, skill, judgment, and quality of performance under similar operations of each Respondent.

NOTE: All proposals as submitted are final. No changes or amendments will be accepted.

2.7 ORDER OF PROPOSAL & FORMS

- Cover Sheet & Checklist
- Cover letter indicating intent and brief introduction
- Form A: Housing for Good Application
- Form B: Housing for Good Supportive Services Budget
- Form C: Contractor E-Verify Declaration
- Form D: MWSBE Form/M/W/SBE Compliance
- Form E: Conflict of Interest Policy
- Three references that speak directly to the applicant's service provider experience related to serving target populations. **References may not be from any party currently employed with Mecklenburg County.**
- Applicant's financial statements prepared by a certified public accountant for current year and previous year. **Note: Service Provider must be in good financial standing in order to be selected as final applicant.**
- Applicant's Articles of Incorporation and current bylaws
- IRS 501c(3) determination letter (if non-profit)
- Certificate of Good Standing from the North Carolina Secretary of State or State where the developer/development team is incorporated
- List of Board of Directors, include addresses and telephone numbers

- Current organizational chart indicating additional positions proposed and proposed job description(s)
- Current Housing Plan or Supportive Services template utilized by Service Provider.

3 GENERAL PROPOSAL CONTENT

The following provides guidance and context to include in the H4G Application (Form A).

3.1 APPLICANT EXPERIENCE

Provide a brief description of your organization, its purpose and history, and its primary programs. Describe the applicant's experience providing housing and/or services to the eligible population described in this proposal. Include experience partnering with agencies and/or serving families fleeing domestic violence. Provide a brief history of the Applicant Organization, including purpose, current programs, and number of staff persons. Connect how this programming fits within the scope of Applicant's expertise, including a trauma-informed approach. Provide outcomes relevant to current programming for this eligible population.

Include experience in identifying landlords, advocating for families with landlords in Mecklenburg County. Include any experience utilizing a Housing First approach to client engagement.

3.2 APPLICANT CAPACITY

Describe capacity of the applicant to coordinate, provide, and/or act as a referral agent for community-based services that support persons of the eligible population. Include a brief description of the organization's history, mission, staffing, and the services the organization provides/coordinates. Connect how this programming fits within the scope applicant's capacity.

Identify a public agency or experienced service provider with which a written agreement has been executed to refer eligible persons and families for the eligible units.

3.3 FUNDING REQUEST

Provide narrative that supports Supportive Services Budget (Form B). Explain the funding match that your agency plans to contribute. This match includes any indirect costs such as technology, office space, administrative, or other items that are already included in your current agency budget.

Refer to Supportive Services Budget (Form B) and provide detailed description as outlined.

3.4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Briefly describe how the housing and/or services of the project are structured to meet the needs of the intended eligible population. Include a description of how this project provides an integrated housing solution for the eligible population. Describe how the project collaborates with multiple systems.

Selected applicants must utilize a secure database to collect all HUD and County-required data and documentation. If applicants utilize the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) database, applicants must not include domestic violence-related information in the HMIS database. Applicants utilizing a comparable database to HMIS will be expected to follow all data guidelines for HMIS within the comparable domestic violence database. Applicants are expected to be knowledgeable about all applicable local, state, and federal confidentiality and privacy laws and guidelines pertaining to domestic violence-related information. Include education level and experience for proposed case managers and supervisor. Include any other requirements for staffing and relevant job descriptions.

3.5 SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PLAN

Provide a detailed description of supports and services to be provided to families, include safety planning related to domestic violence. Describe how applicant assists families in housing identification and leasing process. Explain how services will increase stability for families and address safety needs. Explain how families' needs for services are identified and individual service plans are developed. Reemphasize utilization of the Housing First approach.

Also, provide information on how the project will help create linkages for families to other resources in the community. Include crisis response and access for families.

Provide template of service plan currently used by provider.

4 SELECTION PROCESS

Proposals will be evaluated by an evaluation team based on the Service Provider's ability to meet the performance requirements of this RFP. Failure to submit information requested may result in the elimination of the proposal from further evaluation. Proposals will be assessed to determine the most comprehensive, competitive and best value solution for CSS based on, but not limited

to, the criteria below. CSS reserves the right to modify the evaluation criteria or waive portions thereof.

4.1 EVALUATION PROCESS

It is the intent of the Department to conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of proposals received in response to this RFP.

4.2 SCREENING COMMITTEE

The Department will designate a Screening Committee to evaluate proposals submitted in response to this RFP. The contents of all submitted proposals, including any confidential information, will be shared with the Screening Committee. Only proposals found to be responsive (that is, complying with all instructions and requirements described herein) will be reviewed, rated, and scored. Proposals that fail to comply with all instructions will be rejected without further consideration. Attempts by any Service Provider (or representative of any service provider) to contact or influence any member of the Screening Committee may result in disqualification of the service provider.

4.3 MINIMUM SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All proposals must comply with the requirements specified in this RFP. To be eligible for evaluation, proposals must (1) be received on or before the due date and time; (2) meet the Proposal Format requirements; (3) follow the required Proposal Outline; and (4) be complete. Proposals that fail to follow instructions or satisfy these minimum submission requirements will not be reviewed further. The Department will reject any proposal that deviates significantly from the requirements of this RFP.

4.4 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals meeting the Minimum Submission Requirements will be evaluated according to the established criteria. The criteria are the objective standards that the Screening Committee will use to evaluate the technical merits of the proposals. Only the criteria listed below will be used to evaluate proposals.

4.5 COMPLIANCE

1. The submitting organization's conformance with the instructions and specifications as outlined in this RFP.
2. Track Record & Experience of Each Submitting Organization
3. The organization's eligibility to make a submission under this RFP.
4. The degree to which the submission demonstrates collaboration between the submitting organization and other community-based organizations in the creation of the proposed project.
5. Experience and track record of the submitting organization in the delivery of supportive services to families who require a level of such services gain housing stability.

6. Experience and track record of the organization in performing the service role it is proposing to play in the project, if any (i.e., in the provision case management services or other supportive residential or community-based services) and experience in working with the targeted population(s) (persons experiencing domestic violence and homelessness).
7. Experience and track record of the organization in performing the housing role it is proposing to play in the project, if any (i.e., in the ownership or management of rental for the targeted population(s), in subsidy administration, in operating a scattered site leasing program, master leasing, etc.).
8. General organizational capacity (including factors such as length of existence, breadth and sophistication of current program activities, staff capacity, tenure and experience of board members, and financial capacity of fiduciary) and performance on previous County contracts.

4.6 RIGHT TO TERMINATE DISCUSSIONS

CSS may in its discretion require one or more Service Providers to make presentations to the evaluation team or appear before CSS and/or its representatives for an interview. During such interview, the service provider may be required to orally and otherwise present its proposal and to respond in detail to any questions posed. Additional meetings may be held to clarify issues or to address comments, as deemed appropriate. Service Providers will be notified in advance of the time and format of such meetings. Since Mecklenburg County may choose to award a contract without engaging in discussions or negotiations, the Proposals submitted shall define the service provider's best offer for performing the services described in this RFP.

The commencement of such discussions does not signify a commitment by CSS to execute a contract or to continue discussions. CSS can terminate discussions at any time and for any reason.

4.7 SELECTION

Upon completing its evaluation of proposals, the Screening Committee will select the proposal that best satisfies all conditions of this RFP. Any service provider selected will be so notified and awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract with the Department. All unsuccessful service providers will be notified by e-mail or U.S. mail, at the Department's discretion, about the outcome of the evaluation and service provider selection process.

CSS will have a period up to twenty (20) days, unless otherwise stated, to decide which proposal best meets the criteria outlined in the Request for Proposals. CSS reserves the right to waive any minor informalities or irregularities, which do not go to the heart of the proposal or prejudice other offers, or to reject, for good and compelling reasons, any and all proposals submitted. Conditional proposals, or those which take exception to the Request for Proposals, will be considered non-responsive and will be rejected.

4.8 APPEAL PROCESS

Any appeal shall be filed in writing with **Carole Ward, Management Analyst, 3205 Freedom Drive, Suite 2000, Charlotte, NC 28208**. Appeals must be filed within 20 business days of contract awards.

To be complete, protests must contain the following information:

- The protester's name, address, telephone number.
- A detailed statement of all factual and legal grounds for protests and an explanation of how the protester was prejudiced;
- Copies of relevant documents supporting protester's statement;
- A request for ruling by Mecklenburg County;
- Statement as to form of relief requested;
- All information establishing that the protester is an interested party for the purpose of filing a protest; and
- All information establishing the timeliness of the protest.

All appeals protests must be signed by an authorized representative of the protester. If appeal rules favorably for protester, CSS has discretion on how to implement whatever remedies determined are necessary to correct the defect.

5 PROGRAM GUIDELINES

5.1 PROGRAM GOALS

The goal of H4G is to improve outcomes for families fleeing domestic violence in order for these families to live in an affordable, caring, supportive setting. Families are provided with the necessary support and guidance to manage their lives and improve well-being. Children benefit from supportive and stable communities, positive adult role models, and stronger family units. Families are strengthened with holistic, trauma-informed services focused on substance use, mental illness, parenting and other needs. The result is an end to the intergenerational cycle of child neglect and homelessness, and a new generation of young people living more stable, productive lives.

5.2 ELIGIBLE POPULATIONS

Through this RFP, Community Support Services is requesting submissions of proposals from organizations interested in providing support services combined with rental assistance, to certain target populations living in eligible housing units.

Eligible populations are:

Adults (age 18 or older) who are fleeing domestic violence, lack access to safe,

affordable housing and who have **incomes at or below 30% of area median income** as defined by HUD, at the time of entering the housing.

All H4G participants will access services through Coordinated Entry or through a domestic violence emergency shelter. Mecklenburg County reserves the right to expand eligible population in order to ensure families with highest vulnerable are served.

Project Plans must **clearly identify the populations** to be served by the housing - including the numbers of housing units to be set aside for specific populations (if applicable) - and should document the need for the proposed housing and supports for the identified population.

5.3 ELIGIBLE HOUSING UNITS

An eligible housing unit is an existing apartment that is reserved for occupancy by eligible persons that provides for affordability and expanded access to eligible populations through a formal (written) agreement with the property owner that is dated after the date that the submitting organization(s) is selected under this RFP and that reserves the unit for eligible populations or an eligible person. This may be in the form of a rental subsidy agreement or master lease.

5.4 SUPPORTIVE HOUSING GUIDELINES & BEST PRACTICES

5.4.1 Rapid Rehousing

An intervention designed to help individuals and families quickly exit homelessness, return to housing in the community, and not become homeless again. Rapid re-housing is defined as an intervention providing short-term or medium-term (up to 24 months) financial assistance and services to help those experiencing homelessness to be quickly re-housed and stabilized. The lease for the unit must be between the landlord and the program participant. This is considered permanent housing.

The goals are to help people obtain housing quickly, increase self-sufficiency, and stay housed. It is offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety) and the resources and services provided are typically tailored to the needs of the person.

Eligible housing units must be permanent supportive housing units only. The primary purpose of permanent supportive housing is assisting the individual or family to live independently in the community and meet the obligations of tenancy.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness has outlined three core components for this intervention. They are:

- Housing Identification
- Rent and Move-In Assistance
- Case Management and Services

These core components represent the minimum that a program must provide to be considered a rapid rehousing program, but do not fully describe what constitutes an effective rapid rehousing program.

Successful respondents to this RFP will develop programs that reflect values and practices consistent with the Housing First model and that demonstrate a holistic approach to supporting individuals and their families in their recovery and well-being.

5.4.2 Housing First

Families are engaged through a Housing First approach. The 5 Principles of Housing First are as follows:

- Immediate access to housing with no readiness conditions
- Consumer choice and self-determination
- Recovery orientation
- Individualized and person-drive supports
- Social and community integration

Under the Housing First model, clients do not have to be clean or sober or participate in programming in order to be housed. Though services are voluntary, the expectation is that case managers and provider staff will be successful at engaging clients and supporting their participation in recommended programs, and applicants shall outline what practices and strategies will be employed to engage and motivate clients.

Priority will be given to approaches that maximize participation by clients reflective of the target population to be served in the design and creation of the service approaches. Project Plans should reflect how this will be accomplished.

5.5 GENERAL STANDARDS

All housing units **must be affordable** to the population to be served. In general, rents should be set at rates where the target population is expected to pay no more than 30% of their income for housing costs. Project Plans must describe plans for assuring affordability.

All housing units **must be of good quality** (meet HUD housing quality standards) and conform to state and local fire and building codes, including codes relating to handicapped accessibility. Project Plans must describe strategies that will be taken to ensure housing quality.

All housing units **should be accessible to public transportation and community amenities**. If they are not, the service program plan must reflect how alternate transportation will be provided.

All housing units **must provide for the safety and security of their tenants**.

6 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Service Provider shall procure all necessary permits and licenses and abide by all applicable laws, regulations and ordinances of all Federal, State, and local governments in which work under any resulting contract is performed. These minimal requirements must be met prior to award of contract if your company is selected, before your company's qualifications will be considered.

6.1 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Service Providers with total revenue, from all sources, of more than one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) in annual funding are required to submit an annual Audited Financial Statement prepared by a Certified Public Accountant (CPA). The audited financial statement must include the following:

1. A balance sheet, statement of financial position or statement of assets, liabilities and owner's equity.
2. A statement of income or statement of revenues and expenses.
3. A statement of cash flows.
4. An independent auditor's opinion.

5. Notes to the financial statements and supplemental information.

The year-ended date for the financial statements must be no more than twelve (12) months prior to the beginning of the Contract term.

Shall comply with audit requirements as described in N.C.G.S. § 143C-6-22 & 23 and OMB Circular- CFR Title 2 Grants and Agreements, Part 200, and shall disclose all information required by 42 USC 455.104, or 42 USC 455.105, or 42 USC 455.106.

6.2 INSURANCE

Evidence of adequate Insurance; a Certificate of Insurance or letter from your insurance carrier:

1. Automobile Liability-minimum \$1,000,000;
2. Professional Liability-minimum \$1,000,000;
3. Commercial General Liability-minimum \$1,000,000;
4. Electronic Errors and Omissions Liability-minimum \$1,000,000;
5. Worker's Compensation and Service Providers Liability – State of North Carolina statutory requirements.
6. Mecklenburg County Business Licenses, if non-profit not required
7. Secretary of State Certificate of Authority, if applicable
8. Articles of Incorporation, if applicable

6.3 COMPLETE M/W/SBE COMPLIANCE AND M/W/SBE UTILIZATION COMMITMENT

6.4 COST EFFECTIVENESS AND VALUE

Provide an itemized budget using the template provided per Form B. (Cost must include all aspects of the project).

6.5 OVERDUE TAXES

Provide certification and sworn statement on official company letterhead as evidence that service provider does not have any federal, State or local overdue tax debts as defined by N.C.G.S. 105-243.1.

7 EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals will be evaluated by an evaluation team based on the Service Provider's ability to meet the performance requirements of this RFP. Failure to submit information requested may result in the elimination of the proposal from further evaluation. Proposals will be assessed to determine the most comprehensive, competitive and best value solution for CSS based on, but not limited to, the criteria below. CSS reserves the right to modify the evaluation criteria or waive portions thereof.

7.1 EVALUATION PROCESS

It is the intent of the Department to conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of proposals received in response to this RFP.

7.2 SCREENING COMMITTEE

The Department will designate a Screening Committee to evaluate proposals submitted in response to this RFP. The contents of all submitted proposals, including any confidential information, will be shared with the Screening Committee. Only proposals found to be responsive (that is, complying with all instructions and requirements described herein) will be reviewed, rated, and scored. Proposals that fail to comply with all instructions will be rejected without further consideration. Attempts by any service provider (or representative of any service provider) to contact or influence any member of the Screening Committee may result in disqualification of the service provider.

7.3 MINIMUM SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All proposals must comply with the requirements specified in this RFP. To be eligible for evaluation, proposals must (1) be received on or before the due date and time; (2) meet the Proposal Format requirements; (3) follow the required Proposal Outline; and (4) be complete. Proposals that fail to follow instructions or satisfy these minimum submission requirements will not be reviewed further. The Department will reject any proposal that deviates significantly from the requirements of this RFP.

7.4 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals meeting the Minimum Submission Requirements will be evaluated according to the established criteria. The criteria are the objective standards that the Screening Committee will use to evaluate the technical merits of the proposals. Only the criteria listed below will be used to evaluate proposals.

- a. Compliance.** The submitting organization's conformance with the instructions and specifications as outlined in this RFP.
- b. Track Record & Experience of Each Submitting Organization**
 - 1) The organization's eligibility to make a submission under this RFP.

- 2) The degree to which the submission demonstrates collaboration between the submitting organization and other community-based organizations in the creation of the proposed project.
- 3) Experience and track record of the submitting organization in the delivery of supportive services to families who require a level of such services in order to live independently.
- 4) Experience and track record of the organization in performing the service role it is proposing to play in the project, if any (i.e., in the provision case management services or other supportive residential or community-based services) and experience in working with the targeted population(s), including persons involved with the domestic violence and homeless service systems
- 5) Experience and track record of the organization in performing the housing role it is proposing to play in the project, if any (i.e., in the ownership or management of rental for the targeted population(s), in subsidy administration, in operating a scattered site leasing program, etc.).
- 6) For collaborative submissions, the collective experience and track record of the joint submitting organizations in all of the above, the clear delineation of respective responsibilities between the participating organizations, and a clear strategy for coordinating the activities of the partners on an on-going basis.
- 7) General organizational capacity (including factors such as length of existence, breadth and sophistication of current program activities, staff capacity, tenure and experience of board members, and financial capacity of fiduciary) and performance on previous contracts.

7.5 PROJECT PLAN

1. Compliance with the Program Guidelines.
2. Submitting organization's willingness to participate in performance evaluation of the project through a program of Quality Assurance Monitoring.
3. The overall coherence, comprehensiveness and feasibility of the submitting organization's project plan, including the applicants' understanding of the goals of the H4G Initiative.
4. Priority Factors:

- Degree to which the submitting organization has engaged the targeted communities in the planning and creation of the housing and services (e.g., engagement with the continuum of care and other community planning processes in identifying needs that have not been met, developing local solutions or models, and including groups traditionally left out of local planning processes). If not yet engaged, are they planning to do so? Consistency of the proposed housing and services with local priorities (current and in development) for affordable or supportive housing.
 - The extent of consumer participation in the design of the service approach (to date and planned).
 - The demonstrated level of need for the type of housing proposed for the target population in the targeted geographic areas identified by the submitting organization, the relative availability of alternative resources in the identified target areas.
 - The quality of the submitting organization's Housing Plan and its consistency with the H4G Program Guidelines.
 - The general suitability of the proposed target area(s) from the perspective of the availability of existing housing units and a service linkage, and access to transportation and community amenities.
5. Degree to which the housing approach integrates housing units serving the targeted population(s) with units serving people without identified special needs.
 6. The quality of the submitting organization's Service Plan, including the degree to which the services will have a positive impact on the self-sufficiency of the tenants, and its consistency with the H4G Program Guidelines.
 7. Degree to which the services to be funded add to the service capacity of the submitting organization(s) and the service system within the locality and region.
 8. Degree of linkage with existing rehabilitation, employment, education, healthcare and treatment systems.

7.6 SELECTION

Upon completing its evaluation of proposals, the Screening Committee will select the proposal that best satisfies all conditions of this RFP. Any service provider selected will be so notified and awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract with the Department. All unsuccessful service providers will be notified by e-mail or U.S. mail, at the Department's discretion, about the outcome of the evaluation and service provider selection process.

7.7 DEBRIEFING

Within ten (10) days of receiving notification from the Department, unsuccessful service providers may contact the Official Contact and request information about the evaluation and service provider selection process. The e-mail sent date or the postmark date on the notification envelope will be considered “day one” of the ten (10) days. If unsuccessful service providers still have questions after receiving this information, they may contact Carole Ward and request a meeting with the Department to discuss the evaluation process and their proposals. If held, the debriefing meeting will not include any comparisons of unsuccessful proposals with other proposals. CSS will schedule and hold the debriefing meeting within fifteen (15) days of the request. There will not be any change, alteration, or modification of the outcome or selection process.

7.8 QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE AND APPROACH

Service Providers will be evaluated based upon their understanding, experience and qualifications in performing the same or substantially similar services, as reflected by its experience in performing such services. The evaluation will include references regarding work for organizations with needs similar to the CSS, and the feasibility of the Service Provider's approach for the provision of the services.

7.9 FINANCIAL QUALIFICATIONS

This criterion includes an evaluation of the financial qualifications. The evaluation will take into account the financial strength of the Service Provider and its ability to meet the long-term financial requirements of the Contract.

7.10 COST EFFECTIVENESS AND VALUE

Under this criterion, proposals will be compared in terms of the most reasonable, and/or most effective pricing options.

7.11 ACCEPTANCE OF THE TERMS OF THE RFP

Proposals will be evaluated for compliance with the terms, conditions, requirements, and specifications stated in this RFP.

8 ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Final award of contract is contingent upon availability of funds from Federal and/or local governing bodies. CSS reserves the right to interview at its discretion, any and all interested service providers; and the right to reject any and all proposals, or any part thereof.

Service Providers are encouraged to make a good faith effort to include environmental considerations supporting waste reduction, recycling and buy-recycled products supporting markets for recycled and other environmentally preferable products whenever practical.

8.1 FINANCING

Any costs incurred in the process of preparing and/or submitting a proposal shall be borne by the service provider.

8.2 APPEAL PROCESS

All protests should be filed in writing with **Carole Ward, Management Analyst, 3205 Freedom Drive, Suite 2000, Charlotte, NC 28208**. Protests must be filed within 20 business days of contract awards.

To be complete, protests must contain the following information:

- The protester's name, address, telephone number.
- A detailed statement of all factual and legal grounds for protests and an explanation of how the protester was prejudiced;
- Copies of relevant documents supporting protester's statement;
- A request for ruling by Mecklenburg County;
- Statement as to form of relief requested;
- All information establishing that the protester is an interested party for the purpose of filing a protest; and
- All information establishing the timeliness of the protest.

All protests must be signed by an authorized representative of the protester. If appeal rules favorably for protester, CSS has discretion on how to implement whatever remedies determined are necessary to correct the defect.

APPENDIX A

TERM	DEFINITION
Affordable Housing	Housing where a household with annual income between 0 percent of Area Median Income and 120 percent of Area Median Income does not spend more than 30 percent of their pretax gross annual income on rent and utilities.
Area Median Income	Income level estimate set by HUD at which 50 percent of households earn more and 50 percent earn less. The estimate is adjusted for different family sizes.
Continuum of Care (CoC)	The work of the Continuum of Care (CoC) is mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and is designed to promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending and preventing homelessness as well as providing funding, oversight, planning and evaluation of housing-related services <i>(This is taken from the latest report and will be used to update the Dashboard definition)</i>
Coordinated Entry	Coordinated Entry, which began in May 2014, is Charlotte-Mecklenburg’s portal to connect individuals and families who are homeless to an existing shelter or housing resource. Coordinated Entry also helps the community to prioritize resources for the most vulnerable households and to identify gaps and shortages in housing resources. <i>(This is taken from the latest report and will be used to update the Dashboard definition)</i>
Diversion	A strategy that prevents homelessness for people seeking shelter by helping them identify immediate alternate housing arrangements and, if necessary, connecting them with services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing.
Domestic Violence	Also referred to as <i>Intimate Partner Violence</i> , domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, and emotional abuse. The frequency and severity of domestic violence can vary dramatically; however, the one constant component of domestic violence is one partner’s consistent efforts to maintain power and control over the other.
Eligible Housing Unit	An eligible housing unit is an existing apartment that is reserved for occupancy by eligible families (see above) that provides for affordability and expanded access to eligible populations through a formal (written) agreement with the property owner that is dated after the date that the submitting organization(s) is selected under this RFP and that reserves the unit for eligible populations or an eligible person. This may be in the form of a rental subsidy agreement.

TERM	DEFINITION
Eligible Population	For the purpose of this RFP, an individual or family fleeing domestic violence, lack access to safe, affordable housing and who have incomes at or below 30% of area median income as defined by HUD, at the time of entering the housing.
Emergency Shelter / Seasonal Housing	A facility with the primary purpose of providing temporary shelter for homeless persons.
Extremely Low Income	A household’s annual income is less than 30 percent of the Area Median Income.
Family	A household with at least one adult age 18 or over and at least one child under the age of 18.
Homeless	<p>Homeless (HUD Definition) When an individual or household experiences literal homelessness, including sleeping in an emergency or seasonal shelter, transitional housing, or a place unfit for human habitation. According to HUD, doubled up and staying in a hotel/motel (when the household is paying for the hotel/motel) are not considered homeless. All programs who receive Continuum of Care (CoC) and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) dollars must use this definition of homelessness to determine eligibility for services.</p> <p>Homeless (McKinney-Vento Definition) When an individual or household lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. According to the McKinney-Vento Homelessness Act, this includes children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (doubled up); are living in motels/hotels, trailer parks, or camping groups due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals.</p>
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)	A software application designed to record and store client-level information on the characteristics and service needs of homeless people. Each community’s Continuum of Care (COC) maintains its own HMIS, which can be tailored to meet local needs, but must also confirm to HUD’s HMIS Data and Technical Standards.
Housing First	An approach to quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements.
Housing Cost Burdened	If a household spends more than 30 percent of their gross income on rent and utilities, then they are considered housing cost burdened. If a household spends more than 50 percent of their gross income on rent and utilities, then they are considered <i>extremely</i> housing cost burdened.
Prevention	Prevention is a category targeting households facing housing instability who have not yet lost their housing. Prevention includes community-wide interventions aimed at changing systems and structures that perpetuate housing instability; cross-sector collaboration and coordination to reduce the

TERM	DEFINITION
	<p>prevalence of homelessness; and targeted interventions including financial and legal assistance to help households maintain their housing.</p> <p>Examples of prevention can include housing relocation and stabilization services as well as short-and/or medium-term rental assistance as necessary to prevent the individual or family from eviction or moving to an emergency shelter, a place not meant for human habitation, or other definition of homelessness.</p>
Rapid Rehousing	<p>An intervention that provides short-term rental assistance and services. The goals are to help people obtain housing quickly, increase self-sufficiency, and stay housed. It is offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety) and the resources and services provided are typically tailored to the needs of the person.</p>
Supportive Services	<p>Through a Housing First Approach, outreach and engagement, case management, information and referral, mental health and/or substance abuse treatment, healthcare, employment and job skills training, life skills training and housing stability. .</p>
Very Low Income	<p>A household's annual income is between 30 percent and 50 percent of the Area Median Income.</p>

APPENDIX B

Key Principles of the Service Plan

1. Essential components of services to be provided:

- a. Focused on the strengths and needs of each family;
- b. Provides help to clients in identifying goals and needs, to develop plans to achieve their goals and objectives, and to gain access to appropriate community-based services, including, but not limited to, clinical services, employment and education, natural supports (family, peers, faith communities, etc.), and general community resources;
- c. Available where and when needed by the clients. Clients must be able to access case management services where they live (meaning that case management services come to the client) and at hours that work for the client.

2. Values of services to be provided:

- a. Committed to maximizing client choices and options;
- b. Focused on client's strengths, gifts and potential contributions;
- c. Guided by an expectation of hope and recovery;
- d. Recognizes the importance and value of employment and work.

3. Competencies of the service design:

- a. Not duplicative of existing services serving the target population;
- b. Provides for adequate linkages to the treatment system, particularly in regard to relapse prevention and relapse management;
- c. Flexible and responsive service approach that recognizes, and can adapt to, an episodic pattern of service demands;
- d. Service team is internally coordinated with clear lines of communication, supervision and accountability.

4. Core competencies of service team:

- a. Skilled in on-going outreach and engagement of clients;
- b. Experienced with development of life skills that support the client's ability to succeed in permanent housing;
- c. Knowledgeable about community resources and the means of accessing them;
- d. Possesses the attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary to work effectively with the population to be served by the housing.