

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

HUD Continuum of Care Homeless Program:
Shelter Plus Care Sponsor-Based Project

Submit all final proposals and technical assistance questions to:

Daniel Blankenship, Homeless Grants Administrator
VT State Housing Authority
(VT BoS CoC Lead Agency and Member of the VT Coalition to End Homelessness)
1 Prospect Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05602
daniel@vsha.org ~ (802) 828-0294

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RFP Submission Schedule and Contact Information.....	3
Objective & Background.....	4
Background.....	4
Project Details.....	5
Eligible Program Participants.....	6
Project Requirements & Responsibilities.....	8
Application Submission Format.....	11
Procurement Conditions.....	11
General Requirements for Selected Project Sponsor.....	12
Method of Proposals Project Evaluation.....	13
Other Requirements (only if proposal selected)	14

RFP SCHEDULE

- RFP Issued: Friday, January 14, 2011

- Technical Assistance Conference Calls:

Tuesday, January 18, 2011 ~ 1:00p.m. to 2:00p.m.

OR

Monday, January 24, 2011 ~ 9:30a.m. to 10:30a.m.

Conference Call Number- 1-866-244-8528 ~ Participant Passcode- 324359

- Deadline to Submit Technical Assistance Requests:

Friday, January 28, 2011 ~ 12:00p.m.

- Deadline for Proposals Electronic Submission:

Friday, February 4, 2011 (close of business day)

- Proposals Reviewed by a Bonus Project Review Committee (representatives from VT Housing & Conservation Board, VT Office of Economic Opportunity, VT Housing Finance Agency and the VT State Housing Authority):

Within 30 days of Proposals Submission Deadline.

- Awardee Announced:

Within 30 days of Proposals Submission Deadline.

OBJECTIVE

The Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA), as a grantee in the Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care (VT BoS CoC), was awarded a Shelter Plus Care Sponsor-Based Bonus Project as part of the annual competitive 2009 HUD Continuum of Care Notice of Funding Application (HUD CoC NOFA). This Bonus Project is made available through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as part of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

VSHA is seeking Requests for Proposals (RFP) for the selection of a sponsor to administer a permanent supportive housing project as detailed under HUD's Shelter Plus Care Program - Sponsor-Based Rental Assistance (S+C SRA) component.

BACKGROUND

The Shelter Plus Care (S+C) program is designed to link rental assistance to supportive services that is provided by a sponsor agency (funded through other sources) for homeless persons with disabilities (primarily those who are seriously mentally ill; have chronic problems with alcohol, drugs, or both; or have a AIDS and related diseases) and, if also homeless, their families. The S+C program provides funds to be used for rental assistance for permanent housing for homeless persons with disabilities.

The Shelter Plus Care programs require active involvement of participants in order to maintain their receipt of rental assistance. Participants must follow an individual service plan (ISP) that establishes clear personal goals and services that work towards stability and independence, including accessing mainstream resources.

Local S+C projects are typically implemented through partnerships that include:

- a grantee (VSHA);
- one or more nonprofit housing sponsors that own or coordinate leasing of housing for program participants; and
- a network of supportive services providers.

The goals of the Shelter Plus Care Program are to assist homeless individuals and their families to:

- Increase their housing stability;
- Increase their skills and/or income; and
- Obtain greater self-sufficiency.

Details on S+C programs can be found at “TITLE 24-Part 582-SHELTER PLUS CARE” at:

- <http://www.helpingtohouse.org/resources.php>

Information on all HUD CoC Programs for the Homeless, including S+C, can be found at:

- <http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewHomelessAndHousingProgramInfo>

PROJECT DETAILS

The Shelter Plus Care program sponsor-based rental assistance (S+C SRA) component is very different than the predominant S+C tenant-based rental assistance currently used in the VT BoS CoC. A S+C SRA sponsor agency directly leases or owns a unit(s) and subsequently subleases the unit(s) to a S+C program participant. In the case of a sublease, the sponsor agency maintains responsibility for complying with the lease obligations.

Additional project information:

- The project must be located in a rural county within the VT BoS CoC geographic area. The VT BoS CoC encompasses all counties in Vermont, with the exception of Chittenden County. All counties in the VT BoS CoC area are deemed by HUD as rural, with the exception of Franklin and Grand Isle Counties.
- The sponsor must be a nonprofit organization or a community mental health center established as public non-profit organization.
- The project must serve qualifying participant households that meet the HUD definition of chronic homelessness.
- The sponsor may access up to **\$120,780** over the course of the five-year grant.
- Funds must be utilized for housing expenses incurred through owning or leasing (preferably from a non-profit affordable housing organization) at least three (3) one-bedroom units annually.
- Units may be located in a single structure or scattered site.
- Units will utilize Energy Star Initiative practices.
- Unit costs may not exceed the HUD Fair Market Rent (FMR) in the county that the project is located.
- The sponsor may charge a rental fee to resident participants in an amount not exceed 30% of the household income.
- The sponsor may use any rental assistance amounts not needed in a year to increase the amount of rental assistance available in subsequent years.

- The sponsor may use funds for larger, but not smaller, unit sizes if funding permits.
- S+C rental assistance may not be used in a rental unit that is already receiving other permanent housing rental assistance (example: HCV, Sect. 8 project-based rental assistance, etc.).
- Funds cannot be used for supportive services, which must be funded from other sources.
- The sponsor must provide a commitment letter with the amount of potential supportive services to be provided to prospective project participants over the five-year grant period that matches or exceeds the grant value.
- The sponsor must comply with all HUD record-keeping and reporting guidelines, including utilization of an authorized Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), this also includes cooperating with periodic VSHA assessments of rental assistance and supportive services required by the participants in the program.
- The sponsor will not knowingly allow illegal activities in any unit assisted with S+C funds.
- The sponsor agrees to draw grant funds for and to make rental assistance payments on behalf of eligible program participants at least quarterly.
- The sponsor must comply with all requirements of the project sponsor agreement with VSHA and to accept responsibility for such compliance by any entities to which it makes grant funds available.
- The sponsor may substitute one site for another to accommodate changing needs, provided the sponsor continues to comply with HUD and VSHA guidelines and provided the sponsor continues to own or lease the property and continues to serve the overall minimum number of units [3] indicated in the 2009 CoC NOFA application.

ELIGIBLE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

The purpose of the S+C Program is to provide permanent housing, in connection with supportive services, to homeless households with adult who has a disabling condition.

The primary target population for this S+C SRA project RFP is persons experiencing chronic homelessness who are also diagnosed with one of the following disabilities:

- Serious Mental Illness (SMI); and/or
- Chronic Substance Abuse (CSA); and/or
- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) or related diseases.

Chronic Homelessness- Eligible proposals, and the awarded project, must exclusively serve individuals and/or families who meet the HUD definition of chronic homelessness.

A person who meets the HUD definition of chronic homelessness is:

- an unaccompanied homeless **individual** who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more OR has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years; AND has a disabling condition.

OR

- A **family** household who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more OR has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years; AND consists of at least one adult member in the family with a disabling condition.

→ What is meant by “homeless” in the definition of chronic homelessness?

An episode is a separate, distinct, and sustained stay on the streets and/or in an emergency homeless shelter.

In its definition of a chronic homelessness, HUD defines the term “homeless” as:

1) A person sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g. living on the streets, in a car, park, tent, abandoned or condemned building, etc.).

OR

2) A person sleeping in an emergency shelter which can be “any facility the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary or transitional shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless” (24 CFR Ch.V (4-1-05) 576.3). Although this definition includes the term transitional shelter, persons coming from transitional housing are not considered chronically homeless.

- If a person is in one of the two categories listed above, but most recently spent less than 30 days in a jail or institution, he/she qualifies as coming from one of these two categories.
- Governing regulations include an income eligibility test restricting assistance to persons below 50% of Area Median Income, adjusted for household size.

Disabling Condition- A person with disabilities means a household composed of one or more persons at least one of whom is an adult who has a disabling condition.

A disabling condition is defined as a diagnosable chronic substance abuse disorder (CSA), serious mental illness (SMI), AIDS and related diseases, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions. Persons with CSA, SMI and/or AIDS and related diseases are the targeted population to be served through this S+C SRA project RFP.

A disabling condition must meet the criteria in accordance with the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development and definitions included in Section 223 of the Social Security Act and Section 102(7) of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Under all S+C program components, supportive services must be available to meet the needs of participants—matching rental assistance with an equal amount of supportive services from other sources. These supportive services must either be provided by the sponsor agency or funded by the sponsor and provided by a third party. Other Federal, State, or local sources, as well as private sources may fund the supportive services. In addition to recordkeeping and evaluation that grantees may conduct for their own purposes, they must adhere to HUD-required recordkeeping plus a formalized annual project review (the Annual Progress Report).

ALL proposals, and awarded final project, will exclusively serve individuals and/or families that meet the HUD definition of chronic homelessness. As such, participants must come directly from the streets or other place not meant for human habitation, emergency shelter program, and/or a HUD-defined Safe Haven program.

Eligible Projects

Sponsor Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the program regulations for the component for which it will be applying. HUD has posted on the Internet complete guidance on the CoC process as well as each program component (see: www.hudhre.info). VSHA shall use its resources to assist applicants in submitting project proposals that conform with the program regulations by providing technical assistance, but do not make any representation that funding is guaranteed, or that their interpretations of the regulations are fully consistent with HUD's. The responsibility for the completeness of a Project Proposal and its conformity with the relevant HUD regulations is the sole responsibility of each sponsor applicant.

Private Nonprofit Status

Sponsor applicants that previously submitted non-profit status documentation to VSHA will not have to re-submit this again for this Project Proposal.

Private nonprofit status is documented by submitting either: (1) a copy of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) ruling providing tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code; or (2) documentation showing that the applicant is a certified United Way agency; or (3) a certification from a licensed CPA that no part of the net earnings of the organization inures to the benefit of any member, founder, contributor, or individual; that the organization has a voluntary board; that the organization practices nondiscrimination in the provision of assistance; and that the organization has a functioning accounting system that provides for each of the following (mention each in the certification):

- (a) Accurate, current and complete disclosure of the financial results of each federally sponsored project.
- (b) Records that identify adequately the source and application of funds for federally sponsored activities.
- (c) Effective control over and accountability for all funds, property and other assets.
- (d) Comparison of outlays with budget amounts.
- (e) Written procedures to minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds to the recipient from the U.S. Treasury and the use of the funds for program purposes.
- (f) Written procedures for determining the reasonableness, allocability and allowability of costs.
- (g) Accounting records, including cost accounting records, which are supported by source documentation.

Public Nonprofit Status

Public nonprofit status is documented for community mental health centers by including a letter or other document from the authorized state official stating that the applicant is organized and in good standing under state law as a public nonprofit organization.

Applicants and sponsors that previously submitted non-profit status documentation to VSHA will not have to re-submit this again for this RFP.

Supportive Services

Provision of essential social services to the homeless, including services concerned with employment, health, drug abuse, and education and may include, (but is not limited to):

- Outreach;
- Housing search assistance;
- Life-skills training;
- Medical services and psychological counseling and supervision;
- Employment services;
- Nutritional assistance;
- Substance abuse treatment and counseling;
- Assistance in obtaining other federal, state, and local assistance including mental health benefits, employment counseling, medical assistance, veteran's benefits, and income support assistance such as Supplemental Security
- Income benefits, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, General Assistance, and Food Stamps;
- Other services such as child care, transportation, job placement and job training; and Staff salaries necessary to provide the above service.

Assistance to the Homeless

Homeless individuals and families must be given assistance in obtaining appropriate supportive services, including permanent housing, medical and mental health treatment, counseling, supervision, and other services essential for achieving independent living; and other Federal, State, local, and private assistance available for such individuals.

PROCUREMENT CONDITIONS

Technical Assistance for Proposals- To request technical assistance (TA), please send an email to daniel@vsha.org. Please note that VSHA is only permitted to answer technical questions and shall not provide assistance that may provide a competitive advantage to a proposal. Additional TA may be found on the HUD website at: www.hudhre.info. All requests for technical assistance must be submitted by the date and time indicated in the "Schedule" of this RFP.

Energy Efficiency- HUD/VSHA supports the Energy Star initiative that encourages the use of energy-efficient appliances. Proposals for this project will be selected if the sponsor agrees to utilize Energy Star in their project. For more information on the Energy Star Initiative go to: www.energystar.gov.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES AND POPULATIONS

- Homeless prevention, short-term or transitional housing, and supportive service activities are statutorily ineligible under these programs.
- Persons at risk of homelessness, including those coming directly out of an institution or facility as detailed in the "Questions & Answers: Housing Inventory Chart (HIC)" located at www.helpingtohouse.org, are statutorily ineligible for assistance under these programs.
- Acquisitions, construction, rehabilitation, leasing, and operating costs are statutorily ineligible for assistance under Shelter Plus Care and Section 8 SRO.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION FORMAT

VSHA shall only accept on-time application submitted electronically as detailed:

1. Files should be saved as Microsoft Office documents compatible with Office 2007.
2. All scanned documents shall be saved only as PDF formatted files with resolution set no less than 100 dpi or greater than 400 dpi. VSHA shall not review documents submitted as jpg, tif or other graphical formats.
3. All documents must be compatible and accessible to systems on a Microsoft Vista operating platform.
4. All documents submitted electronically shall be sent via email to: daniel@vsha.org on or before the deadline as detailed in the "Schedule". The subject line should read: 2009 CoC S+C SRA Bonus Project Proposal. The body of the email should include a coversheet and Agency Contact Information. Proposals should be concise and complete.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ANY PROJECT SPONSOR

A. Financial Requirements Summary

CoC funded programs are subject to the uniform policies and requirements of the federal Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Circulars and Federal regulations implementing the Circulars. The grantee must meet any applicable audit requirements in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget Circulars A-133, A-128, and A-110.

The nonprofit project sponsor agency will be responsible for costs associated with an independent audit. As applicable, the audit must be provided to HUD in a timely manner.

B. Grant Administration

Grantees and sponsors are responsible for ensuring that homeless assistance funds are administered in accordance with applicable laws, program regulations and VSHA policies.

C. Performance Reports

An approved sponsor agency must enter into a Sponsor Agreement (SA) with VSHA. This SA will provide VSHA necessary access to the applicant's project for monitoring and evaluation purposes. In addition, the project sponsor agency must provide an Annual Performance Report (APR) for VSHA to file with HUD.

D. Record-keeping

Each grantee and sponsor must ensure that records are maintained for a three-year period after the final expenditure to document compliance with the provisions of the program regulations, and to make them available to HUD upon reasonable advance notice. Grantees are expected to use standard accounting practices in their fiscal recordkeeping.

E. Timely Use of Funds

Grantees and sponsors are expected to utilize McKinney-Vento assistance in a timely manner. The program regulations make clear the standards that grantees will be held to regarding program implementation. Funds must be accessed on a quarterly basis, at minimum. HUD reserves the right to recapture funds not committed within 12-months of grant execution.

G. Homeless Management Information System

Grantees are required to utilize the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for data tracking system, approved by the VT BoS CoC, for case management activities.

METHOD OF PROJECT PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Only proposals that are complete, accurate and relevant will be reviewed. The Project Review Committee will complete the review and evaluation process and prepare a priority list of grantees.

The Project Review Committee shall consist of representatives from the:

- Vermont Housing Conservation Board-VHCB (Rick DeAngelis),
- Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity-VT AHS OEO (Angus Chaney),
- Vermont Housing & Finance Agency-VHFA (Maura Collins), and the
- Vermont State Housing Authority-VSHA (Jenny Hyslop).

Evaluation Factors

Projects will be evaluated to determine if their historical or anticipated performance merits inclusion in the VT BoS CoC. Project proposals that may reduce the overall CoC score may be excluded from the CoC application. Projects will only be included in the submission to HUD if they demonstrate capacity to initiate a new project in a timely manner.

The Project Review Committee will approve a project that clearly demonstrates:

New Projects Rating Factors (100 points total)

1. Project Need in Community (50 Points): does the proposed new project provide a new needed service, and/or is the project proposed for an under-served part of the County and/or State. Measures to determine this factor may include: Housing Inventory Chart/Point-in-Time Count, AHS-OEO Emergency Shelter Census Report, Vermont 2-1-1 reporting, and other applicable measures.

2. Project Management Capability (40 Points):

- Feasibility (taking into account timing of implementation, availability of other resources, and experience of applicant).
- Targeting and outreach to potential participants who meet the HUD definition of chronic homelessness.
- Project and participant performance measures. Measures to determine this factor may include: review of existing or potential measurements proposed by project applicant, review of Annual Performance Report (if current HUD CoC sponsor), etc.

3. Participation in, and support from, local and/or statewide CoC planning processes (10 Points): This factor determined based on letters of support, interviews, etc.

Experience of Project Sponsor and/or Partners

- Briefly and succinctly describe the outreach plan to bring these chronically homeless participants into the project.
- Briefly and succinctly describe experience in assisting participants with the accessing of mainstream resources and implementation of Individual Service Plans (ISP).
- Briefly and succinctly describe the experience of the applying project sponsor and/or partners as it relates to providing supportive services, housing, and working for homeless persons, especially chronically homeless, and carrying-out the activities of the project.
- Briefly and succinctly describe the experience of the sponsor and/or partners in the administration of a Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS).
- Briefly and succinctly identify and describe the experience of the sponsor agency and/or partners in receiving HUD or other government funding.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS, ONLY IF APPLICATION HAS BEEN SELECTED

- Copy of IRS 501 (c)(3) Tax Determination Letter only if applicant has not previously submitted one to VSHA.
- Cash Match Commitment Letter of anticipated supportive services over the course of the entire five-year grant period that equals or exceeds the total grant amount.
- Address of Sponsor, Project Site Location(s) and/or Partner Agencies (if different than mailing address).
- Comply with HUD Environmental Reviews of S+C SRA project.
- Letter of Support from local housing/homeless coalition.
- Memorandum of Understanding with partner agency(s), if applicable.

VSHA will provide technical guidance only and will not provide information that may appear to provide an applicant with a competitive advantage.