



Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to Assist Homeless Response System Improvements Including: System Mapping; Gaps Analysis; Coordinated Entry System Assessment, Redesign, and Development of an Ongoing Evaluation Process; and Community-wide Standards Design and Implementation

Release Date: February 19, 2019

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Introduction

In partnership with the Sacramento City and County Continuum of Care (CoC), the City of Sacramento, and the County of Sacramento, Sacramento Steps Forward (SSF) is launching a number of related efforts to improve and extend our local homeless response system with the ultimate goal of maximizing and expediting the number of individuals assisted out of homelessness. SSF is seeking a qualified consultant/consultant team to assist this effort.

Purpose and Goal

To create a sustainable, streamlined, expanded and integrated/aligned homeless response system that will rapidly connect individuals and families to housing and services. This system will be easily understood and transparent to clients and providers alike. System operations and outcomes will be measurable to facilitate ongoing evaluation and improvement.

About SSF and our Partners

SSF, a 501(c) 3 non-profit entity, has been the CoC Administrative Entity, Collaborative Applicant, and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) lead since incorporation in 2011. In this capacity, SSF is responsible for administration of HUD funds for CoC programs, the Homeless Point-in-Time Count, the Coordinated Entry System, HMIS, and all other CoC implementation responsibilities. The Sacramento

RFQ to Assist Homeless Response System Improvement

CoC Advisory Board has also identified SSF as the applicant and administrative entity for the State of California CoC Homeless Emergency Assistance Program (HEAP) and the California Emergency Solution and Housing (CESH) Program grants. The CoC Advisory Board, comprised of local jurisdictional representatives, homeless services providers, consumers, advocacy groups, meets monthly and carries out business through a variety of committees.

SSF works closely with the CoC Advisory Board and community partners including the City of Sacramento and other cities, the County of Sacramento, the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, consumers and other stakeholders to increase our community's capacity to plan, develop, prioritize and implement systematic community-wide strategies to end homelessness.

Sacramento Steps Forward will assign .5 FTE project manager to work with the consultant and be the implementation liaison with CES, system access staff, and key stakeholders.

The scope of work included in this RFQ falls into two categories:

1. Coordinate closely with SSF, partners and stakeholders to develop and oversee a plan to implement of the scope of work below.
2. Directly or through an identified sub-contract, meet the objectives of specifically named projects included in the scope below and incorporate them into the overall work plan.

Homelessness in Sacramento and our Homeless Response System

At the time of the most recent Point-in-Time Count in January 2017, 3,665 people were experiencing homelessness in Sacramento County. More than half of those counted, or 2,052 individuals, were unsheltered. Over the course of one year from January to December of 2017, as identified by HMIS, 7,370 people identified as newly homeless or returned to homelessness after a period of time away from seeking services.

SSF's most 2017 HUD CoC grant award was for \$20,180,803, allocated to 10 homeless service providers operating 31 homeless programs. In 2017 this funding supported 1,406 housing units which include 2,424 beds for homeless individuals and families. Coordinated Entry System (CES) is used to make referrals into the majority of these units. The CES is primarily focused on HUD-funded housing and has limited referrals

RFQ to Assist Homeless Response System Improvement

into other homeless services and no referrals into emergency shelters. This limitation as well as unclear CES access can be confusing for people who are experiencing homelessness and their advocates.

Not every program that serves homeless people participates in HMIS. In 2017 the Sacramento CoC's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) included 87% of all emergency shelter and transitional housing beds in the community, with the remaining 13% of beds not reporting into the system. In addition there are many different data collection systems and methods to track the provision of services and housing to people who are experiencing homelessness and they are often not integrated.

In 2018, in response to new funds from the State of California to address homelessness, SSF and the Sacramento CoC collaborated with the City of Sacramento and the County of Sacramento to develop collaborative and complementary applications for the HEAP and CESH programs. These funds will significantly increase shelter capacity and rehousing opportunities for homeless individuals and families and support significant improvements in our homeless response system. This funding also provides an opportunity for, as detailed in this RFQ, a qualified consultant/consultant team to support desired system improvements,

In parallel with the CoC, the City of Sacramento and County of Sacramento have implemented significant homeless initiatives.

The City of Sacramento, with the largest homelessness population in the County, provides significant funding and oversight to a range of homeless programs. In addition to a number of other programs, the City operates the Pathways to Health + Home, a Whole Person Care project designed to connect homeless individuals to critical medical and related resources. [Click here](#) to read more.

Sacramento County is the largest provider of social services and a major funder of a variety of homeless services. In 2017, the County Board of Supervisors approved four significant homeless to 1) improve family crisis response and shelters; 2) preserve the Mather Community Campus providing transitional housing, employment services, and recovery support; 3) establish a full service re-housing shelter for homeless difficult to engage in traditional shelter and 4) create a new flexible supportive re-housing program for persons experiencing long term homelessness. In addition the County has recently increased resources for homeless outreach, navigation and rehousing services as well as services for transition aged youth. Significant expansions to the County's mental

RFQ to Assist Homeless Response System Improvement

health and substance use disorder services are also underway. More information can be found [here](#).

Most recently, Sacramento County led a community process to develop a County Homeless Plan which includes a set of key goals and strategies, including system improvement strategies and actions, to be implemented over the next two to three years. Responsibilities for these strategies are shared between the County of Sacramento, City of Sacramento, and SSF. Many of the strategies link to our shared HEAP and CESH proposals and the scope of work detailed in this RFQ. The County Homeless Plan was adopted by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors on December 12, 2019. Plan adoption allows the County to participate in the State's No Place Like Home program which will create new permanent supportive housing for persons with a serious mental illness who are experiencing homelessness. More details [here](#).

Scope of Work

SSF is requesting expressions of interest from respondents qualified to carry out the scope of work detailed below. It is anticipated that the duration of the contract will be for 12 months with an option for one 6-month extension.

Phase1 - Refining Scope of Work

In this first phase, the selected consultant/consultant team will work closely with SSF and stakeholders to refine the scope of work below in a way that maximizes community benefit. The current scope is the product our (SSF and stakeholders) best estimation of tasks and deliverables needed to achieve the desired outcomes. The scope of work, as stated here within or amended in the response, should result in the efficient use of finite grant dollars and should leverage and improve SSF staff and community capacity. Throughout the course of this work, input will be sought from the CoC Advisory Board and its committees including the CES Evaluation Committee, consumers, providers and key stakeholders including a local Funders Collaborative, comprised of public and private funders to be re-formed in early 2019.

Phase 2 - Specific Products

RFQ to Assist Homeless Response System Improvement

Directly, or in collaboration with a subcontractor, the selected consultant will deliver:

- **Systems Map** - Develop a conceptual map of Sacramento's current Homeless Response System based on input from consumers, stakeholders, and providers as well as existing data. The mapping effort should take into account related systems not currently included in Sacramento's Homeless Response System to create an ideal map to guide systems improvement initiatives.

The systems map will serve as a foundational element for a number of the initiatives listed below. It is anticipated that the role of the consultant team will be to gather input, facilitate discussions with consumers and stakeholders, including the CoC and our local Funders Collaborative, and develop an agreed upon systems map with staff support provided by SSF.

- **Gaps Analysis**- Work with partners and stakeholders to develop a gaps analysis which identifies key unmet needs in housing and service systems for persons experiencing homelessness, focusing on overall as well as specific subpopulation needs.

It is anticipated that the role of the consultant team will be to educate community stakeholders, including the CoC Advisory Board and Funders Collaborative, on the components and uses of a gaps analysis and to facilitate community discussions to reach agreement on a preferred gaps analysis model. The consultant will work with SSF staff to build out the agreed upon gap analysis as well as the process to update the gaps analysis overtime.

- **Coordinated Entry System (CES) Assessment, Redesign and Development of an Ongoing Evaluation Process and Implementation Support**

Assessment - Working with SSF staff, partners, consumers and stakeholders and using HMIS data, evaluate Sacramento's CES functionality and results to inform and guide a CES redesign to:

- Improve how individual client's connect to services to resolve their homelessness;
- Ensure compliance with HUD standards;
- Improve transparency regarding access to and availability of resources;
- Improve functionality for providers; and
- Increase operational efficiencies.

RFQ to Assist Homeless Response System Improvement

Redesign - Develop comprehensive recommendations based on assessment findings and ongoing community feedback. Redesign should include strategies, actions and potential costs to improve key features such as access, assessment, prioritization and referrals and recommend ways to improve governance, operations (including data management), and ongoing evaluation. Redesign should also recommend strategies and actions to increase housing and program resources from outside the CoC to be connected to CES.

Additional redesign priorities include:

1. Incorporating emergency shelters, including the design and implementation of a single entry and bed reservation systems; and,
2. Integrating diverse entry systems including those for the general population, veterans, transition-aged youth, families, and behavioral health clients; and,
3. Identifying opportunities to integrate with hospitals, jails and the criminal justice system.
4. Identify opportunities for technology to support system operations.

Support Implementation of Recommendations - Work with SSF staff to implement redesign recommendations and standardize CES reporting, accountability, and evaluation processes aligned with HMIS. Provide guidance to SSF staff regarding the establishment of written policies and procedures to govern CES administration. Provide support to SSF staff on the implementation of the other related policies, procedures and recommendations as needed. Provide change management/communication plan strategies.

Ongoing Governance and Evaluation Process - Establish benchmarks and metrics for future evaluations of the CES. Work with the CoC Advisory Board and the CES Coordinated Entry Evaluation Committee to design and implement improved governance and ongoing evaluation, including appropriate metrics, tools and ongoing evaluation criteria.

It is anticipated that the consultant team will lead the work related to the CES assessment, system redesign and evaluation design, including facilitation of a community process to include discussions with the CoC Advisory board, the CoC Coordinated Entry Evaluation Committee, the Funders Collaborative, consumers providers, and decision makers. In addition, the consultant team will support assigned staff from SSF to implement recommendations including the creation of policies and procedures, alignment with HMIS and other data sources and

RFQ to Assist Homeless Response System Improvement

implementation of an ongoing evaluation process. Consultant team will recommend a long term staffing plan to operate the redesigned CES.

- **Community-wide Written Standards for Shelters, Street Outreach/Navigation, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Rehousing Services**

Provide support for the development of consistent community-wide standards for shelter, street outreach/navigation, permanent supportive housing (PSH), rehousing services. This work should include the design of a training and certification process for service providers in each system. (Note: Sacramento funders have adopted rapid re-housing standards and the CoC Advisory Board has adopted standards for prioritization of PSH.)

It is anticipated that the role of the consultant team will be to support assigned staff as needed from SSF, the City Sacramento and the County of Sacramento. This work will include facilitated input sessions with consumers and providers. Some initial standards are currently being developed in association with the HEAP program.

Consultant team will recommend a long term Coordinated Entry System and system access staffing plan to operate according to the community-wide written standards.

Consultant Qualifications

Essential Expertise and Skills

- Project management
- Homeless systems mapping, assessment and design
- Post implementation evaluation protocols
- Data analysis
- Strong facilitation skills
- Ability to communicate clearly with a variety of stakeholders
- Professionalism and excellent customer service
- Neutrality
- Excellent verbal, written and visualization skills
- Change management expertise (ADKAR or Prosci)

Minimum Qualifications

RFQ to Assist Homeless Response System Improvement

- Significant work with local communities to recommend improvements and implement changes to homeless response systems including systems mapping and gaps analysis
- Work related to the design or redesign of at least two homeless CES
- Significant role in multiple (two or more) communities providing similar services.
- At least two years working with collaborative decision-making processes
- At least three years of experience facilitating and working within a committee decision-making structure to accomplish goals
- Experience developing program policies, procedures and operations manuals

Minimum Requirements

- The ability to either attend community meetings in person or to provide a means of participating remotely through the use of technology. The proposer should describe the use of such technology in this section.
- Commitment to participate in specific milestone activities in person, including:
 - a. CoC Advisory Board meetings, as needed to report-out key work products
 - b. Listening sessions with consumers and providers.
 - c. Workshops as necessary to facilitate the success of the project.
- Commitment to provide in-person training and coaching throughout implementation.

Submittal Requirements

All submittals must be transmitted electronically by (5:00 PM PST, March 31, 2019) to RFQ@SacStepsForward.org ..)

Submittal of Narrative Items shall be in 12 point Arial font, with one inch margins and not exceed page limits identified below:

Submittals should include the following:

Narrative Items:

1. Description of the consultant/consultant team's background and capacity to deliver the consultant services requested. Description of the consultant/consultant teams experience as detailed in this RFQ with particular attention on:
 - a. developing systems maps and gaps analysis;
 - b. assessing and redesigning CES and other systems;
 - c. developing evaluations processes;

RFQ to Assist Homeless Response System Improvement

- d. developing program standards, policies and procedures, operations manuals and training curriculum; and
 - e. providing technical assistance to providers regarding regulations governing federal and/or state funding streams and the procedures and processes associated with them. (5 pages)
2. Description of the proposed approach to providing the consultant services sought. The description should include how the proposer will lead and manage this work, a plan for working with SSF and partners to negotiate the details of the scope of work after awarded, a timeline for the delivery of the specific projects listed in this RFQ, and the planned use of staff and subcontractors. (3 pages)
 3. Description of the proposed method of compensation. (2 pages)

Attachments should include

4. Organization chart(s), staffing plan and resumes of key staff.
5. Samples of relevant past work products.
6. A list of clients, including contact person and phone number, you or your firm has worked for in the past three years
7. References. The ideal consultant will provide references from key CoC stakeholders, including one person from each of the following groups
 - a. CoC governing body membership
 - b. CoC provider/ recipient or sub recipient
 - c. CoC collaborative applicant
8. Specific staff and percentage of their time to be assigned to this project. For Sub-Contractors, include organizational name and staff name. If this information cannot be provided, please explain the staffing strategy in detail.

Selection Criteria/Process

All submittals will be reviewed and evaluated by a selection committee consisting of key staff from partnering agencies as well a representative from the CoC and a representative from the CoC Coordinated Entry and Evaluation Committee.

Submissions will be evaluated on the following criteria and qualifications:

- Demonstrated experience and knowledge on criteria detailed in this RFQ
- Established track record of successful collaborations
- Experience reporting the results of systems assessments in a thorough and accessible format to various stakeholders

RFQ to Assist Homeless Response System Improvement

- Management plan, staff availability and readiness to proceed
- Compensation approach
- Quality of references

One or more proposers may be asked to return with a more detailed plan and cost proposal prior to final selection.

Questions

The contact for all questions related to this RFQ and the included scope of work should be direct to Ben Avey at rfq@sacstepsforward.org:

Timeline

- RFQ issued: February 19, 2019
- Responses due: March 31, 2019 5:00 pm PST, via e-mail.
- Phone or in person interviews of top candidates: week of April, 8-19 2019
- Selection process completed: April 30, 2019

Key Partners/Participants

Sacramento Steps Forward: Sacramento Steps Forward (SSF) is a nonprofit organization, the issuer of this RFQ, and the subsequent entity with whom the successful proposer will contract. Sacramento Steps Forward is the HUD CoC Lead Agency, Collaborative Applicant, and HMIS Lead Agency. SSF is also the Administrative Entity for grants from the State of California's Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) and California Emergency Supportive Housing program (CESH).

Sacramento City and County Continuum of Care (CoC) Advisory Board: The Sacramento CoC Advisory Board is an unincorporated board that fulfills the HEARTH Act requirements, including the annual NOFA competition. It is also the designated body eligible to receive funds from the State of California HEAP and CESH programs. The CoC Advisory Board has selected Sacramento Steps Forward as its HUD CoC Lead Agency, Collaborative Applicant, HMIS Lead

RFQ to Assist Homeless Response System Improvement

Agency, and Administrative Entity for state HEAP and CESH grants and federal HEARTH Act funds.

Coordinated Entry and CES Evaluation Committee: The Coordinated Entry and CES Evaluation Committees are responsible for the design, implementation, success and on-going evaluation of the local system to triage, prioritize and track consumers of the Continuum. The CES Committee has a sub-committee focused on CES evaluation.

Funders Collaborative: The Funders Collaborative is a group of local system administrators who fund and manage homeless systems. This collaborative provides a single table at which region-wide policies and practices can be considered and aligned. Current participants include Sacramento Steps Forward, Sacramento County, Sacramento City, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, City of Citrus Heights, City of Elk Grove, City of Rancho Cordova and potentially others.