



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Human Services Department: Administration Services Division
(831) 454-4130

Subject: Authorize release of housing navigation services request for qualifications

Meeting Date: December 8, 2020

Recommended Action(s):

Authorize the Human Services Department to release a Request for Qualifications, No. 2020HSD06, for Housing Navigation services and direct the Human Services Department to return during February 2021, for award of the contract(s) to the vendor(s) selected through the Request for Qualifications process.

Executive Summary

To increase the number of transitional age youth who secure and maintain permanent housing and to support the safety and housing stability of Adult Protective Services (APS) clients by providing housing-related assistance using evidence-based practices for homeless assistance, diversion and prevention, the Human Services Department (HSD) Adult and Long Term Care (ALTC) and Family and Children's Services (FCS) divisions request authorization to release a request for qualifications (RFQ) for provision of housing navigation and case management services.

Background

In July 2019, Santa Cruz County Adult Protective Services (APS) began implementation of the Home Safe program with eligible participants. Home Safe provides evidence-based homelessness prevention services to APS clients. Home Safe interventions offered to eligible APS clients may include enhanced case management, financial assistance, and housing navigation.

In February 2020, the California State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) invited counties to apply for Transitional Housing Program (THP) and Housing Navigator (HN) funds to help young adults age 18 to 25 years secure and maintain housing, with priority given to young adults formerly in the foster care or probation systems. HSD applied for and was awarded \$26,400 in HN program and \$146,400 in round one THP funds. These funds are required to be spent by June 30, 2022. HSD is in the process of applying for an additional \$146,400 in the second round of THP funds, which if awarded will be required to be spent by the end of fiscal year 2022-2023 (FY22-23). These funds will be used to support countywide homeless response strategies.

Analysis

Housing navigation is a critical component of both the Home Safe program and the Transitional Age Youth program. Navigation services will implement evidence-based

housing first and rapid re-housing practices with participating APS clients. These services shall include outreach to engage at-risk clients, housing navigation that recruits landlords willing to rent to participating clients; identification of appropriate housing opportunities for eligible clients; case management; advocacy; and housing assistance, including referrals for temporary rent subsidies and other financial assistance. Transitional Age Youth (TAY) housing navigation and housing focused case management services will support young adults age 18-25, with a priority on young adults in the foster care or probation systems to overcome barriers to attaining and maintaining housing.

HSD seeks to release the attached RFQ on December 8, 2020, and obtain proposals by January 5, 2021. HSD proposes to solicit proposals to provide evidence-based services that will provide: (1) APS participants unhoused at program entry will receive housing placements, and participants will be in permanent stable housing at program exit; (2) APS participants housed at program entry will receive new housing placements, and participants will be in permanent stable housing at program exit; (3) 27 Transitional Age Youth per year will receive housing navigation and housing focused case management services; and (4) 80% of youth served will be in permanent housing at program exit.

Respondents to the RFQ may elect to submit proposals for either Home Safe or Transitional Age Youth, or both. Successful respondents will demonstrate qualifications and experience in housing navigation, including landlord engagement and knowledge of Housing Authority programs; experience working with the target population(s); and experience working with persons experiencing homelessness in a social service setting. The ability to provide services in Spanish will be given additional consideration.

Dependent upon satisfactory contractor performance, and contingent upon available budget and Board of Supervisors approval, it is anticipated that the contract(s) will be:

1. Home Safe: for the initial term of March 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021, in the amount of \$12,500. Subsequently, a twelve (12) month contract may be awarded for \$50,000, with renewal up to two years.
2. Transitional Age Youth: for the initial term of March 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, in the amount of \$172,800. Subsequently, a twelve (12) month contract may be awarded for \$146,400, with renewal up to two years.

Upon completion of the vendor selection process, HSD will return to your Board in February 2021 for award and approval of the contract(s).

Financial Impact

Funding for these services are sourced through the California State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Transitional Housing Program (THP) and Housing Navigator (HN) funds, which are required to be spent by June 30, 2022. These funds are included in the approved FY 2020-21 HSD Budget. HSD is in the process of applying for an additional \$146,400 in the second round of THP funds, which if awarded will be required to be spent by the end of fiscal year 2022-2023 (FY22-23).

Authorization to release the RFPs will not result in additional General Fund contribution.

Strategic Plan Element(s)

2.D (Attainable Housing: Homelessness) - Recently awarded grant funds will be used to assist transitional age youth in the foster care and probation systems and dependent and older adults to attain and maintain permanent housing. The additional grant funds will increase HSD's ability to reduce homelessness and increase housing stability.

Submitted by:

Randy Morris, Human Services Director

Recommended by:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Attachments:

a Request for Qualifications No. 2020HSD06 for Housing Navigation services

cc:

Human Services Department

Housing Navigation Services

Questions and Answers #1

1. When is the contract, if awarded, likely to be approved by the board and funding available to begin services? (best estimate is fine)

Answer: The contract is currently scheduled to go before the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, February 23, 2021 with a contract term start date of March 1, 2021. This is dependent on final contract negotiation and finalization being completed according to schedule before Tuesday, January 22, 2021.

2. What is the likely length of the first contract related to an award of \$172,800? Per page 4 of A2, the amount of funding available is \$172,800. Is it correct to assume that this amount would need to cover a funding period of approximately 16-17 months, if the contract might begin around Feb 1 or March 1, 2021 and continue through June 30, 2022?

Answer: In short, yes. As referenced, “The total available budget for the term of this agreement is not-to-exceed \$172,800 through June 30, 2022.” This is for the TAY services and excludes the Home Safe services. The likely agreement award effective date is March 1, 2021. So \$172,800 for a term of 03/01/2021 – 06/30/2022 is a 17-month term.

Home Safe funding is currently ending June 30, 2021 so the \$50,000 would be for a term of four (4) months.

3. Is there a known funding amount available that can be used to budget for a 12-month period so that we could estimate funding available per FTE for each 12-month period?
 - TAY: The total available budget for the term of this agreement is not-to-exceed \$172,800 through June 30, 2022.
 - Home Safe: The total available budget for a fiscal year term of this agreement is not-to-exceed \$50,000 from July 1 through June 30.

As written the RFP requests prospective respondents submit their budget proposal, which allows for variables. An organization may elect various options within their budget proposal. Establishing a single 12-month period of the potential 17 months of funding availability is an option, but there is not currently more than one 12-month period budgeted for. The limitation is Home Safe funding would have to be expended by June 30, 2021 and TAY funding would have to be expended by June 30, 2022. Final contract negotiation may provide further opportunity for discussing variables with the respondent(s) selected for contract award(s).

4. If performance metrics are being met, will there be funding available to continue the supportive services for the 27 youth through FY 2022-2023? On page 2 the RFQ says that “services are currently budgeted ...for Transition Age youth through June 30, 2023. But the budget information on page 4 of Attachment A2 says that \$172,800 is the not-to-exceed amount through June 30, 2022. If we hire and train people to fill case manager positions, is the program structured to support each youth through the 3-year (?) period of their FUP voucher?

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Answer: Our published Board item #65 DOC-2020-1006 on 12/08/2020 for release of this RFQ ([available online here](#)) includes this additional clarity: Funding for these services are sourced through the California State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Transitional Housing Program (THP) and Housing Navigator (HN) funds, which are required to be spent by June 30, 2022. These funds are included in the approved FY 2020-21 HSD Budget. HSD is in the process of applying for an additional \$146,400 in the second round of THP funds, which if awarded will be required to be spent by the end of fiscal year 2022-2023 (FY22-23).

Future award of contract(s) to continue services beyond June 30, 2022 is dependent on available funding, contract performance, and approval of the Board of Supervisors.

The currently proposed contract does not require services beyond June 30, 2022 and program structure is to be determined as a result of successful responses and contract negotiation.

5. What is the duration of the FUP vouchers? Youth FUP vouchers typically last 36 months – are these FUP vouchers the same? Is it the expectation that youth will transition to supporting themselves and their own rent without subsidy after 3 years?

Answer: Attachment A2 refers to FUP as Family Unification Program and Housing Authority of Santa Cruz County. Further information may be available at the Housing Authority website at www.hacosantacruz.org.

The currently proposed contract does not require services beyond June 30, 2022 and program structure is to be determined as a result of successful responses and contract negotiation.

6. Do the TAY need to meet the HUD definition for homeless in order to qualify for a FUP voucher and housing services? In other words, can TAY be doubled up or couch surfing or in other at-risk, unstable, socially unsafe housing situations, or do that need to be street or shelter homeless?

Answer: As per page 4 of Attachment A2: The County will provide TAY participant referrals that meet FCS criteria to the awarded respondent(s). And will provide relevant guidelines referenced herein to awarded respondent(s) at the outset of this agreement.

Final contract negotiation may provide further opportunity for discussing variables with the respondent(s) selected for contract award(s). Respondents may propose variable options should they see different ways of meeting the needs described in the RFQ.

7. Do all TAY for this program need to be referred through the Smart Path Coordinated Entry System? Does Item 4. on page 3 of A2 mean that Encompass as contractor may conduct outreach to individuals and refer the TAY individuals directly into its FUP housing navigation and case management services or must all youth complete CES assessments first and be referred for FUP housing services through the CES?

Answer: As per page 4 of Attachment A2, “The County will provide TAY participant referrals that meet FCS criteria to the awarded respondent(s).” There is no reference to Smart Path Coordinated Entry System as the source of referrals and HSD does not infer contractor may refer youth to the services provided in the proposed contract(s). In general, the requirement is for the contractor to refer youth to other resources outside of the TAY Housing Navigation and Housing Case Management program.

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8. In the budget template on page 17, what are examples of “Invoiced Participant Activities” and “Invoiced Group/Other Activities?” Are these activities that have a fee and are not provided by the staff/personnel (Case Managers) included under Personnel Costs?

Answer: Attachment B – Rate Structure outlines HSD’s standard budget framework which allows for the categories listed. The noted categories are broad specifically to allow for variables which may be appropriate.

Examples of “Invoiced Participant Activities” may include incentives, supplies, supportive services and transportation. Examples of “Invoiced Group/Other Activities” may be similar, but for groups of participants.

The RFQ is written to allow for variables within program design and therefor within program budget and will be finalized as part of contract negotiation.

9. What does Item 2. Under OTHER TERMS on page 4 of A2. mean? What does it mean to “provide services for a minimum of 27 placements in a full 12-month term, prorated for partial year terms”? Will it be sufficient to enroll a minimum of 27 TAY and begin working with each of them within the first 12-month funding period, even if not all 27 complete their Housing Authority FUP Voucher application and actually enter housing by the end of the first 12-month funded period? Is the requirement that each youth must complete their FUP application and enter housing within 12 months from when they complete their intake? Or that 27 youth must be housed with a voucher in the first 12 months of the program funding period?

Answer: Pro-rating refers to increasing the required number of participants served beyond 27 for a term longer than 12-months and decreasing the required number of participants served from 27 for a term less than 12-months. The RFQ is written to allow for variables within program design and therefor potentially within program term period. Program term period is also dependent on County timelines being met for a contract/s to be fully executed, and also dependent on the funding period. These variables require pro-rating performance measurements equitably.

Attachment A2 in clause #2 of OTHER TERMS on page 4 requires review of the performance measurements on page 1.

- Provide housing navigation and housing focused case management services to 27 youth
- 27 participants unhoused at program entry will receive a housing placement; will be housed within 90 days of entering the program; and 80% of participants will be in permanent housing at program exit.
- 27 participants will receive assistance to complete a Family Unification Program (FUP) voucher application. Of these 27, 90% of program participants will have a completed FUP voucher application submitted to the Housing Authority of Santa Cruz County within one month of entering the program. And 100% of these 27 participants will have access to a FUP voucher to facilitate their ability to attain and maintain housing.

Therefor it would not be sufficient to enroll a minimum of 27 and begin providing housing navigation and focused housing case management services unless all 27 complete a FUP voucher application, and 24 of them (90%) complete the application. And additionally, 27 unhoused at program entry receive a housing placement and will be housed within 90 days of entering the program – and 21 (80%) remain in permanent housing at program exit.

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10. Will this contract be funded through FESG funds?

Answer: Our published Board item #65 DOC-2020-1006 on 12/08/2020 for release of this RFQ ([available online here](#)) includes this additional clarity: Funding for these services are sourced through the California State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Transitional Housing Program (THP) and Housing Navigator (HN) funds.

In order to provide any information regarding the acronym FESG, please write via email to HSDCCU@santacruzcounty.us with clarification as to the term including what the acronym stands for.

11. Please provide additional information regarding the client data required as described under REPORTING, Item 1. on page 6 of A2. for State's aggregate and individualized monthly reports due by the 15th day of each month. What data is required for each client each month? What is the estimate for the time needed to complete each monthly report? Does the monthly report include both service data and expense data by client?

Answer: Reporting data will be information the contractor has readily available from having served youth under the awarded contract(s) and generally need not constitute a significant element of the program's operations as HSD understands it. The RFQ is written to allow for variables within program design including expense data, so reporting requirements will be finalized as part of contract negotiations.

Housing Navigation Services

Questions and Answers #2

1. On the 2nd page of the RFP re: the contract period for the TAY Navigation Program, it states the end date of the contract as 6/30/23 but in the attachment A2 SOW, it states the contract period is through 6/30/22. Can you please clarify which funding period is correct?

Answer: Our published Board item #65 DOC-2020-1006 on 12/08/2020 for release of this RFQ ([available online here](#)) includes this additional clarity: Funding for these services are sourced through the California State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Transitional Housing Program (THP) and Housing Navigator (HN) funds, which are required to be spent by June 30, 2022. These funds are included in the approved FY 2020-21 HSD Budget. HSD is in the process of applying for an additional \$146,400 in the second round of THP funds, which if awarded will be required to be spent by the end of fiscal year 2022-2023 (FY22-23).

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2. What is the maximum allowed Administrative Overhead % for the TAY Program?

While there is no stated maximum in published procurement policies for administrative overhead, Departments are required to provide additional justification for overhead rates above 10%.

3. On the incentives line item, we're assuming they could be used for bus passes and gas voucher, etc. for clients, and move-in incentives for landlords. Any max amount on the incentives from the County's perspective?

The RFQ is written to allow for variables within program design and therefor within program budget and will be finalized as part of contract negotiation. Final contract negotiation may provide further opportunity for discussing variables with the respondent(s) selected for contract award(s). Respondents may propose variable options should they see different ways of meeting the needs described in the RFQ.

4. On page 2 of A2 SOW, #2, last bullet point it states that housing case mgt will happen for a minimum of 18-month post-housing for those using the FUP voucher. What would the expectation be for any period of that post-housing time that extends beyond the contract end? Would that have to be entirely paid by another funding source?

The currently proposed contract does not require services beyond June 30, 2022. HSD is in the process of applying for an additional \$146,400 in the second round of THP funds, which if awarded will be required to be spent by the end of fiscal year 2022-2023 (FY22-23). Future award of contract(s) to continue services beyond June 30, 2022 is dependent on available funding, contract performance, and approval of the Board of Supervisors.

The term will need to be adjusted in accordance with the awarded contract term as part of final contract negotiations, and as referenced in clause 2 of OTHER TERM on page 4 of Attachment A2, regarding pro-rating.