Low-Barrier Emergency Shelter Operations
Program Proposal Instructions
2019 – 2021 Grant Term

Section 1: Proposal Background

Introduction
The City of Wenatchee is seeking proposals for the operation of a low-barrier emergency shelter in Chelan and Douglas counties. Approximately $100,000 is available to fund facility operations and staffing costs for emergency shelter services for households who benefit from individualized services and a lower-barrier environment. The funding is for a two-year grant period beginning on July 1, 2019.

Note: The City is also seeking proposals for the following complementary services:

- If you currently are seeking funding to construct a new low-barrier shelter facility or are interested in renovating an existing facility to accommodate low-barrier services, please refer to the Capital Low-Barrier Emergency Shelter RFP. Applicants may request both capital and operational funds for a low-barrier project, but must submit two separate proposals (low-barrier capital and low-barrier operations).
- If you are requesting funding for a traditional emergency shelter but are also seeking funding to expand your current program to include a low-barrier component, please complete this RFP as well as the Emergency Shelter Operations RFP. These two RFPs may be combined into a single proposal as long as all requested information from both RFPs is provided.
- If you are requesting funding for emergency hotel vouchers, please refer to the Emergency Hotel Voucher Program RFP.

These additional program RFPs are available on the City’s website at [www.wenatcheewa.gov](http://www.wenatcheewa.gov) (under Government/Community & Economic Development/Community & Neighborhood Programs).

Program Description
This request for proposal is for the operation of a low-barrier emergency shelter(s) based on a low-barrier, Housing First model that focuses on assisting unsheltered households to move to permanent housing. Severe weather shelters are also eligible as long as they are designed to operate as a low-barrier program.

Low-barrier shelters operate differently from traditional emergency shelters. These shelters are designed to serve the most vulnerable households who may have extensive behavioral and medical issues, and as a result, may face significant barriers to housing. Therefore, low-barrier shelters require more extensive staffing than traditional shelters especially in regards to general management, case management, and security services.
This request is an opportunity for local homeless housing providers to partner with local governments, the business community, non-profit organizations, the faith-based community, and other community groups who are interested in supporting chronically homeless individuals in our community. The hope is that the new shelter will be achieved through the pairing of City grant funding and partnerships with the public, private, faith-based, and community-based sectors.

Section 2: Program Components

Target Client Population
Eligible clients must be living outdoors or in a place not meant for human habitation or be fleeing domestic violence.

Low-barrier shelter services must be available for all households experiencing homelessness (i.e. single men, single women, families, couples). However, it is acceptable for multiple low-barrier shelter providers to specialize in certain subpopulations. It is anticipated that approximately 20 - 25 individuals on any given night may require low-barrier emergency shelter services. Of those individuals, it is estimated that approximately:

- 20 - 25 may be single men
- 3 - 4 may be single women
- 1 – 2 may be families and couples

In order to meet the client demand, these services may be provided by multiple service providers in Chelan and Douglas counties. However, if multiple providers are selected, it is expected that these providers will form partnerships in order to:

- Maximize service effectiveness
- Avoid duplication of services
- Provide shelter services to serve the needs of all potential shelter clients as long as space is available and the client is able to meet the low-barrier entry requirements.

Program Elements

- Adheres to Housing First principles:
  - Access to a program is not contingent on sobriety, minimum income requirements, lack of a criminal record, completion of treatment, participation in services, or other unnecessary conditions.
  - Support services are available but are voluntary, client-driven, individualized, and flexible.
  - Services are informed by a harm-reduction philosophy that recognizes that drug and alcohol use are a part of people’s lives. Clients are engaged in non-judgmental communication regarding drug and alcohol use and are offered support regarding ways to minimize risky behaviors and engage in safer practices.

- At a minimum, the proposed program will meet the following criteria which are based on evidence-based practices for low-barrier emergency shelter programs:
- ADA accessibility
- Allows couples and families to stay together
- Accommodates service and companion animals
- Does not discriminate based on protected classes
- Sobriety* and treatment are voluntary
- Does not exclude people with criminal convictions, poor credit, or eviction histories
- Does not require documentation of identification, custody, or citizenship
- Does not turn away clients because of a lack of income or the appearance of an unwillingness to participate in services or employment

*Note: Low-barrier shelters may establish requirements that limit the use of drugs and alcohol in common or shared areas of the facility. In addition, facilities may establish behavioral expectations that limit disruptive or violent behavior resulting from intoxication. However, the requirement to abstain completely from alcohol or drug use is not a component of low-barrier facilities.

- The shelter’s primary focus is to assist clients to move to permanent housing as quickly as possible. Providers will facilitate and support progress and activities that support housing and stability for clients. Services are voluntary and client-centered and organized to quickly route clients into housing or other long-term placement through supportive services, case management, and housing placement services.

- Hours of operation: At a minimum, overnight shelter is required. Priority will be given to shelters with 24/7 support or, if not 24/7, then some degree of enhanced hours. This can be achieved by providing overnight shelter and day shelter services together (either directly or through partnerships).

- The staffing model requires more intensive levels of program supervision, case management services, and security services including some type of 24/7 supervision.

- Utilizes strong partnerships with community organizations that deal frequently with chronically homeless individuals (i.e. homeless outreach programs, law enforcement, mental health providers, hospitals) in order to identify and target potential shelter clients.

**Facility Layout Options**
There is no specific facility layout design required. The shelter may be housed in a new facility or may be established through designating or expanding beds at an existing facility (or multiple partner facilities), or a combination of all. In addition, programs that operate severe weather emergency shelters may utilize temporary, community-based facilities to meet the seasonal needs of their programs.

**Scope of Work**
The description outlined above in the Program Elements section identifies the key program elements and services the selected applicant should provide. Applicants should consider this description when developing their proposals. However, applicants may suggest modifications
and/or additions that will in their estimation make the program more feasible or effective. In addition, applicants should indicate if they will be able to provide all of the program components to the quantity of clients listed above. If not, applicants should describe what level of service they will be able to provide while also maintaining the highest level of program quality.

Applicants may also propose to subcontract one or more elements of their program to other sub-grantees, provided that those partners have been identified and described in the proposal.

**Partnerships and Collaborations**
The establishment of community collaborations and partnerships (both formal and informal) are a critical and required component of the program. Applicants are encouraged to plan creatively to utilize existing community resources to provide program services. Applicants must be able to demonstrate partnerships with existing services, both internal to their own organization and within the broader community to best maximize the use of existing resources, avoid duplication of services, and expand options for those served. In particular, partnerships to increase access to services for physical health and disabilities, trauma support, mental health treatment, and substance abuse treatment are often necessary to support this population. Additional partnerships to assist with meeting basic client needs (i.e. government benefit applications, food support, transportation, clothing and toiletries) are also encouraged.

**Performance Metrics**
The selected applicant will develop a program evaluation plan that, at a minimum, includes the following performance target:
- At least 50% of program participants will exit to permanent housing

Additional performance targets and metrics may be used.

**Funding & Eligible Activities**
Approximately $100,000 is available for the operation of a low-barrier shelter for a two-year grant period beginning on July 1, 2019. The funding may be allocated between the following categories: Facility support, program operations, and administration. Capital projects are not eligible under this RFP. However, if you currently are seeking funding to construct a new low-barrier shelter facility or are interested in renovating an existing facility to accommodate low-barrier services, please refer to the Capital Low-Barrier Emergency Shelter RFP. For a complete description of these eligible categories, please refer to Page 3 of the Homeless Grant Proposal Guidelines.

**Preferred Qualifications**
Successful applicants will preferably demonstrate experience/knowledge of the following areas:
1. Providing services to homeless individuals or families in an emergency shelter setting with an emphasis on reducing barriers to securing and retaining permanent housing.
2. Providing housing and case management services to the target population.
3. Demonstrated capacity to serve individuals with medical conditions, developmental/physical disabilities, behavioral health issues, or substance abuse issues and to make referrals to a diverse team of medical professionals in the community.

4. Demonstrated partnerships with providers of mainstream resources, services, and benefits.

5. Accounting for public/grant funds and complying with federal, state, and local funding requirements.


7. Familiarity with the Chelan-Douglas Community Housing Network coordinated entry system.

Program Staffing
- Applicants should propose a staffing structure/level that best meets the requirements of the proposal. However, it should include some type of 24/7 support or oversight to best serve this vulnerable population.

- All program staff should be trained in Housing First principles. Program case managers should be trained in and actively employ evidence-based practices for client engagement such as trauma-informed care and motivational interviewing.

Section 3: Proposal Questions

Please provide a proposal narrative in response to the questions contained in this section. All questions must be answered for a proposal to be considered complete. Incomplete proposals will not be considered.

Proposal narratives must be organized and formatted as follows:

- Please respond to the questions in this section from a program-level perspective (as opposed to an agency-wide perspective).

- Responses to questions must be organized in the same order as the questions are listed below. Please use each question below as a header within your narrative and provide your responses in a paragraph format below each header.

- Responses should be concise and specific and should be limited to the questions listed below.

- The proposal narrative and attachments should be submitted on 8 ½” X 11” single-sided paper and should be paper clipped (not stapled or bound).

- The proposal narrative should be limited to a maximum of ten (10) pages single-sided in no smaller than 12-point font. The ten page maximum does not include the agency
application form or any of the required attachments listed in the Proposal Guidelines document.

Proposal Questions

Note: If you are proposing a new program that has not yet been established, please answer the questions below based on how you anticipate the program will operate.

Project Overview and Target Population:

1. Program name

2. Total funds requested

3. Type of program (i.e. low-barrier emergency shelter)

4. Provide a general description of your program, a description of the target population, and time limits on services (if any).

5. Describe how many people will be served each year.

6. What special populations, if any, is your program designed to serve?

7. Facility description and capacity:
   a. Is the program currently operational? If so, where is the facility located?
   b. If this is a new program, have you identified a facility location? If yes, please indicate its location. If no, please describe your plan for identifying and obtaining a suitable facility.
   c. How many new or enhanced shelter beds will your program create as a result of this RFP?
   d. How soon will the new or enhanced beds/services be operational?
   e. Describe the number of housing units in your facility, the types of units available (i.e. dorm rooms, private rooms, private apartments), the general layout of the building, and any special features or amenities (i.e. laundry, on-site storage, pet-friendly).
   f. Is the facility building (or future building site) owned or leased by your agency?
   g. Is the facility ADA compliant? If not, describe how you will upgrade the facility to meet ADA requirements and/or accommodate clients with disabilities within the facility.
h. Will the location of the facility raise any concerns or issues with neighboring businesses or property owners? If so, please describe how you will work with your neighbors to address the issues proactively.

i. Describe your facility management approach to ensuring safety and security within the facility.

8. Program hours:
   a. What hours will the facility be staffed?
   b. Are participants allowed to enter and leave the facility as needed or is there a curfew in place?
   c. What time of the day will participants be able to enter the facility? How late may they stay in the morning?
   d. What hours will supportive services or case management be available?

9. Support services:
   a. What supportive services are offered and how frequently are they offered?
   b. How does your program support participants in the goal of transitioning to permanent housing?
   c. Describe how clients will meet their hygiene, laundry, and nutritional needs while participating in the program.

10. Does your program have capacity to expand for severe weather and other emergencies? If so, how much additional capacity can be created?

Commitment to Housing First & Low-Barrier Principles:
Note: In addition, to the questions below, please complete a Housing First & Low-Barrier Assessment Checklist form and include it as an attachment to your narrative.

1. What criteria must participants meet before receiving services?

2. Why would someone experiencing homelessness want to participate in your program?

3. How do you make your program welcoming to potential participants? What will you do to minimize the informal barriers that keep many unsheltered households from accessing shelter?

4. What would cause your agency to deny someone entry into this program?

5. What project rules do participants have to follow and what happens if a participant does not follow the rules?

6. If someone is asked to leave the program, what steps does your program take to make sure they don’t exit to homelessness? Can a household who has been asked to leave your program return at another time?
7. How does your agency ensure that services are voluntary while keeping participants engaged to promote housing stability?

8. Are clients charged for services? If so, describe the program fee structure and policy if participants are unable to pay.

Program Staffing & Commitment to Housing-Focused Services:
1. Describe the staffing structure for the program:
   a. List each program staff position including job title and FTE status.
   
   b. Does your program utilize resident staffing (i.e. clients who perform staff duties in exchange for room/board) or volunteer staffing? If so, indicate the number of residents or volunteers employed, the total number of resident or volunteer hours served per year, and describe your agency’s policy for managing these staff members.

2. What is the ratio of direct-service staff to participants and how does that ratio support program outcomes?

3. What responsibilities and/or tasks do program staff have when partnering with participants on resolving their housing crisis quickly and in a participant-centered way?

4. What qualifications are most important to your agency when hiring direct service staff? How do these qualifications prepare staff to serve your program’s participants?

Program Partnerships:
1. Identify and describe partnerships or collaborations that would be leveraged to support the program. Identify the partner organizations and describe the specific services they would provide. Outline if you already have formal partnerships in place, or if not, describe how you would approach building and maintaining partnerships. If applicable, include copies of partnerships agreements, letters of intent to partner, or memorandums of understanding.

2. How will you partner specifically with other shelter providers, local law enforcement, homeless outreach teams, and local ER hospitals to identify and target potential shelter clients?

Program Performance Evaluation:
1. Describe how you plan to collect and track evaluation performance outcomes.

2. How does your program ask for and incorporate participant feedback about services into your program design and polices/procedures? Please provide specific examples.
Budgeting:

Note: In addition, to the questions below, please complete a *Proposed Program Budget* form and include it as an attachment to your narrative.

1. Describe how the program will be sustained long-term. How will you support the program after grant funds are expended or if your agency is not awarded funding?

2. Will your agency pursue supplemental funding for this program? If yes, please describe your funding plan.

Additional Resources:

1. If you are proposing a new program and/or facility, what resources do you need from the Chelan-Douglas Homeless Steering Committee or other community partners to successfully launch and operate the program?