



## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

**RFI No: 400005431**

**RFI Title: Mobile Housing Placement Team for Women (MHTW)**

**Issue Date: December 23, 2016**

**We are Accepting Responses Through:  
January 13, 2017**

**Refer Questions to:**

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**Submit Responses to:**

Multnomah County Purchasing

501 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Suite 125

Portland, OR 97214 or via

Email to: [jill.punches@multco.us](mailto:jill.punches@multco.us)

(Email submission is preferred)

**A. INTRODUCTION:**

Multnomah County (The County), in cooperation with A Home for Everyone (AHFE) and the Joint Office of Homeless Services, seeks responses from qualified organizations interested in leading and/or collaboratively participating in the operations of a Mobile Housing Placement Team that prioritizes outreach to adult women experiencing homelessness alone or with partners and who are living in emergency shelters or in places not meant for human habitation. One of the key priorities of AHFE is to eliminate racial disparities in service and programming. Approaches that deliver culturally-responsive and/or culturally-specific services, either alone or in combination with agency partnerships, are desired through this RFI.

Information gathered as a result of this Request for Information (RFI) may assist the County in the creation of any potential solicitations and provide the County knowledge of available services in the community.

## **B. BACKGROUND AND POTENTIAL SCOPE OF PROJECT:**

### **I. Introduction**

In the 2015 Point in Time Count, 566 adult women were entirely unsheltered on one night in Multnomah County. This group is one of the fastest growing subpopulations within the overall homeless population, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In response to this significant and growing unmet need, A Home for Everyone's Executive Committee set a priority to increase prevention, housing placement, and shelter resources targeted toward reducing unsheltered homelessness among adult women. As with other groups, the 2015 Point in Time Count also revealed that women of color are disproportionately represented in the unsheltered and sheltered HUD homeless population, in particular African American women. Therefore, the direction of the AHFE Executive Committee was not only to reduce homelessness among adult women, but more specifically to emphasize decreasing racial disparities among homeless women.

In response to the direction of the Executive Committee, the Joint Office of Homeless Services has significantly expanded the number of shelter beds available to adult women. Shelter capacity for women with children has doubled, from year-around capacity of about 90 beds to more than 180. Ninety beds of new women's-only space opened in Gresham in November. An all-populations shelter in East Portland, the Hanson Shelter, opened in the Spring and is prioritizing single women and couples. And most recently, the new Willamette Center shelter opened with 120 beds, 90 for couples and 30 for single women in SE Portland. There are also a significant number of women sheltering in organized "camps" like Dignity Village, Right to Dream Too, and Hazelnut Grove, as well as in less organized, smaller encampments throughout the County.

Whether sleeping in a facility-based shelter or in any other temporary location, A Home for Everyone seeks to ensure that women receive the housing placement and retention resources they need to successfully return to permanent housing as quickly as possible and to retain that housing long term. This Request for Information seeks to determine the level of interest among non-profits serving Multnomah County to establish a new mobile housing placement and retention team that will annually assist into permanent housing at least 100 female headed adult households that are accessing safety off the streets programs or sleeping in places not meant for human habitation.

A Home for Everyone anticipates having \$1,110,000 available in funding over eighteen-months to support the creation of a Mobile Housing Team that will provide outreach, assessment, housing placement, and housing retention services prioritized to women experiencing homelessness. In describing their interest, Respondents are free to detail what they believe to be the most effective combination of housing placement/retention staffing, rent assistance, and support services, but the funding is assumed to cover the expenses for rapid rehousing placements and it is understood that placements of households requiring deeper and more sustained levels of support will have to leverage other resources in the community. Respondents are strongly encouraged to express interest in leading or participating in teams that bring together the expertise of agencies that specialize in serving the known needs of female-headed adult households experiencing homelessness, with an emphasis on addressing the overrepresentation of communities of color in the target population. Current fiscal-

year funding is one-time, but A Home for Everyone anticipates requesting ongoing funding in future fiscal year budgets. Funding beyond June 30, 2017, is contingent upon City of Portland and Multnomah County final adopted budgets.

## **II. Mobile Housing Team for Women (MHTW) Activities**

The MHTW will work closely with the Joint Office of Homeless Services and A Home for Everyone to identify and prioritize activities and focus areas. Program activities will operate in accordance with our adopted [Community Program Guidelines](#), especially those related to Rapid Rehousing, and, at minimum, the MHTW activities will include:

### **A. Outreach**

Outreach to persons, in particular women, experiencing homelessness who are not connected to other housing placement and retention services, including women experiencing unsheltered homelessness and those at shelters and day centers with limited staff capacity. Outreach efforts should be guided by a commitment to increase racial and geographic equity.

### **B. Ongoing Assertive Engagement Support**

Using an Assertive Engagement approach, engage women in a self-directed effort to identify and secure the resources needed to return to permanent housing. Assertive Engagement, further defined below, requires a highly mobile and flexible service delivery model, such that services, to the maximum extent possible, are provided when, where, and in the particular combination the participant prefers. To be effective, these services must be provided in a culturally responsive or culturally-specific manner.

### **C. Housing Placement and Retention**

Assist participants in all aspects of the permanent housing search, application, move-in, and retention process. As needed, this includes assistance with securing necessary identification documents, completing application paperwork, visiting prospective apartments, negotiating with prospective landlords, securing furnishings, moving furnishings, setting up utilities, ongoing home-visiting, provision of eviction prevention assistance, landlord and neighbor problem-solving, and navigation to other necessary services.

### **D. Support Service Access**

While the primary responsibility of the MHTW will be to engage participants in the search, acquisition, and retention of permanent housing, the success of these efforts will often depend upon the MHTW worker's ability to assist a participant in accessing other critical resources and services in the community, including, for example, education and employment services, health care services, benefits programs, and community building activities. Respondents with specific expertise or existing linkages to these services are encouraged to describe this as part of their interest.

## **E. Data Collection and Reporting**

The MHTW will be expected to document its services and expenditures accurately and on a timely basis in the community's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

### **III. Population Priorities**

While this project prioritizes female headed households, and women of color from overrepresented communities in particular, A Home for Everyone also prioritizes serving people with disabilities, people over 55 and Veterans.

### **IV. Definitions**

#### **1. Assertive Engagement**

Assertive Engagement is an approach to the delivery of social services that is effective even for the hardest to reach participants and families, obtains and maintains strong engagement with them and moves them toward behavior change that is self-directed and lasting. Assertive Engagement combines several evidence based practices into a cohesive approach to services that can be used in any setting with any participant population. Assertive Engagement includes: A Heart set on Assertive Community Treatment; A Mind Set based on Strengths Based Practice, an approach to services that recognizes the inherent capability of people to figure out and solve their own problems. The job of the program is to help them prioritize and solve their own problems, not to solve the problems for them. A Skill Set based on Motivational Interviewing (MI), a detailed skill based approach to talking with participants about change. MI was developed to allow two very important processes occur at the same time. These processes are: (1) Participant-centered engagement, and (2) Increasing motivation for changing negative behaviors. The components of Assertive Engagement include: (1) Community based outreach – meeting participants where they are; (2) Active listening as the most powerful tool for promoting engagement, motivation, and creativity; (3) A “don't take no for an answer” approach designed to engage participants; and (4) A high degree of persistence and creativity by staff discovering what it is that participants most want and need and what it takes to connect with and motivate them.

#### **2. Culturally-specific Organization or Programs**

Locally defined for the purpose of this request for information as those with the following characteristics (adapted from *Communities of Color in Multnomah County, An Unsettling Profile*):

- a) The majority of members and/or clients are from a particular community of color, such as African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, Latino, African Immigrant and Refugee, and Slavic.
- b) The organizational or programmatic environment is culturally focused and identified as such by members of the community that is served.
- c) The organizational staff, board and leadership or program staff and leadership reflects the community that is served.
- d) The organization or program has a track record of successful community engagement and

involvement with the community being served.

### **3. Culturally Responsive Services**

Locally defined for the purpose of this request for information as those that are respectful of, and relevant to, the beliefs, practices, culture and linguistic needs of diverse consumer/client populations and communities whose members identify as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home. Cultural responsiveness describes the capacity to respond to the issues of diverse communities. It thus requires knowledge and capacity at different levels of intervention: systemic, organizational, professional and individual. (Adapted from [Protocol for Culturally Responsive Organizations](#), Portland State University.)

### **4. Rapid Rehousing**

Rapid rehousing is a nationally recognized best-practice that the [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#) describes as follows: “Rapid re-housing places a priority on moving a family or individual experiencing homelessness into permanent housing as quickly as possible, ideally within 30 days of a client becoming homeless and entering a program. While originally aimed primarily at people experiencing homelessness due to short-term financial crises, programs across the country have begun to assist individuals and families who are traditionally perceived as more difficult to serve. This includes people with limited or no income, survivors of domestic violence, and those with substance abuse issues. Although the duration of financial assistance may vary, many programs find that, on average, four to six months of financial assistance is sufficient to stably re-house a household.”

### **5. Homelessness Management Information Systems (HMIS)**

A local database used to confidentially collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness. Our community uses ServicePoint as its HMIS software. (Adapted from [HUD overview of HMIS](#).)

### **6. Permanent Supportive Housing**

A type of permanent housing with indefinite leasing or rental assistance paired with supportive services to assist homeless persons with a disability or families with an adult or child member with a disability achieve housing stability. (Taken from [HUD overview of CoC Programs](#).)

## **C. REQUESTED INFORMATION:**

In no more than four pages, double spaced, please provide:

1. Provide an introduction to yourself and your organization and (if applicable) the organizations that you plan to partner with, and indicate a primary contact.
2. Indicate and describe your interest in and capacity for providing MHTW services.
3. Provide a brief overview of your service delivery plan. Include how you will work to ensure racially and geographically equitable access to MHTW services.
4. Please provide a sample operating budget, including start-up costs and administrative expenses,

for the first six months of service delivery along with a general breakdown of the costs. Also indicate the expected ongoing annual costs if the services would be conducted for the upcoming FY 2017-18.

5. In the current fiscal year (January 2017 to June 30 2017), for how many people would you expect to provide a) engagement, b) housing placement and c) retention services?

#### **D. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Multnomah County is required to disclose non-exempt public documents pursuant to ORS 192.410-192.505). ORS 192.502(4) exempts the County from disclosing information submitted in response to a solicitation where the information is such that it “should reasonably be considered confidential.” A respondent who determines that information within a response meets the statutory requirement and desires that such information remain confidential shall mark the bottom of the pages containing such information with the word “CONFIDENTIAL.”

If a respondent marks every page of a response as “CONFIDENTIAL”, the statutory requirement is not met; any response so marked will not be deemed to have been submitted in confidence, and upon request, the entire response will be disclosed.

The County will keep properly marked information confidential unless ordered to release the information and materials by the District Attorney pursuant to ORS 192.460.

#### **E. SUBMITTED MATERIALS PROPERTY OF COUNTY**

All materials submitted for any portion of this Request for Information shall become the property of the County, and will not be returned to respondents.

#### **F. RESPONSE SUBMISSION**

Respondents to this Request for Information must submit their responses through January 13, 2017. Responses may be mailed, hand-delivered or emailed to the County at the address listed on the first page.