

FY15 Chronic Inebriate Anti-Recidivism Program – Permanent Supportive Housing Program
Request for Proposals
Amendment #2
Deadline for Proposals: November 25, 2014

Answers to Written Inquiries:

Question #1: In section 1.06 the RFP states *“DBH will prioritize allocation of DHSS rental subsidy vouchers to individuals receiving comprehensive services through this RFP. (The DHSS/AHFC “Moving Home Voucher Program” will serve up to 150 individuals statewide with targeted rental assistance to individuals who are Alaska Mental Health Trust Beneficiaries and are chronically homeless. Vouchers are allocated through an application process through DBH).”*

Is this a new program created for this RFP or one already in existence through AHFC?

This makes it sound as if the vouchers are allocated by DBH and not the organization administering the program. If that is so, can we get answers to the following:

- Can you explain the goals and objectives of the “Moving Home Voucher Program”?
- What specifically are the eligibility rules for the vouchers?
- Are there any barriers, (e.g. Criminal record, sex offender), to eligibility?

Answer #1: The 150 statewide vouchers referenced in the RFP is a new program that will be administered by DHSS/DBH and represents a net gain of vouchers available in the state targeted for individuals who are disabled, homeless, and highly vulnerable. Program criteria and prioritization will be released when that program is ready to begin accepting applications. Of those 150 vouchers, the availability of rental subsidies to the Anchorage community will be determined through geographic appropriation of the total available statewide and DHSS/AHFC funding available for rental subsidies, and prioritized to the high-risk individuals served by the ICM and ACT programs, as noted in the RFP Section 1.06. As also mentioned in this section, it is up to the applicant to submit a proposal that illustrates how they will use “other relevant sources (such as Medicaid, Individual Service Agreements (ISA), Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, Special Needs Housing Grant, HUD Continuum of Care subsidy and service programs, local funding, private donations, etc.) to ensure that the target population has access to all the necessary services and supports to ensure housing stability”. It is expected that the grantee will pursue all avenues to find long-term subsidies through the resources that are currently targeted towards ending chronic homelessness in Alaska and working within the existing homeless safety network (funded through private, local, state, and federal funding).

Question #2: Is this an increase of 150 vouchers statewide (the answer to which seems to be "no") and would it therefore become the responsibility of the grantee to subsidize housing? Related to that question is how non-grantee agencies could be expected to provide the wrap-around services outside the scope of this grant when their caseloads are already maxed out?

Answer #2: The intention of this RFP is to “finance treatment services” for “individuals who are chronically homeless with behavioral health needs” (Section 1.01). That service array is detailed in the program standards to include integrated dual disorder treatment, with wrap-around services -- including linkage to housing and efforts to keep an individual stably

housed. An evidence-based solution to chronic homelessness is permanent supportive housing, therefore required in the service array is linkage to affordable housing subsidies using community resources. It is up to the applicant to detail how they will ensure linkage to affordable housing subsidies (Section 1.03). While some flexibility in the use of funding is allowed to meet the needs of the target population, (such as in the provision of “bridge rental subsidy through grant”, Section 1.03), it would be outside of the intention of this solicitation for the grant to be used primarily to pay for rental subsidies for an extended period of time. Flexibility regarding the use of the funding is further clarified in Section 1.06.

Question #3: Would creation of a combined & coordinated advisory body from which two subcommittees, one for Category A and one for Category B would be selected, meet the requirements of this RFP?

Answer #3: While the chronically homeless subpopulations served by this solicitation are related, they are distinct populations with varying intensity of behavioral health needs. Applicants must reference the RFP for stakeholder group function, for example the ACT group functions as a referral committee to prioritize services to the target population; this would require necessary confidentiality agreements for review of Protected Health Information and could not overlap with meetings involving community members. It is up to the applicant to design and submit a proposal detailing how they would involve community members into their program design and run the appropriate stakeholder advisory group for the category for which they are applying, within the parameters of this RFP. To the extent possible, collaboration is encouraged and the successful applicants, together with community partners, could choose to form a single steering committee to inform both services (should they choose to do so). The RFP requires proper agreements be in place with appropriate entities that provide services to the target population to ensure collaboration and partnership between providers and non-duplicative services (Section 1.03). Coordination of elements of this RFP cannot diminish the services available to the target population for either project and must be carried out in accordance with Interim Program Standards.

Question #4: Can elements of this RFP be coordinated? Could Category A & B select a joint team to perform these tasks? Assessments for functionality, vulnerability and diagnostic status are required for A & B, could we combine an assessment group?

Answer #4: While the chronically homeless subpopulations served by this solicitation are related, they are distinct populations, with varying intensity of behavioral health needs, and would be outreached in primarily different settings (i.e. API and Providence Psychiatric Emergency Room high users for psychiatric emergencies vs. public inebriate use of the Anchorage Safety Center). Although there are two programs, there is overlap in the population served and the providers of these services will collaborate through referral for the care of individuals. It is up to the applicant to design and submit a proposal. To the extent possible, collaboration is encouraged. The RFP requires proper agreements be in place with appropriate entities that provide services to the target population to ensure collaboration and partnership between providers and non-duplicative services (Section 1.03). For ACT, the RFP does explicitly prohibit multi-agency employment of staffing (Section

1.06); this statement does not prohibit collaboration but does limit employment of the team makeup to one agency.

Question #5: Can we coordinate with rural home areas for the inebriates being addressed to relocate them back to their rural areas, if that is their desire, with benefits such as housing vouchers following them and coordinated services with their regional mental health provider and the Behavioral Health Aides being pulled in as part of the transition team working to relocate them?

Answer #5: No, this solicitation does not seek to inhibit any individual's mobility or desire to move back to their home community (if applicable), but does require that grant-funded services are delivered in the Municipality of Anchorage.

Question #6: Will the division consider suspending or delaying competition, and/or amending the RFP for the purpose of changing the current solicitation structure to fund one provider (or require shared services if two providers are chosen)?

Answer #6: No, the current schedule of this RFP will proceed as outlined. The Division of Behavioral Health, through a thoughtful process, created a multi-component competitive solicitation in order to meet the varying intensity of needs of the chronically homeless subpopulations (including the chronic inebriate subpopulation) and build Anchorage's capacity to provide integrated community-based services. As indicated by Legislative intent, this process was collaborative and included input from the Alaska Mental Health Trust, the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, the Department of Corrections, and the Municipality of Anchorage Department of Health and Human Services. The Division is coordinating a combined effort of programs and funding to address these critical issues while ensuring efforts are not duplicated or wasted. While the chronically homeless subpopulations served by this solicitation are related, they are distinct populations with varying intensity of behavioral health needs. Permanent Supportive Housing is an evidence-based intervention shown to be a solution in addressing chronic homelessness. Assertive Community Treatment and Intensive Case Management are effective and nationally recognized service methodologies, and are designed in this solicitation to provide an appropriate level of service intensity for each subpopulation. It is the Division's intent when funding an evidence-based practice to follow the model to full fidelity. The separation of programs into two categories is a deliberate choice to serve the populations most effectively and follow program fidelity. Although there are two programs, there is overlap in the population served and the providers of these services will collaborate through referral for the care of individuals. The Division believes this is the most appropriate method and use of public funds to achieve the best outcomes for the target population (in reducing recidivism, addressing chronic inebriation, and increasing housing stability).

Question #7: There are concerns over a lack of housing; will the division consider removing housing as an emphasis of the solicitation?

Answer #7: No, DBH recognizes that a current housing shortage presents additional challenges for the applicant and has included in the list of required services the following services focused on assisting applicants to find and maintain housing (Section 1.03): notably

pre-tenancy support services, move-in supports, and ongoing housing stability services. These services are included in the package of services being purchased by the State of Alaska and in estimation of the approximate case rate.

Question #8: Will the division consider removing current evaluation metrics around use of emergency services and replace with metric of individuals currently sober in stable housing?

Answer #8: A primary outcome of this grant is reduced recidivism, defined as the number/days a recipient returns to corrections or an acute care setting (Section 1.02). This evaluation metric will not be removed. As this solicitation is following a harm-reduction model of Housing First, sobriety is not a requirement of tenancy (Section 1.02). While the sample provided did include measurement of current substance use, it is up to the applicant to draft an evaluation plan that is in line with the intent of the RFP including program goals and desired outcomes.

Question #9: Can the Proposal Evaluation Committee (PEC) process to be an open meeting with potential applicants present to explain their proposals?

Answer #9: No, see regulation 7 AAC 78.090-100 regarding the PEC process.

Question #10: Will the Division consider allowing respondents to offer alternative deliverables or negotiate modifications prior to signing the grant agreement?

Answer #10: No, funding decisions are based on Proposal Evaluation Committee (PEC) scores (per 7 AAC 78.090), applicants thorough understanding of grant requirements, and willingness to align with the Housing First model (Section 1.06). Scoring criteria are included for each section of the application to be submitted (Section 4.04-4.17) and detail what the Division is seeking from respondents. After award, the State does allow for necessary negotiations for revision to the proposed budget and scope of services (Section 3.08), but should not be a significant departure from the intention of the RFP or the proposal submitted by the successful applicant.

Question #11: Can the Division engage in discussions around the use of this funding or re-design of the services being solicited by the State of Alaska?

Answer #11: No, the regulations around competitive solicitation processes do not allow for open dialogue with individual parties around the intention of a solicitation. In order to create a fair and equitable process, communications are limited to the contents of the RFP or responding formally to clarification questions so that all potential respondents have the same access to pertinent information.