

**Services for People Experiencing Homelessness in Portland, OR**  
**Notes from RFP Information Session**  
**Tuesday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010**  
**1-2:30 p.m.**

Additional questions should be submitted to Sally Erickson by email ([sally.erickson@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:sally.erickson@portlandoregon.gov)) to be added to an FAQ list that will be posted on the PHB website ([www.portlandonline.com/phb](http://www.portlandonline.com/phb)).

### **I. Welcome & Introductions**

Fourteen individuals attended, representing agencies that included: Innovative Housing, Transition Projects, Outside In, Impact Northwest, Catholic Charities/Housing Transitions, New Avenues for Youth, Northwest Pilot Project, Community Warehouse, JOIN, Bradley Angle, Central City Concern, Cascadia, and Portland Women's Crisis Line.

### **II. Correction to RFP**

The original RFP correctly identifies the proposal submission deadline as 3:00 PM on Monday, September 27, 2010, throughout the document, but incorrectly identifies it on page 14 as Friday, September 25, 2101. *The correct proposal submission deadline is 3:00 PM on Monday, September 27, 2010.*

### **III. RFP Overview**

#### Background:

- The RFP will award a total of one million dollars in one-time city money to address homelessness specifically in the downtown core.
- The primary purpose of the RFP is to get homeless people into housing and to make a visible decrease in homelessness downtown.
- An advisory committee of 20-30 people assembled by City Commissioner Nick Fish convened twice to identify the priorities that led to this RFP.
- While the RFP is fairly prescriptive, it also allows applicants the flexibility to put forth new ideas that they think would better meet the RFP goals.
- PHB hopes to notify awardees by the first week of October and execute contracts by the beginning of November.

#### Notes on eligible activities:

- Allowable activities are listed in the RFP, and other activities may be eligible if proposers can demonstrate that they would better meet the goals of the RFP.
- Permanent housing placement activities are generally limited to short- and medium-term rent assistance (primarily because of the one-time nature of the funding). If proposers believe that clients will need longer periods of assistance, they may propose to provide longer-term assistance, particularly if leveraging other funds.
- RFP emphasizes flexible, client-centered use of permanent housing placement funds. Proposers are encouraged to use assistance strategies that respond to individual household needs rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.
- When addressing bottlenecks, PHB has outlined ones identified in the adult system (moving people from transitional and subsidized housing). Proposers may identify different bottlenecks in family or youth systems, and describe how they would be addressed.
- The advisory body convened by Commissioner Fish envisioned a connection between the homelessness prevention activities and the permanent housing placement activities (especially for those moving from transitional or subsidized housing). The activities were envisioned as a two-part intervention to help people move to self-sufficiency: 1) direct assistance to make the move possible, and 2) an offer of a “safety net” of short-term rent assistance to prevent homelessness if households have any difficulty maintaining self-sufficient housing stability.
- Wherever possible, proposers are encouraged to leverage the multiple activities within the RFP to support each other.

#### Notes on evaluation process and criteria:

- An evaluation panel will use the evaluation criteria from this RFP. Proposers should use the included evaluation criteria as a guide for shaping the content of proposals.
- Proposals may demonstrate ability to provide the full range of eligible activities (either as a single agency or as a collaboration of multiple agencies with an identified lead provider), or they may propose to perform some, but not all eligible activities. In general the evaluation criteria will result in higher rankings for more comprehensive projects with stronger collaborations.
- The bulk of proposal rating points will go to the Service Delivery Plan. Proposers should demonstrate a sound approach that is outcomes focused and that meets the principle goals of the RFP: decrease homelessness in the downtown core, alleviate bottlenecks in the homeless service system, heavily leverage other resources, and serve people with historically poor access to services

- Proposal rating points emphasize both strong experience and strong collaborations. In general, proposals that combine experienced “mainstream” homeless service providers with culturally-specific organizations that demonstrate deep experience serving specific communities of color will score more highly than those that do not demonstrate such partnerships. Ideally the points will favor those proposals that couple strong experience with a broader reach.
- If a proposer does not have strong history as a PHB-funded homeless service provider, emphasize the organization’s experience and effectiveness at serving its defined target population or community, and demonstrate how that will assist in meeting RFP goals.
- Evaluation criteria favor proposals with strong outcomes measured through data collection in Service Point, our region’s service utilization data system. If a proposer is not already collecting client and service utilization data in Service Point, PHB will assist and train staff, but proposers are encouraged to talk with existing PHB providers regarding the agency effort required to effectively use Service Point.

#### **IV. Questions and Answers**

**Q1. Can you clarify the expected housing retention outcomes? Do retention outcome follow-up periods start at the date of placement or from the end of the subsidy?**

A1. Housing retention outcomes will be negotiated as part of the contract(s), and proposers may propose outcomes that they think best reflect their proposed approach and the RFP goals. In general, PHB expects that retention outcome follow-up periods will be measured from the time of placement, but if it makes more sense within the context of your proposal to use post-subsidy retention measures that is also acceptable.

**Q2. If the proposal is taking someone directly from the street into a home, do proposers have to partner with a shelter?**

A2. No, but evaluation criteria suggest that you will receive more points for partnering/ collaborating with other service providers for a more comprehensive approach. Moving people from the streets *and* shelters into housing are both goals of this RFP.

**Q3. Can you clarify your desired priorities? Which would trump in priority, the downtown geography or a particular population? (ie: women and children vs. downtown)**

A3. The advisory body convened by Commissioner Fish emphasized a desire to see a visible decrease in homelessness within the downtown core. As such, proposers should emphasize a downtown geographical focus in their response regardless of population(s) served.

**Q4. Because this is one-time money we won't want to use it on increasing infrastructure, but at the same time we may want to use it on a pilot project or another creative project, which would get more points? (ie: innovation vs. slam dunk)**

A4. Ideally we would like the successful proposals to be "the best of both worlds." Proposers should decide how to structure a service plan based within the context of your organization and how you can best deliver your services.

**Q5. Can an organization apply for any amount of the one million dollars?**

A5. You are free to apply for whatever amount you want but the proposals that demonstrate a more comprehensive, coordinated approach with strong partnerships will likely score higher than those that do not.

**Q6. Can you clarify what is meant in the "Goals Section" by priority populations? Several priority populations are listed. Are any of them preferred over others?**

A6. All of the populations described in the RFP goals are high priority. PHB recognizes that people of color may have had less access to services in the past and is pursuing a broader equity agenda to decrease housing-related inequities. PHB has reserved the right to award as much as 25% of the money to go to culturally-specific providers or programs. If you are a culturally-specific provider or can successfully demonstrate a partnership with a culturally-specific provider you could potentially improve your score. The scoring and contract awards will ultimately depend on the overall mix of proposals and partnering opportunities submitted.

**Q7. Is there any flexibility in the amount of time we have to spend the money? (ie: 18 months rather than 12)**

A7. You may propose to spend the funds over a longer period, but you should tie the extended length of time needed to demonstrating that it would result in a better leveraging of resources and a greater ability to meet RFP goals. Ideally, the funding will be deployed quickly and with demonstrable positive effect.

**Q8. What is the reporting process?**

A8. PHB will expect quarterly reporting using Service Point.

**Q9. Are there any culturally specific organizations in particular that have expressed interest in collaborating on this?**

A9. Impact Northwest, a culturally-specific organization serving the Slavic community, attended the information session and expressed interest in partnerships. The Coalition of Communities for Color may be another good organization with which to inquire.

Other notes:

- Can this RFP be shared with the Veteran's Administration for an upcoming RFP they want to do, this is a good example of how to structure it
- We may want to compare and contrast how this RFP process goes compared to past RFP's because of the slightly different way of doing things
- You may want to think of ways you can make your proposals more visible to citizens when structuring your proposals