

**Request For Proposals for Outcomes Measurement, Supportive Housing**

In 2013, the Massachusetts Legislature approved the use of general funds for supportive housing. The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) used those funds to create a dedicated capital program, the Housing Preservation and Stabilization Trust Fund (HPSTF), for the production and preservation of supportive housing units. Paired with a special Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) operating subsidy, which included an annual stipend to pay for supportive services, as well as with other state housing funds and LIHTC equity, this capital resource established a new model for supportive housing development and preservation in Massachusetts. The HPSTF program allocated all three critical funding streams – capital, operating and service – in a coordinated funding process. Over the course of three annual competitive supportive housing funding rounds, developers have used this resource to provide housing for veterans, seniors, homeless families and individuals, people with disabilities, and unaccompanied youth. While the original program, HPSTF, no longer exists, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) utilized the new and deeply income-targeted National Housing Trust Fund, along with dedicated bond resources such as the Housing Innovations Fund (HIF), to capitalize a fourth supportive housing round in FY 17.

The three supportive housing competitions in 2013, 2014, and 2015 funded a total of 35 projects with 755 units, of which 588 are supportive housing units. The majority of those supportive housing projects secured state awards of dedicated capital, operating subsidy and service funding, though some did not receive each type of resource. Many of those units are completed and occupied, though some remain under construction and a few have yet to begin construction. The Housing Trust Fund round, completed in early 2017, provided similar awards to seven new projects. While we know that these permanent supportive housing units have the potential to offer long-term stability to residents, we need to understand the specific impact that access to permanent supportive housing has had on these families.

This Request for Proposals seeks an experienced research consultant to assist the Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC), a quasi-public organization that manages supportive housing funds including the Housing Innovations Fund (HIF), Facilities Consolidation Fund (FCF), Community Based Housing (CBH) and HPSTF funds on behalf of DHCD, to design and implement a set of outcome measurements for this class of projects. The consultant will work with CEDAC and DHCD staff and an advisory committee to identify existing sources of data for key populations served by this group of housing developments, help to design a reporting mechanism for the projects in this group, review reported data with the team, assist in data analysis, and prepare a final report. This data will be utilized by CEDAC, DHCD and other stakeholders to consider the impact of this funding approach on target populations.

On an annual basis, developers that use the state’s dedicated supportive housing resources are required to submit to CEDAC a variety of asset management deliverables, including proof of insurance, certification of compliance with program requirements, cash flow statements, and audits. CEDAC anticipates that the data points identified through this project will ultimately be added to the annual deliverables for impacted projects.

While it is beyond the scope of this project to gather comparative data from housing developments outside this class of deals, some housing developments in this class do consist of a set-aside of dedicated supportive housing units integrated into a development with “plain vanilla” affordable housing units. In many markets, a significant number of the non-dedicated units are occupied by households with mobile vouchers. For future research needs, households with mobile vouchers might provide a useful comparison as they are likely to be households with similar incomes to households in dedicated supportive housing units. The consultant will advise as to whether these integrated developments should report on all units for purposes of some comparison, and also whether those developments should indicate the presence of a household with a mobile voucher where relevant.

The consultant will also advise as to the level and type of baseline data (# and ages of household residents, service population, income, community, et al) that should be collected.

All data to be collected will be non-identifying, to maintain the privacy of residents. Staff from the MRVP program will provide much of the baseline data. Key questions for data collection may include but need not be limited to:

* Where did households in dedicated supportive housing units live before they resided in this unit? (Shelter? Underhoused?) What is the housing history of that household? Have they experienced homelessness? Were they evicted?
* What is the length of tenure of households in dedicated units? For those who have left, why did they leave and where did they go (if known)?
* What sources of service funding (besides the MRVP supportive service stipend) support this project and/or resident? What is the dollar amount annually?
* What is the service staffing plan at this development? FTE, positions, cost. How does the developer or its partner cover those costs? Does the property owner provide services, partner or contract with another agency to provide those services, refer tenants to outside resources, rely upon tenants to establish their own service relationships, or some combination?
* What are incomes of households in dedicated units at lease-up, at re-certification, and at exit (if known)?
* What public benefits (VA, SSI, Mass Health, etc.) did the household access at lease-up, and at re-certification?
* What is the frequency of contact between a household in dedicated unit, and case worker or other service staff?
* If known, what is the frequency of emergency service usage from that unit (911, ER, other?)

Scope of work, timing, and budget:

Design: Meetings with advisory group and others to identify existing sources of data and to identify limited list of interviews. Interview subjects may include property owners, residents, and/or service providers. Identify models of annual data gathering, and existing data gathered by property owners/service providers, possibly via a survey. Craft questions/data points to be delivered to CEDAC by borrowers as part of annual reporting requirements, and help to design a reporting mechanism. Help to refine list of data points.

Implementation: Conduct interviews with a sampling of developers/property managers/residents/service providers as defined by consultant, CEDAC, DHCD. Work with CEDAC staff to gather data. Other tasks as defined by consultant, CEDAC, DHCD.

Analysis: Review data with committee and discuss conclusions. Make recommendations as to any changes or additions for future years.

Report: Prepare report summarizing data conclusions.

RESPONSE:

Please prepare a written proposal that describes your qualifications, prior experience with research of this type, list of clients and projects, and your fee structure to complete this work. Please include resumes for all members of your firm who will participate in the work, whether your firm is an MBE/WBE, and names of three recent clients with contact information. Please send responses to Sara Barcan, sbarcan@cedac.org, no later than May 19, 2017.

Applications should address consultant’s prior experience with similar work, knowledge of existing and/or ongoing related research, and short-term availability. The ideal length of this project is 4-6 months.

