



Corporation for Supportive Housing

Request for Proposals for:

Evaluation of the Chicago Cook
County Flexible Housing Pool

Deadline for Proposals:

April 24, 2019

Introduction

Corporation for Supportive Housing is seeking a qualified independent evaluator of the Flexible Housing Pool's impact on housing stability, health, and the use of crisis systems for individuals receiving housing and services through the program. The Flexible Housing Pool (FHP) is a partnership initiative with government, public and private hospitals, not-for-profit leaders, community partners and other governmental entities. Partners include:

- City of Chicago
- Chicago Housing Authority
- Cook County Health
- CountyCare
- UI Health
- Center for Housing and Health
- Illinois Public Health Institute
- Corporation for Supportive Housing

The FHP's goals are threefold:

- Provide supportive housing and services to individuals who have been homeless and have high behavioral health and physical health needs that lead to frequent use of crisis systems (e.g. emergency rooms, shelters or jail).
- Create new supportive housing.
- Develop a program that increases efficiency in housing identification and placement, centralizes the housing coordination function, provides funding flexibility to overcome barriers to housing for this population and ultimately reduces the length of time to housing for FHP participants.

Participants are likely to experience the following outcomes:

- Improvement in overall health, increased use of appropriate preventive health services, and corresponding reduction in use of crisis care such as hospital emergency rooms
- Fewer days in Cook County jail, court, or police custody and reduced utilization of inappropriate medical services
- Reduced utilization of homeless crisis response system
- Increased stability and length of residency in supportive housing or other permanent housing

CSH is seeking a research partner to evaluate the success of the FHP in improving outcomes for participants. We are issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) for organizations with demonstrated capacity and experience to conduct an impact evaluation for the initial implementation phase of the initiative. Included in this RFP is a description of the program, and an overview of the goals of the evaluation, a draft scope of services and tasks, and guidelines and timeline for submission.

All questions pertaining to this RFP should be directed to:

Lauren Fulton
Senior Program Manager
Corporation for Supportive Housing
lauren.fulton@csh.org

Description of the Program

The Problem

It is well documented that supportive housing – which offers both permanent affordable housing and linkages to services for physical and mental health, substance abuse and other issues – can reduce long-term spending on emergency services such as shelter, hospital, police, court and jail, while improving outcomes for chronically homeless individuals. For example, an evaluation of the Los Angeles County Department of Health - Housing for Health program found a 60 percent reduction in utilization costs across six public systems. Prior to housing, program participants received public services costing \$38,146 person; this decreased to \$15,358 after one year in supportive housing.¹ Other findings concluded that supportive housing interventions reduced ER visits by 57% and inpatient days by 75%.² This not only represents a shift in costs, but a shift in where individuals are accessing care and a reduction in the burden on the community’s crisis system of care.

Despite mounting evidence of effectiveness, local governments often have trouble securing the necessary investments for supportive housing. In addition to insufficient affordable housing inventory, individuals with complex needs often experience additional barriers to accessing supportive housing, including long waitlists, difficulty navigating the system, and ineligibility under HUD guidelines. Individuals experiencing homelessness in Chicago average a 110-day process from the time the individual/household is matched to a housing provider to when they are housed.³

The Program

The FHP is a new model for funding supportive housing that better meets the needs of individuals who frequently use crisis services and who have high behavioral health needs, high rates of detention in jail, and are experiencing homelessness or long-term housing instability. The FHP will provide funding for housing subsidies (i.e. rental support) as well as housing tenancy supports when there is no other alternative payer (i.e. Medicaid) for these supports. This initiative provides an opportunity for health care investment in supportive housing and prioritization of those resources for the target population.

To help establish and test initial processes, procedures, data collection methods, and outcomes for a new FHP model, an initial phase is being planned to serve 80-100 individuals. The intention is to use evaluation findings and lessons learned from the initial phase to refine the model as it is brought to scale in subsequent phases. By 2021 the FHP will create 750 supportive housing units. This volume of units will significantly impact and shift care

¹ “Housing for Health,” RAND.

https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_briefs/RB10000/RB10000/RAND_RB10000.pdf

² “Evaluation of Housing for Health Permanent Supportive Housing Program,” RAND.

https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1600/RR1694/RAND_RR1694.pdf

³ Dashboard to End Homelessness. <https://www.allchicago.org/dashboard-to-end-homelessness>

and costs away from emergency health services and the justice system to more sustainable investments in housing.

The initial phase of the FHP will be funded by the City of Chicago. In this initial phase the care coordination and clinical services will be provided through partnership with Cook County Health and CountyCare. Cook County Health and CountyCare are anticipated to be responsible for needed clinical services including care coordination, primary care, behavioral health, and mental health services such as Assertive Community Treatment. Cook County Health will identify members of the target population for engagement in the initial phase.

As the initiative expands, the FHP is anticipated to grow through increased public funds as well as private funds through foundations, hospitals, and/or managed care plans.

Key Program Elements

Target Population

The Flexible Housing Pool will target high utilizers of crisis services who have high behavioral health needs, high rates of detention in jail, and are experiencing homelessness.

As the initiative increases in scale, the target population may be adjusted in order to best meet community needs. For the initial phase of the FHP, the program will identify individuals in the target population that reside in the city and meet eligibility criteria as informed by health, behavioral health, and criminal justice data, after which a collaborative assessment and referral process will occur. Through the real-time referral and data review it may be determined the person is involved in other health and housing systems. Eligible individuals will be confirmed through a coordinated assessment and referral process.

Bridge and Permanent Supportive Housing

As part of the FHP, the Center for Housing and Health (CHH) will identify and provide affordable, permanent supportive housing to the target population. The program eligibility criteria were developed with the intention to reach many of our most vulnerable community members and those who may not be eligible for traditional HUD-funded programs. Key aspects of this model include determining specific ways to increase flexibility in how funds are used, increased efficiency in ensuring individuals are matched to quality housing, improved access to tenancy supports, which may result in improved connection and retention in terms of care coordination and clinical services. This new model is not intended to replicate existing permanent supportive housing models in Chicago. Stakeholders are interested in models building on and inspired by the success of the Los Angeles County Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool.⁴

⁴ LA County Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool. [http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/dhs/218377_FHSP082614\(bleed--screenview\).pdf](http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/dhs/218377_FHSP082614(bleed--screenview).pdf)

The FHP model includes subsidies as well as housing tenancy supports and is likely going to include bridge units during a brief waiting period until a long term leased home is secured. Housing provided through the FHP may be in a single site or scattered-site models.⁵

Key Model Components

The City and stakeholders involved in the planning and implementation of the FHP have identified the following best practices, including:

- Housing First
- Harm Reduction
- Person-Centered Care
- Assertive outreach and engagement
- Quality Housing
- Landlord Engagement and Retention

⁵ Types of Supportive Housing. CSH. <http://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/integrated-models-matrix-final.pdf>

Evaluation Goals and Scope of Services

Supported by a number of community foundations and other health sector partners, CSH and the stakeholders involved in the planning and implementation of the FHP are seeking a qualified independent evaluator of the FHP's impact on housing stability, health, and the use of crisis systems for individuals receiving housing and services through the program.

Program Impacts for Evaluation

A fully funded FHP is expected to significantly improve health outcomes for homeless people with chronic conditions. Impacts of the FHP are expected to include:

- Reduced inappropriate ER use
- Reduced inpatient utilization
- Reduced jail stays
- Reduced police, fire, EMS use
- Reduced emergency shelter use
- Increased housing stability
- Increased outpatient utilization
- Increased affordable housing market capacity
- Improved patient outcomes

Evaluation Overview

The FHP program will be evaluated to estimate the impact of supportive housing on individuals' use of a spectrum of publicly-funded services. The appropriate subcontractor will be able to assist with various items, including:

- Design an evaluation methodology and plan
- Support and execute data sharing agreements required to access identified data
- Collect primary data (if required for evaluation plan)
- Develop a timeline and plan for data collection and reporting out
- Collaborate with an appointed performance manager to provide data reports for monthly implementation leads meetings on process metrics
- Evaluate the program impact on a number of metrics
- Participate in FHP governance meetings, frequency to be determined but no more than quarterly

Scope of Work

1) Evaluation Design and Execution

The evaluator, working closely with initiative partners, will ensure that the evaluation design is compatible with the program design and the plan for service delivery. The evaluation will answer the following questions:

1. To what extent does Permanent Supportive Housing impact the use of crisis health services (emergency room visits, hospitalization, hospital bed days, inpatient behavioral health days, detox visits, and ambulance trips) and increase engagement in primary care services (outpatient visits, primary care visits)?
2. To what extent does Permanent Supportive Housing impact the use of criminal justice services (jail bed days, probation, and number of arrests)?

3. What impact does Permanent Supportive Housing have on housing stability and the individuals' use of emergency housing services (i.e. days at shelter, episodes of shelter stays, street outreach, and chronic homeless status)?
4. Does the program lead to improvements in physical and mental health, including measurable improvements to chronic health conditions which can be impacted by consistent, ongoing engagement with outpatient care and compliance with the recommendation of healthcare providers?
5. What impact does housing stability and service linkage have on an individual's perceived quality of life?

We anticipate the evaluation design will use an experimental or quasi-experimental methodology. Suggested methods include matched control groups and time delayed trials. The selected evaluator will confirm the final methodology in collaboration with FHP stakeholders.

2) Secure Data Sharing

Answering the research questions listed above will require data sharing among homeless systems (Homeless Management Information System), health systems (including but not limited to Cook County Health and CountyCare), Medicaid utilization data, and the FHP Housing Coordination Agency (Center for Housing and Health). The evaluator will work with FHP stakeholders to ensure proper data sharing and storing procedures. Prior to commencing the evaluation, the evaluator will be responsible for developing a process to match service records for individuals across different department datasets without identifying the individual personal records or information, unless the data as shared through other agreements is agreed to be sufficient. The evaluator will also be responsible for ensuring safe transfer of information between various partners.

3) Subcontractor and performance manager coordination

The evaluator and the performance manager will work closely to merge the expertise of each organization in order to ensure that the evaluation is conducted in the most comprehensive, complete, and secure manner possible. Coordination will occur via in-person meetings, e-mail, and phone.

Milestones and Deliverables:

- The selected evaluator will provide an evaluation plan that includes a methodological approach to evaluating the FHP program, and a data collection plan that will include a description of procedures to collect the data necessary for evaluation of the initiative.
- The selected evaluator will conduct data sharing that combines relevant administrative data and any primary data collection, as required by the evaluation plan.
- The selected evaluator will attend quarterly governance meetings and occasionally monthly Implementation Leads meetings and prepare presentations/materials for investors and other stakeholders.
- The selected evaluator will deliver a final report answering the evaluation questions.

Funding Available:

An amount not to exceed \$200,000 has been requested for 2019. Funding is currently being applied for, and a selected evaluation partner is expected to work with CSH and other stakeholders involved in implementing the Flexible Housing Pool to secure this funding. It is likely there will be additional funding available to continue the evaluation in future years.

RFP Submission Guidelines

Applicant submissions for Evaluation of the Chicago Cook County Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool should include:

1. Introduction: Provide a brief letter of introduction on organizational letterhead that includes applicant name, address, phone number and email address;
2. Proposed Evaluation Activities (Limit response to 10 pages):
 - Describe proposed evaluation plan, including:
 - Approach to an impact evaluation across data sources and sectors
 - Approach to data sharing activities
 - Description of reports/deliverables
 - Timeline of tasks and work products
 - Describe experience handling sensitive healthcare data;
 - Describe managing conflicts of interest if using data from organizations within the same sector;
 - Describe current capacity for data sharing with the existing FHP partners, including if there are existing agreements in place;
 - Identify any anticipated challenges to the implementation of the evaluation and discuss strategies to mitigate those challenges;
 - Describe a plan for reporting and disseminating results;
 - Provide a detailed timeline for evaluation activities; and
 - Describe a plan for evaluation staffing and oversight;
3. Documentation of the qualifications and experience of the organization you represent and key evaluation staff; include a description of prior experience that is comparable in content, scope and design; and
4. A budget which details specific evaluation activities and includes a rationale for all proposed fees and costs.

Deadline for Submission: April 24, 2019 at 5:00 pm CST.

Proposals may only be in MS Word format. All proposals must be received by CSH by the deadline stated above. Incomplete or late submissions will not be considered.

Submit your proposal to:

Lauren Fulton
Senior Program Manager
Corporation for Supportive Housing
lauren.fulton@csh.org

Selection Criteria & Process

FHP stakeholders will evaluate applications utilizing the following criteria and will select the highest-scoring valid proposal:

- Soundness of approach and degree to which proposed evaluation design and activities meets stated goals;
- Demonstrated experience conducting evaluations of public sector programs and familiarity with evaluating homeless and supportive housing projects, including impacts on multiple crisis systems such as criminal justice and healthcare;
- Demonstrated experience in cross-system data matching to measure service utilization for homeless clients, including experience using healthcare data;
- Rate reasonableness and overall cost of services; and
- Proximity to and knowledge of Chicago/ Cook County, including knowledge of local data systems and existing data sharing arrangements and the ability to initiate work on this initiative in an expedited manner.

Conditions of Proposal Submission:

5. All prospective contractors shall comply with all conditions, requirements and specifications contained herein, with any deviation constituting sufficient cause for rejection of the proposal.
6. Only one proposal will be accepted from any one organization.
7. It is requested that all proposals be prepared in a comprehensive manner as to the content. The format of the submitted proposal shall be as specified in the Request for Qualifications.
8. All costs incurred in the preparation and presentation of the submitted proposal, in any way whatsoever, shall be wholly absorbed by the prospective contractor. Any material submitted by the prospective contractor that is to be considered confidential must be clearly marked as such.

Anticipated Timetable for Selection and Award

Evaluation RFP released	March 27, 2019
Complete applications due to CSH	April 24, 2019 at 5pm CST
Phone interviews scheduled, if necessary	May 1-May 8, 2019
Evaluator notified	May 15, 2019
Contract period begins	June 3, 2019

For any questions, please contact:

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