

Re: Request for Proposal to the Transitional Housing Program

Dear Housing Provider:

Behavioral Health of Cambria County (BHoCC) intends to implement the Transitional Housing Program with one provider in early 2021. Your agency is invited to respond to the Request for Proposal, should you choose to do so.

We are seeking a provider who is highly motivated to implement this program that addresses immediate housing needs in addition to increasing the availability of and access to long term, safe, affordable permanent housing.

Currently in Cambria there are housing options for individuals who meet eligibility criteria, however, often there is a gap between the time they begin enrollment in a program until there is an opening putting many individuals at risk of homelessness. Community housing partners such as Peer Empowerment Network, the Landlords association, and the Christian Home report days or months before an individual can be placed in a program. The length of stay in this program may be up to a year depending on varying circumstances such as employment and/or available housing.

Our Plan is to fill this gap by designating 5 multi-family and 5 (1) bedroom apartment units in local housing developments to house individuals waiting for approval of permanent housing. These units would be in scattered sites and the County would lease the units from the landlords with a 3-year lease. The sites would be located within 0.5 to 1 mile from the downtown area, as well as on the local transit routes.

The expected outcome is that individuals who utilize this program will work with a Housing Coordinator to follow through with their current permanent housing plans. The housing coordinator will support the individual in building skills for independent living. Cambria County does not have other permanent supportive housing (PSH) options for individuals at this time and this program would help individuals reach a goal of permanent stable housing. The Housing Coordinator will survey individuals in the program to track outcomes including, but not limited to the following: average length of time in the program, ability to secure employment, ability to secure transportation, and the percentage of people who have the ability to secure permanent housing. The data will be collected and submitted into the SNAP software system.

It is expected that the outcomes data will be reported out at monthly committee meetings to identify any trends or further needs of individuals who use the program.

The transition domains include employment and career, education, living situation, personal effectiveness/wellbeing, and community life functioning. Implementing this model will require the full dedication and support of the agency CEO and senior management, enthusiasm for partnering with and supporting people in need of transitional housing, a strengths based philosophy, the flexibility of staff to respond to needs 24/7, the ability to face and overcome challenges, a commitment to building relationships and working with community partners, and a strong internal structure that supports the team.

Please review the following information as you consider your response to this RFP:

- The Transitional Housing Program in Cambria County will be a county-wide, voluntary, mobile service carried out by trained Housing Coordinators.
- The following criteria are anticipated for the individuals to be served:
 - MA HealthChoices eligible adults 18 years of age and older.
 - Individuals with a mental illness or individuals who have a mental illness co-occurring diagnosis that need safe, affordable housing.
 - Individuals with a criminal justice history.
 - Those who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness and
 - Transition age youth and young adults
 - Priority individuals who are moving from a more restrictive inpatient or residential treatment setting will be considered as well.

We estimate this plan will serve 50-58 persons annually with 150-175 people who are in the process of securing housing supports and permanent supportive housing served over a 3-year period.

We anticipate implementing Transitional Housing with one provider agency which includes two full-time Housing Coordinators. These are contracted positions and the contractors will be responsible for coordinating all administrative aspects of the Housing program. The Housing Coordinators will serve as the main point of contact for this program.

Initial funding will be through County reinvestment dollars.

Sustainability plan includes Cambria County grant makers such as the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, the United Way of the Laurel Highlands and Lee Initiatives, among other sources to be explored. The Housing Coordinators will be responsible for meeting with local housing organizations such as PEN Supportive Housing Program, Landlord's Association, Martha and Mary House, The Christian Home, The Johnstown Housing Authority, Catholic Charities, Community Action, and St. Vincent De Paul. Together, these separate housing programs will benefit from a single point of contact for housing and will be asked to contribute to the Housing Coordinator positions when initial reinvestment funds are depleted.

Recommended qualifications for Housing Coordinators:

- Must have a high school diploma or equivalent with experience in working with adults with behavioral health challenges.
- Must be culturally reflective of target population, demonstrating excellent youth engagement and interpersonal skills.
- Must be willing to work within a schedule that provides 24/7 coverage for the team.

Types of work experiences that would qualify a Housing Coordinator include:

- Peer Support Specialist
- Recovery Specialist
- Blended Case Management
- Experience with housing issues and barriers within Cambria County

BHoCC and Magellan Implementation Timeline:

- The Housing Coordinators need to be hired and oriented beginning March 1, 2021.
- Housing Coordinators should participate in all free training programs offered by BHoCC for their own professional development.
- BHoCC will conduct a Fidelity Assessment process beginning in the summer of 2021 with the program.

Should your agency choose to respond to the RFP, we ask that you include a brief but thoughtful proposal, as well as a budget. Proposals must include at least the following:

1. Brief Program Description Narrative (**not to exceed 6 pages**)
 - a. Administrative Capacity
 - b. Philosophical Orientation
 - c. Program Design
 - d. Implementation Schedule
2. Preliminary Budget
3. Attachments

Section I: Brief Program Description Narrative

A. Administrative Capacity

- Identify all housing services currently provided and the number of Cambria County individuals served per year. Specify current services to these populations (include number of unduplicated individuals served in each of these demographic categories):
 - Individuals with mental illness or individuals who have a mental illness co-occurring diagnosis that need safe, affordable housing.
 - Individuals with a criminal justice history.
 - Those who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness and
 - Transition age youth and young adults.

- Please include an organizational chart, identify any new services currently being developed, and indicate the ability of the organization to implement this program within the specified timeframes.
- Include a statement of agency leadership’s dedication and support of Transitional Housing Program.

B. Philosophical Orientation

- Describe the organization’s mission and approach to delivery services. Reference accommodations for special needs populations and describe overall agency efforts to address issues of cultural diversity.
- Describe how the program will involve consumers and families in the planning, delivery, and ongoing evaluation of these services.
- Specify any direct experience in providing services to the population targeted for this program including:
 - Individuals with mental illness or individuals who have a mental illness co-occurring diagnosis that need safe, affordable housing.
 - Individuals with a criminal justice history.
 - Those who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness and
 - Transition age youth and young adults.
- Describe your agency’s experience implementing other evidenced based practices.
- What technologies will your agency support for enhanced communication with individuals (i.e. texting, email etc.)?

C. Program Design

- Staffing Requirements:
 - Describe the agency plan to hire the Housing Coordinators. Include how the Transitional Housing program will fit within the continuum of services currently offered by your agency.
 - Describe the staffing plan to provide 24/7 coverage for individuals being served in the Transitional Housing program.
 - Describe your agency’s current experience in serving the homeless/at risk for homelessness population in Cambria County, and the agency strengths you will capitalize on to implement this program.
- Service Delivery:
 - Discuss how referrals will be triaged, contact made with referral agencies, and services started. Provide timeframes for each step and an explanation of how communication will be provided to the referral source.

- Describe where the program will operate and how the program will manage the supervision of staff providing services in the community.
 - Explain your agency’s current experience in employing staff that provide mobile services, what technological accommodations you currently employ or would employ for the staff to be successful.
- Crisis Intervention/Continuity of Care:
 - Describe how the agency will develop crisis plans for each member and what role the agency will play in crises that occur after hours.
- Community Supports and Linkages/Continuity of Care:
 - Describe proposed service linkages with providers of emergency and inpatient medical and psychiatric services, other potential referral sources, and those behavioral health and community resources that will be involved in supporting the individuals.
 - Describe your agency’s knowledge of housing resources within Cambria County and ability to access these resources.
 - Describe your plan to engage individuals and community partners in your planning, implementation, and oversight process and ongoing.
- Quality Enhancement/Outcomes and Evaluation:
 - Describe the organization’s approach to ensuring quality of service and strategies for evaluating program effectiveness.
 - Identify expected individual and system outcomes and benefits, and how consumer satisfaction and stakeholder satisfaction will be assessed.
 - Identify how outcomes will be collected, managed, and applied to assess the effectiveness of the program.

Section II: Budget

Proposals must include budgets with identified allocation amounts or ranges. Start-up and annualized budget costs will be evaluated based on cost/benefit effectiveness.

Section III: Attachments (Required)

1. Table of Organization (Indicate relationship of this program within overall agency structure)
2. Governing Board composition (Include names and member affiliations)
3. Financial Statement (Include assets and liabilities, audit letter or balance sheet)
4. Letters of Support (Include three)

RFP Timeline

August 24, 2020	RFP released to Cambria County providers.
September 7, 2020	Providers to submit letter/form of intent
September 7, 2020	Providers to submit all questions
September 18, 2020	Answers disseminated to all providers
October 1, 2020	Proposal Submission Deadline, 4:00 PM EST
11/30/20 -12/4/20	Provider Interviews Held
December 11, 2020	Announcement of Successful Bidder

(Implementation meetings with the selected provider and Cambria County will initiate after the selection announcement has been made.)

Your request for proposal response must be received **no later than September 7, 2020 via email to Tanya Kvarita at tkvarita@bhocc.org**

If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact Tanya Kvarita at BHoCC.

Thank you for your consideration of this opportunity.

Yours truly,

Tanya Kvarita

Tanya Kvarita, LSW
Executive Director
Behavioral Health of Cambria County