



**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
for
EMERGENCY SHELTER TINY HOME VILLAGE
FOR COVID-19 VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS**

Issued by:
THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA (“City”)
Office of Homeless Services
On:
October 21, 2020

**Electronic proposals must be received by MaryBeth Gonzales, Deputy Director of Policy, Planning
and Performance Management, at Marybeth.Gonzales@Phila.gov
Proposals are accepted on a rolling basis through 5 p.m. on Wednesday, December 16, 2020**

James F. Kenney, Mayor
Elizabeth G. Hersh, Director, Office of Homeless Services

I. Overview

The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to give interested, qualified not-for-profit organizations the opportunity to inform the City of Philadelphia's Office of Homeless Services (OHS), on behalf of Philadelphia's Homeless Continuum of Care, of their capacity, interest and plans to establish and operate a pilot Tiny Home Village of 12-24 units on City-owned land.

People who are over the age of 65 and/or have certain chronic underlying health conditions¹ are more vulnerable to serious, potentially life-threatening illness should they contract COVID-19. People in these demographics who are experiencing homelessness are even more vulnerable, lacking the basic protection of a place to live.

To protect these highly vulnerable individuals throughout the pandemic, the City has been developing and offering a wide range of emergency, temporary and long-term housing options. These include COVID Prevention Spaces using downtown hotels, shared housing, single room occupancies and tiny houses.

The Tiny Home Village concept being pursued by OHS is based on Seattle's model pioneered and operated by the Low-Income Housing Institute (<https://lihi.org/>). In this model people are able to maintain autonomy while benefiting from the support of a community through a cost-effective housing alternative. OHS is seeking a model that is low-barrier, housing-first, harm-reduction, person-centered and trauma-informed with emphasis on self-governance in which staff offer support and care that is largely directed by residents.

Seattle's model also positively and constructively addresses the surrounding community, approaches to which OHS is fully committed. These include landscaping to make the site a community asset, privacy fencing, limited access through a gate, 24-hour security and cameras, and the establishment of an advisory board with neighbor participation. OHS's hope is that the surrounding community will welcome, support and assist their new disabled and elderly neighbors.

The concept being explored with this RFI is that each tiny home would essentially be a room (approximately 120' square feet) located in a compound with a central, shared kitchen area and centralized bathrooms, showers and laundry. All common spaces and units must be accessible per the Standards for Accessible Design specified within the Americans for Disabilities Act (ADA). Each unit will have heat and electricity but no water. 24-hour on-site staffing is required, although it could be a resident or peer. OHS anticipates this pilot village to offer 12-24 units.

The City of Philadelphia will provide the land. The site has electrical power and water available at the curb which the contracted provider will need to connect to the village for use in its operation. The City will support the contracted provider in establishing the site through the Department of Public Property. The contractor will be responsible for securing all relevant construction permits. Construction design will require City approval which OHS will facilitate. The City will also contribute site preparation for the tiny homes and landscaping to ensure it is a

¹ The City relies on the Centers for Disease Control for guidance on who is most vulnerable to COVID based on the latest data: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/homelessness.html>

community asset. Site prep includes leveling and setting a base on which to place the units, as well as site grading. Based on the City's State of Emergency, temporary zoning will be provided for one-year. Renewal of zoning will be contingent upon the success of the program in serving elderly and disabled residents in a safe, sanitary and effective manner.

There is no construction funding available for this project. It will be up to the provider to obtain all permits to construct and install the units including electrical and water as needed. The City will work closely with the provider on the design and development of the site. The City will provide operating funds through the CARES Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) as a temporary emergency shelter, or another eligible source of support to be determined. ESG-CV funding for temporary emergency shelter is subject to expire on January 31, 2022.

This Request for Information (RFI) will help OHS to identify qualifying 501(c)(3) organization(s) with whom to enter into a contract to construct and operate the Tiny Home Village. All residents must meet the definition of being virtually homeless².

OHS encourages all non-profit entities that may be interested in operating the Tiny Home Village to prepare and submit a response to this RFI in order for the City to assess interest and capacity to move forward. Responses to this RFI are considered non-binding and are used to assist the City in selecting organizations that are best suited to operate this model of a Tiny Home Village.

Overview of the Office of Homeless Services

The Office of Homeless Services (OHS) is the public entity charged with the policy, planning and coordination of the City's response to homelessness. The mission of the OHS is to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. OHS works collaboratively with city, state and federal governmental entities and more than 60 homeless housing and service providers to comprise Philadelphia's homeless service system. OHS provides homelessness prevention and diversion services, emergency shelter and temporary housing services to people who are both literally homeless and/or at imminent risk of homelessness. OHS also provides and connects people with long-term housing options such as rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing.

OHS is the Collaborative Applicant for the Philadelphia Continuum of Care (CoC). The Philadelphia CoC is an inter-agency planning body committed to coordinating and implementing a community-wide response to homelessness in Philadelphia. Homelessness prevention strategies help address the needs of persons experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness. OHS is also the Philadelphia CoC's HMIS Lead and the Management Entity responsible for day-to-day homeless service provider operations.

More information about the Office of Homeless Services, the Continuum of Care, and ESG funding opportunity can be found at <http://philadelphiaofficeofhomelesservices.org>.

Partners

OHS is joined in making this Tiny Home Village pilot project a success with key City

² Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing: Defining "Homeless", <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2011-12-05/pdf/2011-30942.pdf>

departments: Planning and Development, Public Property, Licenses and Inspections and the Managing Director's Office, Health and Human Services Cabinet. These partners will be engaged throughout the planning, construction and development of the Tiny Home Village to contribute to its success.

Project Background

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, HUD has allocated special Emergency Solutions Grants Program funds (ESG-CV) to Philadelphia as authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). These ESG-CV funds are to be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic among individuals and families who are homeless or receiving homeless assistance; and to support additional homeless assistance and homelessness prevention activities to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.

With this RFI, the Office of Homeless Services is seeking organizations able to fund the construction of a Tiny Home Village, with a common kitchen and bathroom area, and the operation of the Village for 1 year. The Tiny Home Village would be considered a temporary emergency shelter, subject to the ESG-CV funding expiration date of January 31, 2022. ESG-CV funds may be used to provide essential services and operations for emergency shelter. If it is successful, it will be eligible for continued funding.

The establishment of Tiny Home villages in other cities has proven to be a cost-effective solution for providing temporary housing for people experiencing homelessness. Among the various Tiny Home models employed across the country, the Seattle model of creating tiny home units with a separate, shared kitchen and a shower/bathroom trailer, has been successful and has led to the development of twelve tiny home villages across the Seattle area.

Please note that the funding source is subject to change.

Eligible Applicants

This RFI is open to not-for-profits organizations that meet the following criteria, with documented tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the 1986 IRS Code as amended:

- No part of the net earnings of which inure to the benefit of any member, founder, contributor, or individual;
- Has a voluntary board;
- Has a functioning accounting system that is operated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, or has designated a fiscal agent that will maintain a functioning accounting system for the organization in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles; and
- Practices nondiscrimination in the provision of assistance.

The eligible non-profit applicant or partner/s must demonstrate the financial management capacity and experience to carry out the project as detailed in its project application and to administer Federal funds. In addition, the application must demonstrate:

- Organizational experience successfully providing services to individuals and/or families experiencing homelessness;
- Experience successfully providing housing and case management services to the target population;

- Established partnerships with providers of mainstream resources and benefits, as well as other relevant service providers;
- Financial solvency and administrative capacity to operate a program of the indicated scope;
- Equal opportunity employer, without any founded charges of unfair hiring or promotions within the past ten years;
- Freedom from debt to the Federal Government, State of Pennsylvania, or the City of Philadelphia for nonpayment of taxes, fines, judgments, liens or fees.

The meaningful involvement of people who have lived experience with homelessness as staff and board members is required to be competitive for this opportunity as is a proven commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion that seeks to affirmatively address historic patterns of racial discrimination.

Project Requirements

Projects awarded funding through this opportunity must comply with the following requirements:

- All HUD Emergency Solutions Program (ESG) regulations, as detailed in 24 CFR §576;
- Operate using a Housing First approach, which is a model of housing assistance that prioritizes rapid placement and stabilization in safe, decent and affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness as quickly as possible, thus ending their homelessness. Although a person experiencing homelessness may benefit from supportive services, such as mental health or substance abuse counseling, permanent housing provided with a Housing First approach does not have service participation requirements or preconditions (such as sobriety or a minimum income threshold);
- All common spaces and units must be accessible per the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- Accept participant referrals from the City's Coordinated Entry and Assessment-Based Housing Referral System (CEA-BHRS);
- All referrals into the site must be compliant with Fair Housing laws
- Enter client-level data into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS);
- CoC written standards for the use of this assistance, which includes policies and procedures for providing rapid re-housing housing assistance
- The Philadelphia CoC Nondiscrimination Policy
- The Philadelphia Continuum of Care Emergency Transfer Plan for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual violence, Human Trafficking, or Stalking
- Special Conditions and Requirements for CARES Act funding for ESG:
- Restriction on CARES Act Funds
- People experiencing homelessness shall not be required to receive treatment or perform any other prerequisite activities as a condition for receiving assistance
- Acquisition of property/land cannot be covered through the use of these funds
- Construction and acquisition of the Tiny Homes units cannot be purchased through

the use of these funds.

The Office of Homeless Services requires that the Agency/Respondent shows at least adequate leveraging of funds to carry out the above scope of work.

II. Scope of Work

Project Details

The City of Philadelphia Office of Homeless Services (OHS) is accepting applications from organizations interested in providing the construction and program operations at the proposed Philadelphia Tiny Home Village site. This may be accomplished through partnership.

Operations should include, but are not limited to tenant screening and selection, governance, supportive services, housing case management, development and support of the community, safety and security, connections to employment, healthcare, discharge planning, etc., as needed.

Construction of the site may not be financed through the use of these funds. The selected provider must identify and provide funding for and assume responsibility for construction. OHS encourages providers to seek out minority and women owned business enterprises (MWBE) to provide construction services.

Construction requirements include obtaining permits and entitlements, including permits for building, temporary occupancy, electricity, and plumbing. The electrical permit must be obtained by a licensed electrical contractor. Heating of the units is assumed to be electrical unless a viable, cost-effective alternative is available. There is no access to heating gas on this site.

The provider is expected to lease a trailer for the site showers and bathrooms. The plumbing permit for the trailer must be obtained by the party installing the trailer on the site. The site must follow the Appendix of the 2015 International Residential Building Code, or later iterations of the Code. If the units are built on site, plans will be inspected by the Department of Licenses and Inspections.

Eligible Costs

ESG funding used for the Tiny Homes Village will be applied under the terms of shelter operations. Applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with this rule and be prepared to comply with it if the project is supported by ESG funds:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/1927/hearth-esg-program-and-consolidated-plan-conforming-amendments/>.

Only activities listed in the ESG interim rule at 24 CFR 576 are eligible under the ESG-CV allocation. If an activity is not listed, it is not considered an eligible cost for this funding source. All residents of the Tiny Home Village must meet the definition of literally homeless. Priority will be on those most vulnerable to COVID, people over the age of 60 and/or with chronic underlying health conditions. Referrals will come from the City's Coordinated Entry and Assessment-Based Housing Referral System (CEA-BHRS), with prioritization of referrals from the COVID Prevention Spaces and from those who are unsheltered.

Applicants may request up to 10% of the ESG grant for administrative activities. Costs for staff and overhead directly associated with carrying out activities under Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services (§576.105) or Rental Assistance (§576.106) are not administrative costs but are eligible costs as part as those activities.

III. Proposal Format, Content, Submission Requirements and Selection Process

Proposal Format

Applicants are required to submit electronic responses. Paper submissions will not be accepted.

The electronic copies of proposals must be submitted to MaryBeth Gonzales, Deputy Director at marybeth.gonzales@phila.gov by 5:00pm, Eastern Time Wednesday, December 16, 2020.

Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be accepted. Pages must be numbered and double-spaced with 12-point font and 1” margins.

Proposal Content

**1. Applicant Background, Profile, Qualifications, and Relevant Experience
(Maximum 1000 words)**

Provide a narrative description of the Applicant itself, including the following:

- a. A primary contact for the Applicant, including name, job title, address, telephone and fax numbers, and email address;
- b. Organizational background, including number of years in operation, primary mission and philosophy, and any other information about the organization that Applicant deems pertinent to this RFP;
- c. Basic organization and management structure of the Applicant subrecipients (if any). Include a description of internal and external coordination, and structures for managing basic organization operations;
- d. Experience in effectively utilizing public funding (ie, Federal, State, or local government funds) to work with individuals experiencing homelessness/housing insecurity, including people with physical and/or behavioral health needs such as mental illness and substance use;
- e. Experience and/or expertise (or that of a partner agency) with building construction (physical plans, local permitting processes and requirements, administrative tasks);
- f. Experience and/or strategies employing principles of self-governance;
- g. Strategies used to continue current programming despite the limitations resulting from COVID-19 and the need for social distancing;
- h. Experience operating program(s) using the Housing First approach and incorporating trauma-informed care practices; History of collaboration and

working across systems to serve the target population;

- i. Financial capacity to administer the grant, including the accounting system that will be used to administer the grant and any financial procedures that might have that may impact the implementation of the grant.

2. **Project Understanding – (Maximum 1000 words)**

Provide a brief narrative statement that confirms Applicant’s understanding of, and agreement to provide, the services and/or tangible work products necessary to achieve the objectives of the project that is the subject of this RFI. Applicant shall describe how the Applicant’s professional experience will benefit the project.

3. **Preliminary Construction Plan – (Maximum 1000 words)**

Provide a brief narrative statement describing the construction plan, including:

- a. Specifications of the units
- b. Quality control
- c. Experience and expertise of the construction management team/agency
- d. Location of construction (i.e. units built on site or transported to the site)

4. **Budget Form - (Attachment)**

Complete and attach a budget form, detailing the specific cost for each service, tangible work product, and other costs related to completing the scope detailed on this RFI. Please be sure to include all relevant budget line items, including items such as staffing and security services.