

**MERCER COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMISSION
HAS ISSUED THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
FOR A HOUSING MANAGEMENT AGENCY TO OVERSEE THE
MASTER LEASING AND BRIDGE SUBSIDY PROGRAMS**

**Instructions: All completed RFPs must be submitted in writing and via email.
Five (5) unbound original proposals must be submitted to the address below:**

*Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission
8406 Sharon Mercer Road
Mercer, PA 16137
Attention: Housing Committee*

*An electronic copy of the proposal must also be submitted to
sharronda.faber@mcbhc.org*

All pages of the proposal must be numbered.

**ALL PROPOSALS MUST BE RECEIVED BY
4:00 PM ON FRIDAY, JUNE 8, 2018.**

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SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission (MCBHC) believes that creating Permanent Supportive Housing is a key element in the recovery process. Supportive Housing is an evidence-based housing intervention that combines affordable housing assistance with wrap-around support services for people experiencing homelessness, serious mental illness and/or other disabilities that may impact their ability to obtain and retain housing. Research has clearly shown that securing and retaining safe, affordable housing is an essential component in maintaining long-term stability and community tenure for individuals within this target population. Permanent supportive housing allows the individual to remain permanently in the housing unit if they so choose. When permanent supportive housing is implemented consistently with a set of core operating principles, there is a reduction of public expenditures for emergency room and inpatient care (medical, psychiatric and substance use disorders), jail, police, emergency medical services and the court system, shelters and other services for persons residing in the housing.

Through the HealthChoices program, counties are permitted to retain revenue and investment income that was not spent during a contracted year. These funds are called reinvestment funds. The MCBHC has committed to develop additional, safe, affordable housing with the creation of Master Leasing and Bridge Subsidy programs for adult residents over the age of eighteen (18) struggling with mental health, substance use or co-occurring disorders who are in need of housing and supports at all stages of the recovery process.

PURPOSE/SCOPE

The Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission (MCBHC) is soliciting proposals from qualified parties with proven experience in rental subsidy management and leasing with local landlords to serve as the contracted “Housing Management Agency” in developing, implementing and administering a Master Leasing Program and a Bridge Subsidy Program cooperatively with the MCBHC. The Housing Management Agency shall be responsible for utilizing the allocated funds to create and implement successful programs with measurable outcomes. **The term of this funding is July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2020.**

The Housing Management Agency must work collaboratively with the MCBHC Housing Coordinator. The Housing Management Agency may form multi-agency partnerships to carry out the goals and objectives of the program; however, the Housing Management Agency must serve as the single agency interfacing with the MCBHC to develop, implement and administer the programs.

Master Leasing Program

Under “master leasing” a nonprofit or public agency leases multiple units of housing from a landlord(s) and subleases the units to low-income tenants who meet eligibility criteria. The landlord receives a certain monthly payment whether or not the units are occupied. The Master Leasing Program will support the creation of housing options through the acquirement of safe, affordable, and accessible housing units in Mercer County in order to create permanent

supportive housing targeted for these high priority individuals. These housing units will range from single to double or family living arrangements and will be integrated into the community. The goal of MCHBC's Master Leasing Program is to assist individuals in the target population to secure and retain safe, affordable, accessible, recovery-based housing.

The Housing Management Agency will be responsible for working with landlords on the Master Leasing arrangements and will hold the lease with a landlord or property owner. The MCBHC will determine the target population and eligibility criteria for prioritizing applicant selection and will provide funds for payment for a security deposit and a portion of the rental payment. Tenants will not pay more than 30% of their income toward their rent and utilities. The Housing Management Agency will encourage landlords/owners to establish leases in the individual's name for those who have been meeting their lease obligations.

Any housing unit in which a Master Leasing tenant resides, regardless of the property owner, should be inspected before the tenant moves in and at least once a year while the tenant lives in the unit using Housing Quality Standards (HQS).

Bridge Subsidy Program

The primary purpose of bridge subsidies is to immediately provide permanent supportive housing for priority consumers while creating a structured link to a more permanent subsidy through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. A Bridge Subsidy Program provides temporary, tenant-based rental assistance until a person receives a Section 8 or other type of rental subsidy or has obtained access to a subsidized unit. At time of entry into a Bridge Subsidy Program, the participant is required to apply for Section 8 assistance at the first available opportunity. The participant holds the lease to the unit and is responsible for all contractual obligations to the landlord in order to maintain the unit. Bridge Subsidies can only be used for rental costs (that are typically at or below the area's Fair Market Rent) and are paid directly to the landlord of the unit on behalf of the tenant. Typically, tenants pay 30% of their income toward rent, and the subsidy pays the remainder up to the Fair Market Rent Value, as calculated by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Bridge Subsidy Program is intended to be short-term although due to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher list being currently closed in Mercer County, it is likely that it may take several years for a Bridge Subsidy participant to obtain a voucher.

This Request for Proposal process (RFP) is seeking to identify an agency that has experience in developing, managing and administering property and permanent supportive housing units. All these developed housing options will be geographically located in Mercer County and the identified management agency will not collect more than 30% of a renter's income for rental costs. The developed housing options must be integrated in the community, close to transportation and meet the HUD required standards with monthly leases within HUD rental costs. If the units under Master Leasing are in a single building, they must meet OMHSAS's integration requirements: for buildings with nine (9) or fewer units, no more than 50% of the units can be permanent supportive housing. For buildings with ten (10) or more units, no more than 25% of the units can be designated as permanent supportive housing.

There will be no requirement for individuals residing in these units or receiving bridge subsidy to receive any type of service in order to secure or retain housing in these apartments, although services such as Blended Case Management, peer support, D&A Case Management, certified

recovery specialist, ID Supports Coordinators, mental health treatment, and substance abuse treatment options will be available through the MCHBC and various local community service providers.

The Housing Management Agency will have the necessary background and experience in managing a Master Leasing and Bridge Subsidy Program. For the Master Lease Program, the Housing Management Agency will develop policies and procedures on the process for tenants to access the units, standards for tenants, and notification expectations of tenant rights and appeal processes. For the Bridge Subsidy Program, the Housing Management Agency will develop standardized policies and procedures outlining at minimum how the programs will be administered, expectations and limitations on distribution of funds, facilitate the movement of participants to the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, etc.

TARGET POPULATION

The target population for these programs must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Be MA eligible at the time of distribution of funds
- 2) Be a resident of Mercer County
- 3) Be 18 years or older
- 4) Have a documented mental health and/or substance abuse disorder, or have a co-occurring mental health/intellectually disability (can be evidenced through a diagnosis, dual diagnosis or history of treatment)
- 5) Use the intended funding to help with housing in Mercer County through an approved Master Leasing unit or payment of rent through the Bridge Subsidy program

Resources will be targeted and prioritized to serve individuals that are most in need of long-term housing assistance so they can regain stability in their life.

SECTION 2 – HOUSING MANAGEMENT AGENCY

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Housing Management Agency shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Work with the MCBHC to establish program standards, requirements, and measurable performance goals and outcomes;
2. Collaborate with MCBHC Housing Coordinator and other community agencies providing supports for the tenants of the Master Leasing units and Bridge Subsidy participants;

3. The Housing Management Agency will provide general rental assistance to approved individuals of the Master Leasing and Bridge Subsidy Programs. This may include housing payments paid on behalf of the client for:
 - a. Rental costs
 - b. Security deposits
 - c. Utilities
4. Develop an individualized long-term lease plan for each tenant that will result in the tenant establishing the lease in their own name. This will include identification of what costs will be covered, for how long, and what contribution will be required by the tenant. Tenants will not pay more than 30% of their adjusted gross income for tenant rent including an allowance for any tenant paid utilities;
5. Coordinate property inspections. Any housing unit in which a Master Leasing tenant or Bridge Subsidy participant resides, regardless of the property owner, should be inspected before the tenant moves in and at least once a year while the tenant lives in the unit using Housing Quality Standards (HQS);
6. Ensure compliance with OMHSAS' integration requirements for Master Leasing Program: for buildings with nine (9) or fewer units, no more than 50% of the units can be Permanent Supportive Housing. For buildings/developments with ten (10) or more units, no more than 25% of the units can be designated as Permanent Supportive Housing;
7. Develop a working list of area landlords interested in partnering with the Housing Management Agency for purposes of the MCBHC Master Leasing Program;
8. Work with landlords to identify appropriate housing units for accepted program clients. This should include assuring that all accepted Master Leasing and Bridge Subsidy units meet HQS standards, local state and federal government laws and regulations governing building code, fire code, handicap access and health and safety;
9. Develop and execute a standardized rental lease with landlords on behalf of program clients for the Master Leasing Program:
 - a. Ensure that the Master Lease meets local tenant landlord law.
10. Develop and execute a standardized sub-lease with program clients for the Master Leasing Program:
 - a. Develop a timeframe for lease, customized to client needs that is within the timeframe of the funding period of June 30, 2018 through July 1, 2020.
 - b. Develop a tolerance policy that identifies what would cause individual to be removed from program.
 - c. Set an inspection schedule within each lease arrangement. This should include move-in, move-out and periodic monitoring.

17. Evaluate the effectiveness of program services and outcomes;
18. Evaluate landlord compliance with program policies and procedures; and
19. Protect the client's confidentiality.

SERVICE OBJECTIVES

- Increase the availability and access to housing options that are safe, integrated, affordable and accessible for the target population;
- Develop ongoing professional collaborations and build strong alliances through service and treatment agencies, community supports and collateral organizations to support these individuals.
- Establish rental independence by the targeted population to achieve housing stability.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

The Housing Management Agency shall be responsible for reporting to the MCBHC Housing Coordinator how each program is achieving its identified goals and measurable outcomes. This will include providing quarterly reports to the MCBHC to assist with monitoring this program.

The Housing Management Agency shall maintain books, records, documents and other evidence pertaining to costs and expenses in accordance with program requirements.

The Housing Management Agency must maintain client records for each tenant in a manner that ensures and protects confidentiality.

PROGRAM BUDGET

The term of the funding period is July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2020. The budget for the first fiscal year July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019 is as follows:

Master Leasing Program	\$110,000
Bridge Subsidy Program	\$ 79,000

The budget for the second fiscal year July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020 is anticipated to be the same.

Staffing is not included in the above budget amounts. A separate budget proposal for staffing costs must be submitted.

The MCBHC reserves the right to make revisions to the budget allocations between each program due to changes in program demands.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

All applicants must meet the following minimum qualifications to be considered as a qualified bidder:

1. Must have the necessary background and experience to develop and manage these housing options for the target population.

Additional Preferred Qualifications:

1. Have experience in managing housing opportunities for this target population;
2. Have experience building collaborative relationships with other human service agencies, as well as knowledge of other community support resources for this target population;
3. The applicant agency should be recovery-focused, providing a safe and healthy housing environment for individuals seeking long-term recovery.

SECTION 3 – PROPOSAL SOLICITATION

INTENT

It is the intent of the MCBHC to solicit proposals with the intention of executing a contract. This notwithstanding, any proposal shall be submitted with the following expressed understanding:

- This Request for Proposal (RFP) is not subject to the competitive bidding process and any contract entered into as a result of any proposal will not be based on the concept of the “lowest cost applicant;”
- The MCHBC has the right to reject any and all proposals at any time during the process;
- The MCBHC may modify the selection process or the scope of the project or the required responses at any time;
- All costs of developing proposals and any subsequent expenses relating to contract negotiations are entirely the responsibility of the applicant and may not be charged to the MCBHC.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

Applicants whose proposals are selected will be notified in writing as to their selection. Applicants whose proposals are not selected will also be notified in writing by MCBHC.

Applicants responding to this RFP will not receive any feedback on the quality of their responses or the selection process.

PROPOSAL TIMEFRAMES

ACTION	DATE
RFP RELEASED:	May 16, 2018
PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING: <i>(To address questions regarding this RFP – Questions should be submitted in writing to Sharronda Faber, Housing Coordinator, at sharronda.faber@mcbhc.org prior to the meeting.)</i>	May 22, 2018 2:00 p.m.
RFP RESPONSES DUE:	June 8, 2018
AWARD DATE:	June 15, 2018
ANTICIPATED START DATE OF PROGRAM:	July 10, 2018

There is no commitment by the MCBHC on anything beyond what is directly stated in this RFP.

SECTION 4 – RFP SUBMISSION

DIRECTIONS

1. Be sure the agency meets the minimum qualifications prior to completing your response;
2. Respond to the questions in the sequence that they appear in the RFP and as completely as possible within the limits set forth in each question;
3. All responses must be typed using Times New Roman 12-point font;
4. All RFP's must be submitted in two (2) formats:
 - Electronically via email to:
Sharronda Faber, Housing Coordinator
[**sharronda.faber@mcbhc.org**](mailto:sharronda.faber@mcbhc.org)
 - Five (5) unbound original proposals submitted to:
Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission
8406 Sharon Mercer Rd.
Mercer, PA 16137
Attention: Housing Committee
5. Respondents must submit a cover letter signed by an authorized representative of the entity. The cover letter must include the following:
 - A statement of agency interest in this project and agency understanding of proposed scope of services and how the agency's proposed planning and development strategy will achieve program objectives;
 - The identification of the primary contact person and principal authorized to sign documents on behalf of the agency. Indicate the name, address and telephone number(s); and
 - Identify the legal name of the entity, its headquarters address, and its principal place of business.

OUTLINE FOR SUBMISSION – RFP QUESTIONS

Please provide the following information regarding the agency's interest in the project and ability to develop and provide these housing units for individuals within the target population.

1. Please describe in detail the agency's background, experience and present activity as well as the philosophy of the organization. This should include documentation of the agency's financial stability which will enable the agency to successfully provide and manage the proposed housing units for the targeted population. (15 points – 2 pages maximum).
2. Describe how the agency will collaborate and coordinate with the MCBHC (the Lead Agency on the Project) and its Housing Coordinator. Describe how the agency will collaborate with other community support agencies to help ensure long term stability in these apartments for the targeted population (10 points – 1 page maximum).
3. Provide a scope of work that describes what the agency's approach will be for developing the Master Leasing and Bridge Subsidy Programs; how the agency will organize and manage the programs; and information regarding the approach to resident involvement and methods for achieving long-term sustainability within the funding period (15 points – 2 pages maximum).
4. Provide a detailed progressive description of the project's implementation, including a clear timeline for the project, with an expected start date as well as dates for each developmental step for the program's initiation and operation. The description should include the program's goals and objectives and detailed deliverables. Include the projected numbers of proposed units and estimated number of individuals served. (30 points – 4 pages maximum).
5. Provide a full job description of the Housing Management Agency staff performing duties related to this project, as well as required minimum qualifications. Staffing should not exceed .75 FTE, and salary and benefit costs must be included in the projected budget submitted in Question 6 (10 points – 2 pages maximum).
6. Provide a comprehensive budget for each of the two fiscal years (July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019 and July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020). The budget needs to include costs for designated staffing for this project which details wages, benefits, and other operating expenses. In addition, this budget should reflect separate appropriations designated for the Master Leasing Program and the Bridge Subsidy Program. A narrative which explains how the costs were derived and the detailed business plan for financing the proposal must also be provided. Ideas for financial sustainability should be included in the narrative. (15 points – 4 pages maximum).
7. Attach any letters of support from other agencies or individuals that may demonstrate the agency's experience and background with providing housing opportunities for this target population (5 points – no maximum).

Total points possible: 100