



## REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

### LEAD AGENCY FOR YOUTH HOMELESSNESS DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

The Grand Rapids Area Coalition to End Homelessness seeks statements of qualifications from interested entities to coordinate and lead the local effort to end youth homelessness in collaboration with the Coalition and other stakeholders. The selected organization will be identified as the lead agency on the Coalition's application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the [Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program \(YHDP\)](#) funding opportunity.

#### **Purpose of this Request**

The Grand Rapids/Wyoming/Kent County Continuum of Care, also known as the Grand Rapids Area Coalition to End Homelessness, seeks to ensure the opportunity to lead the community in its planning efforts to end youth homelessness is made available to any interested parties. The YHDP funding opportunity is known to be highly competitive. The Coalition seeks to improve the score received in the first three rounds of competition and to submit an application that may be selected for funding.

#### **Intended Recipients of this Request**

Housing/service providers with experience serving homeless youth or agencies with experience in community planning and leading collaborative efforts.

#### **Potential Funding**

The lead organization may be eligible for HUD Planning Grant funding if the community is selected by HUD as an YHDP participating community.

#### **Application and Review Process**

Agencies intending to apply must submit an email to [cmyers-keaton@hwmuw.org](mailto:cmyers-keaton@hwmuw.org) by noon on Monday, June 14, 2021 to notify of intent.

Responses to this Request for Qualifications must be received by **noon, Wednesday, June 16, 2021.**

Responses will be evaluated by the CoC's Funding Review Committee and approved by the Steering Council. Upon approval, the Lead Agency will be notified immediately of its selection.

## Scope of Lead Agency Role

The selected Lead Agency shall lead the local effort to end youth homelessness in collaboration with the Coalition and other stakeholders. Specifically, the Lead Agency shall coordinate the development of a collaborative Coordinated Community Plan to end youth homelessness with the intent to seek HUD approval of the plan, post-award, if selected to receive a YHDP grant. Communities will have a total of 6 months to submit a Coordinated Community Plan after announcement of the selected communities.

HUD expects the following principles to be integrated in the Coordinated Community Plan, such as in the action steps or the project listings:

- **U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) Youth Framework and the Four Core Outcomes.** USICH coordinates the federal response to homelessness and creating a national partnership at every level of government and with the private sector to reduce and end homelessness. The coordinated community plan must demonstrate a commitment to the principles of the USICH Youth Framework to End Youth Homelessness published in 2012 and to its four core outcomes:
  - Stable housing includes a safe and reliable place to call home;
  - Permanent connections include ongoing attachments to families, communities, schools, and other positive social networks;
  - Education/employment includes high performance in and completion of educational and training activities, especially for younger youth, and starting and maintaining adequate and stable employment, particularly for older youth; and
  - Social-emotional well-being includes the development of key competencies, attitudes, and behaviors that equip a young person to succeed across multiple domains of daily life, including school, work, relationships, and community.
- **Special Populations.** USICH, in partnership with its member agencies, has identified several special populations of youth experiencing homelessness that are particularly vulnerable in how they experience homelessness, as well as their pathways in and out of homelessness, in ways that are distinct from the general population of youth. For these particularly vulnerable and often overrepresented young people, there is a need for identification and engagement strategies, infrastructure considerations, and housing and service-delivery approaches that are responsive to their specific needs. The coordinated community plan must identify and address the local impact of homelessness on these special populations and address how the community will meet the needs of youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ); youth who are gender-non-conforming; minors (under the age of 18); youth involved with juvenile justice and child welfare systems; and victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation.
- **Equity:** Research has found significant racial and ethnic disparities in rates of homelessness. Specifically, Black, Indigenous, Hispanic (non-white), and LGBTQ youth experience homelessness at disproportionately higher rates. Community efforts to prevent and end homelessness should consider and address racial inequities to successfully achieve positive outcomes for all persons experiencing homelessness. The Coordinated Community Plan must address how the community is measuring and considering racial inequities and other disparities in the risks for, and experiences of homelessness in the community, consistent with fair housing and civil rights requirements.

- **Positive Youth Development (PYD) and Trauma Informed Care (TIC).** Both PYD and TIC are accepted best practices in housing and service delivery for youth and include principles and service frameworks. The coordinated community plan must address how PYD and TIC will be incorporated into all aspects of the youth crisis response system, including at the system and project levels.
- **Family engagement.** HUD believes that the best diversion and intervention strategy is to engage families, whenever appropriate, through community partnerships with organizations such as child welfare agencies, schools, youth providers, and other community human services and homeless services providers. The Coordinated Community Plan must address family engagement strategies and services designed to strengthen, stabilize, and reunify families. Potential services include family counseling, conflict resolution, parenting supports, relative or kinship caregiver resources, targeted substance abuse and mental health treatment, etc.
- **Housing First:** Housing is a cornerstone for meeting a multitude of basic needs necessary for success. Young people should be provided with rapid access to safe, secure, and stable housing that meets their needs as quickly as possible, without the condition that they are 'ready' for housing. The coordinated community plan must address how all youth will be offered immediate access to safe, secure, and stable housing with no preconditions.
- **Unsheltered homelessness:** HUD estimates that 50% of youth experiencing homelessness are unsheltered. The Coordinated Community Plan must address how the projects will address and decrease unsheltered youth homelessness in the community.
- **Youth choice:** The capacity for self-determination may be a critical factor in obtaining many positive outcomes for Transition Age Youth, and is closely related to the principles of PYD. Consistent with federal youth policy, allowing youth to exercise self-determination is a youth centered approach that values youths' expressed needs, self-awareness, and community knowledge. This youth centered approach emphasizes youth choice in terms of the kind of housing youth need and the extent and nature of supports and services they access and presents alternative options for youth who avoid programs with barriers like sobriety or abstinence. The coordinated community plan must address how youth choice will be integrated into all aspects of the youth crisis response system.
- **Individualized and client-driven supports:** The Coordinated Community Plan must acknowledge that the needs of the young people to be served will be unique. Housing and support packages that help prevent and end homelessness among youth must recognize and respond to individual differences across individuals to serve them appropriately and efficiently. Communities must design the system flexibly to accommodate individuals with both high and low service needs, as well as the need for short-term or long-term supports. The coordinated community plan must address how the youth crisis response system will provide individualized and client-driven supports.
- **Social and community integration:** The goal of youth homelessness services should be a successful transition to adulthood, including the successful integration into a community as a positive contributing community member. To accomplish this requires the community to provide socially supportive engagement and the opportunity for youth to participate in meaningful community activities.

- **Coordinated entry:** Coordinated entry processes are necessary components of a high functioning crisis response system and must be developed intentionally to incorporate youth. The Coordinated Community Plan must address how the CoC will ensure that the coordinated entry process is youth-appropriate.

### **Threshold Requirements of Lead Agency**

The selected lead agency will be required to meet all statutory and regulatory requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and 24 CFR part 578, as referenced in Appendix A. The agency must also have the capacity to manage finances in compliance with HUD funding requirements if a planning grant is awarded to the lead agency. Refer to [Appendix A](#) of the YHDP Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for additional information.

### **How to Apply**

Responses must include the following information:

- i. Organization Name
- ii. Describe organizational structure and financial resource/staff capacity to support the development of a Coordinated Community Plan to prevent and end youth homelessness as outlined in the YHDP NOFO. Provide the name and title of the person that will serve as the main point of contact if selected as lead agency.
- iii. Describe the organization's financial capacity to support a planning grant, including the ability to provide matching funds of 25%, as required by HUD, if the lead agency applies for planning grant dollars.
- iv. Describe the organization's plan, ability, and experience to build collaboration among partners and facilitate community-wide conversations regarding youth homelessness.
- v. Describe the organization's experience with and ability to support/achieve the HUD principles outlined above that are to be incorporated in the Coordinated Community Plan. Include reference to all principles.
- vi. Provide the organization's history of involvement with the CoC's Youth Committee and Youth Action Board. If there has been little or no previous involvement, describe ability to become involved and actively engaged in those spaces
- vii. Describe how the organization will partner with the CoC and its Youth Action Board and Youth Committee to prepare and submit both the application to the NOFO and the Coordinated Community Plan, if selected as a YHDP recipient. Refer to the [CoC's Governance Charter](#) for additional information.
- viii. Describe the organization's experience with and approach to conflict resolution and ability to navigate and/or facilitate potentially difficult conversations among partner agencies.
- ix. Describe experience with youth homelessness in the community.

### **Directions for Submission**

Responses shall be sent as high importance to [cmyers-keaton@hwmuw.org](mailto:cmyers-keaton@hwmuw.org) by noon, Wednesday, June 16, 2021 with subject line, "YHDP Lead Agency Proposal."

## Questions

Contact Courtney Myers-Keaton at [cmyers-keaton@hwmuw.org](mailto:cmyers-keaton@hwmuw.org). Please note questions received after 5 p.m. on Tuesday, June 15, 2021 may not receive a response prior to the submission deadline.