

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

## **Housing Navigator**



DELAWARE COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has a county administered and state supervised child welfare system. Children and Youth Services of Delaware County is the County office responsible for the investigation of allegations of child abuse and neglect. Children and Youth Services ensures the immediate safety and protection of children. The agency makes all reasonable efforts to provide services to children in their homes and communities and to enhance the family's capacity to provide for their children's educational, physical and behavioral health needs.

In addition, Delaware County Children and Youth Services is mandated by law to provide an array of Independent Living Services to youth between the ages of 14 and their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday who have experienced out of home care that was provided by the child welfare agency. Specially, the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Fostering Connections) requires that the youth present an approved transition plan to the court 90 days prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and prior to their discharge from care. The process of securing safe, stable and affordable housing for older youth is a priority of the Independent Living Program. The addition of a Housing Navigator service will provide youth with additional supportive services as they transition from the child welfare system towards self-sufficiency.

## **PROJECT GOALS**

Children and Youth Services of Delaware County has funding to provide Housing Navigator services to Independent Living eligible older youth through the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program Grant. This funding will be used for practices and programs that will increase the number of older youths transitioning from the Child Welfare System to secure and maintain a safe, affordable, and permanent housing unit.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

Delaware County Children and Youth Services is requesting proposals for the provision of Housing Navigator Services for older youth. The identified population for this proposal is older youth between eighteen and twenty-three years of age. These youth have been determined to be eligible to receive supportive services through the Delaware County Children and Youth Services Independent Living Program. The eligibility age for these services was extended to age twenty-three as per provisions of the Family First Prevention Services Act.

In the proposal, the provider should consider a model that will assist this population to overcome barriers faced as they secure a safe and affordable housing unit. i.e.: their age, limited/lack of employment history, income level, credit/lack of history, etc.

Preference will be given to proposals that use a promising, supported or well supported evidence-based model.

The Housing Navigator should establish a strong collaborative relationship with the youth, the youth's identified support person/s, Delaware County Children and Youth Services Independent Living program staff, private rental market landlords within Delaware County and surrounding communities, Delaware County Housing Authority, Chester Housing Authority, Delaware County Continuum of Care providers, Delaware County Office of Behavioral Health, Delaware County Office of Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities programs if the individual youth is deemed eligible for services and all other identified community resource staff involved with each youth.

Referrals for Housing Navigation Service will come directly from Delaware County Children and Youth Services Independent Living Program supervisor. If a youth presents themselves at an outside agency the Independent Living supervisor will coordinate with that agency to determine eligibility of youth for the Housing Navigator Service.

The provider for the Housing Navigator Services will need to conduct quarterly housing meetings with representatives from Delaware County Children and Youth Services and based on need, additional identified community resource staff from i.e.: Continuum of Care, Offices of Behavioral Health and Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities and the housing authorities. The goal of these meetings will be to identify needs, barriers to services, and trends in Housing Navigator referrals.

Housing Navigator Service should be time limited (six to nine months) and intensive with a strong youth advocacy and education component. The services should address the following essential components: Housing Search, Housing Placement, Housing Education (Prepared Renter Education Program curriculum) and Housing Maintenance. These services should include frequent collaboration with the youth, landlord and youth's identified support person. The Housing Navigator should participate in case planning meetings when needed, to support the youth's housing goals as outlined in the youth's Independent Living Plan.

**Housing Search:** The Housing Navigator should conduct an assessment for each youth referred to the service. This assessment should identify potential barriers (credit, utility arrears, forensic, etc.) to housing placement. The Housing Navigator will notify the Children and Youth Services Independent Living Services supervisor of any identified barriers in order to create a plan to address the needs of the youth. In addition, the Housing Navigator should conduct a housing preference assessment to determine wants and needs of the referred youth, desired location and important amenities, etc. The Housing Navigator should develop a housing search plan and establish a timeline. Additional tasks during the Housing Search component should include but not be limited to: assisting with completion of all required documents, secure move-in funding, serve as youth's liaison, and establish and maintain communication with all involved parties, provide transportation for youth, conduct required housing inspections.

**Housing Placement:** once youth secures a housing unit the Housing Navigator should assist with turning on utilities, referrals to additional community resources, creating and

encourage utilization of monthly budget in order to maintain housing. If needed, establishing payment plan for past debts. Assist with identifying community resources to assist with initial household furnishings and items.

**Housing Education:** Housing Navigator should apply knowledge of residential lease contracts to educate youth on their rights and responsibilities as tenants. Refer the youth to Prepared Renter Education Program curriculum training if possible. Provide guidance on how to be a responsible member of the community. Provide support for the youth's plan to achieve self-sufficiency, encourage youth's active engagement with all their informal and formal support systems.

**Housing Maintenance:** Housing Navigator should continue to serve as the youth's mediator and advocate with the landlord to establish a safety net of support for the youth once the youth is placed into a housing unit. Housing Navigator should conduct a minimum of four monthly home visits in order to ensure a stable transition and integration within their community. Provide continued housing education through Prepared Renter Education Program curriculum training for post housed tenants.

**Other:** Housing Navigator should have an established case management tracking system to document progress toward housing placement. Submission of monthly, quarterly, and annual reports to the Children and Youth Services office. Develop, maintain and share data base network of landlords/available units that are willing to work with older youth.

The Housing Navigator provider can anticipate an average of 15 referrals that are opened for service during one fiscal year. It is anticipated that the number of referrals will incrementally increase once the program is fully implemented. There will likely be additional referrals that will not open due to youth refusal, relocation of the youth, or need for a different service. The Housing Navigator will attempt to engage youth to set initial face-to-face contact. If the Housing Navigator is unable to contact youth within two weeks of the referral the Housing Navigator will notify the Independent Living supervisor to discuss status of the referral. The length of service will vary based on the needs of the individual youth. All referrals will be initiated from Delaware County Children and Youth Services. The Housing Navigator service provider will maintain a wait list for youth to receive services and will establish criteria, in conjunction with Children and Youth Services, to prioritize referrals to ensure youth with the greatest level of need have timely access to services. Due to the funding stream, youth referred to the Housing Navigator service will be receiving services through Children and Youth Services Independent Living Program. If youth is a parenting youth it is possible that they may be open with the in-home services department within Delaware County Children and Youth Services, therefore youth will have an assigned Independent Living and/or Children and Youth Services caseworker. The Housing Navigator service provider shall conduct monthly team conferences with the youth and assigned Independent Living/Children and Youth Services caseworker. The Housing Navigator

service provider shall provide monthly written reports of these conferences to the agency.

Housing Navigation service should have clear definitions to define successful case closure. If successful case closure is not possible and housing has not been secured, the provider must work with Children and Youth Services to determine what ongoing services will be needed for the youth. The provider shall meet with Children and Youth Services personnel a minimum of quarterly to review service delivery and referral patterns. The provider should also establish a system for three, six and nine-month follow-up meeting following case closure to look at longer term outcomes.

## **BUDGET**

The Housing Navigator service is funded through Chafee Foster Care Independence Program Grant, awarded to the Children and Youth Services of Delaware County with funding requested through the annual Needs Based Plan and Budget process. The funding is a combination of federal, state and local funds.

## **PROPOSAL TIMELINE**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Date</b>
Release of Request for Proposal	November 19, 2020
Applicant Questions Due Address Questions to: Kelly Wiltsie <a href="mailto:humanservices@delcohsa.org">humanservices@delcohsa.org</a>	December 3, 2020 by 12:00 Noon E.S.T.
Proposals Due	December 10, 2020
Proposal Review Dates	December 17-31, 2020
Applicant Selection Date	January 4, 2021

## **TIME AND PLACE OF SUBMISSIONS**

The Request for Proposal will be posted on the County and Department of Human Services websites, [www.delcopa.gov](http://www.delcopa.gov)/[www.delcohsa.org](http://www.delcohsa.org) and can be downloaded from there directly as of November 19, 2020.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

The County reserves the right to disqualify any proposals received after the specified date/time and not completed in the indicated format and inclusive of all required information.

Respondents to the Request for Proposal must submit three complete sets; one original, marked 'ORIGINAL' and two copies marked 'COPY'. The copies must contain **NO** provider identifiers, those that do will not be considered.

SEALED proposals, in one unmarked envelope clearly indicating "RFP submission", will be received on or before **4:00 PM Eastern Standard Time, December 10, 2020** in the

office of Delaware County Human Services, 20 South 69<sup>th</sup> Street, Upper Darby, PA 19082. Late submissions will not be considered.

Submissions shall be sent or hand delivered to the below issuing officer:

Kelly M. Wiltsie  
Delaware County Human Services  
20 South 69<sup>th</sup> Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Upper Darby, PA 19082

Submissions must include the following separate documents:

- Technical Proposal
- Cost Proposal
- Transmittal Letter signed by an official who has the legal authority to bind the company to the terms of the proposal.

All costs of developing the proposal and any subsequent expenses related to contract negotiations are entirely the responsibility of the applicant.

The County reserves the right to conduct Best and Final negotiations in its sole discretion.

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS**

1. Proposals should be submitted with the following understanding:
  - a. This Request for Proposal 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 responsible applicant.”
  - b. The County may modify the selection process, the scope of the project or the required responses.
2. The County will select finalists with whom they will begin the interview and selection process prior to contract negotiations.
3. The following links are provided as resources that may be helpful in the preparation of proposals:
  - California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare registry at: <http://www.cebc4cw.org/>.
  - Penn State University Evidence-Based Prevention and Information Support (EPIS) Center - <http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/ebp>
  - What Works Clearinghouse - <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>
  - Family Resource Information, Education, and Network Development Service (FRIENDS) National Resource Center – <https://friendsnrc.org/evidence-based-practice-in-cbcap/evidence-based-practice-directory>

#### 4. Issuing Office

The issuing officer is the sole point of contact for this Request for Proposal. Note that, following the release of this Request for Proposal, all questions should be submitted to the issuing officer in writing or via email to [humanservices@delcohsa.org](mailto:humanservices@delcohsa.org) by the indicated date as outlined in the Proposal Timeline, all correspondences must include “Housing Navigator – RFP” in the subject line. Submitted questions and answers will be posted on the County and Department of Human Services websites, after the Applicant Questions Due Date outlined in the Proposal Timeline.

#### 5. Contract

The successful applicant will be expected to enter into an agreement with Delaware County, subject to the availability of local, state and federal funds and County Council’s approval.

i. The successful applicant must comply with the following contract appendices, attached.

1. Appendix F – Insurance
2. Appendix U – Audit Requirements
3. Appendix AA – Invoice Submission Requirements
4. Appendix CC – HIPAA Business Associate Agreement
5. Appendix EE – Child Protective Services Law

#### 6. Rejection of Proposals

Delaware County Council reserves the right to reject any and all responses or parts thereof and to determine whether the quality and type of service to be furnished meets the requirements for which it is intended. They further reserve the right to insist or waive any technicalities required for the best interest of the County and to consider competency and responsibility of the bidder before the award of the contract. Also, the County may negotiate separately with competing applicants in an effort to get a Best and Final Offer. If all proposals are unacceptable, the County reserves the right to reject the proposals and to issue a new RFP, if indicated.

#### 7. Amendments to Request for Proposal

If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this Request for Proposal, the County will issue an Amendment to all applicants who responded and post on the County and Department of Human Services websites, [www.delcopa.gov](http://www.delcopa.gov)/[www.delcohsa.org](http://www.delcohsa.org).

## **ELEMENTS OF PROPOSAL**

1. Technical Proposal – should be no more than 15 pages in length
  - a. Experience and Background Information
    - i. Describe how the addition of this service is consistent with the continuum of services offered by your organization and is consistent with your organization’s mission and vision.
    - ii. Describe your organization’s current level of experience working with public child welfare agencies and other community resources.
    - iii. Describe the governance structure of your organization.
    - iv. Describe your organization’s current system for program and system oversight and quality improvement.
    - v. Describe your organization’s current system for assuring cultural competence.
    - vi. Describe your plan for outreach and engagement of youth and families referred by the child welfare agency.
    - vii. Describe the proposed staffing and staff supervision plan, including job descriptions, supervision requirement and methods of supervision.
  - b. General
    - i. Describe proposed record keeping, to include quarterly statistical reports and tracking of longer-term outcomes.
    - ii. Describe how data will be utilized to track and adjust services based on identified trends and needs.
    - iii. Describe the information technology to be used by the program.
    - iv. Describe the procedure for addressing consumer complaints and grievances.
  
2. Cost Proposal –

The applicant is to complete the Cost Proposal per instructions.

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

A Request for Proposal review committee will score each proposal, using a pre-defined scoring system. Each element of the Request for Proposal will be ranked based on whether all service delivery components are addressed and the degree to which the proposed components achieve project goals.