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**HUD/Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project Round 6**

 **MA-506 Worcester City and County Continuum of Care**

**Requests for Proposals (RFP) for New Project Applications**

**Overview**

The Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance, Inc., Lead Agency of the MA-506 Worcester City and County Continuum of Care, in collaboration with the Worcester County Youth Action Board (YAB) was awarded Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) funding in HUD’s sixth round of YHDP competitions.

YHDP is an initiative designed to prevent and end youth homelessness. The goal of the YHDP is to support selected communities, including rural, suburban, and urban areas across the United States, in the development and implementation of a coordinated community approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness.

**YHDP Vision**

*The vision of the Worcester City and County CoC* *is to ensure all youth and young adults in Worcester County are housed and supported through their transition into adulthood. Our community will continuously work to empower, earn trust, and center the needs and voices of Youth and Young Adults, inclusive of BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and disabled communities.*

*We will erase the red tape, honor autonomy, provide relief and equitable access to*

*quality services and resources, and raise awareness of stigmas and stereotypes*

*that would negatively impact the lives of youth.*

The Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance, Inc., in partnership with the Worcester County Youth Action Board (YAB) is seeking Project proposals from Worcester County providers of services and housing. The Worcester City and County CoC has approximately $1,182,000, per year for each of two years available for two new projects serving Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adults experiencing housing insecurity.

To reflect HUD’s and the CoC’s priority to rapidly rehouse youth experiencing housing insecurity, Project applications must align with YHDP Principles.

**YHDP Principles**

**Youth Voice:** Ensuring the voices of youth and young adults with lived experience root all elements of our plan and its implementation with authentic opportunities for involvement - especially involving young people who are more often marginalized by the dominant culture. Specifically seek input from youth and young adults who identify on the LGBTQIA+ spectrum, have experience in the foster care system, are pregnant or parenting, are immigrant youth, have experience in the juvenile justice system and/or survivors of human trafficking and exploitation. Provide opportunities for on-going involvement for youth and young adults.

**Youth choice:** The capacity for self-determination may be a critical factor in obtaining many positive outcomes for Transition Age Youth,5 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.

**Embracing Respect and Change:** Be willing to listen and learn through this process and foster a culture that embraces change and seizes opportunities to improve our system for youth and young adults.

**Addressing Disparities:** Apply a racial and gender equity lens within the implementation process and actively address implicit bias and racial disparities in Worcester County.

**Data-driven Decision Making:** Utilize data and an active performance management framework to drive all decision making, including investment decisions and tracking progress towards outcomes. Use data to target and prioritize assistance to youth with the greatest needs.

**Housing First** - A foundational principle of the Worcester City and County CoC, Housing First means that assistance and housing are offered to youth and referrals made, including access to intensive, youth-focused case management and services, without preconditions and barriers to entry such as sobriety, criminal background, rental history, credit score or service participation requirements.

Please see RFP Attachment C for Terms and Acronyms relevant to YHDP

Those interested in submitting a New Project Application are strongly encouraged to review the **FY21 Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program FR-6400-N-35.** [FR-6500-N-35 Youth Homeless Demonstration Program FINAL (hud.gov)](https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/CPD/documents/FR-6500-N-35-Youth-Homeless-Demonstration-Program-FINAL.pdf)

**Project Types and Description**

The following two types of new projects will be considered:

**I. Supportive Services Only for Coordinated Entry (SSO-CE)**, $185,000 each year for two years.

Project Description:

Funding for this project will support the hiring of **three** Coordinated Entry Specialists, hired to ensure youth and young adults are connected to housing and supportive services through the Coordinated Entry System. If the youth chooses, specialists will be expected to:

* Engage youth using culturally appropriate, trauma-informed practices to build trust, emphasize autonomy, and communicate support and resources available.
* Identify and triage for crisis needs.
* Assess youth for Coordinated Entry System if immediate need is not resolved.
* Assess housing needs and preferences, including a youth’s interest in shared housing
* Assist youth with collecting and storing identification and housing documents.
* Ensure youth have access to mainstream benefits and resources, such as SNAPS,
* Match, refer and provide youth with a warm handoff to housing and resources in the community.
	+ Resources: transportation, crisis and mental health supports, family mediation and education, financial literacy (reducing debt, saving, investing, understanding credit scores)
* Conduct outreach to youth using multiple, innovative methods to reach as many youths as possible.
* Build and expand existing partnerships with organizations (juvenile justice, parole, schools, etc.) that can identify and connect youth to Coordinated Entry staff, housing, and resources.
* Educate community partners and businesses who interact with youth (hospitals, urgent care clinics, libraries, coffeeshops) on who to contact if they encounter an at-risk or homeless youth, and what resources are available.

Each Coordinated Entry Specialist will be assigned to one of three geographic regions in the CoC. Applicants are encouraged to hire persons with lived experience to staff these positions. This includes youth who are currently enrolled in housing and supportive service programs.

Target number of youth served: 150 annually

Target Populations: Minors and Transitional Aged Youth under 25.

Number of staff: 3

Staff/Client Ratio: 1:50

**II. Permanent Housing-Rapid Rehousing (PH-RRH)**, $997,000 each year for two years.

Project Description:
Funding will support rapid rehousing project(s) that offer time-limited financial assistance (including rental assistance) and a wide variety of permanent housing and supportive services options for youth to choose from. The targeted population is all youth and young adults under 25 experiencing homelessness, but applicants *may also* tailor their program to specific subpopulation.

Project applicants should incorporate the following key characteristics into their proposals:

* Short to medium-term rental assistance (3 to 24 months)
* Extended rental assistance up to 36 months, as needed (pending approval from HUD)
* Two lease structure options to meet the specific needs of each participant:
	+ Lease between the participant and property owner (using tenant-based rental assistance)
	+ Lease in the name of a sponsor agency, recipient, or subrecipient which then subleases to participant (using leasing or sponsor-based rental assistance) in circumstances where the participant has high tenant screening barriers preventing them from obtaining housing
* Shared housing when participants are interested in having roommates
* Staffing models that include staff specialized in landlord engagement and housing search, case management, peer supports, and grant management/administration.
* Participant-driven, individualized financial assistance and services, outlined in the Key Service section below.

Applicants are encouraged to hire persons with lived experience and peers who have specialized expertise with historically underserved populations like LGBTQ+ identifying young people. All staff should be trained on trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, implicit bias, anti-racism and anti-adultism.

Key Services

Upon receipt of referral, project staff will provide youth with optional, individualized support including:

* Searching for and identifying different accessible/suitable permanent housing options (e.g., including roommates) available.
* Navigate application process, leasing signing and move in
* Rental assistance
* Case management
* Peer support
* Tenant’s education (tenants’ rights, understanding leases, etc.)
* Life skills support (tailored to various neuro-types) – including activities associated with daily living, money management, health management
* Financial assistance until they find stability.
	+ **Examples of financial assistance:** rental assistance, moving costs, first/last security deposit, furniture, household items, transportation, car maintenance/gas, childcare, job training fees, utility deposits, internet, food, healthcare co-pays, cell phones, education costs, vital documents, legal fees
* Connections to community support: substance abuse treatment (e.g., peer recovery coaches, affordable mental health clinics, mainstream benefits, FAFSA navigation, furniture banks, food pantries, clothing, fuel assistance, affordable mental health care clinics, tax filing support.

Target number of youth served: 60 annually

Target Populations: Youth and young adults under the age of 25

Number of staff: at least 4 staff

Staff/Client Ratio: 1:15 at a given time

Target Number of Housing Units: 44

**Grant Terms:** All project applications are for a two-year grant term with the possibility of renewal as part of the annual CoC competition.

**YHDP Waivers**

To encourage innovation, HUD encourages the CoC to seek alternative requirements (“waivers”) of existing regulations that were justified to make a project more responsive to the needs of the target population and community. Project applicants may request any alternative requirements they believe will enhance their project. Alternative requirements may not be approved prior to project implementation; therefore, applicants must be able to implement their project without waivers. **Considerations**

* Applicants may apply to multiple projects. Those who are applying for multiple project types need to submit applications for each project.
* Funding allocations are estimated and subject to change based on the proposals received
* Project applicants may apply for the total funding allotted for the project type or a portion of it
* Organizations can create partnerships to create joint proposals and operate projects in partnership. For example, in the rapid rehousing project, you may have one organization administer the rental assistance and other organizations provide the services to promote county-wide representation.

**Minimum Requirements**

**Threshold Requirements:** Selected Project applicant(s) will be required to fulfill the following:

1.Project Applicants must be private, not-for-profit, agencies, states, local governments, and instrumentalities of state and local governments. Be located and/or able to provide services within Worcester County and to serve youth and young adults.

2. Agree to work with YHPD Technical Assistance, and utilize the recommendations of YAB and CoC on project design and ongoing improvements to enhance the overall impact of YHDP.

3. Coordinate all program referrals through the Worcester City and County Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry System as defined by the CoC Governance Charter.

4. Agencies are required to participate in HMIS and enter participant data per the HMIS data standards, policies and procedures.

5. Demonstrate experience and capacity serving diverse populations including but not limited to LGBTQ+ youth, youth of color, non-citizen youth, pregnant and parenting youth, etc.

6. Adhere to the principles of Housing First as defined above.

**YHDP Project Application Timeline**

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| May 1- May 26th  | RFP is posted and proposals are collected |
|   | **05/04:** Bidders Conference @ 3-4pm (virtual) **05/05:** Positive Youth Development Training @ 10am**05/18:** Project Selection Committee training**05/26:** RFP is closed  |
| May 27th - June 8th  | Project Selection Committee reviews and selects proposals**06/08:** Project Selection Committee Meeting @ 2:00 |
| June 9th | Selected applicants are notified of awards |
| June 10th - June 30th | Project applications submitted in e-snaps |

**Application Requirements**

**A Completed Application Packet Includes:**

* The Application (RFP Attachment D)
* The applicant’s Housing First Policy and Procedure document
* Verification of non-profit status
* Letter of Match 25% commitment with amount and source of match

**Project Selection Process**

YHDP Project Review and Selection Committee- will evaluate proposals utilizing the Evaluation and Scoring criteria, (RFP Attachment F) and will select the highest-scoring valid proposal for each program type to recommend for funding. The review panel will consist of selected YAB Members and members of the YHDP Planning Committee who are not project applicants. Final project decisions will be made using the panel’s Evaluation and Scoring Criteria ranking. Applicants who do not pass minimum threshold review will not be eligible for consideration.

Project applicants are required to provide notice to Christine O’Connell at coconnell@cmhaonline.org **no later than May 8, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.** of the intent to submit a project application and must include the following information:

1. Name of Entity
2. Name of Project
3. Type of Project
4. Full Contact information of lead staff person who will be completing the application through *eSNAPS*.

Complete project application packets must be submitted to pmunene@cmhaonline.org no later than **May 26, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.**

Selected applicants will be supported to submit the project applications and all required attachments within e-snaps.

A Bidders Conference will be held via Zoom May 4, 2023 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.

**Please see Project Application and Evaluation and Scoring Criteria.**

**Contact Peter Munene at** **pmunene@cmhaonline.org** **for more information.**