REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST (RFI)

Family Stabilization & Housing Support Programs for the Monterey County Department of Social Services

1.0 INTENT

1.1 Monterey County Department of Social Services (DSS) is soliciting Letters of Interest from qualified organizations to provide Housing Support Program and Family Stabilization Program services to CalWORKs families in Monterey County.

1.2 CONTRACTORS may submit a Letter of Interest for one or both programs outlined within this RFI.

1.3 This solicitation is not intended to create an exclusive service AGREEMENT and multiple agreement awards may be made. County retains the ability, at its sole discretion, to add qualified CONTRACTORS at any time.

1.4 Estimated total funds available for both programs is $1,000,000

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Effective January 1, 2014, Family Stabilization (FS) was a new component of the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Program that provides intensive case management and services to clients that meet the criteria set forth in AB 74. FS is designed to ensure a basic level of stability within a family prior to, or concurrently with, participation in Welfare-to-Work (WTW) activities.

2.2 In July 2014, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) received special authority to launch a new Housing Support Program (HSP). Per Senate Bill (SB) 855 (Chapter 29, Statutes of 2014), housing support in the CalWORKs program is necessary to assist families working towards achieving self-sufficiency. Homelessness and housing instability in the CalWORKs program is a challenging problem that impacts children’s well-being and their parents’ ability to engage in employment.

3.0 THIS IS A REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST (RFI) ONLY

3.1 This RFI is being issued solely for information and planning purposes – it does not constitute a Request for Proposal (RFP) or a promise to issue an RFP in the future. This request for letters of interest does not commit the County to contract for any supply or service whatsoever.
Further, the County is not at this time seeking proposals and will not accept unsolicited proposals. Responders are advised that the County will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI; all costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party’s expense.

The Monterey County Contracts/Purchasing Division is acting as the representative for DSS for purposes of this RFI.

Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future RFP, if any is issued. If a solicitation is released, it will be synopsized on the Monterey County Contracts/Purchasing Division Website at: http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/cao/solicitcenter.htm.

It is the responsibility of the potential proposers to monitor this site for additional information pertaining to this requirement.

4.0 PURPOSE OF THIS RFI

The purpose of this RFI is to solicit information from qualified agencies, firms, or corporations, hereinafter referred to as “CONTRACTOR”, who will assist DSS with the implementation of a Family Stabilization and Housing Support Program. DSS is in the beginning stage of developing a draft RFP with the intention of releasing it in the near future. The purpose of the RFP will be to solicit written proposals from qualified consultants capable of developing and implementing a family stabilization and housing support program. In order to fully develop an RFP, DSS needs to have a better understanding of the qualified organizations interested in performing the following:

4.1 Family Stabilization Program - CONTRACTOR shall be responsible for providing housing/shelter expertise, options, and temporary financial assistance (TFA) services to families referred by the Department of Social Services (DSS) Family Stabilization Unit case managers in the following situations:
   4.1.1 Homelessness or imminent risk of homelessness;
   4.1.2 A lack of safety due to domestic violence;
   4.1.3 Emergency shelter; and/or,
   4.1.4 Movement to transitional housing.

4.2 Department of Social Services Responsibilities for Family Stabilization (FS):
The Department of Social Services (DSS) Family Stabilization Unit is responsible for the primary case management services for these cases. CONTRACTOR will be responsible for direct services related to housing for these cases. CONTRACTOR will provide a Housing Specialist and a Housing Case Manager to serve customers referred into the program that require housing services to be successful in the program.
4.2.1 The Housing Specialist shall support families in identifying potential housing units by conducting outreach, recruitment and engagement of new landlords, and an ongoing search for available units. The Housing Specialist shall assist families by identifying, matching, placing, and helping retain housing units. The Housing Specialist shall also conduct the initial inspection of each unit, and the Housing Specialist or Case Manager shall conduct on-going habitability and basic safety inspections of each unit. The Housing Specialist shall identify housing options based on recommendations from the FS Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT).

4.2.2 The Housing Case Manager shall provide support to families with housing specific case management when determined appropriate.

4.2.3 The Housing Specialist and Housing Case Manager shall participate in the FS Program MDT. The MDT consists of DSS staff and several other service providers. As a team, the members of the MDT make determinations regarding services that customers are eligible for, such as TFA, which can include rental assistance, rental deposit, or other services designed to remove barriers to housing. CONTRACTOR shall issue TFA payments to third parties as deemed appropriate and approved by the MDT.

4.3 CONTRACTOR’S Responsibilities for Family Stabilization (FS):

4.3.1 Participate in weekly MDT meetings with DSS/CalWORKs case managers.
4.3.2 Accept DSS/CalWORKs referrals for housing/shelter search and assistance.
4.3.3 Make first appointment with DSS referred customers within three (3) business days of receiving a referral.
4.3.4 Evaluate each referred family and determine housing needs. Housing evaluations shall include:
   4.3.4.1 Financial assessment to determine affordable housing;
   4.3.4.2 Geographic assessment to identify housing in the area of work, school and/or FS support activity locations.
4.3.5 Partner with other Monterey County housing agencies to place customers with extenuating family circumstances in housing units designed to support those circumstances including, but not limited to: Community Homeless Solutions, Pueblo Del Mar, Homeward Bound, and Sun Street Centers.
4.3.6 Provide temporary shelter referrals and TFA to referred families from the date of first contact with CONTRACTOR until their first appointment with CONTRACTOR.
4.3.7 Place DSS referred customers in available, safe and affordable housing efficiently to minimize the number of days a family will experience homelessness.
4.3.8 Document and update a list of available low cost housing units as they become known throughout the areas of Monterey County.
4.3.9 Conduct a visual habitability inspection of the proposed rental unit.
4.3.10 Provide Housing Case Management services as recommended by the MDT.
4.3.11 Provide DSS/CalWORKs with detailed monthly data reports on families associated with the FS program.
4.3.12 Determine eligibility for rental assistance and provide payments directly to third parties on behalf of FS customers.
4.3.13 Ensure that each DSS referred customer pays a portion of the agreed monthly rent amount.

4.4 CONTRACTOR shall administer Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA), calculated per family on an as-needed basis. TFA services include:
   4.4.1 Rental application fee(s)
   4.4.2 Rent arrears (up to three months)
   4.4.3 Credit report(s)
   4.4.4 Moving expenses
   4.4.5 Rental payment(s)
   4.4.6 Security deposit(s)
   4.4.7 Unexpected financial burdens
   4.4.8 Utility deposits
   4.4.9 Utility payments
   4.4.10 Emergency motel/hotel payment

4.5 CONTRACTOR shall have regular communication with the FS program staff at DSS to manage intake and closure process of cases. Cases may contain personally identifiable information (PII) and CONTRACTOR must have resources to transmit information to and from DSS in a secure manner. CONTRACTOR shall also adhere to DSS rules of confidentiality and obtain proper release of information authorization prior to case engagement.

4.6 CONTRACTOR is expected to provide housing services to sixty (60) FS families within the fiscal year. CONTRACTOR shall provide up to six (6) months of TFA per FS family. CONTRACTOR shall have appropriate resources in place to provide FS housing services for as many as thirty (30) FS families monthly.

4.7 Housing Support Program – CONTRACTOR shall be responsible for providing all direct services for cases in the Housing Support Program (HSP). CONTRACTOR shall provide housing/shelter expertise, intensive case management, housing resources and advocacy and issue temporary financial assistance (TFA) to families referred by the Department of Social Services (DSS) for eligible customers who are literally homeless.
   4.7.1 For purposes of the Housing Support Program (HSP), “homeless” is defined as:
       4.7.1.1 Lacking a fixed and regular nighttime residence; or
       4.7.1.2 Having a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publically or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations; or
       4.7.1.3 Residing in a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; or
       4.7.1.4 In receipt of a judgment for eviction, as ordered by a court

4.7.2 CONTRACTOR shall be responsible for all direct HSP services after a family has been identified, approved, and referred into the program by DSS.
4.7.3 CONTRACTOR shall provide at least two (2) Case Managers and one (1) Housing Specialist for this program. Case Managers and Housing Specialists
should be experienced and trained in current best practices of the Housing First Model.

4.7.3.1 Case Managers shall conduct the program intake process, resource assessment, and referrals for job skills training/development. Case Managers shall provide progressive, ongoing case management services, including monthly office visits or home visits, budgeting and money management services and detailed case management with all active clients receiving HSP services. Detailed case management services shall include documented strategies for increasing family income and financial literacy, documented plan for decreasing TFA received over time, and documented goals and progress towards reaching self-sufficiency. Case Managers shall also provide regular advocacy, guidance, and resource support related to maintaining housing stability.

4.7.3.2 A Housing Specialist shall support families in identifying potential housing units by conducting outreach, recruitment and engagement of new landlords, and an ongoing search for available units. The Housing Specialist shall assist families by identifying, matching, placing, and helping retain housing units. The Housing Specialist shall also conduct initial inspection of each unit and the Housing Specialist or Case Manager shall conduct habitability and basic safety inspections of each unit.

4.7.4 CONTRACTOR shall administer Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA), calculated per family on an as-needed basis. TFA services include:
4.7.4.1 Rental application fee(s)
4.7.4.2 Rent arrears (up to three months)
4.7.4.3 Credit report(s)
4.7.4.4 Moving expenses
4.7.4.5 Rental payment(s)
4.7.4.6 Security deposit(s)
4.7.4.7 Unexpected financial burdens
4.7.4.8 Utility deposits
4.7.4.9 Utility payments
4.7.4.10 Emergency motel/hotel payment

4.7.5 CONTRACTOR shall maintain detailed case notes and program data regarding all customers served.
4.7.5.1 CONTRACTOR shall submit this data to DSS on a monthly basis for regular case review and reporting to California Department of Social Services using a data secure method.

4.7.6 CONTRACTOR shall have regular communication with the HSP staff at DSS to manage intake and closure process of cases. Cases may contain personally identifiable information (PII) and CONTRACTOR must have resources to transmit information to and from DSS in a secure manner.
4.7.6.1 CONTRACTOR shall also adhere to DSS rules of confidentiality and obtain proper release of information authorization prior to case engagement.

4.7.7 CONTRACTOR is expected to permanently house forty-eight (48) HSP families within the fiscal year.

4.7.7.1 CONTRACTOR shall have appropriate resources in place to provide HSP services for as many as forty (40) families monthly.

4.8 Funding Allocation

4.8.1 Estimated total funds available for this RFI are $1,000,000 between the two programs.

4.9 Program Outcomes

4.9.1 Outcome measurements for each program will be based on the number of families placed into permanent housing.

4.10 CONTRACTOR shall have the capacity to collect and report detailed case management data to the County on a monthly basis.

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5.0 RFI RESPONSES

5.1 Interested parties are requested to respond to this RFI with a letter of interest and should adhere to the following requirements:

5.1.1 Letters of Interest from prospective agencies should be submitted on a maximum of three (3) pages, single space 8.5x11 papers.

5.1.2 Letter should specify the intent to provide services for the FS Program, HS Program, or both programs.

5.1.3 Letter should express capacity and experience for serving the very low-income and difficult to house community.

5.1.4 Letter should share a brief background on the agency’s services and how it relates to each of the programs, or program, they are interested in serving.

5.1.5 Letter should include proposed service counts for the contractual period for each of the programs, or program, they are proposing to serve.

5.1.6 Letter should confirm capacity to provide all of the services as outlined in Section 4.0, Scope of Work.

5.1.7 Letter should confirm the agency’s capacity to issue financial payments on behalf of the customer to third parties, and submit accurate invoices to DSS for reimbursement.

5.1.8 Letter should confirm the agency’s capacity to document case management services being provided to CalWORKs families.

5.1.9 Letter should address the agency’s capacity to collect and report detailed case management data on a monthly basis.
5.2 Written responses are **due no later than Thursday, June 9, 2016, 3:00PM PST.** Responses shall be submitted via e-mail only to lewellingdl@co.monterey.ca.us. Please be advised that all submissions become DSS property and will not be returned.

6.0 SUMMARY

THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INTEREST (RFI) ONLY to identify sources that can provide FAMILY STABILIZATION & HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMS in accordance with the Scope of Work outlined within Section 4.0. The information provided in the RFI is subject to change and is not binding on the County. The County has not made a commitment to procure any of the items discussed, and release of this RFI should not be construed as such a commitment or as authorization to incur cost for which reimbursement would be required or sought. All submissions become property of DSS and the County of Monterey, and will not be returned.

7.0 POINT OF CONTACT

Questions and correspondence regarding this solicitation shall be directed to:

Primary Contact for the County: **DeAundra Lewelling**  
**Deputy Purchasing Agent**  
1488 Schilling Place  
Salinas, CA 93901  
PHONE: (831) 755-4998  
FAX: (831) 755-4969  
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