

**Metro Regional Project**

**to End Long-Term Homelessness**

Request for Proposals: Welcome Team

**INTRODUCTION**

Hearth Connection is a non-profit organization working to simplify and improve Minnesota’s homelessness response system by providing administrative and funding support to direct service providers, fostering collaborative relationships among government and community stakeholders, and exploring innovative ways to target resources toward identified service gaps across Minnesota. We do this through a variety of initiatives including four Regional Projects across the state, the Minnesota Crisis Housing Fund, Dakota County Housing Search & Stability, and SMAC Coordinated Entry.

Hearth Connection was created in 1999 to operate the Supportive Housing Managed Care Pilot in collaboration with Ramsey County and Blue Earth County. Today, Hearth Connection serves over 2,300 children, adults and youth across 46 Minnesota counties through its four regional projects, special projects, and rental assistance partnerships. The Metro Regional Project works with individuals and families experiencing long-term and/or chronic homelessness across the seven-county Metro area. The Metro Regional Project includes eight mobile teams and nine rental assistance partnerships that currently serve a total of 500 households.

The Metro Regional Project – serving adults without children, families with children, and unaccompanied youth – receives referrals from Coordinated Entry in Hennepin, Ramsey, and the Suburban Metro Area Continuums of Care (CoCs) via Hearth Connection. Hearth Connection is developing a new Welcome Team concept that will work closely with Regional Project mobile teams and rental assistance partnerships receiving referrals.

We are soliciting proposals for 1.0 FTE direct service staff to provide services as described below. Hearth Connection will fund up to $86,000 annually in Long-Term Homeless and/or HUD PSH Supportive Services Funds. Applicant agencies may also incorporate leveraged funds such as Medicaid Housing Consultation Services. Initial contract may start as soon as April 1, 2021 and will be renewed annually based on performance.

**WELCOME TEAM CONCEPT**

Upon referral from Coordinated Entry (CE), the first weeks of service provided by a mobile team focus primarily on outreach, engagement, documentation, and initial assessment. Referred participants may have little to no current connection to shelters, outreach, or other providers so mobile teams must first locate the participant based on information provided in HMIS. In order to utilize HUD CoC PSH programs, participants must be verified and documented as chronically homeless. Funding for services such as Adult Mental Health-Targeted Case Management (TCM) or Medicaid Housing Stabilization Services (HSS) also require specific assessment and documentation before those resources can be utilized as part of mobile team services.

Hearth Connection and our mobile team partners recognize that this initial engagement and assessment of individuals and families currently experiencing homelessness is a specialized skillset and that specialized staff will enable participants to be connected with the mobile team that best meets their needs for housing search and ongoing stability. The Welcome Team will be the first connection for all new participants of the Metro Regional Project mobile teams. They will engage in the following activities:

Outreach & Engagement

* Using information from HMIS, locate and engage the referred participant.
* Meet with the participant to explain the Regional Project and enroll the participant.

Documentation and Assessment

* Work with participant to document their homeless verification and collect third-party verification where possible.
* When appropriate, ensure that participant has a completed Diagnostic Assessment (DA) and/or Professional Statement of Need (PSN) for eligibility for Medicaid-billable services. This may take place within the Welcome Team, within the Welcome Team’s organization, or in partnership with another organization.
* When appropriate, complete an HSS Person-Centered Housing Plan in collaboration with the participant.
* Assess participant needs, desires, and preferences for specialized teams within the Hearth Connection mobile team network.

Transition to a Mobile Team

* Collaborate with Hearth Connection to refer the participant to a mobile team that best meets the participant’s needs and preferences.
* Facilitate a warm hand-off to the mobile team.
* Ensure documentation is shared securely with the mobile team.

The Welcome Team may also assist with obtaining identity documents (state IDs, birth certificates, etc.) and facilitate connections to mainstream benefits, health care, mental health services, legal services, and other resources that will improve the participant’s quality of life and contribute to future housing stability.

All participants in this project will have been identified at assessment as long-term homeless and having multiple barriers to housing stability. Hearth Connection providers must have a strengths-based, consumer-focused Housing First model, emphasizing building trust, using flexibility, creativity and perseverance. They must be trauma-informed and culturally competent. They must be grounded in best practices and promising approaches, including harm reduction and motivational interviewing.

**PROPOSALS**

There will be an information session on Friday, February 19, 2021 at 11am via Zoom (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8281981242>). Applicants will be able to ask specific questions of Hearth Connection concerning this project and this solicitation. The session is not mandatory, but it is recommended.

Subsequent questions may be submitted by email to heather@hearthconnection.org.

Electronic proposals must be received no later than 5pm on Wednesday, March 10, 2021 to:

**Heather Duchscherer, Metro Regional Manager**

**heather@hearthconnection.org**

There is no prescribed page limit, but applicants are asked to keep proposals as concise as possible.

**APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

Completed proposals should consist of the following:

* Application Cover Sheet
* Organization Information
* Organizational Capacity
* Project Narrative
* Applicant Assurances
* Budget and Budget Narrative
* Organization’s Most Recent Audit and Required Management Letter

**SELECTION PROCESS**

Proposals will be reviewed by at least four (4) people, including at least one (1) Hearth Connection staff person and one (1) current contracted mobile team provider.

Proposals will be scored based on the following point system:

* Organization has experience working with individuals and/or families experiencing long-term homelessness and has knowledge of best practices and promising approaches for ending long-term homelessness. (15 points)
* Organization has experience documenting disability, homeless history, and/or chronic homelessness status. (5 points)
* Organization has the capacity to implement and support an effective program including ability to bill for Medicaid Housing Stabilization Services (15 points)
* Organization is willing to participate in anticipated and reasonable unanticipated evaluation, compliance, and continuous quality improvement activities. (10 points)

*Final determination is made by Hearth Connection staff.*

**COVER SHEET**

**Organization Name:**

**Executive Director/President Name:**

Title:

Address:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

**Contact Person for this Application:**

Title:

Address:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

**Federal Employer Identification Number:**

**DUNS Number:**

**ORGANIZATION INFORMATION**

1. Describe your organization’s history and mission.
2. Describe your organization’s main programs or projects.
3. Describe your organization’s experience serving individuals and/or families experiencing chronic homelessness, long-term homelessness and/or multiple barriers to housing stability.
4. How does your staff reflect the backgrounds of the communities you serve?
5. Please describe any data tracking system or evaluation tools you currently use for any homeless or supportive housing and service programs you operate, the outcome data you currently collect for those programs and those project’s outcomes.
6. Please provide a list of your Board of Directors, affiliations and tenure on the Board.
7. Is your organization subject to a single audit?

**ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

1. Please describe how your organization is, or will be able to support your proposed role in the project, including supervision and oversight, financial management, data collection, documentation, etc.
2. Please provide a timeline for becoming operational, including major project milestones. Please indicate your organization’s willingness to negotiate a contract in good faith to support this timeline.
3. Revenues and expenses for this project must be tracked and reported separately from other programs/projects.  Please describe your accounting system's ability to separately track a new project's revenues and expenses.
4. The limitations of state and federal grants require that provider partners leverage other funding sources such as Targeted Case Management and/or other Medicaid services. Please describe your current capacity to bill for services including current county or health plan contracts, capacity to track expenses related to provision of services, and/or necessary clinical supervision.

# PROJECT DESIGN NARRATIVE

1. Please describe the multi-disciplinary staffing model and supervision structure you propose for this team, an organizational chart showing reporting and communication relationships, and qualifications of key staff. Please describe how the staffing model supports the diverse needs of the population you propose to serve.
2. This project may receive referrals for whom there is no current contact information. Please describe your organization’s experience with locating and engaging with these sorts of referrals. Describe what strategies the team will use in urban and suburban communities.
3. HUD PSH can require extensive documentation before enrollment. Describe your organization’s experience with documenting mental illness/disability and housing/homeless history and strategies the navigator will use to collect this documentation.
4. Participants often have a range of concerns and aspirations that extend beyond what any single program can support. Describe how you will make linkages to other services in the community (e.g. healthcare, education, employment, economic assistance, civic engagement).
5. This project is committed to offering a strengths-based, consumer-focused Housing First model, emphasizing building trust, using flexibility, creativity and perseverance, being trauma-informed and culturally competent, and grounded in best practices and promising approaches, including harm reduction and motivational interviewing Please demonstrate your organization’s experience with these approaches and discuss how your proposal meets these objectives.
6. Describe how your organization will capture the lessons your organization and the team learn and how you will institutionalize a learning process to ensure continuous quality improvement in your work in the future.

**APPLICANT ASSURANCES**

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (“The Organization”),

I hereby verify that the Organization agrees to the following Assurances.

□ Yes □ No

□ Yes □ No

□ Yes □ No

□ Yes □ No

□ Yes □ No

□ Yes □ No

□ Yes □ No

□ Yes □ No

1. The Organization agrees to meet project requirements to document household eligibility and measure participant progress using assessment tools approved by Hearth Connection.
2. The Organization agrees to meet the State’s HMIS reporting requirements, by using Hearth Connection’s web-based information system, Co-Pilot.
3. The Organization agrees to participate in evaluation of the project’s success managed by the State, County or Hearth Connection.
4. The Organization agrees to periodic monitoring of its programmatic and financial records.
5. The Organization agrees to provide copies of its annual audit.
6. The Organization agrees to participate in training and technical assistance sessions associated with administrative processes and service delivery best practices for this project.
7. The applicant affirms that, to the best of its knowledge, this proposal does not present a conflict of interest with any party or entity, which may be affected by the terms of a forthcoming contract. The applicant agrees that, should any conflict or potential conflict of interest become known, it will immediately notify Hearth Connection of the conflict or potential conflict, and will advise Hearth Connection whether it will or will not resign from the other engagement or representation.

8. The Organization agrees to provide periodic financial reports detailing revenues and expenses for this project in the required format.

□ Yes □ No

1. The Organization agrees to separately track revenues and expenses in its accounting system for this project. Revenues or expenses from other projects/programs will not be commingled with revenues and expenses for this project in its accounting system.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**BUDGET**

The following information is provided to help you understand the RFP budget process for requesting Hearth Connection funding. This budget is used to make award selection only. You may be requested to submit a final budget to be included in a contractual agreement at a later date.

Please note that the attached budget is Hearth Connection’s universal budget template. It may contain line items that do not apply to your program. Feel free to contact us with any questions.

*Budget Assumptions:*

* Assume you are submitting a budget for a full calendar year only (12 months).
* Any funding being requested will be considered for funding awarded under a cost reimbursement arrangement.
* Do not include capital costs in equipment or occupancy lines. The portion of capital equipment or an owned building that will be used by the Hearth Connection program can be included in the budget under Depreciation. Please specify if the depreciation is related to an owned building/building improvement or to equipment in the Budget Narrative (basic desktop and laptop computers are to be treated as a program supply, please list such equipment under B.9 Program Supplies). The Budget Narrative can be a free-flowing Word document submitted with the Budget form.
* Actual tracking of revenue and expenses must be done in an accounting system that allows for fund source accounting by revenue and expense type. Such a system must be able to produce reporting in a manner that allows for extraction of expenses that complements the budget format used by Hearth Connection.
* Awarded funds must be used for participants living in the region for which the funds were awarded.
* Participants must meet the state’s long-term homeless definition.
* Participants must be enrolled in Hearth Connection’s program.
* Awarded funds cannot be used to benefit non-Hearth Connection participants. Should funds be used in combination with other sources, such expenses must be allocated based upon documented allocation methods and only the Hearth Connection participant’s portion charged to Hearth Connection’s program.
* Direct Assistance funds should be considered the funds of last resort. Other funding sources such as Emergency Assistance, Family Homeless Prevention Assistance Program funds, or other emergency services funding should be utilized first.
* Any funding not utilized in this award will be returned to Hearth Connection for use by other Hearth Connection programs. A program reconciliation will be conducted at the end of every year to determine how much funding remains unused. Leverage funds will be considered first dollar spent when determining unused funds owed back to Hearth Connection.

*Budget Instructions:*

1. Please complete the attached budget form for the proposed RFP program. **IMPORTANT**: do not override any formulas in the spreadsheet because you will disable the spreadsheet’s functionality, as none of the cells have been password protected. We suggest you make a backup copy before you begin to compile your RPF Budget, in case you must return your budget back to its original format.
2. Do not enter data that is not specifically being requested in the header section of the budget form. Provide Organization Name only and ignore all other fields of information.
3. Enter your budget numbers in the first purple column marked “Proposed Budget” for the first year only—ignore the second year’s budget column.
4. Hearth Connection is interested in all sources of revenue that will be used in the RFP program. Please list any other sources of funds in the “G. Leveraged Funds” section of the budget. If you do not find the correct line item description within the Leverage category, please use the additional space provided on page 2 by selecting “G. Notes: Other Leveraged Service Funds” and listing your revenue sources. Provide enough of a description so the reader of the budget can fully understand your unique revenue sources.
5. Hearth Connection is interested in all types of expenses that will be used in the RFP program. Please list all expense types using the following categories: Outreach and Engagement Services; Case Management and Site-based Management; and/or Direct Assistance. If you do not find the correct line item description within your category, please use the additional space provided on page 2 by selecting your appropriate category and listing your expenses. Provide enough of a description so the reader of the budget can fully understand your unique expense needs. Ask yourself: what is the total value of everything you need to do the work? Assume you will pay fair market price for everything.
6. Salaries & Wages and Fringe Benefits will be listed on a separate page. Please list each individual position by position title. Follow the instructions on the “Example” tab. All salary & wage information will be listed under the correct category that best describes the position’s function. Pay special attention to the first column and provide the appropriate system to reflect direct service staff and seasonal staff. If staff work in other areas of the organization and will only provide a percentage of their time to this RFP program, make sure that you indicate the correct percentage in Direct Program % column. Carry over the total number from the Direct Program Amount to the Project Budget and Budget Report, either under Outreach and Engagement Services or Case Management and Site-based Management. The Fringe Benefit line will auto-populate at a fixed 28% of Salaries & Wages.
7. “C. Direct Assistance.” This category, also commonly referred to as “flex funds” or “participant funds,” is used for flex funds on behalf of participants only. These funds must be reasonable in nature and not exceed $1,000 per household per year. Please consult Heather Duchscherer to help you determine the appropriateness of flex funds for this program.
8. “D. Administrative” will be for Indirect Expenses at a fixed 12% de Minimis rate of Direct Program expenses.
9. “F. Program Funds Requested by Provider (G-E)” is the amount of funds being requested from Hearth Connection.
10. If federal funds are being awarded in this RFP program, please follow the cost principles for Uniform Guidance regarding allowed and non-allowed expenses.
11. Provide a Budget Narrative in Word format to support your RFP Budget submittal.
12. Provide a copy of your most recent annual audited financial statement (if not a traditional Hearth Connection awardee), and a copy of your Management Letter associated with the annual audit being submitted.
13. If you have additional questions, please contact Taunia Gorka, Finance Director, at Hearth Connection at taunia@hearthconnection.org or 651.302.7189.