

2017

Trenton/Mercer Continuum of Care

**Request for Proposal (RFP)
For
Fiscal Year 2016 Continuum of
Care (CoC) Program**

**COC
COORDINATED ASSESSMENT
PROJECT
&
HOUSING SEARCH/COUNSELING**

The proposal including all required documentation must be received by

June 30, 2017 at 12:00 p.m.

Late applications will not be accepted

BACKGROUND

In June 2010, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness published *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, in which the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and its Federal partners set goals to end veteran and chronic homelessness by 2015, end family and youth homelessness and set a path to end all homelessness by 2020. The development of a comprehensive crisis response system in each community, including new and innovative types of system coordination, is central to the plan's key objectives and strategies.

HUD REQUIREMENT AND POLICIES

Under the interim rule of HUD's Continuum of Care (CoC) Program, each CoC must establish and operate a centralized or coordinated assessment system (24 CFR 578.7(a)(8)). HUD defines centralized or coordinated assessment system, often referred to as a "coordinated entry" system as a centralized or coordinated process designed to coordinate program participant intake assessment and provision of referrals. A centralized or coordinated assessment system covers the geographic area, is easily accessed by individuals and families seeking housing or services, is well advertised, and includes a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool. The goal is to increase the efficiency of local crisis response systems and improve fairness and ease of access to resources, including mainstream resources. Coordinated entry processes are intended to help communities prioritize people who are most in need of assistance.

COORDINATED ENTRY AND ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (CEASe)

The **vision** of the CEASe system is that no one in the Trenton/Mercer area should experience homelessness and that everyone should have a safe, stable place to live. The **mission** is to provide an organized process to ensure that individuals who become homeless can move to permanent housing as quickly as possible. Those with the longest history of homelessness will be given priority for housing resources.

TARGET POPULATION

The CEASe System serves all families and individuals who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness as defined under the federal HEARTH Act and its implementing regulations. For the purpose of this RFP, the target population to be served is chronically homeless and homeless individuals, sheltered and unsheltered, ages 18 and older.

GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

The CEASe System covers the entire CoC area, which includes all of Mercer County.

GOVERNANCE AND PARTNER ROLES

The Trenton/Mercer CoC governs the CEASe System. The CoC is ultimately responsible for compliance with HUD requirements under the CoC Interim Rule that includes:

- Establishing and operating a centralized or coordinated assessment system
- Meeting the HUD coordinated entry requirements described above, in the CoC Interim Rule, in any other HUD Notice, and in the CoC Notice of Funding Available (NOFA)
- Establishing and following written standards for CoC assistance
- Coordinating with Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) recipients in establishing the centralized or coordinated assessment system and CoC written standards
- Developing a specific policy for how the coordinated entry system will address the need of person fleeing domestic violence, but who are seeking assistance from non-victim service programs.

The CEASe Oversight Committee of the CoC has significant responsibilities that include:

- Monthly meetings to help plan, implement and operate the CEASe System
- Serve as a forum for CoC members, providers and community participation and feedback in planning, implementing, and operating CEASe, and identifying needs and solutions related to the project.
- Developing specific, program, policy and technology options and solutions for recommendation to and approval by the CoC.
- Coordinating with the staff of the CoC Lead Agency and CEAS Center.
- Coordinating with the CoC's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) provider
- Reviewing system performance data and evaluating the efficiency of CEASe
- Expanding HMIS capacity to fully incorporate all components of CEASe
- Implementing and administering the CEASe master list.
- Providing training across the homeless service provider network to enact systems change to incorporate CEASe
- Developing and updating CEASe policies and procedures
- Provide analysis and reports on the progress of the CEASe System
- Other tasks as needed.

AGENCY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Lead Agency- City of Trenton, Department of Health and Human Services

The City of Trenton, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has been selected by the Trenton/Mercer CoC to serve as the Lead Agency and Collaborative Applicant for the HUD CoC Program Grant.

Central location & Point of Entry- Coordinated Entry and Assessment Services (CEAS) Center Under DHHS, the City of Trenton's CEAS Center serves as the central location for homeless individuals seeking permanent housing and supportive services. The CEAS Center is located at 509 Perry Street, Trenton, NJ. After hours, the Homeless Hotline and 211 are available for the unsheltered.

The CEAS Center is responsible for the day-to day operation of the CEAS Center, including but not limited to:

- Working to ensure resources are available.
- Facilitating coordination and communication with community partners.
- Matching available housing resources to homeless individuals based need and refer to housing providers to seek permanent housing as quickly as possible.
- Participate in case conferencing and assist with resolving any issues or concerns.
- Provide medical screening and coordinate with health care and health insurance providers
- Gather and maintain and keep up-to-date information regarding shelter and permanent housing availability.

Partner Agencies – non-profit social services community agencies

All programs that receive CoC, ESG, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), or targeted VA funding are required by their funding sources to participate in the CEAS System. All other programs serving person who are or are at-risk of experiencing homelessness are encouraged and welcome to join the CoC and the CEAS System.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Trenton/Mercer CoC utilizes the following process for coordinated entry and assessment for homeless individuals in Mercer County.

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Access Points:

- a central location, the Coordinated Entry & Assessment Services (CEAS) Center located within a geographic area where individuals present to receive homeless housing and services; and
- a specialized team of case workers that provides assessment services at provider locations within the CoC (e.g. Rapid Re-housing).

Distinct elements of the assessment and referral processes: The processes of *assessment*, *scoring*, *prioritization* and *determining eligibility* comprise four distinct elements of the coordinated entry process that connect coordinated entry participants to potential housing and services.

- *Assessment* -refers to the use of one or more standardized *assessment tool(s)* to determine a household's current housing situation, housing and service needs, risk of harm, risk of future or continued homelessness, and other adverse outcomes. HUD does not intend that the term be confused with assessments often used in clinical settings to determine psychological or physical health, or for other purposes not related to preventing and ending the homelessness of persons who present to coordinated entry for housing-related assistance.
- *Scoring* -refer to the process of deriving an indicator of risk, vulnerability, or need based on responses to assessment questions. The output of most assessment tools is often an "Assessment Score" for potential project participants, which provides a standardized analysis of risk and other objective assessment factors. While assessment scores generally reflect the factors included in the prioritization process, the assessment score alone does not necessarily determine the relative order of potential participants for resources.

Additional consideration, including use of case conferencing, is often necessary to ensure that the outcomes of the assessment more closely align with the community's prioritization process by accounting for unique population-based vulnerabilities and risk factors.

- *Prioritization* -refers to the coordinated entry-specific process by which all persons in need of assistance who use coordinated entry are ranked in order of priority which must ensure that ESG projects are able to serve clients in accordance with written standards that are established under CoC. In addition, the coordinated entry process must, to the maximum

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extent feasible, ensure that people with more severe service needs and levels of vulnerability are prioritized for housing and homeless assistance before those with less severe service needs and lower levels of vulnerability.

- *Determining eligibility* - determining eligibility is a project-level process governed by written standards. Coordinated entry processes incorporate mechanisms for determining whether potential participants meet project-specific requirements of the projects for which they are prioritized and to which they are referred. The process of collecting required information and documentation regarding eligibility may occur at any point in the coordinated entry process, i.e., after or concurrently with the *assessment, scoring, and prioritization* processes, as long as that eligibility information is not being used as part of prioritization and ranking, e.g. using documentation of a specific diagnosis or disability to rank a person. Projects or units may be legally permitted to limit eligibility, e.g., to persons with disabilities.

LOCAL PROCESS

The Trenton/Mercer Continuum of Care, through a comprehensive Coordinated Assessment Process, targets and prioritizes the most vulnerable persons experiencing homelessness in the community. The CoC follows a two-part coordinated assessment process for families and individuals, which assesses the vulnerabilities and level of service needs in order to prioritize for the most appropriate housing intervention. Housing interventions are not uniformly prescribed for participants, however, because consumer choice must also be valued and upheld throughout the process per the CoC's Policies and Procedures.

For individuals unaccompanied by children, the CoC has developed a Coordinated Entry and Assessment System (CEASe) for individuals experiencing homelessness. Through a coordinated assessment process, the needs of the homeless are identified and prioritized and a plan to move from homelessness to housing is developed.

CoC Coordinated Assessment Project (CAP)

The Coordinated Assessment project seeks to prioritize those with the most severe service needs in order to helping them obtain permanent housing before moving to serving those with the least barriers.

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The CoC's orders of priority aim at ensuring all Permanent Supportive Housing funded through the CoC targets the persons who need it the most—whether experiencing chronic homelessness or the most severe needs.

- Priority 1: Chronically homeless individuals and families with the longest history of homelessness and with the most severe service needs*
- Priority 2: Chronically homeless individuals and families with the longest history of homelessness
- Priority 3: Chronically homeless individuals and families with the most severe service needs
- Priority 4: All other chronically homeless individuals and families
- Priority 5: Homeless individuals and families with a disability and most severe service needs

Chronically Homeless Veterans with the longest history of homelessness and most severe service needs will take first priority. Homeless youth 18-24 years of age shall also be prioritized.

*Severity of Service Needs include: 1) High utilization of crisis services (emergency rooms, jails, and psychiatric facilities); 2) Significant health or behavioral health challenges or functional impairments which require a significant support in order to maintain permanent housing.

The CEASe System Prioritization Matrix tool is used to determine housing solutions best fitted for the chronically homeless and literally homeless persons identified through the CEASe system prioritization process. These protocols are coordinated and directed by the CEAS Center. All related client contacts and service planning must be documented in HMIS.

FUNDING REQUEST

Under the FY2016 CoC Program grant, the City of Trenton, Department of Health and Human Services applied for and received funding for a Coordinated Assessment Project (CAP). HUD awarded the City of Trenton \$102,519 to implement this project. The City of Trenton, DHHS is seeking proposals for the FY2016 CoC CAP to serve chronically homeless and homeless individuals, 18 years and older that are sheltered and unsheltered.

Eligible activities under the CAP are: Assessment of Service Needs, Case Management, Street Outreach, Housing Search and Counseling Services, and Project Administration.

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For the Purposes of this RFP, a total of \$98,366 will be available as follow:

- **\$76,513** is available for Assessment of Service Needs, Case Management and Street Outreach. (**Important Note:** Agencies may apply for all services listed above as a single application or may apply for Street Outreach only. Assessment and Case management must be applied for together.
- **\$18, 500** is available as a **SEPARATE** application for Housing Search/Counseling activities. The Housing Search/Counseling activity must be applied for as a separate stand- alone project and is NOT to be combined with the other Coordinated Assessment activities. Applications that include Housing Search/Counseling with the other activities will not be considered.
- **\$3,353** is available for Administrative Cost.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

A total of \$57,313 is available for the Assessment of Service Needs and Case management activities. These activities must serve as a single component and may be the equivalent of one full-time equivalent position or two part-time positions with distinct specific roles and responsibilities.

1. Assessment of Service Needs

Assessment of Service Needs will primarily focus on the screening and assessment of all literally and chronically homeless individuals seeking services and housing. At a minimum, but not limited to the following:

- Acquire Release of Information form
- Complete initial Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Intake
- Screen all literally and chronically homeless individuals ages 18 years old and older
- Screen emergency shelter population after seven (7) days
- Prioritize and immediately screen and refer homeless youth 18 to 24 years old
- Screen unsheltered population through mobile outreach at locations such as: train stations, soup kitchens and other places not meant for human habitation
- Make referrals to the CEAS Center for engagement for housing and support services
- Assessment services are voluntary and must be non-discriminatory
- Screening/assessment will be conducted at the CEAS Center at least 2-3 days a week

2. Case Management

Case management will focus primarily, at a minimum, but not limited to the following:

- Assist clients in obtaining identification
- Assist in the development of the individual housing plan
- Assist in obtaining Federal, State and Local benefits (e.g. GA, SSI, Medicaid, SNAP)
- Provide Information and Referral
- Provide outreach and engagement to individuals identified through the Matrix
- Participate as a member of the CEASe coordination team. This team consists of the CEAS Center supervisor, homeless housing provider and other CEASe system participants as needed.
- Provide incentives and flexible services needed to assist identified individuals to move to housing.

3. Outreach Services

A total of \$19,200 is available for Street Outreach. These activities may be applied for as a single component or in conjunction with the Assessment and Case Management services. Coordinated street outreach activities may include but is not limited to:

- Conducting street outreach to the homeless at train stations, soup kitchens, tents and other places not meant for human habitation
- Participate in outreach team meetings
- Data collection, and
- Provide frequent engagement of homeless individuals who are unsheltered and do not have a designated agency doing follow-up to provide services and housing.
- Work as a team with the CEAS Center

4. Housing Search/Counseling Services

A total of \$18,500 is available for Housing Search/Counseling Services. These activities MUST be applied for as a single component with a separate application.

Housing Search/Counseling services will focus primarily, at a minimum, but not limited to the following:

- Identifying affordable housing
- Developing an inventory of all permanent housing types

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- Developing and building landlord relationship in geographical area
- Conducting landlord/tenant mediation
- Ensure unit inspections
- Assisting in addressing landlord/tenant disputes
- Negotiating a settlement agreement mutually satisfying both parties
- Accompany clients and staff through walk-throughs with landlords
- Provide feedback on violation issues and recommendations
- Ensure housing quality standards
- Provide landlord/tenant rights materials
- Make housing referrals
- Ensure all Fair Housing laws are adhered to and followed
- Participate in monthly Housing Hub meeting for networking and landlord engagement

The Housing Navigator should have experience in landlord/agency/tenant relationships, identification of affordable housing, ability to negotiate rents, ensuring Housing Quality Standard inspections, mediation and familiar with fair housing rules and regulations.

Project Administration

A total of \$3,353 is available for Project Administrative Costs. Only the costs listed below are eligible and may not be altered, or substituted.

Service:

Salary, wages and related cost of staff engaged in program administration

- Prepare Program Budgets & Schedules
- Developing systems to ensure compliance
- Monitoring program activities
- Preparing reports related to program for HUD
- Coordinating resolution of audits and monitoring findings
- Evaluating program results
- Managing or supervising staff with above responsibilities

Administrative

3rd party contracts, including general legal services accounting or audit services

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Other Costs

Goods and Services required for administration including rental or purchase of equipment, insurance, office supplies, rental and maintenance, but NOT purchase of office space

Training:

Costs of providing training on CoC requirements and attending HUD CoC Training (all training request must be approved by the City of Trenton)

Environmental Review

Costs of carrying out environmental review responsibilities

Project Administration may be requested for each application.

ELIGIBILITY

Non-profit agencies are eligible to apply. Proof of 501 (c)(3) designation must provide in addition to a copy of the agency's Certificate of Incorporation and list of the Board of Directors.

HMIS REQUIREMENTS

In order to meet to fulfill all HUD and COC reporting requirements, applicants must adhere and agree to at a minimum, but not limited to the following:

- Utilize the designated HMIS project – *City of Trenton – Coordinated Assessment Project* in HMIS
- Enter all client data including intakes, screenings and service contacts in the *City of Trenton – Coordinated Assessment* Project in HMIS.
- Adhere to all HUD and CoC HMIS policies and procedures
- Adhere to all HUD and CoC reporting requirements including providing data in the designated HMIS for the Annual Progress Report (APR)
- Assign at least one person to conduct data entry. Sub-recipients will be provided a unique log- in to complete client screenings, intake and service contact logs.
- Attend mandatory HMIS trainings and meetings
- Complete a Release of Information form for all homeless individuals entered into the designated HMIS project

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- Experience in serving target population
- Experience in providing eligible activities
- Experience using HMIS
- Recruiting and hiring linguistic and culturally competent staff
- Attendance at all HUD and CoC trainings and meetings

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- Participate in providing annual feedback to address the quality and effectiveness of the entire coordinated entry experience for both participating projects and households. Appropriate feedback methodologies include the following:
 - i. Surveys designed to reach either the entire population or a representative sample of participating providers and households;
 - ii. Focus groups of five or more participants that approximate the diversity of the participating providers and households; and
 - iii. Individual interviews with participating providers and enough participants to approximate the diversity of participating households. Participants selected to participate in the evaluation must include individuals currently engaged in the coordinated entry process or who have been referred to housing through the coordinated entry process in the last year.
 - iv. All project recipients must participate in all levels of evaluation.

RIGHTS

The City of Trenton reserves the right to decrease or increase funding available. No third party contracting for specific activities will be accepted.

Term: All documents, materials and reports produced under this grant are the express ownership of the Trenton/Mercer CoC.

TERMINATION OF CONTRACT

If, through any cause, the applicant shall fail to fulfill in a timely and proper manner obligations under the contract or if the sub-recipient violates any requirements of the contract, the City of Trenton shall thereupon have the right to terminate the contract by giving written notice to the sub-recipient of such termination at least sixty (60) days prior to the proposed effective date of the termination. Such termination shall relieve the City of Trenton of any obligation for the balances to the sub-recipient of any sum or sums set forth in the contract.

The applicant agrees to indemnify and hold the City of Trenton harmless from any liability to sub-recipient concerning payment for services performed arising out of the lawful termination of the contract by the City under this provision. In case of default by the sub-recipient, the City may procure the services from other sources and hold the sub-recipient responsible for any excess cost occasioned thereby.

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This project will expand on the existing coordinated assessment system. The applicant (s) selected to implement activities will be given 30 days to hire a staff and develop a time line to beginning activities for case management, housing/counseling services and outreach. All activities will begin within 60 days of the notice. The sub-recipient will be required to provide an effective management plan identifying supervision, target goals, and timelines and monthly reports in HMIS.

DEADLINE

Applications must be submitted to the City of Trenton by June 30, 2017 (Late applications will not be accepted). Applications should be submitted ELECTRONICALLY to: Vernett Sherrill, Grant Administrator, City of Trenton, Department of Health and Human Services at vsherrill@trentonnj.org and a copy to Marygrace Billek at mbillek@mercercounty.org.

Applications may be mailed to: City of Trenton, Department of Health and Human Services, 319 East State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608, Attn: Vernett Sherrill

REVIEW PROCESS

Upon receipt of agency's proposal, proposals will be reviewed by CoC Evaluation committee and recommendations for funding will be submitted to the City of Trenton. Final funding decisions will be determined by the City of Trenton.

NOTICE OF AWARD

The successful applicant will be notified of the award of contract upon a favorable decision by the City of Trenton and after HUD Grant Agreement execution and Trenton City Council approval.

COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

Any contract entered into between the contractor and the owner must be in accordance with and subject to compliance by both parties with the New Jersey Local Public Contracts Law. The contractor must agree to comply with the non-discrimination provisions and all other laws and regulations applicable to the performance of services there under. The respondent shall sign and acknowledge such forms and certificates as may be required by this section.

NON-DISCRIMINATION REQUIREMENTS

The CoC must develop and operate a coordinated entry process that permits recipients of Federal and state funds to comply with applicable civil rights and fair housing laws and requirements.

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Recipients and sub-recipients of CoC Program and ESG Program-funded projects must comply with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of Federal civil rights laws as specified at 24 C.F.R. 5.105(a), including, but not limited to the following:

Fair Housing Act prohibits discriminatory housing practices based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or familial status;

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance; and

In addition, HUD's Equal Access Rule at 24 CFR 5.105(a)(2) prohibits discriminatory eligibility determinations in HUD-assisted or HUD-insured housing programs based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status, including any projects funded by the CoC Program, ESG Program, and HOPWA Program. The CoC Program interim rule also contains a fair housing provision at 24 CFR 578.93. For ESG, see 24 CFR 576.407(a) and (b), and for HOPWA, see 24 CFR 574.603.

MANDATORY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION COMPLIANCE

No firm may be issued a contract unless it complies with the Affirmative Action requirements of P. L. 1975, C. 127 as identified in the documents attached hereto.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990

Discrimination on the basis of disability in contracting for the delivery of services is prohibited. Respondents are required to read American with Disabilities language that is part of the documents attached hereto and agree that the provisions of Title II of the Act are made part of the contract. The contractor is obligated to comply with the Act and hold the owner harmless.

AFFIRMATELY FURTHERING FAIR HOUSING

HUD's AFFH rule provides an effective planning approach to aid program participants in taking meaningful actions to overcome historic patterns of segregation, promote fair housing choice, and foster inclusive communities that are free from discrimination. More information may be found at www.hudexchange.info/programs/affh/

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Agency Profile:

NAME OF AGENCY: _____

TYPE OF AGENCY: _____

CONTACT PERSON: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

IS YOUR AGENCY A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION? Yes _____ No _____ If No, PLEASE STOP. YOU ARE NOT ELIGIBLE TO APPLY TO THIS RFP

TAX IDENTIFICATION # _____

(You Must Attach a Copy of Your 501 (c)(3) letter from the Internal Revenue Service and a list of current Board Members).

Applicants must complete all sections and must not exceed more than 5 pages of narrative.

Experience

I. Describe the history and purpose of the organization

II. Describe the type of services provided by the organization

III. Describe the organization's experience with providing services to chronically homeless and service resistant clients

IV. Describe organization's experience working with a coordinated assessment process

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Budget Request

Eligible Activities	Amount Requested
1. Case Management	\$
2. Housing/Counseling Services	\$
3. Outreach Services	\$
Total Request	\$
25% Match Requirement	\$
Administration (Max \$3,353)	\$
Grand Total	\$

Budget Narrative: For each line item funding is requested please describe who will perform activities, their work experience, rate of pay and frequency.