

# **Request for Proposals: Homeless Systems Coordinated Entry Evaluator November 10, 2022**

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to obtain the professional services of a firm or individual, hereinafter referred to as the “Proposer”, to perform service for the Ohio Balance of State Continuum of Care (BoSCoC), hereinafter referred to as the “Contractor”, in evaluation and refinement of the Coordinated Entry (CE) system for all individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness or are at imminent risk of homelessness. This includes examining the existing components of the current CE system and process, recommending needed changes, and ensuring that the process works most effectively. The work is to be done in collaboration with Ohio BoSCoC staff and designated committees/workgroups.

## **Background and Context**

A Continuum of Care (CoC) is a geographically based group of representatives that carries out the planning responsibilities of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) Program. The Ohio Balance of State Continuum of Care (BoSCoC) represents the 80 non-urban counties in Ohio.

Coordinated Entry (CE) is a system that allows for coordinated entry into a local homeless services system, as well as coordinated movement within and ultimately exit from the system. Coordinated Entry increases the efficiency of a homeless assistance system by standardizing access to homeless services and coordinating program referrals.

### **Ohio BoSCoC Organization and Management**

The Ohio Balance of State Continuum of Care (BoSCoC) is the federally recognized homeless system that represents the 80 largely suburban and rural counties in Ohio. Within these 80 counties there are approximately 400 homeless programs including emergency shelters, transitional housing, rapid re-housing programs, and permanent supportive housing. On any given day, these programs can serve over 7000 people.

### **Role of Ohio Department of Development**

The Ohio Department of Development, Office of Community Development (ODOD), has been designated by the Ohio BoSCoC Board to serve as the Collaborative Applicant for the CoC and the grantee for the CoC Planning grant. Additionally, ODOD staff serve as co-chair of the Ohio BoSCoC Steering Committee and have a standing seat on all other BoSCoC committees/workgroups.

ODOD is also the state agency responsible for administering federal Emergency Solutions Grant funds and state homeless program funds. In this role, ODOD works to align state and federal program requirements and to ensure coordinated community planning across funding streams.

### **Role of Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio**

ODOD contracts with the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) to provide primary staff support for the Ohio BoSCoC. COHHIO currently has three FTE on its CoC team.

Additionally, COHHIO has been designated by the Ohio BoSCoC Board to serve as the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead. In that role, COHHIO applies directly for the CoC HMIS grant and supplies approximately four staff to the management of the Ohio BoSCoC HMIS.

### **Ohio BoSCoC Homeless Planning Regions**

The 80 counties in the Ohio BoSCoC are divided into 17 Homeless Planning Regions. Providers in these regions are responsible for working with ODOD and COHHIO to ensure all federal and state homeless program and system requirements are met. The Homeless Planning Regions report to COHHIO and ODOD.

With support and guidance from the CoC team at COHHIO, Ohio BoSCoC Homeless Planning Regions are responsible for coordinating local homeless systems and programs, including the implementation of the Ohio BoSCoC CE system and standards.

### **Federal and State Funding of Homeless Services in the Ohio BoSCoC**

The Ohio BoSCoC receives approximately \$23 million annually in federal Continuum of Care Program funding for about 95 projects. Ohio BoSCoC regions also receive about \$10 million annually from the state homeless assistance program to support emergency shelter, rapid re-housing, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing programs.

Additionally, the Ohio BoSCoC has been awarded two Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) grants, serving two regions of the CoC, totaling about \$1.8 million in annual funding.

### **Ohio BoSCoC's Coordinated Entry System**

To facilitate implementation of Coordinated Entry systems in the 80 counties that comprise the Ohio BoSCoC, the CoC team developed the Ohio BoSCoC CE System Standards. These CE System Standards guided the development of Regional CE Plans and ensured that there was consistency and standardization in the CE system and processes where needed. All Regional CE Plans were finalized and CE fully implemented in the Ohio BoSCoC in January 2018. The Ohio BoSCoC CE Operational Manual, which includes the CE System Standards, can be found on COHHIO's [website](#).

In compliance with HUD requirements, the Ohio BoSCoC has designated the following CE entities:

#### **Policy Oversight Entity**

The Ohio BoSCoC has designated the CoC Board to serve as the CE Policy Oversight Entity. In this role, the CoC Board is responsible for the following:

- Establish CE participation expectations
- Determine data collection and data quality expectations
- Provide approval of all CE policies

#### **Management Entity**

The Ohio BoSCoC has designated COHHIO, specifically the CoC team, as the CE Management Entity. The CoC team is comprised of CoC and HMIS staff housed at COHHIO. In this role as the CE Management Entity, CoC staff are responsible for the following:

- Provide day-to-day management of the CE system
- Develop and deliver training related to CE system and requirements
- Conduct monitoring of the implementation of the CE system

#### **Evaluation Entity**

The Ohio BoSCoC has designated the CoC Board as the Evaluation Entity. Responsibilities of the Evaluation Entity include:

- Plan annual CE evaluation

- Collect data as part of evaluation
- Evaluate CE implementation process for effectiveness and efficiency
- This may include identifying a third party to complete the evaluation
- Identify policy and process improvements

## **Proposal Requirements and Information**

### **Scope of Services**

Proposers are encouraged to use their expertise and experience to develop an appropriate scope of services. The evaluation should consider all aspects of the Key Elements of Coordinated Entry and provide recommendations on how to improve the system's effectiveness and efficiency. It is anticipated that the tasks to be performed would likely include the following, but the Proposer should delineate whatever activities he/she believes would result in a thorough evaluation of the Ohio BoSCoC CE system.

- Soliciting of stakeholders' input and feedback on the Access Point process and evaluation of the homeless system's overall accessibility.
- Evaluation of the CoC's assessment tool, considering recommendations from staff currently completing assessments. Recommend any additional necessary changes or refinements to the tool.
- Evaluation of the assessment process, considering recommendations from staff currently completing assessments. Recommend any changes or refinements to the assessment process.
- Review of referral procedures to determine their appropriateness and to recommend changes to the process, including the HMIS portion of the process, if needed.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the current prioritization process and procedures.
- Analysis of the housing and service needs of families and individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in order to make recommendations on process changes or refinements to result in a more effective homeless crisis response system. This may include identification of gaps in the process/system which create barriers to housing stability for families and individuals.
- Evaluation of compliance with applicable HUD Coordinated Entry Notices, CoC Program Interim Rule, ESG Interim Rule, and HUD Equal Access Rule, etc. Provide recommendations on policies and procedures to ensure full compliance with all relevant requirements.

### **Contents of the Proposal Package**

Proposals should include the following:

- A detailed work plan outlining the Proposer's scope of services. Work plan should include a description of process to be used, deliverables, and timeframes for each element in the scope of services. The timeline should indicate the length of time suggested for each activity and its beginning and ending point within the contract period.
- The credentials, experience, and background of the Proposer.
- Detailed descriptions of similar work, including information relating to the outcomes or success of the work. References from past employers or contractors should be included if possible.
- Other resources or capacities that the Proposer has to enhance the provision of this service.
- Information about experience in data collection, analysis and reporting, including experience with Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or databases similar to HMIS.

- Evidence of cultural competence with people experiencing homelessness or similar populations.
- Detailed budget related to the deliverables in the work plan for the contract period.

## Timeline

- The RFP will be available beginning November 10, 2022
- The RFP will be posted to [www.cohhio.org](http://www.cohhio.org) and distributed through various networks
- Interested parties may contact Erica Mulryan, Ohio BoSCoC Director, at [ericamulryan@cohhio.org](mailto:ericamulryan@cohhio.org) for copies of the RFP or for questions
- **Proposal packages must be submitted by December 23, 2022** to [ericamulryan@cohhio.org](mailto:ericamulryan@cohhio.org)
- The Ohio BoSCoC will seek to begin work on the evaluation plan as soon after proposal selection as possible. Proposers should keep this mind when developing proposals.

## Selection Process

Following submission of proposals, a selection team will review the proposals and, if needed, schedule interviews with Proposers. The selection team will recommend the best Proposer to the Ohio BoSCoC Board for consideration. Negotiations for contracting with the selected Proposer will be completed and the contract will be placed into effect at that time.

## General Requirements

- The Proposer must comply with applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations and meet applicable professional standards
- The Proposer must be an equal opportunity employer and provide assurance that no person will be denied services on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.
- The Ohio BoSCoC Board or its representatives reserve the right to contact a Proposer for clarification of the proposal submitted and to reject any or all submitted proposals