

## Request for Letters of Interest

### Overview

The Homeless Action Partnership is pleased to release this request for Letters of Interest (LOI) to provide community engagement and public communications services to help meet the goals of both the Request for Proposals issued by Santa Cruz County & Homeless Action Partnership (HAP) for the Homeless Emergency Aid Program and The California Emergency Solutions & Housing Program. The total amount available for award through this LOI is \$100,000 to be expended as available through the duration of HEAP/CESH funding allocations.

**Responses are due by 5 p.m. on March 22, 2019.**

### Purpose

The Homeless Action Partnership (HAP), the local Watsonville/Santa Cruz City and County Continuum of Care, finds that there is an immediate sheltering and public health crisis, with both the County and cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville having declared a Shelter Crisis in accordance with California Government Code Sections 8698-8698.2. The need for additional shelter and services is urgent, and lack of immediate action has a deleterious impact on both homeless persons and communities throughout California.

Recognizing this need, the State has dispersed Homeless Emergency Assistance Program funds intended to provide immediate emergency assistance to people experiencing homelessness. In many cases, public communication, community understanding of the extent of the challenges, needs and services and community engagement on solutions is critical to their success. The HAP finds that in addition to an immediate and urgent need for emergency shelter and services, there exists an immediate and urgent need for a robust community engagement, partnership development and public communications process to help effectuate the delivery of those services.

Given these findings, the HAP has decided to have an expedited process to deliver community engagement services. The HAP Governing Board and HAP Jurisdictional Executive Committee have made an emergency allocation of our CoC's HEAP funds totaling \$100,000 for community engagement, public communications, and outreach as described below.

### Timeline and Oversight

Upon selection, the County of Santa Cruz as lead agency for the Homeless Action Partnership intends to immediately engage the services of a provider with expertise in community engagement and communications. As CoC lead agency, the County will administer the contract and serve as project manager and work with the HAP Governing Board to identify a HAP subcommittee that includes jurisdictional and community partner perspectives to coordinate and oversee the community engagement and communications work.

### Scope of Services

The Homeless Action Partnership seeks an agency with the ability to provide related multidisciplinary services including but not limited to:

1. Community engagement and partnership strategy development encompassing different geographies and stakeholders;
2. Community meeting design, coordination, and facilitation;
3. Communications strategy development;
4. Web design, development and maintenance;
5. Media messaging and coordination among HAP members and community partners;
6. Content creation and curation;
7. Social media outreach and management;
8. Graphic design services for informational and other digital and/or printed materials;
9. Media ad buys and reports on audience metrics;
10. Related duties as determined.

In addition to the ability to provide listed services, parties will be assessed for their community engagement and public relations experience and background, experience with community and engaging on complex policy issues, and familiarity with homelessness and related issues. Familiarity with local media market and Santa Cruz County communities is desired.

### LOI Process Timeline

- **March 6, 2019** Letter of Interest issued
- **March 22, 2019** Deadline to submit proposals
- **March 25-29, 2019** Evaluation and Ranking of Proposals
- **April 2-5, 2019** Written notification to applicants of award decisions
- **April, 2019** Anticipated timeframe for executing agreements

*Please note, these dates are estimated and are subject to change.*

### LOI Submission Deadline and Requirements

Proposals must be received no later than 5:00 PM on TK, 2019. Late applications will not be accepted.

**Submittals must be emailed to: Rayne Marr: [rayne.marr@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:rayne.marr@santacruzcounty.us)**

Please include the following contact information in the response:

- Agency name;
- Street address;
- Contact person;
- Telephone number;
- E-mail address;
- Project narrative (see below)
- Project budget

### Project Narrative

Letters of interest must contain a Project Narrative including the following elements:

1. A description of organizational skills and expertise to fulfill the requested Scope of Services, including a description of team members and their background and experience working in a public relations and communications;
2. A description of the applicant's understanding of the homelessness issue in Santa Cruz County, including relevant challenges and opportunities;
3. Proposed rates/fees for the Scope of Services;
3. A description of experience working with HAP partners, including actual or potential financial or ethical conflicts (if any);
4. For respondents proposing working with other organizations or subcontractors, describe prior experience working together;
5. Indicate whether any of the following apply to your organization (for applicants consisting of multiple organizations, this question applies to the lead organization only):
  - a. Loss (either voluntary or involuntary) of federal funds in the last three years, including funding reallocation, suspension of reimbursement, repayment of grant funds or de-obligation of grant funds due to performance issues (If yes, please describe circumstances).
  - b. Unresolved funder (e.g. HUD) or financial audit findings or concerns (If yes, please describe and attach any communications pertaining to such findings or concerns. (Attached communications will not count against the page limit.)

### **Evaluation and Selection of Projects**

Upon receipt of the applications, County Homeless Services Coordinator, County Communications Manager and HAP staff will assess proposals and provide recommendations to the joint HAP Governing Board and Jurisdictional Executive Committee. Any applicant seeking a funding allocation through the expedited LOI process shall not participate in the LOI selection process.

### **Disclosures**

All proposal documents submitted are subject to California Code Section 6250 et seq., commonly known as the California Public Records Act. Information contained in the proposals may be made public after the review process has been completed, negotiations have concluded, and a recommendation for award has been made.

HAP, the County and the Cities reserve the right to make such background checks as it deems necessary to determine the ability of the proposer to perform the work. The City reserves the right to reject any proposal if the background check fails to satisfy the City that such proposer is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the contract and to complete the work contemplated therein.

### **Stipulations**

HAP, the County and the Cities are not responsible for any expenses which applicants may incur in preparing and submitting the proposal, and HAP, the County and the Cities are not be liable for any costs incurred by the proposers that are related to the LOI or RFP process. The HAP, the County and the Cities reserve the right to request or negotiate modifications to the proposals as appropriate. All proposals received from proposers in response to this LOI will become the property of the County of Santa Cruz and will not be returned to the proposers.

### **Questions and Answers**

Applicants may direct questions in writing to:

Rayne Marr: rayne.marr@santacruzcounty.us

### **Agreements**

The most appropriate allocation or agreement type will be assessed by County Homeless Services staff and communicated to the awardee. All final details will be negotiated with the awardees. The County of Santa Cruz Purchase Order Terms and Conditions are included in Appendix A. The awardees will be required to submit regular invoices and comply with State HEAP guidelines on reporting.

### **Appendix**

Appendix A: The County of Santa Cruz Purchase Order Terms and Conditions