

Housing Mobility Counseling and Search Assistance Program

The Department of Housing (DOH) is requesting proposals from qualified organizations to provide tenant education, mobility counseling, and housing search assistance for eligible participants in DOH's rent subsidy programs: Section 8 Housing Choice Program (Section 8) and Rental Assistance Program (RAP). Services will have a strong emphasis on mobility moves from areas of very low and low opportunity to areas of higher opportunity, with a priority for families with young children. Respondents must have a minimum of three (3) years of demonstrated experience with tenant education, mobility counseling, and housing search assistance. Eligible organizations include private for-profit and not-for-profit incorporated organizations. Respondents that propose the use of subcontractors must present the same information about the proposed subcontractors as for respondents. Use of subcontractors is subject to the approval of DOH.

DOH is requesting proposals for Housing Mobility Counseling and Search Assistance Program activities for the contract period July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2019. The total available funding through this Request for Proposals (this "RFP") shall not exceed \$365,000 annually. DOH expects to award \$365,000 to one or more respondents that can, individually or collectively, provide services statewide. Respondents may propose to serve all or part of the State.

Proposals must be received at DOH no later than 3:00 p.m. eastern standard time on Friday December 11, 2015. Proposals received after the stated due date and time may be accepted by DOH as a clerical function but will be evaluated for consideration under this RFP only at the discretion of DOH. Those proposals that are not evaluated for consideration under this RFP may be destroyed or returned at the discretion of DOH. All

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proposals must be in sealed packages clearly identified as "Housing Mobility Counseling and Search Assistance Program 2015_18632 RFP."

This RFP is available in electronic format on the State Contracting Portal at <http://das.ct.gov/cr1.aspx?page=12> or from the Department's Official

Contact:

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Phone: 860-270-8081
E-Mail: Steve.DiLella@ct.gov

This RFP is also available on the Department's website at <http://www.ct.gov/doh>. A printed copy of this RFP can be obtained from the Official Contact upon request.

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*Below is an outline of this Request For Proposals. This outline presents the standard structure of all RFPs for Purchase of Service ("POS") meaning that the same sections and subsections appear in all RFPs for POS and are identically organized. The subsections of **Section II** are standard and their contents are the same for all RFPs for POS and do not vary. The subsections of **Sections I, III and IV** are standard, but their contents vary by RFP, depending on the Department's procurement requirements.*

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

■ A. INTRODUCTION

1. **RFP Name or Number.** Housing Mobility Counseling and Search Assistance Program 2015_18632 RFP
2. **Summary.** DOH is requesting proposals from qualified organizations to provide tenant education, mobility counseling, and housing search assistance for eligible participants in DOH’s rent subsidy programs: Section 8 and RAP. Services will have a strong emphasis on mobility moves from areas of low opportunity to areas of high opportunity, with a priority of families with young children for participants in DOH’s rent subsidy programs: Section 8 and RAP.
3. **Commodity Codes.** The services that DOH wishes to procure through this RFP are as follows:
 - 2000: Community and Social Services/Housing Mobility Counseling and Search Assistance

■ B. ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS / DEFINITIONS

BFO	Best and Final Offer
C.G.S.	Connecticut General Statutes
CHRO	Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CT)
CT	Connecticut
DAS	Department of Administrative Services (CT)
DOH	Department of Housing (CT)
DSS	Department of Social Services (CT)
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act (CT)
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development (U.S.)
IRS	Internal Revenue Service (U.S.)
LOI	Letter of Intent
OAG	Office of the Attorney General (CT)
OPM	Office of Policy and Management (CT)
OSC	Office of the State Comptroller (CT)
POS	Purchase of Service
P.A.	Public Act (CT)
RFP	Request For Proposals
SEEC	State Elections Enforcement Commission (CT)
U.S.	United States

- *contractor:* a private provider organization that enters into a POS contract with DOH as a result of this RFP

- *private provider organization*: a non-state entity that is either a for-profit or a not-for-profit incorporated organization
- *proposer*: a private provider organization that has submitted a proposal to DOH in response to this RFP
- *prospective proposer*: a private provider organization or that may submit a proposal to DOH in response to this RFP, but has not yet done so
- *subcontractor*: an individual (other than an employee of the contractor) or business entity hired by a contractor to provide a specific health or human service as part of a POS contract with DOH as a result of this RFP

■ C. INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Official Contact.** The individual below is the Official Contact for purposes of this RFP. The Official Contact is the **only authorized contact** for this procurement and, as such, handles all related communications on behalf of DOH. Proposers, prospective proposers, and other interested parties are advised that any communication with any other DOH employee(s) (including appointed officials) or personnel under contract to DOH about this RFP is strictly prohibited. Proposers or prospective proposers who violate this instruction may risk disqualification from further consideration.

Name: Steve DiLella, Director, Individual and Family Support Programs, DOH
Address: 505 Hudson Street, Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: 860-271-8081
E-Mail: Steve.DiLella@ct.gov

Please ensure that e-mail screening software (if used) recognizes and accepts e-mails from the Official Contact.

- 2. RFP Information.** This RFP, any amendments to this RFP, and other information associated with this procurement are available in electronic format from the Official Contact or via the internet at the following locations:

- DOH's Web Page
<http://www.ct.gov/doh>
- State Contracting Portal
<http://das.ct.gov/cr1.aspx?page=12>

It is strongly recommended that any proposer or prospective proposer interested in this procurement subscribe to receive e-mail alerts from the State Contracting Portal. Subscribers will receive a daily e-mail announcing procurements and addenda that are posted on the portal. This service is provided as a courtesy to assist in monitoring activities associated with State procurements, including this RFP.

Printed copies of all documents are also available from the Official Contact upon request.

3. Contract Awards. The award of any contract pursuant to this RFP is dependent upon the availability of funding to DOH. DOH anticipates the following:

- Total Funding Available: \$365,000
- Contract Cost: Confidential
- Contract Term: 7/1/2016 to 6/30/2019

DOH may select one or more proposals at its discretion depending on the results of the evaluation process and the funding available.

4. Eligibility. Private provider organizations with a principal place of business in Connecticut, are eligible to submit proposals in response to this RFP. Individuals and any entity that is not a duly formed corporate entity are ineligible to participate in this procurement.

5. Minimum Qualifications of Proposers. To qualify for a contract award, a proposer must have the following minimum qualifications:

Qualified organizations must have a minimum of three years of demonstrated experience with tenant education, mobility counseling, and housing search assistance. Eligible organizations include private for-profit and not-for-profit incorporated organizations. Bidders that propose the use of subcontractors must present the same information about the proposed subcontractors as for bidders. Use of subcontractors is subject to the approval of DOH.

6. Procurement Schedule. See below. Dates after the due date for proposals ("Proposals Due") are target dates only (*). DOH may amend the schedule at its discretion. Any change will be made by means of an amendment to this RFP and will be posted on the State Contracting Portal and DOH's Web Page.

- RFP Released: October 20, 2015
- Letter of Intent Due: N/A
- Deadline for Questions: November 17, 2015
- Answers Released: November 24, 2015
- Proposals Due: December 11, 2015
- (*) Start of Contract: 7/1/2016

7. Letter of Intent. A Letter of Intent (LOI) is not required by this RFP.

8. Inquiry Procedures. All questions regarding this RFP or DOH's procurement process must be directed, in writing, to the Official Contact before the deadline specified in the Procurement Schedule. The early submission of questions is encouraged. Questions will not be accepted or answered verbally – neither in person nor over the telephone. All questions determined by DOH to be material to this procurement and received before the deadline will be answered. At its discretion, DOH may or may not respond to questions received after the deadline. DOH may combine similar questions and give only one answer. All questions and answers will be compiled into a written amendment to this RFP. If in DOH's determination any answer to any question constitutes a material change to the RFP, the question and answer will be placed at the beginning of the amendment and duly noted as such. DOH will release the answers to the questions on the date(s) established in the Procurement Schedule. DOH will publish any and all amendments to this RFP on the State Contracting Portal and on DOH's Web Page.

9. Submission Date and Time. The Official Contact is the **only authorized recipient** of proposals submitted in response to this RFP. Proposals must be received by the Official Contact on or before the due date and time:

- Due Date: Friday December 11, 2015
- Time: 3:00 pm, Eastern Standard Time

Faxed or e-mailed proposals will not be evaluated. DOH will not accept a postmark date as the basis for meeting the submission due date and time. Proposers should not interpret or otherwise construe receipt of a proposal after the due date and time as acceptance of the proposal since the actual receipt of the proposal is a clerical function. When hand-delivering proposals, proposers should allow extra time due to building security procedures. Proposals received after the due date and time may be accepted by DOH as a clerical function, but such late proposals will be evaluated for consideration under this RFP only at the discretion of DOH. At the discretion of DOH, late proposals may be destroyed or returned by the submitters.

An acceptable submission must include the following:

- one (1) original proposal;
- Five (5) conforming electronic copies. Compact Disks and/or flash drives clearly labeled with the legal name of the respondent and the RFP Name or Number

The original proposal must carry original signatures and be clearly marked on the cover as "Original." Unsigned proposals will be evaluated for consideration under this RFP only at the discretion of DOH. The original proposal and each conforming copy of the proposal must be complete, properly formatted and outlined, and ready for evaluation by the Screening Committee. **The electronic copies of the proposal must be compatible with Microsoft Office Word except for the Budget, which may be compatible with Microsoft Office Excel.** For the electronic copies, required Appendices and Forms identified in Section IV may be scanned and submitted in Portable Document Format (PDF) or similar file format.

10. Multiple Proposals. Multiple proposals from one organization will not be accepted.

11. Declaration of Confidential Information. Proposers are advised that all materials associated with this procurement are subject to the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the Privacy Act, and all rules, regulations and interpretations resulting from them. If a proposer deems that certain information required by this RFP is confidential, the proposer must label such information as CONFIDENTIAL. In Section C of the proposal submission, the proposer must reference where the information labeled CONFIDENTIAL is located in the proposal. *EXAMPLE: Section G.1.a.* For each subsection so referenced, the proposer must provide a convincing explanation sufficient to justify an exemption of the information from release under the FOIA. The explanation must be stated in terms of (a) the prospective harm to the competitive position of the proposer that would result if the identified information were to be released and (b) the reasons why the information is legally exempt from release pursuant to C.G.S. § 1-210(b). Acceptance of a proposal by DOH where such proposal contains such confidentiality requests is not an agreement that such material is confidential or exempt from disclosure. DOH reserves the right to make such determination. All applications submitted in response to this RFP are the sole property of the State and subject to the provisions of Connecticut's FOIA, CGS §1-200 et seq., which provides that public records and documents are subject to public access and copying unless specific exemptions to disclosure exist. If an applicant

believes that portions of its application are exempt from disclosure, the applicant should mark the specific portions as confidential. Acceptance of an application by DOH that contains such reservations is not an agreement that the material is confidential or exempt from disclosure

12. Conflict of Interest - Disclosure Statement. Proposers must include a disclosure statement concerning any current business relationships (within the last three (3) years) that pose a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85. A conflict of interest exists when a relationship exists between the proposer and a public official (including an elected official) or State employee that may interfere with fair competition or may be adverse to the interests of the State. The existence of a conflict of interest is not, in and of itself, evidence of wrongdoing. A conflict of interest may, however, become a legal matter if a proposer tries to influence, or succeeds in influencing, the outcome of an official decision for their personal or corporate benefit. DOH will determine whether any disclosed conflict of interest poses a substantial advantage to the proposer over the competition, decreases the overall competitiveness of this procurement, or is not in the best interests of the State. In the absence of any conflict of interest, a proposer must affirm such in the disclosure statement. *Example: "[name of proposer] has no current business relationship (within the last three (3) years) that poses a conflict of interest, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-85."*

■ D. PROPOSAL FORMAT

1. **Required Outline.** All proposals must follow the required outline presented in Section IV – Proposal Outline. Submissions that fail to follow the required outline may be deemed non-responsive and not evaluated.
2. **Cover Sheet.** The Cover Sheet is Page 1 of the proposal. Proposers must complete and use the **Cover Sheet** form, which is embedded in this section as a hyperlink. [Cover Sheet Mobility RFP.docx](#)
3. **Table of Contents.** All proposals must include a Table of Contents that conforms to the required proposal outline. (See Section IV.)
4. **Executive Summary.** Proposals must include a high-level summary, not exceeding two (2) pages, of the main proposal and cost proposal. The Executive Summary shall include: a) the respondent's minimum of three (3) years of demonstrated experience with tenant education, mobility counseling, and housing search assistance; and (b) methodology of provision of case management services in conjunction with housing search and mobility counseling.
5. **Attachments.** Attachments other than the required Appendices or Forms identified in Section IV are not permitted and will not be evaluated. Further, the required Appendices or Forms must not be altered or used to extend, enhance, or replace any component required by this RFP. Failure to abide by these instructions may result in disqualification.
6. **Style Requirements.** Submitted proposals must conform to the following specifications:

Binding Type: Loose leaf binders with the legal name of the proposer and the RFP Name appearing on the outside front cover of the binder: **Housing Mobility Counseling and Search Assistance Program 2015_18632 RFP**

Dividers: A tab sheet keyed to the table of contents must separate each subsection of the proposal; the title of each subsection must appear on the tab sheet

Paper Size: 8 ½" x 11" "portrait" orientation

Page Limit: 10 double-sided, consecutively numbered pages (20 pages total) **excluding** all required Appendices and Forms

Print Style: 2-sided

Font Size: Minimum 11 point

Font Type: Arial or Tahoma

Margins: The binding edge margin of all pages shall be a minimum of one and one half inches (1½"); all other margins shall be one inch (1")

Line Spacing: Single-spaced

- 7. Pagination.** The proposer's name must be displayed in the header of each page. All pages, from the Cover Sheet through the required Appendices and Forms, must be numbered in the footer.

Packaging and Labeling Requirements. All proposals must be submitted in sealed envelopes or packages and be addressed to the Official Contact. The legal name and address of the proposer must appear in the upper left corner of the envelope or package. The RFP Name or Number must be clearly displayed on the envelope or package: **Housing Mobility Counseling and Search Assistance Program 2015_18632 RFP**

Delivery Condition - The proposal, including the original copy and all required electronic format copies, must be submitted in a sealed envelope or box by the stated due date and time. Those required documents that cannot be converted into electronic format may be excluded from the electronic copy. All materials must be in Microsoft Word, Excel or PDF.

Any received proposal that does not conform to these packaging or labeling instructions may be accepted or excluded from evaluation, at the discretion of DOH. Any proposal excluded from evaluation may be destroyed or returned to the submitter at DOH's discretion.

■ E. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

- 1. Evaluation Process.** It is the intent of DOH to conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of proposals received in response to this RFP. When evaluating proposals, negotiating with successful proposers, and awarding contracts, DOH will conform to DOH's written procedures for POS procurements (pursuant to C.G.S. § 4-217) and the State's Code of Ethics (pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 1-84 and 1-85).
- 2. Screening Committee.** DOH will designate a Screening Committee to evaluate proposals submitted in response to this RFP. The contents of all submitted proposals, including any confidential information, will be shared with the Screening Committee. Attempts by any proposer (or representative of any proposer) to contact or influence any member of the Screening Committee may result in disqualification of the proposer.
- 3. Submission Requirements.** All proposals must comply with the requirements specified in this RFP. Proposals that fail to follow instructions or satisfy these

submission requirements may, at the discretion of DOH, be rejected without further review.

4. Evaluation Criteria (and Weights). Proposals that comply with the requirements specified in this RFP will be evaluated according to the established criteria. The criteria are the objective standards that the Screening Committee will use to evaluate the merits of the proposals. Only the criteria listed below will be used to evaluate proposals. The criteria are weighted according to their relative importance. The weights are confidential.

- Organizational Profile
- Proposed Program Description
- Staffing Plan
- Program Outcome Requirements
- Quality Assurance Requirements
- Financial Profile
- Budget and Budget Narrative
- Appendices

Note:

As part of its evaluation of the Staffing Plan, the Screening Committee will consider the respondent's demonstrated commitment to affirmative action, as required by the Regulations of CT State Agencies § 46A-68j-30(10).

5. Proposer Selection. Upon completing its evaluation of proposals, the Screening Committee will submit the rankings of all proposals to DOH's Commissioner. The final selection of a successful proposer is at the discretion of DOH's Commissioner. Any proposer selected will be so notified and awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract with DOH. Proposers will not be allowed to negotiate for a higher amount of funds or a higher administrative/overhead percentage than that submitted in the proposed budget. Such negotiations may, but will not automatically, result in a contract. Pursuant to Governor M. Jodi Rell's Executive Order No. 3, any resulting contract will be posted on the State Contracting Portal. The Screening Committee may select as few or as many proposals needed to ensure the population is being served in all areas of the state. All unsuccessful proposers will be notified by e-mail or U.S. mail, at DOH's discretion, about the outcome of the evaluation and proposer selection process.

6. Debriefing. After receiving notification from DOH, any proposer may contact the Official Contact and request a debriefing of the procurement process and its proposal. If proposers still have questions after receiving this information, they may contact the Official Contact and request a meeting with DOH to discuss the procurement process. DOH shall schedule and conduct debriefing meetings that have been properly requested promptly following DOH's receipt of a request. The debriefing meeting will not include comparisons of any proposal with other proposals, nor will the identity of the evaluators be released. The debriefing process may not be used to change, alter or modify the outcome of a competitive procurement. More detailed information about requesting a debriefing may be obtained from the Official Contact.

7. Appeal Process. Any time after the submission due date, but **not later than thirty (30) days** after DOH notifies proposers about the outcome of a competitive procurement, proposers may submit an appeal to DOH. The e-mail sent date or the postmark date on the notification envelope will be considered "day one" of the thirty

(30) days. Proposers may appeal any aspect of DOH's competitive procurement; however, such appeal must be in writing and must set forth facts or evidence in sufficient and convincing detail for DOH to determine whether during any aspect of the competitive procurement there was a failure to comply with the State's statutes, regulations or standards concerning competitive procurement or the provisions of this RFP. Any such appeal must be submitted to DOH's Commissioner with a copy to the Official Contact. The proposer must include the basis for the appeal and the remedy requested. The filing of an appeal shall not be deemed sufficient reason for DOH to delay, suspend, cancel or terminate the procurement process or execution of a contract. More detailed information about filing an appeal may be obtained from the Official Contact.

- 8. Contest of Solicitation or Award.** Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 4e-36, "Any bidder or proposer on a state contract may contest the solicitation or award of a contract to a subcommittee of the State Contracting Standards Board..." More detailed information is available on the State Contracting Standards Board web site at <http://www.ct.gov/scsb/site/default.asp>.
- 9. Contract Execution.** Any contract developed and executed as a result of this RFP is subject to DOH's contracting procedures, which may include approval by the OAG.
- 10. Reservations.** DOH reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP, to modify or waive any requirement, condition or other term set forth in this RFP, to request additional information at any time from one or more applicants, to select any number of applications submitted in response to this RFP, or to reject any or all such applications, in each case at DOH's sole discretion. DOH may exercise the foregoing rights at any time without notice and without liability to any applicant or any other party. Applications submitted in response to this RFP shall be prepared at the sole expense of the applicant and shall not obligate DOH to procure any of the services described therein or herein from any applicant. DOH shall not be obligated to any applicant until a final written agreement has been executed by all necessary parties thereto and all applicable approvals have been obtained.

II. MANDATORY PROVISIONS

■ A. POS STANDARD CONTRACT, PARTS I AND II

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the proposer implicitly agrees to comply with the provisions of Parts I and II of the State's "standard contract" for POS:

Part I of the standard contract is maintained by DOH and will include the scope of services, contract performance, quality assurance, reports, terms of payment, budget, and other program-specific provisions of any resulting POS contract.

Part II of the standard contract is maintained by OPM and includes the mandatory terms and conditions of the POS contract. Part II is available on OPM's website at: <http://www.ct.gov/opm/site/default.asp>

Note:

Included in Part II of the standard contract is the State Elections Enforcement Commission's notice (pursuant to C.G.S. § 9-612(g) (2)) advising executive branch State contractors and prospective State contractors of the ban on campaign contributions and solicitations.

Part I of the standard contract may be amended by means of a written instrument signed by DOH, the selected proposer (contractor), and, if required, the Attorney General's Office. Part II of the standard contract may be amended only in consultation with, and with the approval of OPM and the Attorney General's Office.

■ B. ASSURANCES

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, a proposer implicitly gives the following assurances:

- 1. Collusion.** The proposer represents and warrants that the proposer did not participate in any part of the RFP development process and had no knowledge of the specific contents of the RFP prior to its issuance. The proposer further represents and warrants that no agent, representative, or employee of the State participated directly in the preparation of the proposer's proposal. The proposer also represents and warrants that the submitted proposal is in all respects fair and is made without collusion or fraud.
- 2. State Officials and Employees.** The proposer certifies that no elected or appointed official or employee of the State has or will benefit financially or materially from any contract resulting from this RFP. DOH may terminate a resulting contract if it is determined that gratuities of any kind were either offered or received by any of the aforementioned officials or employees from the proposer, contractor, or its agents or employees.
- 3. Competitors.** The proposer assures that the submitted proposal is not made in connection with any competing organization or competitor submitting a separate proposal in response to this RFP. No attempt has been made, or will be made, by the proposer to induce any other organization or competitor to submit, or not submit, a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition. The proposer further

assures that the proposed costs have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement with any other organization or competitor for the purpose of restricting competition. Nor has the proposer knowingly disclosed the proposed costs on a prior basis, either directly or indirectly, to any other organization or competitor.

- 4. Validity of Proposal.** The proposer certifies that the proposal represents a valid and binding offer to provide services in accordance with the terms and provisions described in this RFP and any amendments or attachments hereto. The proposal shall remain valid for a period of 180 days after the submission due date and may be extended beyond that time by mutual agreement. At its sole discretion, DOH may include the proposal, by reference or otherwise, into any contract with the successful proposer.
- 5. Press Releases.** The proposer agrees to obtain prior written consent and approval of DOH for press releases that relate in any manner to this RFP or any resultant contract.

■ C. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, a proposer implicitly agrees to comply with the following terms and conditions:

- 1. Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action.** The State is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action employer and does not discriminate in its hiring, employment, or business practices. The State is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services, or activities.
- 2. Preparation Expenses.** Neither the State nor DOH shall assume any liability for expenses incurred by a proposer in preparing, submitting, or clarifying any proposal submitted in response to this RFP.
- 3. Exclusion of Taxes.** DOH is exempt from the payment of excise and sales taxes imposed by the federal government and the State. Proposers are liable for any other applicable taxes.
- 4. Proposed Costs.** No cost submissions that are contingent upon a State action will be accepted. All proposed costs must be fixed through the entire term of the contract.
- 5. Changes to Proposal.** No additions or changes to the original proposal will be allowed after submission. While changes are not permitted, DOH may request and authorize proposers to submit written clarification of their proposals, in a manner or format prescribed by DOH, and at the proposer's expense.
- 6. Supplemental Information.** Supplemental information will not be considered after the deadline submission of proposals, unless specifically requested by DOH. DOH may ask a proposer to give demonstrations, interviews, oral presentations or further explanations to clarify information contained in a proposal. Any such demonstration, interview, oral presentation or other supplemental information will be at a time selected and in a place provided by DOH. At its sole discretion, DOH may limit the

number of proposers invited to make such a demonstration, interview, or oral presentation and may limit the number of attendees per proposer.

- 7. Presentation of Supporting Evidence.** If requested by DOH, a proposer must be prepared to present evidence of experience, ability, data reporting capabilities, financial standing, or other information necessary to satisfactorily meet the requirements set forth or implied in this RFP. DOH may make onsite visits to an operational facility or facilities of a proposer to evaluate further the proposer's capability to perform the duties required by this RFP. At its discretion, DOH may also check or contact any reference provided by the proposer.
- 8. RFP Is Not An Offer.** Neither this RFP nor any subsequent discussions shall give rise to any commitment on the part of the State or DOH or confer any rights on any proposer unless and until a contract is fully executed by the necessary parties. The contract document will represent the entire agreement between the proposer and DOH and will supersede all prior negotiations, representations or agreements, alleged or made, between the parties. The State shall assume no liability for costs incurred by the proposer or for payment of services under the terms of the contract until the successful proposer is notified that the contract has been accepted and approved by DOH and, if required, by the Attorney General's Office.

■ D. RIGHTS RESERVED TO THE STATE

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, a proposer implicitly accepts that the following rights are reserved to the State:

- 1. Timing Sequence.** The timing and sequence of events associated with this RFP shall ultimately be determined by DOH.
- 2. Amending or Canceling RFP.** DOH reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP on any date and at any time, if DOH deems it to be necessary, appropriate, or otherwise in the best interests of the State.
- 3. No Acceptable Proposals.** In the event that no acceptable proposals are submitted in response to this RFP, DOH may reopen the procurement process, if it is determined to be in the best interests of the State.
- 4. Award and Rejection of Proposals.** DOH reserves the right to award in part and/or to reject any and all proposals in whole or in part, for any reason or for no reason. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, DOH may waive or modify any requirement, condition or other term set forth in the RFP if in its judgment the best interests of the State will be served. DOH reserves the right to reject the proposal of any proposer who submits a proposal after the submission date and time or otherwise not in conformity with the submission requirements set forth in this RFP.
- 5. Sole Property of the State.** All proposals submitted in response to this RFP are to be the sole property of the State. Any product, whether acceptable or unacceptable, developed under a contract awarded as a result of this RFP shall be the sole property of the State, unless stated otherwise in this RFP or subsequent contract. The right to publish, distribute, or disseminate any and all information or reports, or part thereof, shall accrue to the State without recourse.

- 6. Contract Negotiation.** DOH reserves the right to negotiate or contract for all or any portion of the services contained in this RFP. DOH further reserves the right to contract with one or more proposer for such services. After reviewing the scored criteria, DOH may seek Best and Final Offers (BFO) on cost from proposers. DOH may set parameters on any BFOs received.
- 7. Clerical Errors in Award.** DOH reserves the right to correct inaccurate awards resulting from its clerical errors. This may include, in extreme circumstances, revoking the awarding of a contract already made to a proposer and subsequently awarding the contract to another proposer. Such action on the part of the State shall not constitute a breach of contract on the part of the State since the contract with the initial proposer is deemed to be void *ab initio* and of no effect as if no contract ever existed between the State and the proposer.
- 8. Key Personnel.** When DOH is the sole funder of a purchased service, DOH reserves the right to approve any additions, deletions, or changes in key personnel, with the exception of key personnel who have terminated employment. DOH also reserves the right to approve replacements for key personnel who have terminated employment. DOH further reserves the right to require the removal and replacement of any of the proposer's key personnel who do not perform adequately, regardless of whether they were previously approved by DOH.

■ E. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the proposer implicitly agrees to comply with all applicable State and federal laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, the following:

- 1. Freedom of Information, C.G.S. § 1-210(b).** The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) generally requires the disclosure of documents in the possession of the State upon request of any citizen, unless the content of the document falls within certain categories of exemption, as defined by C.G.S. § 1-210(b). Proposers are generally advised not to include in their proposals any confidential information. If the proposer indicates that certain documentation, as required by this RFP, is submitted in confidence, the State will endeavor to keep said information confidential to the extent permitted by law. The State has no obligation to initiate, prosecute, or defend any legal proceeding or to seek a protective order or other similar relief to prevent disclosure of any information pursuant to a FOIA request. The proposer has the burden of establishing the availability of any FOIA exemption in any proceeding where it is an issue. While a proposer may claim an exemption to the State's FOIA, the final administrative authority to release or exempt any or all material so identified rests with the State. In no event shall the State or any of its employees have any liability for disclosure of documents or information in the possession of the State and which the State or its employees believe(s) to be required pursuant to the FOIA or other requirements of law.
- 2. Contract Compliance, C.G.S. § 4a-60 and Regulations of CT State Agencies § 46a-68j-21 thru 43, inclusive.** CT statute and regulations impose certain obligations on State agencies (as well as contractors and subcontractors doing business with the State) to insure that State agencies do not enter into contracts with organizations or businesses that discriminate against protected class persons.

3. Consulting Agreements, C.G.S. § 4a-81. Proposals for State contracts with a value of \$50,000 or more in a calendar or fiscal year, excluding leases and licensing agreements of any value, shall require a consulting agreement affidavit attesting to whether any consulting agreement has been entered into in connection with the proposal. As used herein "consulting agreement" means any written or oral agreement to retain the services, for a fee, of a consultant for the purposes of (A) providing counsel to a contractor, vendor, consultant or other entity seeking to conduct, or conducting, business with the State, (B) contacting, whether in writing or orally, any executive, judicial, or administrative office of the State, including any department, institution, bureau, board, commission, authority, official or employee for the purpose of solicitation, dispute resolution, introduction, requests for information or (C) any other similar activity related to such contract. Consulting agreement does not include any agreements entered into with a consultant who is registered under the provisions of C.G.S. Chapter 10 as of the date such affidavit is submitted in accordance with the provisions of C.G.S. § 4a-81. The proposer may upload the Consulting Agreement Affidavit (OPM Ethics Form 5) through an automated system hosted by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS)/Procurement Division, and DOH will review said document online. The [DAS guide to uploading affidavits and nondiscrimination forms online](#) is embedded in this RFP as a hyperlink.

IMPORTANT NOTE: A proposer must complete and submit OPM Ethics Form 5 by the due date and time for proposals in response to this RFP.

4. Gift and Campaign Contributions, C.G.S. §§ 4-250 and 4-252(c); Governor M. Jodi Rell's Executive Orders No. 1, Para. 8 and No. 7C, Para. 10; C.G.S. § 9-612(g) (2). If a proposer is awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract with an anticipated value of \$50,000 or more in a calendar or fiscal year, the proposer must fully disclose any gifts or lawful contributions made to campaigns of candidates for statewide public office or the General Assembly. Municipalities and CT State agencies are exempt from this requirement. The successful proposer may upload the Gift and Campaign Contributions Certification (OPM Ethics Form 1) through an automated system hosted by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS)/Procurement Division, and DOH will review said document online. The [DAS guide to uploading affidavits and nondiscrimination forms online](#) is embedded in this RFP as a hyperlink.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The successful proposer must complete and submit OPM Ethics Form 1 prior to contract execution.

5. Nondiscrimination Certification, C.G.S. §§ 4a-60(a) (1) and 4a-60a (a) (1). If a proposer is awarded an opportunity to negotiate a contract, the proposer must provide DOH with *written representation* or *documentation* that certifies the proposer complies with the State's nondiscrimination agreements and warranties. A nondiscrimination certification is required for all State contracts – regardless of type, term, cost, or value. Municipalities and CT State agencies are exempt from this requirement. The successful proposer may upload the Nondiscrimination Certification through an automated system hosted by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS)/Procurement Division, and DOH will review said document online. The [DAS guide to uploading affidavits and nondiscrimination forms online](#) is embedded in this RFP as a hyperlink.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The successful proposer must complete and submit the appropriate nondiscrimination certification form prior to contract execution.

III. PROGRAM INFORMATION

■ A. DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

DOH strengthens and revitalizes communities by promoting affordable housing opportunities. DOH seeks to eliminate homelessness and to catalyze the creation and preservation of quality, affordable housing to meet the needs of all individuals and families statewide to ensure that Connecticut continues to be a great place to live and work.

DOH works in concert with municipal leaders, public agencies, community groups, local housing authorities, and other housing developers in the planning and development of affordable homeownership and rental housing units, the preservation of existing multi-family housing developments, community revitalization and financial and other support for our most vulnerable residents through our funding and technical support programs. As the State's lead agency for all matters relating to housing, DOH provides leadership for all aspects of policy and planning relating to the development, redevelopment, preservation, maintenance and improvement of housing serving very low, low, and moderate income individuals and families. DOH is also responsible for overseeing compliance with applicable statutes, regulations and financial assistance agreements for funded activities through long-term program compliance monitoring.

Department Mission

A Connecticut where affordable housing in strong, vibrant and inclusive communities is accessible to individuals and families across the state and homelessness is a thing of the past.



B. PROGRAM OVERVIEW: Program Title: Housing Mobility Counseling and Search Assistance Program

DOH is requesting proposals from qualified organizations to provide tenant education, mobility counseling, and housing search assistance for eligible participants in DOH's rent subsidy programs: Section 8 and RAP. Services will have a strong emphasis on mobility moves from areas of low opportunity to areas of high opportunity, with a priority of families with young children.

■ C. MAIN PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

1. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY AND STRUCTURE

General - Responses to the requirements in this section must describe the background and experience of the proposer and any proposed subcontractors. The responses must also address the details regarding the capacity and resources of the proposer and any proposed subcontractors relevant to providing tenant education, mobility counseling, and housing search assistance.

(a) Purpose/Mission: Describe how your proposed program fits within your organization's mission and current programs. Summarize the services you currently provide within the geographical area in which you are proposing to perform services under this RFP. An organizational chart shall be included in Section IV.H, Appendices.

(b) Entity Type/Years of Operation: Give a brief overview of your organization. Demonstrate your organization's experience providing tenant education, mobility counseling, and housing search assistance services for at least three years, or equivalent and the provision of case management services in conjunction with mobility counseling. Detail current number of clients being served, client-to-staff ratio and funding source(s).

2. Proposed Program Description

A. Program Objectives – The proposer must describe how it will meet the following objectives of the Housing Mobility Counseling and Search Assistance Program:

- 1) Encourage racial and economic integration when consistent with an individual's or a family's wishes;
- 2) Ensure participants are able to access the housing of their choice in the neighborhood of their choice after assessing all available housing options;
- 3) Comply with the Fair Housing Act and all other applicable fair housing legal requirements.

B. Consumer Support Services - The proposer must describe how it will provide the following consumer support services to maximize Section 8 and RAP utilization:

1) Tenant education and recruitment of program participants

a. Annually contact 100% of the households that participate in, or that have been selected to participate in either DOH's Section 8 or RAP program in the area proposed to be served by the proposer to inform them of the Housing Mobility Counseling and Search Assistance Program and to invite these households to participate;

b. Prepare and disseminate written and/or oral information in English and Spanish on the existence of the Housing Mobility Counseling and Search Assistance Program, services provided, and the availability of assistance to assist eligible households in locating rental housing.

c. Prepare and disseminate written and/or oral information in English and Spanish on the importance of housing choice and the effect that housing location has on education and other important outcomes in a person's life.

d. Prepare and disseminate written information describing the applicable fair housing laws for all program participants with an emphasis on source of income protections and that includes information on how to make a fair housing complaint.

e. The proposer shall explain how it will provide the following tenant education and support services, including

1. Life skills training, including budgeting and credit management,

2. The role that housing location plays in all aspects of a person's life,
3. Tenant and landlord responsibilities,
4. How to conduct and document a housing search,
5. How to establish and maintain good references and their importance in the housing search,
6. Understanding the lease and its obligations,
7. Communications and interviewing skills,
8. Housekeeping,
9. Fair housing laws, how to identify discrimination, and what to do if a participant is the victim of housing discrimination,
10. Other strategies aimed at increasing the clients' awareness on housing related issues,
11. Understanding the differences between areas of low opportunity and areas of high opportunity,
12. Developing and maintaining a database and resource material for support services,
13. Providing information and resource material regarding area communities including but not limited to information on crime statistics, school success, public transportation, potential local employment opportunities, health care providers, grocery stores, etc.,
14. Working with the client to complete a housing needs assessment,
15. Working with the client to develop goals and action plans to meet these goals,
16. Providing assistance with developing individual family budget and financial management plans including budgeting for the security deposit and developing plans to satisfy outstanding debts/judgments,
17. Assisting clients with the completion and submission of rental applications and/or necessary program documents,
18. Assistance with housing search including but not limited to providing access to on-line housing search tools, newspapers, local housing advertising, tours of new localities, arranging meetings with landlords, etc.,
19. Documenting the outcome of each unit viewing, explaining Section 8, RAP and mobility program to landlords unfamiliar with the program(s),
20. Encouraging the victims of housing discrimination to report it to an enforcement agency; and
21. Negotiating rental and security deposit amounts.

2) Provision of mobility counseling and housing search services. The proposer shall explain how it will:

- a. Provide Mobility Counseling and Search Assistance to assist clients obtain rental units in neighborhoods they choose after completing a housing needs assessment and to increase utilization of Section 8 vouchers and RAP certificates,

- b. Counsel program participants on budgeting for housing, utilities and other expenses, suggestions on how to address bad debts, unpaid rent, and unpaid utilities,
- c. Assist with program participants' housing searches, including, but not limited to, providing access to on-line housing search tools, newspapers, local housing advertising, tours of higher opportunity communities, arranging meetings with landlords, etc.,
- d. Assist program participants with the moving process, including assisting in arranging for an inspection of the new home, information about enrolling children in school, notifying businesses and governmental agencies of an address change, locating and organizing documents needed during a move, transferring utilities, etc.,
- e. Counsel program participants on fair housing issues, including how to identify discrimination, referrals to fair housing agencies and assistance with making a complaint,
- f. Use housing needs assessment tools to assist program participants to identify potential municipalities and neighborhoods, priorities for evaluating potential neighborhoods (e.g. access to jobs, public transportation, family, day care, schools, etc.) and housing units (e.g. accessible features, number of bedrooms, washer/dryer, etc.), and financial constraints such as not being able to exceed the payment standards of the Section 8 or RAP. Please attach any housing assessment tools the proposer would use with Section 8 and RAP tenants if successful in this proposal,
- g. Outreach to DOH clients in Section 8, and RAP, by means including but not limited to actively seeking from DOH's housing agent client recertification lists and abatement lists and to forward to the contractors flyers and brochures about mobility and search services to give to clients; and
- h. Provide informational brochures and Materials to the DOH's housing agent, so that they can be included in the annual recertification package.

C. Participant Outcomes – The proposer shall explain how it will ensure that:

- a. Program participants in the proposer's proposed service area will have access to safe, stable, decent, and affordable housing that meets their identified housing needs;
- b. Program participants in the proposer's proposed service area will have access to services and supports to improve their quality of life and achieve self-sufficiency;
- c. Program participants in the proposer's proposed service area will be able to choose and secure housing in the neighborhoods of their choice.

D. Staffing Requirements

Each proposal shall include the following information about the number and qualifications of staff that the respondent intends to employ to deliver the services required by this RFP. If the respondent is proposing the use of any subcontractors to provide any of the services required by this RFP, provide this information about each subcontractor and partner.

- a. **Key Personnel:** Provide the names and/or titles of proposed personnel, the number of hours per week and percentage of time to be dedicated to the program for each individual assigned to the program, and how this staffing will successfully meet this RFP's requirements without duplicating any services being provided pursuant to any other contract, grant, or other agreement. Indicate any vacant or new positions. Summarize the proposer's procedures to secure and retain professional staff and the method of evaluating personnel performance. Identify the personnel who will be responsible for program management responsibilities that shall include, but not be limited to: a) day-to-day oversight of the program; b) attending all program meetings at the request of DOH; and c) responding to DOH's requests for program status updates, and ad hoc and interim reports.
- b. **Job Descriptions/Resumes:** Attach current job descriptions in Section IV.H. Appendices for all proposed funded positions and resumes for all key personnel that are currently employed by the proposer.
- c. **Staff-to-Client Ratio:** Describe the support staff (case manager) to client ratio proposed for the program and the rationale used to arrive at that ratio. NOTE: There is no pre-set ratio determined by DOH.

F. Data and Technology Requirements

- a. The proposer shall provide the following information about the proposer's information management and performance measurement systems. If the proposer is proposing the use of any subcontractors to provide any of the services required by this RFP, provide this information about each subcontractor. Describe the data management system proposed for use during the administration of the Housing Mobility Counseling and Search Assistance Program
- b. Describe the hardware and software systems proposed for use during the administration of the Housing Mobility Counseling and Search Assistance Program.

G. Program Outcome Requirements

The proposer must demonstrate how it will be able to obtain the following outcomes:

Outcome 1: Increase knowledge of the mobility counseling/search assistance program and the importance of housing choice

- a. 100% of housing voucher or certificate holders in the geographic area served by the contractor receive information orally or in writing about the mobility counseling/search assistance program;
- b. 100% of housing voucher or certificate holders in the geographic area served by the contractor receive information about the fair housing laws with an emphasis on source of income protections;
- c. 100% of housing voucher or certificate holders in the geographic area served by the contractor receive information on the importance of housing choice and the impact housing location has on all aspects of a person's life.

Outcome 2: 25% of households move to an area of higher opportunity.

Outcome 3: Clients obtain housing that meets the housing needs identified in the housing needs assessment tool

- a. 20% of clients participating in the mobility counseling/search assistance program have obtained housing that meets all of their identified housing needs;
- b. 50% of clients participating in the mobility counseling/search assistance program have obtained housing that meets 50% or more of their identified housing needs, including their primary housing need;
- c. 20% of clients participating in the mobility counseling/search assistance program have obtained housing that meets their primary housing need;

H. QUALITY ASSURANCE REQUIREMENTS: Describe the proposer’s internal quality assurance process and its impact upon program operations. Describe current and planned activities to ensure service quality and how services enable clients to access and maintain stable housing.

- a. Client Satisfaction Process: Describe the proposer’s client satisfaction process (surveys, etc.). Summarize feedback (number and percent of returned surveys, summary of concerns expressed by clients, etc.). Give a brief narrative of the proposer’s follow-up actions or plans regarding concerns raised by clients. Include a copy of the proposer’s client satisfaction survey, if applicable, in Section IV.H. Appendices.
- b. Program Audit Compliance: Describe the proposer’s compliance with past contracts and/or directives. State any deficiencies identified in recent annual program audits, monitoring or corrective action plans, and if applicable, steps taken to complete any recommendations.

I. COST PROPOSAL COMPONENT

1. Financial Requirements

- a. Audited Financial Statements: The proposer shall provide audited financial statements for each of the last two fiscal years. If audited financial statements for each of the last two fiscal years are not available, the proposer shall provide comparable statements that will document the proposer’s financial position and include an explanation of the reason for submitting such documents rather than audited financial statements. Audited Financial Statements do not count toward the total page limit of the proposal.
- b. Financial Management Procedures. The proposer shall submit the proposer’s written financial management procedures that include policies/procedures for: (i) managing and tracking cash receipts/disbursements; (ii) budgeting; (iii) procurement; (iv) reconciling expenditures; (v) separation of duties/functions and (vi) payroll. Include with the proposal in Section IV.H. Appendices.
- c. Financial Capacity: Describe the organization’s financial capacity to properly isolate income and expenditures related to the services provided in connection with this RFP. Discuss the internal controls used to ensure the safeguarding of

funds to ensure that a thorough record of expenditures can be provided for purposes of an audit.

d. Leveraged Funds: Describe the proposer's long term strategy to sustain funding for the program and explain how funds provided for performing services in connection with this RFP may be used to leverage other funding.

e. Mixed Funding: If proposer is utilizing staff who will be paid from one or more funding sources other than DOH in connection with this RFP, proposer must document how staff time for this program will be tracked.

2. Budget Requirements

- a. Cost Standards: All proposed costs are subject to federal cost policy guidance and the standards developed by the State Office of Policy and Management for determining the cost of contracts, grants, and other agreements with organizations that receive funding from the State. In the event of any inconsistency, the federal cost policy guidance shall supersede the OPM cost standards. The applicable federal cost policy guidance is available at [OMB Circular A-133](#), [OMB Circular A-122](#), and Office of Community Services Information Memorandum, [Transmittal No. 02-2008](#). Be advised that the cost proposal is subject to revision prior to contract execution in order to ensure compliance with the OPM cost standards and federal cost policy guidance. More information about the cost standards is available on OPM's web site: [Cost Standards](#).
- b. Budget: **A responsive proposal shall include** a line item budget that depicts the allowable costs associated with the program, utilizing the budget form that is embedded in this section as a hyperlink. [Blank DOH Mobility Counseling budget - DOH.xls](#) All pages should be submitted and, as they are forms, are not included in the page limit. Start-up costs should be minimal and prudent; proposals will be competitively scored on financial feasibility.
- c. Budget Narrative: **A responsive proposal shall detail** how costs included in the line item budget were calculated. Either Microsoft Office Word or Excel format is acceptable. Allowable costs are those associated with the following eligible activities.

Note 1: DOH reserves the right to fund portions of a proposed budget and/or require adjustments.

Note 2: DOH reserves the right to consider all factors including cost in the final selection of a successful respondent. The opportunity to negotiate a contract with DOH will not be awarded based on cost alone.

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