

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

New Jersey Expectant & Parenting Youth (EPY) Supportive Housing

Questions? Email us anytime at dcfaskrfp@dcf.state.nj.us

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IMPORTANT CLARIFICATIONS

On page 25 of the RFP, the Appendices should also include the following documents:

#39 Attach a summary of the 5 units using the following table as per page 20

#40 Attach any intake or assessment tools that will be used for Program Approach

#41 Attach any evaluation tools that will be used to determine the effectiveness of the program

#42 At your option, citations and references to materials cited to in the Narrative may be attached as #42 instead of in the body of the narrative.

Budget and Contracting

1. Can the budget be utilized to cover the cost of mental health care for the youth?

No. The Applicant should coordinate services provided by many agencies including the DCF's Division of Child Protection and Permanency and Children's System of Care at:

<http://nj.gov/dcf/about/divisions/dcsc/>

In addition, youth in the program will likely be eligible for the Medicaid Extension for Young Adults (MEYA) to age 26.

2. If the unit is vacant, does the agency have to pay the rent for the time the unit is unrented?

The agency would be responsible for the rent for any period of time that the unit is unrented. The agency is the lease holder and is subleasing the unit to a tenant.

3. Please clarify what is to be included in the start-up costs portion of the budget? How do incidental expenses (i.e. air conditioners, bus passes, etc.) factor into the budget?

Start-up costs are one-time expenses that are necessary to ready the program for implementation and the expenses are reasonable, allocable, and allowable. Examples include items such as office furniture, computers, telephones for staff hired for the program. Additional start-up funds are not available. All start-up costs must be funded with accruals. Applicants must provide a justification and detailed summary of all expenses that must be met in order to begin program operations.

Applicants should demonstrate in their proposal their awareness of financial resources already available to youth through DCF. The agency needs to justify the reason for the specific incidental expenses to be included.

4. Can the agency spread the startup costs out throughout a year? Is there a specific formula or ratio to be followed?

No and No.

5. Can the startup costs be used for client direct and/or incidental expenses?

The start-up costs aren't for client direct and/or incidental expenses. The agency should budget for client related expenses in the "specific assistance to client" budget line item.

6. When the agency is building their budget, can they add a line item for potentially vacant units?

No.

7. To whom does the security deposit belong? Does the security deposit stay with the agency or does the youth take it with them upon departure?

The security deposit belongs to the agency and can stay with the agency when the tenant leaves.

8. What happens if the young adults do not have furniture? Does the budget allow us the opportunity to provide this? If so, who owns it after they end their tenure with us?

Providers are to include funding for “specific assistance to clients” in the budget to assist young adults in obtaining furnishings for their apartments. This funding should be available as needed for the youth in the program and is not a set amount annually or per youth. Please disregard any mention to the amount of \$3,000 previously stated at the Bidder’s Conference on 1/11/16. If furniture is purchased for the young adult, they own the furniture.

9. What percentage is permitted for administrative costs?

Providers are permitted to include general and administrative costs (G&A) in their budget proposals and DCF will determine its participation towards those costs during its review of the submitted proposal.

10. Are wrap-around funds above and beyond the \$3,000? Should this money be used to cover costs not covered by other types of funds?

All financial resources available to the youth should be explored prior to using program funding to cover incidental and direct expenses for the youth. This might include but is not limited to the DCF Independent Living Stipend, CP&P flex and Local Office funds, wraparound (Chafee) funds. Please disregard any mention to the amount of \$3,000 previously stated at the Bidder’s Conference on 1/11/16.

11. Who is responsible for cleaning the apartment in between youth tenants? Who is responsible for on-going maintenance of the unit?

The written agreement between the landlord/property management and service provider should outline who the responsible party is for the above mentioned concerns.

12. Can they use start-up funds initially to pay for a security deposit?

Yes. Agencies can use start utilize 1.5x the rent for a security deposit for each unit.

13. Can security deposits come from client specific assistance funding in subsequent years?

Yes, security deposits can come from the client specific assistance budget line in subsequent years. However, agencies should also consider having some “bridge” funds for such matters. In addition, since the security deposits will go

back to the provider, unless there are damages, new security deposits likely will not be needed each time a youth goes into a unit after a youth has moved out.

Housing Voucher Related Questions

14. Please clarify the sentence beginning, “Number of units/rental rates...” on page 20.

Number of units refers to the number of apartments. Rental rates refer to the monthly rental rate that will be charged for the unit. Please be reminded that DCA will not pay more than the Fair Market Rent Value for each specific type of unit for your county.

15. Can you post the link for the sample PBV for vouchers contract?

From our understanding of this question, we believe this is the information needed in this request:

<http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=52530b-1.pdf>.

16. Is the agency considered the service provider and the landlord? Is the rent paid directly to the agency?

Yes, the agency provides services as well as serves as the landlord to the youth. The youth pays the rent to the agency, and the agency pays the rent to the landlord through the master lease.

17. Will DCA pay the agency for a vacant apartment?

No. However, if a household is absent from the assisted unit for an extended period because a household member is hospitalized, the program participant must provide written notice to the DCA Field Office Supervisor. The participant will be asked to provide an estimate of the hospitalization period to the Field Office Supervisor. Unless circumstances warrant the period of vacancy will not exceed 120 days or the anniversary of the HAP contract whichever comes first. The program manager, or designee, may grant an extension of up to an additional 60 days in the case of an illness or rehabilitation. However, the program participant is under a mandate that the household may not be absent from the unit for a period of more than 180 consecutive calendar days for any reason. The unit will still be available to the participant upon discharge from the treatment program and the participant is required to continue paying the tenant rent to owner and any cost of utilities required under the lease during the absence from the assisted unit.

18. In the event a youth must be evicted, whose is responsible for the eviction process?

The agency awarded would be responsible for completing the eviction process in landlord-tenant court.

19. Does the voucher cover utilities? What if the utilities are already included in the master lease?

The voucher does not cover utilities. If the utilities are included in the rent, the provider may be able to charge full Fair Market Rental Rate, assuming the total price of the unit rent and utilities does not exceed the Fair Market Rental Rate of the unit.

20. Are case management funds guaranteed for the 15 year life of the voucher?

All funding is subject to annual appropriation and continued performance by the provider. All contracts may be terminated upon notice.

21. Can the agency have an agreement (via a Memorandum Of Agreement) with a landlord instead of a master lease?

Applicants who do not currently own the proposed housing units must attach an agreement or documentation signed by the current owner that includes the number of units that will be made available through a 15 year master lease, the rental rates for the units, and a statement indicating that the agreement is contingent upon award of funding.

22. Are the DCA vouchers 15-year vouchers?

The vouchers are Project Based Section 8 vouchers that have been provided to DCF for a 15 year period. The contracted grantee may have the vouchers for a 15 year period. Youth may reside in the housing unit with a goal that youth move (not mandatory) by their 26th birthday.

21. Can the clients also receive services until they are 26? It is clear that they can retain the housing/voucher to that age.

The awarded program(s) will work in partnership with DCF to coordinate ongoing services and support for youth in the program upon their 21st birthday and continuing thereafter.

22. Can the agency continue to provide intensive case management services to the youth after the age of 21?

The awarded program(s) will work in partnership with DCF to coordinate ongoing services and support for youth in the program upon their 21st birthday and continuing thereafter.

23. Because the housing vouchers are through the Department of Community Affairs, will agencies be required to report into the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)?

Yes. Agencies awarded funding that includes Section 8 project based housing vouchers will be required to report into the HMIS system. Agencies who do not already report into the system will be required to pay a \$750 annual fee for reporting and having access to the system which needs to be factored into the budget.

24. Does the agency lose the voucher if the youth takes the voucher with them when they move out?

In the circumstance that DCF is able to receive a tenant based voucher for a youth which allows them to leave the program, the agency will receive a replacement Project Based Section 8 voucher. These circumstances are not automatic and still need to be identified.

25. Can two youth share one apartment?

No.

26. How is the number of bedrooms determined for one parent and their child/children? What happens when the child turns seven while living in a one bedroom unit? What if the youth has another child while living in a one bedroom unit? Will they be relocated to larger unit? What happens if there are no larger units available?

DCA will determine the number of allowable bedrooms based on the size of the family.

Typically a parent plus one child under seven = one bedroom. When the child turns 7 the agency is permitted to get a two bedroom if the child is not of the same sex.

Parent plus two children = two bedrooms.

If a youth has another child, the provider's capacity to locate a larger unit and DCF & DCA's approval of the unit will all be determining factors in whether or

not a family can be relocated to a larger unit. These decisions will be made and planned and driven by the parent and family.

27. If an agency submits a proposal for five, one-bedroom units, and it becomes apparent that there is a much higher demand for 2 bedroom units, does the agency have the ability to add an addendum to their contract to reflect the change in number of bedrooms?

Yes, provided that the addendum is approved by DCA.

28. Can a large home with several bedrooms be used for the purposes of this RFP to receive all five vouchers?

No.

29. Can an agency receive more than five vouchers during the fifteen year period of this grant?

For each region there are only 5 vouchers offered for this particular program.

30. During gaps of occupancy in a unit, is the agency responsible for the cost of the empty unit?

Yes. The agency is recommended to work with DCF to expedite a youth to enter into the unit as soon as possible. The agency is also recommended to work with the landlord that the agency has the master lease with to negotiate these circumstances.

31. Are there any regulations that would automatically disqualify a youth from occupying an EPY supportive housing unit?

Yes, please see the DCA website- For example: Per federal housing guidelines, individuals who have been:

- evicted from public housing,
- convicted of manufacturing methamphetamines in public housing, and/or
- required to register under Meghan's Law: are not permitted to reside in an EPY supportive housing unit.

32. Can the youth break the lease?

Yes, a youth, like any other tenant can break a lease and may incur a penalty. There are some exceptions in which a tenant may be able to legally move out before the lease term ends. Please refer to NJ Landlord Tenant Laws for further guidance.

http://www.state.nj.us/dca/divisions/codes/offices/landlord_tenant_information.html

33. Does DCF have licensing or inspection regulations for the EPY supportive housing units?

There are no DCF licensing regulations for the units. There are inspections, conducted by DCA, based on DCA's regulations.

34. If an agency already has use of its own units, can a service provider repurpose them for this proposal?

Yes, however if these units are already being used for another DCF contracted housing program, this would not be allowable.

Tenant/Youth Related Questions

35. Are pregnant youth eligible?

Yes.

36. Are undocumented youth eligible for EPY supportive housing?

No, as this is a federal program which requires that the head of the household be legally in this country.

37. Are fathers and mothers and a child or children eligible for EPY supportive housing?

The decision to allow the non-custodian parent or significant other to live in the unit would be a decision that would be decided upon and approved between the provider agency, DCF, and DCA. However if this was allowable, any adult tenant in the unit would require background checks as per DCA guidelines.

38. What would happen if, in a few years, it becomes apparent that a youth is in need of more intensive services or a higher level of care (primarily related to mental health services)

The awarded program would be required to assist the youth with service linkage and community supports.

39. Is the parent who resides in EPY supportive housing permitted to allow their significant other to reside in the unit? Are both parents of the child or children allowed to reside in one unit?

The decision to allow the non-custodian parent or significant other to live in the unit would be a decision that would be decided upon and approved

between the provider agency, DCF, and DCA. However if this was allowable, any adult tenant in the unit would require background checks as per DCA guidelines.

40. Are services limited to parenting mothers? Could we include parenting single fathers?

Services are not limited to parenting mothers and can include parenting fathers.

41. What if a youth has to go to drug and alcohol treatment, for example long term inpatient, what happens to the vacant unit?

If a household is absent from the assisted unit for an extended period because a household member is hospitalized, the program participant must provide written notice to the DCA Field Office Supervisor. The participant will be asked to provide an estimate of the hospitalization period to the Field Office Supervisor. Unless circumstances warrant the period of vacancy will not exceed 120 days or the anniversary of the HAP contract whichever comes first. The program manager, or designee, may grant an extension of up to an additional 60 days in the case of an illness or rehabilitation. However program participant are under a mandate that the household may not be absent from the unit for a period of more than 180 consecutive calendar days for any reason. Yes the unit will still be available to the participant upon discharge from the treatment program, the participant is required to continue paying the tenant rent to owner and any cost of utilities required under the lease during the absence from the assisted unit.

42. Is there a cap for the rent? How does the agency determine the rent?

Yes, the rent is subject to and cannot exceed the Fair Market Value Rates, https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr/fmrs/FY2016_code/select_Geography.odn.

43. Can an agency refer its own consumers to the EPY supportive housing program?

Assuming the young adult meets the qualifications of the program, the provider should discuss the potential occupant of the unit with DCF Office of Adolescent Services Program Lead and CP&P case worker.

44. Is there an age limit for youth to enter this program?

Youth must enter the program prior to their 21st birthday.

Referral Process and DCF Involvement

45. The RFP states that families will be identified for the program by CP&P and OAS. Can the grantee refer seemingly eligible families to the CP&P?

If the grantee becomes aware that a family has child welfare concerns the grantees should contact the State Central Registry (SCR) at 1-877-NJABUSE. If the youth has an open case, the grantee should contact the DCP&P worker. The awarded agency cannot refer a non-CP&P involved family to SCR simply to open a CP&P case to access this housing program.

46. If youth with closed DCP&P cases are considered on case-by-case basis, what is the criteria that would make them eligible or ineligible for this housing program?

Specific criteria has not been determined at this time.

47. Will DCP&P, and CSOC remain involved with the case upon youth's admission until age 21?

It is possible that a youth's case remains open with CP&P and CSOC however not required for them to attend the program.

Program Model Related Questions

48. What happens if a youth refuses services for the entire duration they are in the program? Are there consequences to the agency?

While services are not mandatory, it is our expectation that the provider will utilize engagement strategies that will aid the young adults in realizing the benefit of participating in services. If DCF finds that there is a consistent pattern of multiple youth not participating in services, DCF will evaluate the agency's engagement strategies utilized in their program.

49. Can we offer youth the options of shared living (house) and/or apartments with these vouchers?

No, a shared living (house) is not allowable. No, youth cannot share an apartment with these vouchers.

50. Does the lease between the youth and the agency have to start on a specific date of the month? Will the rent amount be prorated to the start date of the lease?

DCA allows a lease to start on any date and will prorate its payment to the owner.

51. It is clear that a housing first type model is being followed, however, if there is proper grounds to evict a client (after exhausting all alternative interventions), can the client still be eligible for services?

We are utilizing a housing first model. Service participation is not required and tenancy is not linked to service participation. However a young adult who has been evicted can access and utilize service if the provider has the capacity to continue providing the young adult with services.

52. Can one organization apply for multiple regions? If so, are separate proposals for each region required?

Yes, one organization can apply for multiple regions. Yes, separate proposals are required for each region. Please be clear in each separate proposal which region is being applied for on the cover sheet and in the Narrative.

53. Do the housing units have to be located throughout the counties or can the services be open to those counties and be centralized in one?

Housing units can be located throughout the county(ies). Services should be provided within or near the same location/community where the youth resides.

54. What would happen if there is more demand for the services from one county over another?

Awarded programs will be located in the counties outlined in the RFP. Youth residing in the program can be referred from counties outside of where the program is located.

55. What criteria or logic models are we expected to utilize for determining who receives more intensive or less intensive support services? Who would make this decision?

Logic models are not used to determine intensity of services, but rather to identify the logical links between the desired outcomes, the program assumptions or theories and the program activities. (Administration for

The agency should be able assess the individual needs of youth/families and provide services accordingly and describe in the proposal what this process will look like.

56. Are staff expected to live on-site for supervision of the children? Also, are there child supervision ratios?

There is no requirement for staff to live on-site. There are no expected child supervision ratios by staff for a child living with its parent.

57.If our agency has more current or more relevant data, can the agency include it in their submission?

Yes. Descriptions of data or conclusions will count toward the Narrative.

58. Is this program a pilot program?

Yes. Additionally, it is expected and intended for the awarded agencies to work together through collaboration. This collaboration is also expected to be on-going.

59. What happens if a child is removed by CP&P from the care of the youth for suspected abuse/neglect? How long should the unit be held vacant?

Please be advised that your agency will have to determine this fact based scenario under the tenants of NJ landlord-tenant law. While we are not your counsel, it is our belief that a youth cannot be evicted solely because their child/children are no longer in their physical custody. Furthermore, the provider agency will work with the youth to reunify with their child.

60.Is cable considered a utility?

No

61.Because of the nature of the population that this proposal aims to serve, are there any special access or expedited access to child care services?

No.

62. Is the \$3,000 to be spent entirely on furniture?

Please disregard any mention to the amount of \$3,000 previously stated at the Bidder's Conference on 1/11/16. Providers are to include funding for "specific assistance to clients" in the budget to assist young adults in obtaining furnishings and other items as needed for their apartments.

Proposal Related Questions

63. Should the pages be numbered through the appendices?

Page numbers are not required, but the evaluation team may appreciate the clarity.

64. Can an agency submit their proposal on a flash drive or other portable storage device?

No, only CD ROMs are allowable.

65. Is it permitted for an agency to partner or collaborate with an agency who did not attend the bidder's conference?

Only organizations that attended the bidder's conference can apply for this RFP. An organization can subcontract to another provider organization, this needs to be fully outlined in the proposal.

66. Are references for data to be included in the narrative portion of the proposal, or can the agency include those references in an appendix?

Applicants can include references for data and other information as a footnote in the narrative or as a separate attachment in the appendices. If the applicant finds that footnoting references in the narrative might put the narrative over the allotted page limit, please include the references as a separate attachment in the appendices.

67. Are Public Housing Authorities eligible to apply?

No.

68. When is the award notice date?

The award announcement will be made after all eligible proposals have been evaluated and scored and a funding recommendation is approved by the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families. There is no specific time frame, but the awarded provider(s) will be notified via a letter and email.

69. The proposal requires detail about the housing unit location, type, layout, etc..., yet there is emphasis on client choice in housing.

a. What if the identified units do not align with the clients preferences?

The agency will need to consider the youth's needs as they are selecting the unit and include this information in the proposal. The expectation is that the provider has a conversation with the young person to ensure they are selecting a unit and moving into a community that best fits their needs.

b. Will clients be chosen based on the housing available and how their preferences align with the housing available or will the client be selected first and housing wrapped around them?

Youth will be referred by Child Protection Staff if they are eligible for the program. Supportive services will be available to the youth.

c. For example, if we own units, which location and style are not negotiable, will clients who are willing to accept these units be identified for the project, or with others units that fit to the clients desires need to be secured? That will impact the implementation timeline.

Provider units will need be designed to meet the youth's needs as discussed throughout the RFP and in question 3a.

70. In the Impact/Outcomes section, it lists a series of key indicators that are recommended for measurement. Do all of these have to be accomplished? What are the consequences for the organization if the young adult refuses services and it is difficult to gauge the outcomes?

DCF is interested in understanding the impact of this program model. DCF strongly recommends that applicants measure the key indicators (amongst others) to understand impact on housing stability, well-being family functioning, achievement of goals, etc. The outcome indicators are meant to assist with ongoing quality improvement and not to penalize awardees.

71. The proposal indicates that the data collected through the implementation of the program is property of DCF. What happens if we want to use that data for planning purposes or to do independent research?

DCF owns the data for this project. If you wish to use the data collected for your organization only for other purposes, you must provide us with your

research plan and submit a request. Our website contains our research protocols at: <http://nj.gov/dcf/childata/research/>

72. What if the youth has another child while living in a one bedroom unit? Will they be relocated to larger unit?

DCA will determine the number of allowable bedrooms based on the size of the family. Typically a parent plus one child under seven = one bedroom. When the child turns 7 the agency is permitted to get a two bedroom if the child is not of the same sex. A Parent plus two children = two bedrooms.

The provider's capacity to locate a larger unit and DCF & DCA's approval of the unit will all be determining factors in whether or not a family can be relocated to a larger unit.

73. What happens if there are no larger units available?

This will need to be discussed between the provider agency, DCF, and DCA.