

Questions and Answers from RFP Vendor Conference, September 24, 2009

Request for Proposals to Provide Emergency Shelter and Supportive Services to Homeless Individuals and Families During the Cold Weather Period: November 30, 2009 to March 31, 2010

Q. In the budget, are the providers required to list staff positions or just list the number of full time employees?

A. The budget template requests FTEs by classification and the expenses associated with those FTEs.

Q. Does this correspond with Type II status?

A. Since this proposal is over \$100,000, it qualifies as a Type II contract. Yes.

Q. Is a “proof of site control” required for the use of the armories?

A. OHHSS will work with a representative of the National Guard to arrange this.

Q. If there is overcrowding at the armory, is there another facility to work hand in hand with the armory?

A. If there are more than 125 individuals at the facility on a given night, the provider will have to arrange transportation to another facility.

Q. Does the County give flu shots to homeless for free when they enter the shelter?

A. No. The service provider can arrange for this service to be provided to individuals staying at the shelter.

Q. In previous proposals, what were some of the pro’s and con’s that providers have faced? Do you have a history of past performance in terms of performance failure rates?

A. In the last 20 years or so, one service provider has provided these cold weather shelter services. They have done everything from utilizing three armories to when the San Jose armory closed and EHC built its own shelter on Little Orchard St.

Services have been generic: Shelter, two to three meals per day, volunteers, distribution of blankets and supplies, donations (toiletries, snacks, food).

One of the challenges involves working with the National Guard. They will inform the service provider—usually with advanced notice—that a facility is unavailable. It is necessary for the provider to develop and maintain a network of agencies and churches in the community who can assist with alternative sites as well as provide volunteer assistance and donations such as clothing and toiletries to the homeless.

Also, not so much in Gilroy but in Sunnyvale and San Jose, it has been a challenge to secure a cleaning service to clean up the building in the mornings after the clients leave so the building can be ready for the National Guard at the appropriate time.

Finally, maintaining staffing levels can be a challenge. With only \$600,000, this limits the staffing levels and what you can pay to the staff. This is where volunteers are important.

Q. Have there been any problems with subcontractors? Has the subcontractor not done the work?

A. No.

Q. Last year EHC was allowed to expand the hours at the armories. Would this be scaled back? Hours were extended by about a half hour in the morning.

A. If the National Guard lets us do that this year, we can extend the hours again.

Q. Specific hours of operation are not mentioned, but are these negotiable with the National Guard?

A. Yes. See Attachment A, section II. Program Description; subsection C. Operations, number 1: "The operational hours of the program shall begin and end at the times specified by the National Guard (for the armory sites) and at a mutually agreed upon time at the third site. Additional time for setup prior to and cleanup after the operational period shall be included as part of the cost of the Program.

Q. Are there any provisions for extending the term in case there is inclement weather?

A. While the Cold Weather period ends 3/31/10, the contract term is 11/1/09 – 10/31/10. The Department would entertain the provision of services after 3/31/10 if there are funds remaining from the \$600,000 budget.

Q. The State recently passed a new law that requires everyone to have an ID before entering a facility. How will you enforce this?

A. In the past, each individual has a card, and it's swiped when they enter the facility. It has the reference number that is unique to each individual, which identifies him or her as someone who can come in the shelter. This action records the person's stay in the shelter and is recorded in a central database that the service provider must maintain and use to provide the reports due to the County.