**Request for Letters of Interest**

**Emergency Rental and Utility Assistance**

**Responses Due: July 20, 2020, 12 PM AZ Time**

**Background**

The City of Tucson has received federal funds under the CARES Act to help those affected by the COVID-19. One of the greatest needs identified are households that are in jeopardy of eviction as a result of not being able to meet their housing costs for rent and utilities. The City has received funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Community Development Block Grant program and other state and federal sources of CARES funds that allow for rental, utility and mortgage assistance. The City of Tucson is dedicating a total of $5,080,000 towards this effort for the following activities:

* Eviction Prevention Rental and Utility Assistance - $2,080,000
* Eviction Prevention – Constable Direct Referral - $2,500,000
* Foreclosure Prevention – Mortgage Assistance - $500,000

The City of Tucson is releasing this Request for Letters of Interest from eligible non-profits with capacity and experience operating eviction prevention programs. Agencies must have the ability to guarantee payments to landlords and provide payments to landlords in a timely manner. The City may issue a separate request for interest for the administration of mortgage assistance at a later date. This solicitation is solely for the purpose of providing rental and/or utility assistance.

**Eligible Applicants**

The City of Tucson intends to amend an existing agreement with the successful respondent to include the scope of work and funding issued through this solicitation. Eligible applicants include not-for-profit and government entities with one or more existing Continuum of Care, Emergency Solutions Grant, Community Development Block Grant, and/or General Funds contracts or subawards with the City of Tucson.

Funding Available

The City is looking for a minimum of two agencies to administer these funds but may fund more based-on capacity. Additional funds may become available later to expand or continue the project beyond the initial 12-month project period.

Eligible Beneficiaries

Selected agencies must serve individuals and families who are impacted by COVID-19 and meet the following:

* City of Tucson resident needing rental assistance
* Tucson and Pima County residents in need of utility assistance, except Tucson Water.
* Income requirement: At or below 100% AMI
* Household will be able to remain housed and sustain housing/utilities after assistance is provided
* Meet CDBG-CV eligibility

Program participants will most likely be referred by HCD; the intake/referral process is in development. Agencies funded under this solicitation will not be reimbursed for services provided to any persons not meeting the above criteria and referred by HCD or designated agency.

Timeline

Respondents must be able to provide all services described in the scope of work and begin accepting project referrals on or before July 27, 2020.

Minimum Households to be Served

The City of Tucson intends to fund the rental and utility assistance programs to serve as follows:

* Eviction Prevention Rental and Utility Assistance - $2,080,000 Approximately 830 households will be served with maximum assistance of $2,500. Households will be eligible for up to 3 months of rent and utility costs.
* Eviction Prevention – Constable Direct Referral - $2,500,000 Approximately 714 households will be served with maximum assistance of $3,500. This will incorporate past rent, late fees, and court costs that are required to keep the household housed.

Scope of Work

Agencies must specifically clarify scope for Eviction Prevention Rental and Utility Assistance and/or Eviction Prevention (Constables)

* Provide financial assistance for rent and utility assistance. Eligible activities include:
	+ Rental payment
	+ Rental Late Fees
	+ Utility Payment
	+ Utility Late Fees
	+ Court Costs
* Conduct initial assessment of service needs for all households within 48 hours of receiving project referral from the City.
* If working with referrals by County Constables, agency must have a minimum of two direct contacts for Constables to accept referrals, process the application and determine eligibility within 48 hours of receiving referral.
* Meet virtually or in person with client, determine and document project eligibility for all households served.
* Enter program participant database specified by City within two (2) business days of an activities’ occurrence. The City will require the following data points to be tracked for each household:
	+ Date referral received
	+ Date of initial meeting and interview completed
	+ Date application and all documentation is completed and determined eligible
	+ Eligible or denial determination
	+ Amount of assistance
	+ Date payment sent to landlord/Utility company(s)
	+ Household Demographics
	+ Participate in weekly coordination with the City of Tucson and/or community-based teams regarding the implementation and utilization of the project.
* Coordinate with community agencies to provide referrals to households for other needed services.
* Grant reporting will be required pursuant to City and HUD requirements.

Budget

This is a cost reimbursement agreement. The selected respondent will be required to submit monthly invoices within 15 days following each month of service. Eligible costs as identified in the approved budget will be reimbursed within 30 days of invoice receipt. Eligible costs include:

* Rental and utility assistance which may include late fees and court costs.
* Project staff wage and salary expenses to provide services described in this solicitation
* Office and program supplies associated with providing eligible services
* Administrative/indirect costs will be provided between $40,000 to $80,000; this will be determined based on amount of funding agency is awarded.

**Letter of Interest**

Responses to this solicitation must be provided in the form of a letter of interest issued on agency letterhead and signed by an authorized organizational representative with authority to bind the organization to the services and budget proposed. Letters of interest must include:

* Certification that the respondent will provide all services as outlined in this solicitation and that the project description and budget proposed represent a firm and binding offer.
* A general description of how project services identified in this solicitation’s scope of work will be provided and plan for project staffing to deliver those services.
* Prior experience providing rental and utility assistance Plan for uninterrupted continuity of operations in the event of staff illness or other shortage
* Individual responsible for overseeing the operations of the project.
* Detailed project budget identifying proposed costs and methodology for calculating those costs.
* Name, title, phone number, and email address of two persons able to answer questions related to the proposal and enter into contract negotiations with the City of Tucson.
* Experience with Pima County ESN system; ability to check for duplication of funding

The full letter of interest may not exceed 3-5 single-spaced pages using standard 11 pt. font size or larger.

The City of Tucson will review all submitted documentation. Information provided will remain confidential and will be used to develop a more detailed scope of work and funding agreement with the selected respondent.

**Submittal Process**

Responses must be emailed to Jodie.barnes@tucsonaz.gov and received no later than 12pm Arizona time on Monday, July 20, 2020.

**Questions Regarding this Solicitation**

Questions regarding this solicitation should be emailed to Jodie.barnes@tucsonaz.gov.