

JANUARY 12, 2021- NORMAN CITY COUNCIL ITEM

ACCEPTANCE OF CONTRACT K-2021-79 BETWEEN THE CITY OF NORMAN AND HOMEBASE, INC. FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGIC HOMELESS PLAN.

BACKGROUND: The City of Norman has served as the Collaborative Applicant for the Norman/Cleveland County Continuum of Care (CoC) since 1999. A Continuum of Care is defined by HUD as the group organized to carry out the responsibilities prescribed in the CoC Program Interim Rule for a defined geographic area (Cleveland County). A CoC should be composed of representatives of organizations including: nonprofit homeless providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, organizations that serve homeless and formerly homeless veterans, and homeless and formerly homeless persons.

The CoC program itself is a funding opportunity from HUD which promotes community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. The program promotes access to and effects utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families. The CoC program optimizes self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

As determined by HUD, the role of the Collaborative Applicant is the eligible applicant designated by the Continuum of Care (CoC) to collect and submit the CoC Registration, CoC Consolidated Application (which includes the CoC Application and CoC Priority Listing), and apply for CoC planning funds on behalf of the CoC during the CoC Program Competition. The Collaborative Applicant is responsible for the development of the CoC governance charter which defines the roles of the CoC and associated agencies.

Responsibilities of the Collaborative Applicant for a CoC also include operating the CoC, designating and operating a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), planning for the CoC (including coordinating the implementation of a housing and service system within its geographic area that meets the needs of the individuals and families who experience homelessness there), and designing and implementing the process associated with applying for CoC Program funds.

Since the beginning of the Norman/Cleveland County CoC in 1999, the CoC organizational aspects and requirements have evolved on both the federally mandated level as well as the local response level. What began as a monthly meeting of homeless service providers discussing possible collaborations has evolved into a robust, organized system of over 80 entities that annually are responsible for the oversight of over \$700,000 of Federal and State funding being provided annually to address homelessness. With the exception of a small Planning Grant, these funds are contracted directly between the funding source and the agency receiving them without the City of Norman being a party to the contract.

DISCUSSION: Each of the member entities of the CoC whether they be a homeless service agency, an affiliated non-profit, public or faith based organization, or an interested community member, strive to provide scarce resources to persons who are experiencing homelessness in the

most efficient way without a duplication of resources. The City of Norman serving as the Collaborative Applicant, is responsible for the coordination of organizing information, tracking the availability of resources, and understanding the regulatory requirements of multiple programs to address homeless within our community. Because there are multiple independent providers each with their own missions and funding resources, alignment is difficult. This also results in unintended duplication of efforts as well as gaps in service.

Included within the recent unsuccessful bond issue, was a proposition to provide five million dollars to address homelessness within the City of Norman. Throughout the discussion pertaining to the bond issue a common theme emerged which was that there needs to be strategic plan on how homelessness is addressed within our community. Included within the 2020-2021 Capital Budget was project BG0253 for the undertaking of both a Strategic Homeless Plan and a Strategic Housing Plan. With the assistance of ADG, Inc. staff developed RFP-2021-24 which specified that the City of Norman is seeking professional expertise to analyze its current provision of homeless services. The scope of analyzation includes but is not limited to identifying gaps and duplications across providers, recommendations of the best built solution(s) to improve the community's overall safety net, including preferred sites and long term operating practices, and to review existing benchmarking efforts. These efforts will be summarized in a final written strategy document.

There were three responses from qualified firms to the RFP. Homebase, Inc.; Analytic Insight, Inc.; and Public Works, Inc. each submitted excellent proposals which captured the intent of the RFP. Interviews with the firms was held virtually on October 28, 2020. After the interviews and thorough review of the proposals, Homebase, Inc. was selected as the firm to conduct the Homeless Strategic Plan. Contract negotiations commenced and the resulting contract is attached as well as RFP-2021-24 and the proposal from Homebase.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval of K-2021-79 with Homebase, Inc. in the amount of \$100,000.

Funding is available within the following accounts:

Capital Account; \$87,413.00: Org 50499950 Object 46201

CoC Planning Grant; \$12,587.00: Org 21240290 Object 44003