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## **Responses to Questions Submitted for RFP: HCVP Consultant Services**

**Note: The deadline for the submissions is extended to January 23, 2024**

### **AHA Current Staffing and Systems**

- 1. Will AHA please provide a current organizational chart of the HCV team.** AHA is an MTW Expansion agency with approximately 1600 vouchers and is on a triennial recertification schedule for about 1500 of these vouchers (the other vouchers are part of special programs such as VASH and EHV that are not yet included under MTW). There are 13.5 budgeted positions in the Housing Programs Department. Three staff perform continued occupancy processes including annuals, interims, and rent increases. Two staff work with eligibility, voucher issuance and initial leasing. One staff member does contracts, PIC entries, some reporting, and troubleshooting. Another staff member manages hearings and inspections. Additionally, 3.5 staff manage the front desk, tracking incoming information and calls, mail processing and general customer service functions. The other three positions in the department are supervisory positions: Director, Assistant Director and Supervisor.
- 2. Is AHA currently on a case management model or functional transactional model?** The processes of Initial intake for new entrants to the programs, leasing of transfer households, and HQS are assigned to specific staff; all other functions are handled on a case management model.

### **Substitute Staffing (On- Site)**

- 1. Regarding substitute staffing, which positions is the AHA expecting would require substitutes?** Management roles.
- 2. Would this be more data entry/specialist positions, or would this also include supervisory/management level positions?** Management roles.
- 3. If management positions were required, are there any union staff that our team would potentially be overseeing?** There is no union.
- 4. Would the contractor be required to enforce performance expectations?** Yes, to the extent that they monitor and manage the employee's day-to-day work and would contribute input into a performance evaluation system. AHA would be responsible for HR

decisions for their employees regarding discipline, termination, as well as pay increase and promotion.

**4a. What are the general limitations around this?** If a long-term contractor management staff is to be discussed, AHA would work with the vendor to have written limitations.

### **Consulting Work (Section 1)**

- 1. Approximately, how many process maps is the AHA desiring to create?**  
We plan to do process mapping for at least 5-8 processes including voucher issuance, RFTA processing, lease/HAP contract approval, annuals, interims, rent increases, EOPs and inspections.
- 2. Regarding the financial reporting as requested in the scope of services, what are the expectations around this request? Is this AHA requesting that the selected contract access HUD systems and submit on behalf of the AHA?** No, the expectations are to provide consulting advice on financial systems (e.g. two-year tool etc.), other HUD and industry forecasting or monitoring tools to ensure AHA maximizes its use of funds. Significant submissions are not anticipated.

### **Remote Processing (Section 2)**

- 1. For Section 2 of the Scope of Services: What is the anticipated volume of files that will be assigned to the vendor for completion of a 12-month period?** The annual workload is approximately 600 files for annuals, 300 interims and 1000-1500 rent increases. We would expect up to 1/3 of this to be assigned to the outside vendor, unless we experience significant, unforeseen staff absences.
- 2. Does the agency have a backlog of work that it anticipates assigning to the vendor? If yes, how large is the backlog? What, if any, backlog is AHA currently experiencing? If so, to what extent? (none, mild, heavy).** The AHA's backlog is mild – less than 20 files at this time, but this can change quickly as the AHA is expecting a landlord to provide 500 new leases and rent increases in the next couple of months.
- 3. In Section 2 of Exhibit D, would "Voucher Issuance" include the selection of families from the wait list, processing of eligibility, briefing, etc., through to Voucher Issuance?** Yes, except selection from the waitlist, which we would do ourselves.
- 4. As it relates to remote processing, how would the selected contract prefer communication with clients be handled? Will the selected contractor be utilizing AHA communications systems, or would the selected contract be required to use their own?** The AHA would provide limited access to its Yardi system which will handle communication to clients. It is preferable that clients are not given contact information for contractors directly.

- 5. Will the selected contractor have any responsibility for recommendations or termination for non-compliance, informal reviews/hearings?** Yes, they would recommend termination for noncompliance with the annual recertification process. Other terminations (for example, behavioral issues, lease violations), would remain with the AHA. AHA staff would also prepare the informal review/hearing briefs, not contractor staff, although they may be asked to review the brief or provide supporting documents.

### **Performance Standards**

- 1. What are the performance requirements that will be required of the selected contractor?** SEMAP High performer, including for the Determination of adjusted income indicator. AHA also runs on a matrix system so that annual reexaminations are started 120 days ahead of the due date and must be completed at a minimum of 15 days before the deadline (30 days if they lead to an increase in the tenant portion). A similar system is used for interims and rent increases.
- 3. Are there any current KPIs for the AHA HCV Program that can be shared? Does AHA have any expectations of contractor improvements or goals? (Example currently at standard performer but want to move to high performer)** AHA is MTW so is currently SEMAP exempt. We have been a high performer since 2014 and we expect the contractor to meet the same SEMAP standards and any new standards that HUD sets in the future for MTW agencies. Staff's performance is measured against the SEMAP standards through quality control audits even though the AHA does not submit SEMAP to HUD.

### **Systems**

- 4. What software does the agency currently utilize?** Yardi Voyager (PHA) along with Rent Café, DocuSign, and an imaging system.
- 1. Is AHA currently leveraging Rent Cafe?** Yes. The AHA uses all functions of Rent Café that are currently launched including acceptance of pre-applications, intake, regular reexaminations, interim reexaminations, landlord portal, and ability for communications to staff. The AHA will implement the RFTA process when it is launched and debugged.
- 2. Does the agency utilize paper files, or has the agency moved to a paperless format? Is the AHA currently operating in a paperless environment? If not, how will file documentation be shared with the selected contractor for remote services?** Yes, we are paperless.
- 3. Aside from YARDI, what other systems are utilized to support routine processing and management of families? Does AHA have any additional transaction management systems?** Laserfiche, Nelrod rent reasonableness, EIV, EDD and the Work Number.
- 4. What systems are currently used for rent reasonableness and background checks?** Nelrod for rent reasonableness and Yardi for background checks,
- 5. What security criteria are required to access any internal resources?** Any individual accessing AHA systems will be required to provide documentation of completion of HUD's

cyber awareness training. Contractors will be expected to carry cyber insurance and maintain the integrity of all systems. Internet connections used to connect to AHA databases must be password protected and cannot be public. Best practices for computer access are expected to be followed at all times including not sharing passwords.

6. **Will AHA provide the contractor with access to HUD Secure Systems?** AHA has not done this before with our vendors but we are open to reviewing whether it is allowed by HUD and how we would preserve confidentiality.
7. **Is there a UIV application available for Income Verifications? Is the cost of that system borne by AHA or the contractor?** Yes, the Work Number. The contractor may propose additional systems in their bid and should provide pricing. These will be reviewed as part of the RFP review.
8. **Will the selected contractor be required to communicate via paper format with applicants/tenants (as it relates to remote processing)?** The contractor will be expected to communicate via paper format in some cases. For example, rent change letters must be mailed to the owner and participant.
9. **How are requests currently being handled? For example, are tenants required to drop off paper requests for interim changes, rental increase requests, etc.? Or is there an electronic submission element or portals?** The participants are expected to do this electronically via the Rent Café portal. Landlords can do this electronically via the portal or using forms available on our website. We anticipate Yardi will update Rent Café this year to include a workflow for owner rent increases.

### **Admin Plan**

1. **Has AHA recently updated the Administrative Plan to include all necessary updates regarding HOTMA and NSPIRE?** AHA has requested to delay to NSPIRE to the latest possible date October 1, 2024. The AHA has drafted HOTMA changes, but as this has also been delayed to possibly January 2025, the AHA has not presented these drafts to the Board of Commissioners. It is anticipated that NSPIRE changes will go to the Board in the summer.
2. **Does AHA have current SOPs for major processes within each area?** Yes, but we are looking to do the process mapping to update the SOPs and align them with MTW, HOTMA, technology upgrades, and post COVID protocols.
3. **What level of autonomy does the contractor have for establishing efficiencies within the program?** The contractor may propose changes that fit within the current Admin Plan but changes may not be implemented without written approval from the Executive Director or designee. Changes that require an Admin Plan revision would need Board approval.

### **MTW**

- 1. Has AHA implemented all of their first year MTW initiatives?** The AHA has submitted 20 activities to HUD as part of its first and second MTW Supplement. Of these 20 activities: 12 activities were approved and implemented July 1, 2023, 3 were more recently approved but have not yet been implemented, 3 are still with HUD for approval, and 4 were removed from consideration. If you'd like to learn more about the specific programs that were implemented you can visit our website:  
<https://www.alamedahsg.org/housing-programs/moving-to-work/>

**1a. Are there dedicated staff for the MTW program?** The staff creating the MTW Plan and monitoring outcomes (among other duties) is 3 but there is another analyst position budgeted in the Data and Policy department. This contractor would not manage the MTW plan.

### **Quality Control**

- 1. What percentage of files is expected to be Quality Control reviewed by the contractor?**

Any vendor doing file work should have their own internal systems and controls for quality review and should describe those in their bid. The fees section the RFP is for Quality Controlling either another vendor or our own staff. We are interested in doing an initial 100% review in the first year and then 25-75% in future years of our current files. We are also interested in moving to a model whereby QC is done before the rent change notice for annuals, interims and rent increases are issued to the tenant (i.e. a preapproval process). Therefore, the ability to do this quickly and in a systematic way is important. Weekly reports and meetings will be necessary.

### **Fees and Expenses**

- 1. Would the contractor be reimbursed for any additional systems that we may need to utilize to improve efficiencies should they receive?**

The contractor may propose additional systems in their bid and should provide pricing. These will be reviewed as part of the RFP review.

- 2. Does AHA expect any substitute staff or trainers, as noted in Section 1 of Exhibit D, to reside locally in Alameda? Or is there a living stipend available?** Contractors are not expected to live locally, but AHA may at times want them to be onsite and would pay reasonable travels costs (see our travel policy). If a long-term contract were proposed for onsite staffing, we would consider living costs/arrangements at that time.

**2a. If supplies are needed to perform the duties under these responsibilities, would AHA provide supplies/reimbursement, or is the contractor responsible for them?**

The contractor may propose additional supplies in their bid and should provide pricing. These will be reviewed as part of the RFP review. The AHA will provide system access to Yardi and documents can be uploaded into participant files if needed.

- 3. Should the cost/file include quality control review, or should that be listed as a separate cost per file?** The cost per file should include the vendor's own internal quality control. A separate fee should be listed for quality controlling other vendors' or AHA files.

4. **The pricing table does not include a section for including the per-file pricing for the activities requested in Section 2 of the Scope of Services.** This has been added to our website under Addendum # 2.
5. **Part 8 of the response requires submission of itemized costs for the items in Attachment D, the scope of services. Does this apply to both lists of services in Attachment D (Section 1 and section 2) or just those listed under Section 2? The list under section 1 is based on an hourly rate and it would be difficult to estimate the number of hours without more detailed requirements for each service.** Please see Addendum #2 for the updated pricing sheet.