

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL RESPONSE TO  
**LANE COUNTY HEALTH &  
HUMAN SERVICES PUBLIC  
SHELTER FEASIBILITY STUDY**

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**FEBRUARY 5, 2018**



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## **A. Lane County's Request for Proposals**

Despite the County and Continuum of Care (CoC) commitment to ending homelessness in Lane County, homelessness, particularly unsheltered homelessness, has been a persistent issue for the County over the past ten years. While Lane County has made progress - a decrease of 12% in the number of overall homeless households from 2013 to 2017 - the number of households living unsheltered, in shelters or in transitional housing remained at nearly 1,300 households with over 1,500 people, according to the 2017 Point-in-Time count.

The County, along with its Continuum of Care and non-profit providers, has successfully implemented systems changes including increased permanent supportive housing units - from 397 in 2013 to 512 in 2017, as well as the creation of new Rapid Re-Housing programs. In addition, the County and CoC have approved a pilot program for overnight parking for people with vehicles who are unsheltered; initiated plans for a large multi-service center and permanent supportive housing program; obtained close to \$1 million to fund homeless prevention activities; launched a pilot diversion project; and approved two housing programs for youth. Unlike many CoCs, the Lane County CoC enjoys the active participation of the community and regularly reports 30-40 members attending CoC meetings. These actions and occurrences signify a community motivated to find solutions, such as housing and services, for those experiencing homelessness in the County.

Part of this demonstrated commitment is the County's Request for Proposals for a Public Shelter Feasibility Study. This RFP highlights the County's interest in understanding its existing systems in terms of how people enter into homelessness, what housing and services they are able to access, identification of system bottlenecks, and most importantly, recommendations for improvements to make the allocation of resources most efficient and effective.

The Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) appreciates the opportunity to respond to the County's RFP and to highlight our unique capacity to carry out this initiative and provide the County with recommendations that will help it address homelessness.

## **B. TAC Experience Conducting Homeless Shelter and Supportive Housing System Analysis**

The Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) is a nonprofit organization with 25 years of experience providing technical assistance and consultation to states, counties, and Continua of Care (CoC) on conducting shelter and supportive housing systems analysis for individuals and families who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness. The team we have assembled to support this project specializes in the intersection of homeless resource allocation and system analysis and includes subject matter experts in the areas of homelessness, affordable housing, and behavioral health and other complex care populations. Supportive housing and systems analysis are at the core of our work at TAC.

TAC is recognized nationally for leading and facilitating federal, state, and local supportive and supported housing strategic planning efforts, and has authored numerous strategic plans for state and local jurisdictions. These plans have included recommendations for increasing development of affordable supportive and supported housing, improving system coordination, serving people in more integrated settings, and maximizing state and federal resources. TAC has provided technical assistance (TA) and consultation on the development of supported housing using Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), state bond funds, project-based vouchers, Continuum of Care funding, as well as Medicaid funding for supports. In addition, TAC has worked with communities on how to use other federal resources to address housing crisis including the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS programs.

TAC's extensive background in homelessness and affordable housing community planning, including specific accomplishments in the collection and analysis of system-wide data to determine gaps and make recommendations to better allocate resources to serve people experiencing homelessness within communities, make it the firm best positioned to assist in undertaking this project for Lane County.

In studying a community's homeless response, TAC analyzes the role other systems of care including housing, health care and crisis services play. TAC has the demonstrated ability to successfully engage stakeholders, including people with lived experience, members of the business community, McKinney Vento liaisons and other key school personnel, child welfare and behavioral health advocates and funders, and representatives of the criminal justice system. Furthermore, TAC knows firsthand the requirements and challenges faced by local governments and CoCs to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.

The TAC team has substantive experience in leading and facilitating strategic planning activities related to homelessness and housing. Highlights include formal, complex, high-level strategic planning projects on the city, county, multi-county, and state level. In all these projects, TAC relies on a data-driven, stakeholder engaged, local approach. See below for a summary of a sample of TAC's work on local and statewide system analysis.

Local Community	Scope of Work	State Agency	Dates
<b>Boston, MA</b>	Current work involves the design of its coordinated entry system to further target flexible housing resources to Boston's most long-term and vulnerable homeless residents; recruiting affordable housing developers into the city's homeless set-aside program, designing a system-wide rapid re-housing response, and implementing an action plan to advance the city's goal of ending veteran homelessness.	Department of Neighborhood Development	<b>2000 – Present</b>

Local Community	Scope of Work	State Agency	Dates
<b>New Bedford, MA</b>	Developed a two-year strategic plan. Process included data analysis, key stakeholder interviews, an on-site community planning and systems mapping exercise, and development of strategic recommendations.	New Bedford Department of Planning, Housing, and Community Development	<b>August 2016 – August 2017</b>
<b>Three County CoC, Chesterfield, MA</b>	TAC provides ongoing assistance focused on CoC Governance, Service Written Standards, Monitoring and Compliance Protocols, System Performance Measures, Coordinated Entry, Veteran Housing Coordination, Reporting, and CoC-wide program and system design.	Hilltown Community Development Corporation; Three County Continuum of Care Board	<b>2015 – Present</b>
<b>Montgomery County, MD</b>	Provided extensive hands-on community planning with CoC members to develop a strategic plan and related structures. A key component of the work included an analysis of gaps and unmet shelter and housing needs including a system mapping protocol. The CoC incorporated TAC's data and analysis into future strategic planning for the community as a whole.	Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services	<b>August 2014 – March 2016</b>
<b>Seattle/King County, Washington</b>	Recommendations to strengthen governance structure; developed tools and trainings to reinforce fidelity to housing first; and guided the expansion and impact of a coordinated entry system. Led development of plan to end youth homelessness including defining goals, objectives, and vision.	All Home, Inc.	<b>2016 – Present</b>

State	Scope of Work	State Agency	Dates
<b>Alaska</b>	Development of a statewide strategic supportive housing plan for people with SPMI and other disabilities. Facilitation of multiple state agencies and stakeholders. Ongoing technical assistance.	Alaska Division of Behavioral Health; Alaska Housing Finance Agency; Mental Health Trust Authority	<b>December 2014 – June 2017</b>

<b>Georgia</b>	Development of a statewide strategic supportive housing plan for people with SPMI served under U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Olmstead agreement. Ongoing provider training in supportive housing. Facilitation of multiple state agencies and stakeholders.	Georgia Department of Community Affairs; Georgia Department of Behavioral Health	<b>2012 – Present</b>
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Facilitated a work group meeting legislative mandate to develop 1,000 units of permanent supportive housing. Olmstead and community integration planning. Facilitation of multiple state agencies stakeholders.	Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation; Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services.	<b>2013 – Present</b>
<b>New Mexico</b>	Development of a statewide strategic supportive housing plan for people with SPMI and other disabilities. Facilitation of multiple state agencies and stakeholders. Ongoing technical assistance.	New Mexico Human Services Department	<b>2017 – Present</b>
<b>North Carolina</b>	Development of statewide strategic supportive housing plan for people with SPMI and other disabilities, related to USDOJ Olmstead settlement implementation. Facilitation of multiple state agencies and stakeholders.	North Carolina Housing Finance Agency and Department of Health and Human Services	<b>April 2016 – July 2017</b>
<b>Oregon</b>	Supporting the Statewide Supportive Housing Strategy Workgroup to develop supportive housing program and policy considerations and an implementation framework to support the housing services and health service needs of homeless individuals or individuals at risk of homelessness.	Oregon Housing and Community Services and Oregon Health Authority	<b>December 2017 – December 2018</b>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Development of statewide strategic supportive housing and Olmstead planning for people with SPMI and other disabilities. Facilitation of multiple state agencies and stakeholders. Ongoing technical assistance.	Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services	<b>2007 – Present</b>

<b>Texas</b>	Multi-state analysis of service- enriched housing and recommendations to increase and improve service-enriched housing within Texas.	Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)	<b>2012 – 2013</b>
<b>Virginia</b>	Development of a statewide strategic supportive housing plan for people with SPMI and other disabilities. Facilitation of multiple state agencies and stakeholders. Ongoing technical assistance.	Virginia Housing Development Authority and Department of Behavioral Health	<b>July 2017 – Present</b>
<b>Washington, DC</b>	Development of a strategic supportive housing plan for people with SPMI, related to USDOJ Olmstead settlement implementation. Facilitation of multiple state agencies and stakeholders.	Department of Mental Health	<b>2012</b>

In addition to consulting work throughout the country, TAC staff have extensive direct management experience in both the public and nonprofit affordable housing and human services sectors, distinguishing us from organizations more limited in capacity. TAC’s team includes former state mental health commissioners, federal and state Medicaid experts, and experts in affordable housing policy, financing, and development, as well as staff from agencies recognized as innovators in homeless solutions including Pay for Success and housing search and support. This expertise makes us uniquely qualified to perform this work for Lane County.

TAC’s staff are also HUD’s subject matter experts on the Continuum of Care and Emergency Solutions Grant programs, and have served on HUD’s Coordinated Entry team. TAC staff developed guidance and tools on youth homeless models <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5138/ending-youth-homelessness-a-guidebook-series/> and on strategies to target unsheltered homeless (under HUD review). In developing materials to help CoCs address existing unsheltered populations, TAC reviewed best and promising practices in many CoCs across the US.

**C. TAC’s Approach to Conducting a Shelter Feasibility Study**

A comprehensive shelter feasibility study must include an assessment of need including a clear understanding of in-flow, out-flow, performance of rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing programs as well as demand for these programs, and the availability and need for diversion and prevention programming. The assessment must also include a review of available resources including housing as well as mental health, substance use, activities of daily living, juvenile justice, and child welfare, among others. Lane County presents some unique challenges, with over 60% of the homeless population in 2017 being unsheltered, and 90% of

Lane County consisting of forested areas, which could include hidden encampments and difficulty providing transportation to housing and services.

TAC's approach will be multi-pronged:

- 1) Examine the current system, using data and stakeholder interviews
- 2) Develop a map of the current system. Meet with stakeholders again to make refinements
- 3) Make projections of impact on the system based on different potential scenarios
- 4) Make recommendations on a shelter proposal including target population, size, operations, and design.

The following provides a more detailed breakdown of these four steps.

### **Step 1: Current System: Gaps Analysis/Data Collection/Stakeholder Interviews**

TAC's team will first review all relevant data and documents related to the homeless population and their needs in Lane County. This data research and analysis would include analyzing data from the 2016, 2017, and 2018 (*if available*) Point-in-Time counts; current HMIS data including reports on system performance measures and AHAR data; and current homeless program-level data. When completed, TAC will review the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)'s needs assessment on first time homelessness. TAC will review other critical documents, including the CoC's Housing Inventory Charts from 2016, 2017 and 2018 (*if available*); 2017 grant inventory worksheet; current CoC Governance Charter; and the 2016 and 2017 CoC Program Consolidated Application and Project Priority Listing application. TAC will also analyze any related existing CoC and Lane County (if separate) policies and procedures, CoC and ESG Program written standards, coordinated entry processes, and monitoring/project ranking tools. TAC will review the county's Consolidated Plan and Action Plans, and the Housing and Community Services Authority of Lane County Administrative Plan as well as any existing plans to End Homelessness in Lane County.

TAC proposes to be on-site engaging key stakeholders including interviews with the Poverty and Homeless Board of the CoC, the Housing and Community Services Agency of Lane County, CoC housing and service providers, and private property owners. TAC will conduct a focus group or individual interviews with people currently experiencing unsheltered homelessness and people currently sheltered. To understand potential service resources, TAC will leverage the work we are currently doing for the State to understand the resources that might be available to the County and CoC. TAC understands that strategies for successful engagement of all stakeholders across systems include concisely communicating concrete roles or contributions the system partners can play; prioritizing the time of system partners effectively; hosting results-based facilitation of stakeholder meetings; using clear and simple governance and decision-making protocols to promote transparency and inclusivity; and incorporating a transparent feedback loop of the planning process. The stakeholder interviews and meetings will help inform both provider and consumer opinions of systems and processes.

TAC will summarize the findings of the data collection and analysis, systems mapping exercise, and stakeholder interviews to identify core areas of focus and direction.



## **Step 2: Current System: Map of Current System**

Once the data is gathered and analyzed and key stakeholders consulted as discussed in the following section, TAC will draft an accessible, easy-to-understand map of the coordinated entry process that will include access and utilization of shelter, street inflow/outflow, and placement to permanent housing, self-resolution, and returns to homelessness. The goal is to make system flow data accessible to all stakeholders in the planning process to drive data-informed decision-making.

The mapping of the CoC will include an analysis of individuals and families living in unsheltered situations. This analysis will be used to define system capacity need in key areas such as permanent housing, shelter, outreach, housing navigation, supportive services, or leveraged mainstream services to prevent recurring homelessness. TAC will also look at any diversion efforts to reduce inflow into homelessness. To the extent possible with available data, TAC will use an outlier analysis to remove irregularities from the dataset and investigate the unique trends it reveals. Our analysis will include the experience of prioritized populations who experience homelessness at disproportionate rates, which may include families with children, individuals with serious mental illness and/or substance use issues, LGBTQ youth, and victims of sexual exploitation. Producing a map of the current systems in Lane County will identify specific gaps within the system where people become “stuck,” and will identify existing barriers to housing.

## **Step 3: Projections of impact on the system based on different potential scenarios**

The gaps analysis can also include a scenario planning tool to model possible outcomes based on the best available data about current needs and system performance. This step allows TAC to make systems assumptions about the allocation and prioritization of resources. For example, what if Lane County looked at its rapid rehousing program. If on average, RRH resources turn over every four months, but the community decided to change practices and policies and reduce the length of time a participant receives RRH, the CoC may realize an increased capacity of 33%, giving it more opportunities to serve additional people. Or the CoC may look at the adopting homeless preferences in privately owned, HUD-assisted housing to serve as a “move-on” tool for people living in PSH who no longer need the services but need the affordability. Would this action increase flow and reduce the number of sheltered or unsheltered. TAC will include scenarios that involve different emergency shelter models – size, operations, etc. to also project impact on the system.

## **Step 4: Recommendations on a shelter proposal**

For the core areas of focus and direction, TAC will work with stakeholders to explore the role of emergency shelter and best practices in shelter design and operations. TAC will shape its work around shelter best practices.

### *Stated role and expected outcomes of the shelter*

Emergency shelter plays a critical role in a community’s homeless response system. When emergency shelters embrace evidence-based best practices such as: housing first philosophy;

diversion services; low barrier access; rapid exit services; and accountable performance measurements based on data collection, they can be a community's key partner and tool in ending homelessness. In communities where crisis housing/emergency shelter policies mandate extremely low threshold and low barriers, brief stays governed by participant choice, and the offering of immediate wraparound services to support a quick exit to permanent housing, the crisis housing/shelters are successful partners in ending homelessness. These shelter policies and protocols accommodate partners, pets, and material goods. While they offer services, participation is not mandatory.

### *Housing First Model in Shelter*

Successful shelter policy incorporates core housing first principles into shelter practice. Successful housing first practices in emergency shelter include client driven service models, few to no programmatic pre-requisites to permanent housing entry, and low-barrier admission shelter policies. When shelter staff focus on helping individuals and families access and sustain permanent rental housing as quickly as possible from shelters, people will exit shelters rapidly and access stable permanent housing. Coordinated entry staff as well as shelter staff (if the shelter is not a CE access point) should be trained on how to link people to other resources once they have entered the shelter. Shelter policy should be low barrier to entry and have policies in place that help people keep their shelter "place/bed" while conducting a housing search.

### *Housing First Shelters and Housing Navigation Centers*

Several communities have instituted navigation centers as part of their response to the homeless crisis system, most predominantly in San Francisco and Seattle. There are initial struggles in setting up navigation centers including capital and operating costs for the navigation center. Navigation centers have proven successful in communities, like Lane County, which have a relatively high-unsheltered population. The navigation center acts as a place where a person experiencing homelessness can go to look for housing and be linked to resources to end their homeless crisis quickly, including through diversion practices. Successful navigation centers include low threshold designs in a way to be inviting to people who are unsheltered; for example: lockers for storage of personal items, allowing pets into the center, sanitation services and supplies, etc. While most notable navigation centers are in urban areas, opportunities to design a shelter/navigation response is possible in a more rural community as well.

### *Best Practices and Ratios/System Flow*

A system that does not have good system flow will inevitably become "stuck." A stuck system does not move people from the streets or shelter quickly into housing. A stuck system often includes the following aspects: high-unsheltered population, long and static waitlists for shelters, long lengths of stays in shelters (more than 30 days), high percentage of exits from shelters back into homelessness, long waitlists for RRH and PSH, and no diversion strategy in place.

In an effective homeless response system, each part of the system plays a specific role focused on the overall goal of stabilizing people experiencing homelessness in housing as quickly as possible. Characteristics of an effective crisis response system with good system flow include:

- prevention of or diversion from homelessness when possible;
- rapid identification and engagement of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to connect them to crisis services;
- quick, accessible pathways to shelter and other crisis services with short stays in shelters; and
- rapid connection to permanent housing for all sheltered and unsheltered people, with priority on the most vulnerable.

Once TAC analyzes the Lane County system, recommendations for new or the reallocation of current resources will take into account good system flow practices.

### **Shelter Proposal**

The final shelter proposal will be based on the data on homeless populations, systems performance, systems mapping, and community's response and embrace of shelter best practices. Specifics of a proposal cannot be outlined without the above analysis and exploration but will consider some of the following:

**Target Population:** Based on the data, is there a need for the shelter to target a certain population (e.g. youth). If so, any targeting in HUD funded programs would have to be in accordance with HUD's 2016 published Notice "Equal Access in Accordance with an Individual's Gender Identity in Community Planning and Development Programs."<sup>1</sup>

**Services Provided:** The recommendations will outline services within the shelter but also services needed beyond the shelter. Best practices call for the availability, but no requirement to accept, wraparound services. TAC will draw upon the expertise of the Medicaid subject matter experts on our team to identify resources for additional services and linkages to existing community-based services. The shelter recommendation report will also outline best practices that will link shelter services to other mainstream resources within Lane County and to national best practices including diversion, prevention, and housing first practices, as mentioned above.

**Hours:** Shelters range from limited overnight hours to 24-hour facilities. The recommendations will be made based on data analysis and mapping.

**Coordinated Entry System:** Coordinated Entry is a key component of any shelter recommendation. The report will take into account the access, assessment, prioritization, and referral mechanisms of the coordinated entry system.

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<sup>1</sup> 24 CFR Part 5 [Docket No. FR 5863–F–02] RIN 2506–AC40 Equal Access in Accordance With an Individual's Gender Identity in Community

**Operational Policies and Staffing:** The report will include recommendations for effective operational policy and procedures that align with national shelter best practices as it relates to rapidly rehousing individuals and families out of shelter and increasing outflow while working to decrease inflow over time. TAC will outline the staffing expertise needed, hours of operation, and most effective ways to market the shelter locally.

**Analysis of estimated demand and utilization rates:** Rates will be mapped out based on the previous system mapping exercise. TAC will facilitate the implementation of the action plan through trainings, written materials, data analysis, etc. Plans will be feasible; plans will be based on available resources, quantifiably proven strategies, and will incorporate stakeholder feedback.

**Systems impact:** As part of the recommendations, TAC will outline the impact on other components of the CoC. For example, would the shelter create demand for additional PSH and if so, how much more PSH would be needed. Part of this demonstration of impact will be a projection of Lane County's homeless numbers if the identified needed shelter is not built. Like other CoCs, Lane County likely has resources with predetermined or required targets as well as more flexible resources; TAC's analysis will look at ways that redesigning flexible resources could impact the system.

**Evaluation:** TAC's report will include recommendations for evaluation and system performance goals. The CoC is now required to track system performance measures (SPM). TAC will make recommendations on how best the CoC can evaluate progress on these SPMs and identify additional metrics for it to consider tracking. This evaluation process will allow the County and CoC to make mid-way revisions if needed and keep momentum going.

### **Financial and Political Considerations**

TAC understands that with any change in a system of care with local, state, and/or federal limited resources, financial and political considerations must be incorporated into recommendations and implementation to succeed. TAC will help identify resources that may be available to fund a new emergency shelter in Lane County. This may include the reconfiguration of existing resources. It may also include a phased strategy when full implementation is not immediately feasible.

TAC will help County and local CoC stakeholders address political considerations that may arise. When creating new or expanded resources within a community, such as a new emergency shelter, it is imperative that the community understands the plan and that implementation include an effective communication strategy.

### **Policy Considerations**

While conducting stakeholder interviews and the community systems mapping exercise, TAC will identify local barriers as well as support for potential shelter plans. TAC is currently working with the state of Oregon Housing and Community Services and in this capacity will identify any

potential state support for or obstacles to implementation. Lastly, as a HUD TA provider, TAC is in a reliable position to identify emerging policy priorities from the federal government and to translate these for local implications.

**D. TAC Timeline: March 1, 2018 – December 31, 2018**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Scope of Work</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Project Management</b>	Coordination with Lane County assigned staff on progress of project, monthly billing, scheduling, etc.	March through December
<b>Data Collection</b>	HIC, PIT, system performance measures, HMIS data and coordinated entry data.	March through May
<b>Stakeholder and Consumer Interviews</b>	In person and by phone interviews, and meeting facilitation with stakeholders	March through May
<b>Analysis of Homeless System</b>	Clear and easy to read map of the current homeless system in Lane County	May through July
<b>Shelter Recommendation Report</b>	Create a recommendations report based on findings, analysis, and mapping exercises in Lane County	July through September

Task	Scope of Work	Timeline
Delivery of shelter feasibility and recommendations report and revisions based on feedback	Delivery or presentation of shelter feasibility analysis and recommendations report, including any revisions and comments of local stakeholders	September through November
Final shelter feasibility and recommendations report	Complete any changes or additional revisions for report	December

## E. Key Staff

TAC staff has the skills, experience and expertise to carry out this strategic planning and feasibility analysis. The key staff proposed to work on this include:

*Gina Schaak, Senior Associate:* Gina has over 15 years of experience helping nonprofit housing and service agencies to navigate federal, state, and local programs in order to access and create permanent supportive housing (PSH) for the most vulnerable populations. In addition to being a skilled TA and training provider with extensive experience providing support and consultation to nonprofit homeless and housing organizations, Ms. Schaak serves as TAC's national policy researcher and public liaison and is an expert on HUD's Continuum of Care program and planning requirements. Ms. Schaak is the lead on the City of Boston strategic planning process and successfully completed the Montgomery County systems mapping and planning effort.

*Liz Stewart, Senior Associate:* Liz has over 15 years of experience in policies and practices related to affordable housing development and permanent supportive housing. Through her experience in the nonprofit and public sectors, she has helped supportive housing and services agencies to navigate local and federal regulations and restrictions in order to access resources to support permanent supportive housing. She has extensive knowledge of federal and state programs used to finance housing and services for low-income and vulnerable populations including the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS program, the Housing Choice Voucher program, the 811 PRA program, and HUD Continuums of Care. She is an expert on underwriting and evaluating financial feasibility for mixed-finance housing developments including the use of Section 202, Community Development Block Grants, HOME, and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. Liz is one of HUD's subject matter experts on the CoC program and has assisted numerous CoCs in developing and utilizing systems performance measures as tools to achieve systems change.