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## HOUSE WAKE!

### REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST

Wake County has received federal funding that is dedicated to responding to the COVID-19 CRISIS. Known as the “CARES Act”, it provides additional flexible funding to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, and public agencies, through familiar and new programs that can be used to address housing instability and homelessness. Wake County’s Department of Housing Affordability and Community Revitalization (Housing) will be utilizing a portion of these funds and is seeking qualified community partners to assist in implementing its response plan, **“HOUSE WAKE!”**.

The first phase of HOUSE WAKE! is a strategic plan to minimize the effects of COVID-19 on homeless and precariously housed Wake County residents, while maximizing opportunities for positive long-term outcomes. The plan will run through the end of the 2020 calendar year, utilizing and coordinating federal, state and local funding to address the COVID-19 crisis within our homeless and precariously housed population and to move them to housing stability. The plan is focused on implementing stabilization and intervention programs through our community partners that can minimize the harm from COVID-19 and help pivot our vulnerable residents to recovery. As federal funding is scheduled to end in December of this year, our partners should plan to identify funding sources to make their projects permanent.

Wake County will select partners who will implement programs focused on addressing the various needs of households who are homeless or cannot access financial resources and face a high risk of becoming housing insecure or homeless (e.g. undocumented, unsheltered, borderline homeless,) as a result of the effects of COVID-19 on the local economy. There are seven distinct components of this plan, six of which require partners at this time:

#### 1. **Healthy Hotels Initiative**

Through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), the County has contracted with two hotels for use of approximately 200 rooms to establish high-risk, healthy hotel sites for the population meeting the criteria of homelessness and one or more high-risk category for the COVID-19 virus. The Housing Department will contract with partners to run the healthy hotels for the term of the COVID-19 relief funds availability, currently set to expire on December 31, 2020. This will allow Wake County and its community partners additional time to permanently house clients from these hotels, rather than exit them to the street. This also provides an opportunity to connect partnering agency, hotels and clients to the broader strategic plan and expanded community services. The County may seek to add another hotel if the need to increase capacity is determined. *Treasury CRF funds will support this program.*

### **The Opportunity**

The Housing Department seeks contracts with community service organizations to provide case management and related supportive services to residents temporarily housed in the County's Healthy Hotels. Supportive services include but are not limited to on site management, transportation, medical needs, housing navigation, laundry, educational, etc. The successful organization should be ready to assume hotel oversight by June 1, 2020. County staff will work with the selected community partner to ensure a smooth transfer of operations through a phase-in period.

## **2. Wake Prevent! Hotel Families Assistance Program: Phase II**

In order to begin to address the wave of evictions coming from renters, homeowners as well residents utilizing hotels as their primary residence, Wake Prevent! Hotel Families Program will be expanded. Phase II of this program allows staff to accommodate families who have been screened, but not referred for services or aid due to lack of current capacity. Currently, more than 160 families, living in more than 40 different hotels in Wake County have been approved for this program and are waiting in queue. The need for this program is anticipated to increase and may require the inclusion of additional demographics. *Treasury CRF funds will support this program.*

### **The Opportunity:**

Wake County seeks to double the capacity of this program by increasing current partner contracts and/or partnering with additional agencies for case management. Successful organizations should be prepared to begin the process of providing intensive case management by June 1, 2020.

## **3. Rapid Rehousing Permanent Placement Program**

As recommended by HUD, the majority of CARES entitlement dollars will be allocated to provide short-term rental assistance and services, with the goal of helping people obtain housing quickly, increase self-sufficiency, and stay housed. *CDBG & HOPWA funds will support this program.*

### **The Opportunity:**

Grants will be made to service agencies to support the rapid rehousing of homeless individuals. Grants will also be made to affordable housing developers to support the immediate rehabilitation of existing affordable units which are currently uninhabitable. Grant awards will in place as of June 1, 2020.

Expenses may include, but are not limited to:

- Security deposits/rental assistance
- Property damage
- Vacancy payments
- Program administration
- Affordable housing development and rehabilitation

## **4. Housing Navigation & Landlord Engagement Program**

The Housing Navigation & Landlord Engagement Program will educate potential partners on the benefits of working with our programs as well as coordinate efforts to create and manage a database of Wake County vacant units. This program support service providers working to rapidly rehouse unsheltered or precariously housed Wake County residents. *Treasury CRF funds will support this program.*

**The Opportunity:**

The Housing Department will contract with a community partner to develop a rental unit database providing details about unit size, rent and availability as well as who the owner is willing to accept in terms of a renter (i.e. those with criminal histories, poor credit, evictions, etc.). The partnering agency should seek funding to support the continuation of this program beyond the 2020 calendar year. Successful organizations should be prepared to begin the process of developing the database by June 1, 2020 and begin services within 30 days.

**5. Housing Services Enhancement Program**

Funding allocated to be used as a flexible funding source to compliment programs approved for CARES entitlement programs and to bridge gaps. *Treasury CRF funds will support this program.*

**The Opportunity:**

Wake County is seeking client supportive services for those clients in any of the Hotel, Rapid Rehousing, or street outreach programs. Wake County intends to make supportive services funding available on or before June 1, 2020.

Services may include, but are not limited to:

- Food
- Personal Hygiene
- Household supplies
- Transportation (gas/bus cards)
- Supplying furnishings for permanent homes
- Basic technology needs for school age children required to continue education

**6. Shelter & Street Outreach Enhancement Program**

Wake County is requesting that agencies consider making programmatic and physical shelter alterations that support social distancing. Increasing the capacity of street outreach programs working to identify high-risk unsheltered residents is also a primary focus of this program. *ESG & HOPWA funds will support this program.*

**The Opportunity:**

The County will provide funding to agencies making qualified programmatic and physical shelter alterations to support social distancing. In addition, the County is seeking to provide funding that supports increased capacity of street outreach programs working to identify high-risk unsheltered residents. The County is seeking to have grant awards in place on or before June 1, 2020.

Services may include, but are not limited to:

- Physical shelter alterations and supplies
- Unsheltered engagement
- Case management
- Emergency health and mental health services
- Transportation

## Next Steps

Agencies whose current organization mission falls within the parameters outlined in this Request for Letters of Interest are strongly encouraged to evaluate their programs to see how they can best increase their current capacity and/or initiate new programs to work with Wake County in responding to the COVID-19 crisis. The County's preference is for agencies to bundle multiple services to provide the most complete range of services possible to our client population. Strategic alliances and partnerships with other entities is acceptable and encouraged. **The County is looking to fund projects that can begin as soon as possible.** The County is seeking to have grant awards/contracts in place on or before June 1, 2020.

Wake County will accept questions and proposals at [HOUSING.INFO@WAKEGOV.COM](mailto:HOUSING.INFO@WAKEGOV.COM), with **HOUSE WAKE! in the subject line**. Questions of a general nature and their responses will be posted for public view on our website at <http://www.wakegov.com/housing/Pages/opportunities.aspx>. For proposals, please provide the following information by noon, May 11, 2020.:

### Program Narrative

- Who you are: brief organizational bio with key staff;
- Primary contact person;
- Type of services proposed;
- Whether these are existing or new programs;
- The capacity/number/type of clients that can be served;
- A timeline for implementation;
- Outreach strategies;
- How social equity will be ensured;
- Staffing needs;
- Program costs/resource needs;
- Tracking accomplishments and recording demographic data;
- Agreements/MOU's if partnering with other entities; and
- Plans for continuing the program after December 2020

### Cost Allocation Budget

- If an expansion of a current program, include a copy of the current budget;
- Define/delineate separate programs;
- Identify direct and indirect costs;
- Allocation of staff salaries, benefits, and taxes;
- Identify program specific categories

Funded agencies should maintain complete program records demonstrating compliance and use of funds and will be required to allow Wake County access to all records. Progress reports will be required. All funded programs will be monitored for federal, state and local regulatory compliance as well as programmatic accomplishments.