

RFQS#006 COVID-19 RISE 2.0 – 2020 - NPS

Section E. Scope of Work

1. Background & Purpose of Funding

Department: Austin Public Health

Proposal: RFQS #006 COVID-19 RISE 2.02020 - NPS

The City of Austin (City) seeks to fund qualified social service providers (Applicants) with demonstrated experience administering an online portal and providing immediate financial assistance through ACH transfers, pre-paid debit and credit cards to individuals impacted by COVID-19. In order to ensure equitable access, the Applicant will be responsible for a centralized application and distribution process with a secure online portal. Within the process, the successful applicant must be able to administer an online portal, with a lottery based on eligible applicants, an intake process that allows for the upload of required documentation and the ability to distribute all funds within 4 weeks of award.

On June 4, 2020, Council passed Resolution [#20200604-049](#) and Resolution [#20200604-040](#) that authorizes the City Manager to negotiate and execute contracts to service providers to offer direct financial assistance to the community impacted by COVID-19. It further stated the following:

“The City Manager is directed to seek a simplified, centralized application(s) and intake process available, and consider expanding the options for awarding funds to individuals based on a lottery, or similar process, or client- based direct assistance programs (which provide support to existing clients who have previously qualified for assistance). The Council 's policy objective is easing the burden of the application process for qualified residents. Options are at the discretion of staff but could include options such as the following:

- An open application period of at least 7 days over at least one weekend;
- An application accessible online and by phone, widespread outreach and plain- language instructions and information;
- Options to accommodate speakers of languages other than English throughout the application and service period;
- Simplified ways to provide required documentation and reduce levels of documentation required;
- Consistent applicant eligibility guidelines across service providers;
- Sufficient notifications to ensure applicants are up-to-date on the process;
- Ensuring any client-based direct assistance programs partner with organizations that can show they have access and trust with large numbers of persons in priority populations; and
- Other considerations as appropriate.”

Austin Public Health seeks to fund social services agencies to expand existing services to provide immediate direct services and assistance that are equitably focused, and for vulnerable Austinites impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Funding and Timeline

- 2.1 Applicants may apply for **either** project type:
- A) **Centralized Phone Bank and Application Assistance:** Up to \$500,000 for phone bank and assistance with uploading documentation for clients chosen to receive assistance from the lottery. No financial assistance is included in this project type. Funds can only be used for salaries and operations to run the phone bank that will coordinate with the online portal.
- OR**
- B) **Online Portal, Lottery, and Financial Assistance Distribution:** Up to \$665,000 administration of the online portal and lottery to distribute a minimum of \$8,835,000 in direct financial assistance for a total contract of \$9,500,000. If an agency is able to propose a budget with less than the 7% in administration, more funds will be available for direct financial assistance up to the full amount available for the online portal, or \$9,500,000.
- 2.2 Austin Public Health anticipates awarding two Agreements, one for \$500,000 and the other for \$9,500,000 in the categories above.
- 2.3 The Agreement will have a 6-week contract term starting August 10, 2020.
- 2.4 Applicants must be ready to begin the program approximately one week from the start date.
- 2.5 Awarded programs will be structured as a deliverables-based agreement, where an agency is reimbursed for a report or product that must be delivered to the City by the grantee (or by the Subgrantee to the Grantee) to satisfy contractual requirements. It can include goods or finished works, documentation of services provided or activities undertaken, and/or other related documentation.

3. Applicant Minimum Qualifications

- 3.1 Applicant shall be a non-profit authorized to operate in Texas.
- 3.2 Applicant must have submitted all applicable tax returns to the IRS and the State of Texas (e.g. Form 990 or 900-EZ and state and federal payroll tax filings); submitted all required payroll taxes; and does not owe past due taxes to the City.
- 3.3 Applicant shall be eligible to legally contract with the City of Austin and not debarred from contracting according to SAM.gov and City Debarment information.
- 3.4 The Applicant and its principals may not be currently suspended or debarred from doing business with the Federal Government, as indicated by the United States General Services Administration list of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Non-Procurement Programs, the State of Texas, or the City of Austin.
- 3.5 Applicant shall have the ability to meet Austin Public Health's Social Services Insurance Requirements (reference D – Supplemental Purchase Provisions).
- 3.6 Applicant must have an active Board of Directors that meets regularly and reviews program performance, financial performance, and annually approves the agency budget.

- 3.7 Applicant shall have a minimum of five (5) years established, successful experience providing financial assistance to low-income individuals.
- 3.8 Applicant shall have proven experience complying with local, state and federal funding requirements, including programmatic and demographic reporting, segregation of funds, client de-duplication, etc.

4. Program Design Requirements

4.A. Centralized Phone Bank and Application Assistance must propose the following components:

- 4.A.1. Successful collaboration with agency administering the online portal, lottery, financial assistance distribution.
- 4.A.2. Phone-based eligibility prescreening assistance in a streamlined process to assist families without internet access.
- 4.A.3. Phone assistance must be accessible in English and Spanish and other languages as needed.
- 4.A.5. Application Assistance to households chosen in the lottery in uploading and completing required eligibility documentation to receive financial assistance.

- 4.A.6. Ability to obtain required eligibility documentation from individuals who do not have access to the internet.

Required information/documentation of Lottery winners may include:

- ✓ Government issued identification of head of household
- ✓ Names of other individuals in the household
- ✓ Bank Account if requesting ACH transfer
- ✓ Current Household Income
- ✓ **Signed** affidavit to support household income.
- ✓ Proof of City of Austin/Travis County resident
 - Government Issued ID
 - Utility bill in the name of someone in the household

4.B. Online Portal, Lottery, and Financial Assistance Distribution must have the following components:

- 4.B.1. Must be willing and able to successfully collaborate with agency providing phone-based eligibility prescreening and application assistance for families without internet access.
- 4.B.2. Must have an online portal through a secured website for accepting applications from community members with the following functionality:
 - i. Online portal accessible in English and Spanish and other languages as needed.
 - ii. Ability to conduct an eligibility prescreening online to collect the following type of information:
 - Demographic Information
 - Name of the Head of Household
 - # in household

- Address (must be Austin/Travis County)
 - Zip Code
 - Email address
 - Phone number
 - Race/Ethnicity of all household members
 - If selected for the lottery, are you able to upload the required information?
 - What is your current monthly household income?
 - What forms of financial assistance has your household received?
 - No financial assistance received
 - Federal Stimulus funds
 - Unemployment
 - RISE Funds
 - Other _____
 - How has your household been impacted by COVID-19?
 - Loss of a job
 - Income decreased by at least 50%
 - No impact
 - iii. Ability to screen applicants based on a formula so that only eligible households are entered into the lottery.
 - iv. Ability to conduct a randomized lottery and alert lottery winners to move forward with submitting required documentation
 - v. Ability to obtain electronic signatures from clients (ex. DocuSign, Verisign, or e-signatures by Adobe).
 - vi. Ability to de-duplicate household / individuals.
 - vii. Ability for individuals to upload required eligibility documentation and ability to obtain required eligibility documentation from individuals who do not have access to the internet.
 - Required information/documentation of Lottery winners
 - ✓ Government issued identification of head of household
 - ✓ Names of other individuals in the household
 - ✓ Bank Account if requesting ACH transfer
 - ✓ Current Household Income
 - ✓ **Signed** affidavit to support household income.
 - ✓ Proof of City of Austin/Travis County resident
 - Government Issued ID
 - Utility bill in the name of someone in the household
- 4.B.3. Ability to disperse \$2000 in financial assistance through ACH transfers, pre-paid debit and credit cards to households.
- 4.B.4. Must have sufficient administrative capacity to comply with fiscal and compliance requirements, and be able to disperse ACH deposits and gift cards to individuals without access to a bank account in a rapid and efficient manner.

- 4.B.5. Must document client eligibility requirements and keep internal controls in place to ensure data quality and integrity.
- 4.B.6. Must disperse all funds in a rapid and efficient manner within 4 weeks of award.

5. Client Eligibility Requirements

The resolution states that the funds should “prioritize relief for people in underserved communities who are low- or very low-income and/or who remain unemployed or underemployed , with a special emphasis on those who do not qualify for other forms of assistance, such as unemployment insurance.”

Specific APH requirements:

- 5.1 Low-Income, at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level
- 5.2 Residents of Austin/ Travis County
- 5.3 Need for assistance as a result of COVID19 (ineligible for unemployment, applied for unemployment but it will take too long to receive assistance)

6. Required Program Metrics

- 6.1 Unduplicated clients served
- 6.2 Unduplicated households served
- 6.3 Demographic information for individuals including:
 - 6.3.1 Race
 - 6.3.2 Ethnicity
 - 6.3.3 Zip Code
 - 6.3.4 Gender

7. Application Format and Submission Requirements

- 7.1 The Application must be submitted in Partnergrants: <https://partnergrants.austintexas.gov/> by the **deadline of Wednesday, July 22, 2020 by no later than noon CST**. No paper copies will be accepted.
- 7.2 Responses should be included for each question.

8. Application Evaluation

- 8.1. Competitive Selection: This procurement will comply with applicable City Policy. The most qualified Applicant will be selected by the City on a rational basis. Evaluation factors outlined below shall be applied to all eligible, responsive Applicants in comparing responses and selecting the most qualified Applicant. Award of an Agreement may be made without discussion

with Applicants after submissions are received. Responses should, therefore, be submitted on the most favorable terms.

8.2 Evaluation Factors: All responses will be evaluated based on the following criteria and rankings. Maximum 100 points. See application for additional details.

1. **References** – Question 1 **(15 points)**
2. **Experience** – Question 2 **(20 points)**
3. **Personnel** – Question 3 **(10 points)**
4. **Readiness** – Question 4 **(10 points)**
5. **Service Capacity** – Question 5 **(30 points)**
6. **Project Budget and Narrative** – Question 6 **(5 points)**
7. **Sample Documents** – Question 7 **(10 points)**

8.3 All Applications will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Considerations will be given to Applicants:

- 8.3.1 With experience administering direct financial assistances to clients
- 8.3.2 With the capacity to start the administration of the funds immediately and efficiently
- 8.3.3 That demonstrate alignment with advancing equitable outcomes. The proposed program implementation strategy must:
 - Work to advance racial equity in the community and within the agency culture.
 - Have access to data, including demographics and performance measures on racial/ethnic disparities and use it to guide the work of the program.
 - Host or participate in training events dedicated to improving equitable outcomes.

9. Additional Information

Proposal Acceptance Period: All applications shall remain valid until award, negotiation, and execution of contracts as directed by the Austin City Council.

Proprietary Information: All materials submitted to the City become public property and are subject to the Texas Open Records Act upon receipt. If an Applicant does not desire proprietary information in the proposal to be disclosed, each page must be identified and marked proprietary at time of submittal. The City will, to the extent allowed by law, endeavor to protect such information from disclosure. The final decision as to what information must be disclosed, however, lies with the Texas Attorney General. Failure to identify proprietary information will result in all unmarked sections being deemed non-proprietary and available upon public request.

Exceptions: Please be advised that exceptions to any portion of the Solicitation may jeopardize acceptance of the application.

Application Preparation Costs: All costs directly or indirectly related to preparation of a response to the RFQS or any oral presentation required to supplement and/or clarify an application which may be required by the City shall be the sole responsibility of the Applicant.

Contract Adjustments: The City of Austin reserves the right to adjust the Agreement amount or scope of work over the contract period based on community needs, Applicant's ability to expend funds in a timely manner or any other factor. When the City determines adjustments need to be made, the City will provide at least a 90-day notice to the Grantee.