



# REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

## Housing Development Sponsor for No Place Like Home (NPLH) Program

*RFQ Release Date:  
August 17, 2020*

RFQ available on the Plumas County website at:  
<https://www.plumascounty.us/87/Behavioral-Health>

*Statement of Qualifications (SOQ)  
Submission Deadline Date:  
September 4, 2020, 4:30PM*

Issued by:  
PLUMAS COUNTY  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION.....	3
3. TIMELINE .....	4
4. DEVELOPER QUALIFICATIONS.....	5
5. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS .....	5
6. SOQ SELECTION CRITERIA .....	6
7. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION .....	7

## **LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A. HOUSING FIRST PRINCIPLES

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Plumas County Behavioral Health Department is releasing this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to invite Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) from potential compatible Housing Development Sponsors (Development Sponsor) for the purpose of partnering with Plumas County and planning, constructing, owning, and managing a permanent supportive housing project funded, in part, by the State of California No Place Like Home (NPLH) Program.

From this SOQ process and qualifications received, the County intends to select potential compatible Development Sponsors, based on the selection criteria listed in Section 6, and invite those selected to respond to a subsequent Request a Proposal (RFP) process.

NPLH provides competitive and non-competitive funding for permanent supportive housing that serves persons with serious mental illness who are chronically homeless, homeless, or at-risk of being chronically homeless. Under the NPLH Program, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) may make loans to reduce the initial cost of acquisition and/or construction of housing and may set funds aside to subsidize extremely low rent levels over time.

The selected Development Sponsor will apply to the NPLH Program jointly with Plumas County in the 3<sup>rd</sup> NPLH funding round, with Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) issuance anticipated for October 2020.

It is recommended that respondents to this RFQ refer to NPLH Guidelines found on the HCD website at <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-funding/active-funding/nplh.shtml>.

The housing project that will ultimately be developed by the selected Development Sponsor will be required to meet NPLH threshold criteria, will adhere to Housing First principles as described in Attachment A, and will be in collaboration with the Northern California Continuum of Care (NorCal CoC), which will include coordination with NorCal CoC's Coordinated Entry (CE) system and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

This RFQ review process will prioritize development sponsors that can demonstrate experience delivering housing and supportive services for homeless individuals, preferably in rural California communities and that propose a development process that addresses Plumas County's goals and objectives as described in the Plumas & Sierra Counties Plan to Address Homelessness.

## **NPLH GOALS AND GUIDELINES**

The NPLH Program was established in order to address the State's escalating homelessness crisis by providing funding to develop Permanent Supportive Housing for those who are homeless, chronically homeless or at risk of chronic homelessness, and who also have a serious mental health condition.

All NPLH-assisted housing must use Housing First principles (Attachment A) with low-barrier tenant selection practices that offer voluntary and individually customized support services. Counties that receive NPLH funding must commit to providing mental health services and connections to other needed community services which foster well-being and independence.

Plumas County desires to apply for NPLH funds in order to address the housing needs of chronically homeless individuals with a serious mental illness and is committed to providing the necessary and required mental health services for a minimum of 20 years.

The NPLH Program provides deferred payment loans to counties applying with a Development Sponsor for the development of Permanent Supportive Housing (minimum of 5 units) for persons who meet the definition of the NPLH target population. NPLH funds may be used to acquire, design, construct, rehabilitate, or preserve permanent supportive housing, which may also include a capitalized operating subsidy reserve.

Plumas County intends to collaborate with a qualified developer with relevant experience in affordable housing development, property management and asset management, to compete for NPLH funds in the Round 3 Competitive Allocation, small County set-aside. This NOFA is anticipated to be released late October 2020 and will be due late January 2021.

The County is seeking developers that will be ready to apply for NPLH funds for a housing project, identified in collaboration with the County.

The selected developer will be designated as the project "Development Sponsor." The Development Sponsor will coordinate with the County on all aspects of the application to HCD, and will apply jointly with the County. If awarded NPLH funds, the Development Sponsor will assume responsibility, with appropriate County coordination and oversight, for all aspects of the development, property operations, and property maintenance in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and all applicable financing regulations.

Development Sponsors submitting their SOQ for consideration under this RFQ should be prepared to comply with the purpose and all requirements of the NPLH Program if selected by Plumas as the project Development Sponsor.

The NPLH Program furthers the purposes of AB 1618, (Chapter 43, Statutes of 2016), as amended by AB 1628, (Chapter 322, Statutes of 2016, effective September 13, 2016), and the 2018 No Place Like Home Act (AB 1827, Assembly Budget Committee). The NPLH Program Guidelines, dated September 2019 (the Guidelines), and any subsequent updates, implement, interpret, and make specific the NPLH statutes.

The HCD Program Guidelines establish terms, conditions, and procedures for the award of funds under the Competitive Allocation. Except as otherwise provided in the NPLH Program Guidelines, multifamily rental housing projects which may be negotiated as a result of responding to this RFQ are also subject to HCD's current Uniform Multifamily Regulations (UMRs), and may be subject to California competitive bidding and prevailing wage law. Additionally, all applications and projects must comply with the requirements of the to-be-issued NPLH 2020 NOFA Round 3 Competitive Allocation of Funds.

For access to the documents referenced above and new information as it becomes available, please follow the link to HCD's NPLH website: <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-funding/active-funding/nplh.shtml>.

Prospective Development Sponsors should review and familiarize themselves with the above-mentioned documents prior to responding to this RFQ.

## 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### **PLUMAS COUNTY CHARACTERISTICS, AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEED, AND HOMELESSNESS**

Overall Characteristics: Plumas County (Plumas) is located in the northern end of the Sierra Nevada mountain range of California. Plumas was originally named after the Spanish *Río de las Plumas* (the Feather River) which runs through the county. Plumas is primarily bordered by Lassen County on the northeast, Sierra County on the south, and Butte and Tehama counties on the west. Plumas' only incorporated city, Portola, is approximately a 40-minute drive to Plumas' County seat, Quincy, and a 50-minute drive from Reno, Nevada.

Plumas County is 2,613 square miles and home to 85% of the Plumas National Forest. Plumas County's population is approximately 18,807 people (US Census Bureau 2019 estimate).

Portola has 2,068 persons residing within the city proper. Another 2,068 residents live in Chester, while approximately 2,444 residents live in East Quincy and 1,692 residents live in Quincy.

The median household income varies by source and year, although HCD and HUD's data generally aligns. In 2018 the median household income was \$50,270, as reported by the US Census American Community Survey 2014-2018 and the poverty rate is 13.3%, which is slightly lower than the California poverty rate of 15.1% (US Census). In 2019 the median household income for a four-person household reported by HCD state income limits was \$70,700 and in 2020 is \$72,200. Lastly, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reported Plumas County's 2018 median household income at \$63,300, and then in 2019 at \$70,700, and in 2020 at \$72,200.

Data on Homelessness: The primary quantitative data source on homelessness is the Continuum of Care Point-in-Time (PIT) survey that was most recently conducted on January 27, 2020.

The 2020 PIT survey counted a total of 115 homeless individuals in Plumas County. Of these individuals, 38 individuals were sheltered and 77 were unsheltered. All of the sheltered individuals were located in Quincy and more than half of the unsheltered individuals were also located in Quincy.

Affordable Housing Need: Plumas County has a tremendous need for subsidized affordable housing.

#### Availability:

- 50% of Area Median Income is just below \$35,000 for a three-person household. An estimated 2,593 households in the County have an income of less than \$35,000. Households at this income level cannot afford market rent.
- In Plumas there are 324 HUD-subsidized units and 70 tax credit units, for a total of 394 affordable, rent-restricted units. When compared to the 2,593 households earning less than \$35,000, there is a significant shortfall of at least 2,199 units that are affordable to low income households.

#### Affordability:

- Two out of every three households earning less than \$35,000 spend 30% or more of income on housing.
- 38% of renter households pay more than 35% of income to rent, which is a total of 835 households.

## **PLAN TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS AND SITES FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS**

On June 15, 2020, the Plumas County Board of Supervisors adopted a joint Plumas & Sierra Counties Plan to Address Homelessness (Plan). The Plan describes the existing homelessness resources and partnerships within the County, as well as the County's goals and objectives to address homelessness, which includes the development of permanent supportive housing. The County is also undertaking a sites feasibility analysis of potential parcels that may be appropriate for the development of a permanent supportive housing project.

For more information on the Plan and sites feasibility analysis, contact Tony Hobson, Ph.D., Director, Plumas County Behavioral Health Department, (530) 283-6307 or by email at [thobson@pcbh.services](mailto:thobson@pcbh.services).

## **POTENTIAL LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES**

Plumas has earmarked to receive \$500,000 from the State NPLH non-competitive allocation which may be used to leverage NPLH funds. Plumas also intends to apply for funding from the competitive funding made available through NPLH. Staff within the Behavioral Health Department are responsible for the application for NPLH funding; however, it is the expectation that the Development Sponsor will be highly involved.

In addition, Plumas is in the process of applying for State Non-Competitive Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA). The Plumas County Year 1 (2019) allocation of \$121,182 is dedicated to assisting the Development Sponsor with predevelopment costs associated with the NPLH housing project. The 5-year estimate for Plumas County (including Year 1) in the PLHA formula allocations is \$727,093, although annual funding amounts are subject to the amount of revenue collected by the State. Approximately two-thirds of Years 2-5 (2020-2023) funds will be deposited in a reserve to be used for supportive services costs associated with the NPLH new permanent supportive housing project.

Plumas may apply for funding made available through State of California HOME funds.

The Plumas County Community Development Commission (PCCDC), the applicable housing authority, is also willing to engage in discussions regarding the provision of Project-Based Section 8 vouchers for NPLH units.

## **3. TIMELINE**

RFQ Released	August 17, 2020
SOQ Deadline to Ask Questions	August 28, 2020
RFQ Addendum Posted to County Website	August 31, 2020
SOQ Submission Deadline	September 4, 2020
SOQ Interviews (at County's option)	September 8-18, 2020
Selected Development Sponsors Invited to Respond to RFP Process	No later than September 25, 2020

## 4. DEVELOPER QUALIFICATIONS

In order to submit a SOQ, a Development Sponsor must meet the following minimum threshold qualification:

- Developed and own at least one permanent supportive housing project (NPLH or non-NPLH).

In addition, it's preferred if the Development Sponsor has:

- Experience with Housing First Principles.
- Developed and own at least one housing project in a rural California community.
- Successful experience securing affordable housing funding.
- Completion of projects within schedule and budget.

## 5. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The submitted SOQ in response to this RFQ should include the following elements, organized in the following order:

- A. Prepare cover letter stating interest and identifying Development Sponsor's principal point of contact with contact information.
- B. Provide overall description of Development Sponsor's affordable housing development experience including examples of such housing projects, knowledge and experience of key staff that will be assigned, and capacity between 2021 and 2023 to plan and deliver the housing project.
- C. Include specific description of Development Sponsor's experience with Housing First principles and developing and owning permanent supportive housing for NPLH populations, including examples of such housing projects.
- D. Describe preferred approach to developing permanent supportive housing, particularly in rural areas like Plumas County, including examples from past experiences with project development steps and timeline, pro forma budgeting, collaborations with jurisdictions, partnerships with other entities, and the community outreach and engagement strategy.
- E. Describe experience securing funding and strategy to securing competitive NPLH Round 3 funding.
- F. Provide example(s) of when a permanent supportive housing project operations plan was utilized well after in service, including best practices in property management and staffing, delivery of supportive services, community integration, and financial strategy for long-term sustainability. Describe the entities that are typically involved and their roles. Describe years of experience with/as a Lead Service Provider in providing services to special needs populations in permanent supportive housing or helping persons address barriers to housing stability.
- G. Include three (3) references, including name, title, entity, mailing address, email address, and phone number.
- H. Attach resumes of key staff.

## **SOQ QUESTIONS**

All questions regarding this RFQ shall be submitted in writing by email and directed to Tony Hobson, Ph.D., Director, Plumas County Behavioral Health Department, at [thobson@pcbh.services](mailto:thobson@pcbh.services) no later than August 28, 2020, 4:30 PM. The County will accordingly respond in writing by email and will maintain a log of the written questions and answers thereto in the form of a RFQ Addendum.

The RFQ Addendum with questions and answers, will be posted to the County's website <https://www.plumascounty.us/87/Behavioral-Health> on August 31, 2020.

## **SOQ SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINE**

The SOQ must be no more than 10 pages (not including resumes) on letter-sized paper, 12 point font, single-sided, and stapled.

One (1) original and four (4) copies of the SOQ shall be delivered in a sealed package.

Package shall be clearly marked with the Development Sponsors Name and the words "NPLH DEVELOPMENT SPONSOR" and shall be delivered to the County in person or by mail at the following location:

**Plumas County Behavioral Health Department**  
**Attn: Tony Hobson, Ph.D., Director**  
270 County Hospital Road, Suite 109  
Quincy, CA 95971

### **THE SOQ DEADLINE IS 4:30 PM ON SEPTEMBER 4, 2020**

Proposals received after the time and date specified above will not be considered and will be returned unopened to the proposer. Any proposal received prior to the time and date specified above may be withdrawn or modified by a written request from the proposer. To be considered, however, the modified proposal must be received prior to the time and date specified above.

## **6. SOQ SELECTION CRITERIA**

Plumas County will use the following selection criteria to evaluate the SOQs submitted by Development Sponsors. **Total Possible Points— 100**

1. Overall affordable housing development experience including knowledge of key staff assigned to work on the project and capacity to deliver the project— 25 points
2. Specific experience with Housing First principles and developing permanent supportive housing for NPLH populations— 25 points
3. Experience and strategies to securing funding— 20 points
4. Strength of services, development steps and timeline, pro forma budgeting, partnerships, collaborations, and community outreach— 10 points
5. Demonstration of experience with project operations, financial strategies for long-term project sustainability, and community integration— 10 points
6. References— 10 points

From this SOQ process, the County intends to invite selected Development Sponsors to respond to a subsequent RFP process.



## **7. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The County reserves the right to request any Development Sponsor submitting a SOQ to clarify the submittal or to supply additional information necessary to assist in the selection process.

The County may deem it necessary to interview and retains the right to interview Development Sponsors as part of the selection process.

The County reserves the right to reject any and/or all submittals at its discretion for any reason.

This RFQ does not commit the County to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal for this request, or to procure a contract for services.

The County reserves the right to accept or reject any or all SOQs received as a result of this request, to negotiate with any qualified Development Sponsor, or to modify or cancel in part or in its entirety the SOQ if it is in the best interests of the County to do so.

The prospective consultant is advised that should this RFQ and subsequent RFP process result in recommendation for award of a contract, the contract will not be in force until it is approved by the Board of Supervisors and fully executed by the County.

All products used or developed in the execution of any contract resulting from this RFQ and subsequent RFP process will become public domain.

Contract award as a result of this RFQ and subsequent RFP process will be made without discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, sex, or national origin.

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**HOUSING FIRST PRINCIPLES**

## **HOUSING FIRST**

Programs using Housing First generally fall into two categories:

- Supportive housing, which is an apartment made affordable through long-term rental assistance, paired with intensive services promoting housing stability.
- Rapid re-housing, which connects a family or individual to an apartment affordable through short to medium-term rental assistance, along with moderate services designed to allow that household to increase their income sufficiently to be able to afford the apartment over the long-term.

While Housing First recognizes housing is a necessary precursor to treatment, Housing First does not mean “housing only.” On the contrary, Housing First acknowledges social services and care coordination are necessary elements of housing stability and quality of life.

### **CORE COMPONENTS OF HOUSING FIRST UNDER CALIFORNIA LAW**

In 2016, the California Legislature passed Senate Bill 1380 (Mitchell). It required all housing programs to adopt the Housing First model. The Legislation defined Housing First with these “core components”:

- Tenant screening and selection practices promote accepting applicants regardless of their sobriety or use of substances, completion of treatment, or participation in services.
- Applicants are not rejected on the basis of poor credit or financial history, poor or lack of rental history, criminal convictions unrelated to tenancy, or behaviors that indicate a lack of "housing readiness."
- Housing providers accept referrals directly from shelters, street outreach, drop-in centers, and other parts of crisis response systems frequented by vulnerable people experiencing homelessness.
- Supportive services emphasize engagement and problem solving over therapeutic goals and service plans that are highly tenant-driven without predetermined goals.
- Participation in services or program compliance is not a condition of housing tenancy.
- Tenants have a lease and all the rights and responsibilities of tenancy.
- The use of alcohol or drugs in and of itself, without other lease violations, is not a reason for eviction.
- Funding promotes tenant selection plans for supportive housing that prioritize eligible tenants based on criteria other than "first-come-first-serve," including, but not limited to, the duration or chronicity of homelessness, vulnerability to early mortality, or high utilization of crisis services.
- Case managers and service coordinators are trained in and actively employ evidence-based practices for engagement, including motivational interviewing and client-centered counseling.
- Services are informed by a harm-reduction philosophy that recognizes drug and alcohol use and addiction as a part of tenants' lives, where tenants are engaged in nonjudgmental communication regarding drug and alcohol use, and where tenants are offered education regarding how to avoid risky behaviors and engage in safer practices, as well as connected to evidence-based treatment if the tenant so chooses.
- The project and specific apartment may include special physical features that accommodate disabilities, reduce harm, and promote health and community and independence among tenants.

## **EVIDENCE BASIS**

The federal and State government recognize Housing First as an evidence-based practice. In fact, a settled and growing body of evidence demonstrates:

- Tenants accessing Housing First programs are able to move into housing faster than programs offering a more traditional approach.
- Tenants using Housing First programs stay housed longer and more stably than other programs.
- Over 90% of tenants accessing Housing First programs are able to retain housing stability.
- In general, tenants using Housing First programs access services more often, have a greater sense of choice and autonomy, and are far less costly to public systems than tenants of other programs.