



**Request for Proposals RFP No. 07/15-289
Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)
Project Based Vouchers**

Solicitation Background and General Requirements

Home Forward provides housing solutions for individuals and families who cannot find affordable and adequate housing. As one of the most highly regarded housing authorities in the country, Home Forward is an independent public corporation established in 1941, by the City of Portland. In 1992, Home Forward's jurisdiction was expanded to include all of Multnomah County. A nine-member Board of Commissioners with seats appointed by City of Portland, the City of Gresham, and Multnomah County and confirmed by the Portland City Council governs Home Forward. Members of the Board serve without pay.

Home Forward is requesting proposals from housing providers to partner with Home Forward and the local Veterans Administration Medical Center in an application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for set-aside funding available for project basing HUD-VASH vouchers using a Housing First approach. VASH vouchers come with Section 8 voucher rent assistance as well as ongoing case management and supports for the veteran provided by the Veterans Administration (VA). The selected property will be included in a joint application for between 9 and 50 VASH vouchers to be project based pending an award from HUD. The award of Project Based Vouchers (PBV) to the selected property will be conditional, subject to the successful award of HUD funding and compliance with all PBV VASH regulations. In the event HUD does not award Project Based VASH Vouchers for the selected property, Home Forward may elect to award project-based VASH vouchers currently available to Home Forward to the selected property. Additionally, while Home Forward may submit only one application with a single property identified for set-aside funding, Home Forward may elect to use this solicitation to identify multiple properties at which to project-base VASH vouchers available under Home Forward's current award. In order to be considered for either the set-aside VASH vouchers or the current Home Forward VASH vouchers, Proposers must commit to maintain their offer for a period of 30 days from the date of submittal.

Home Forward Asset Management Department may elect to submit a proposal for the property to be considered for the set-aside VASH vouchers. In this event, the Home Forward proposal must be submitted at least 24 hours in advance of the closing date and time for all other proposals. Home Forward's proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope to the Procurement and Contracts Department. All proposals received, including from Home Forward, will be evaluated after the closing date and time. No member of the Home Forward Property Management Department or Asset Management Department will be included in the selection committee or evaluation process.

Each interested proposer should review [HUD Notice PIH 2015-11](#) for program intent and requirements. Additional information on *Housing First* is available at hudexchange.info. Additional information regarding Home Forward's Project Based Voucher program can be found in Chapter 17 of our [Section 8 Administrative Plan](#).¹

Home Forward will consider properties for both the set-aside VASH vouchers and the current Home Forward VASH vouchers based upon the following criteria. Proposers should provide sufficient but concise information, responding to each section below. Proposals should be formatted with 1 inch margins, utilizing Ariel font, minimum size 11. All proposals must be received by 2 p.m. on August 5, 2015. Proposals should be sent either electronically as pdf files or by other postal delivery method to the attention of:

Berit Stevenson
Procurement and Contracts Manager
Home Forward
135 SW Ash Street, 5th Floor
Portland, Oregon 97204
Telephone: 503.802.8541
Email: berit.stevenson@homeforward.org

Proposal Content

A. Cover Letter

Provide a cover letter that introduces the proposed property and project/property team, including owner/developer and property manager and your interest in partnering with Home Forward in this endeavor. Indicate your willingness to commit your property for consideration for a period of 30 days from submittal. Home Forward will post any addendum to this solicitation on the Home Forward website and Proposers are encouraged to review the website prior to submitting a proposal in order to receive such addendum. Indicate receipt of any addendum posted to the Home Forward website within the cover letter. The cover letter should be signed by an authorized representative.

B. Evaluated Content

1. **Property Description (5 points available)** – Provide the follow information:
 - a. The number of Project-based VASH requested—must be between 9 and 75.
 - b. Is the proposal for existing housing or newly constructed or rehabilitated units?

¹ Rules for Project Based VASH differ from those for our local Project Based Voucher program in one key way: Under our Moving to Work authority, Home Forward has limited the ability of families in Project Based Voucher units to move with a tenant-based voucher after the first year of tenancy (Chapter 17-VII.C). Home Forward does not have the ability to restrict tenant mobility in this way for Project-Based VASH units. Home Forward and Projects must allow for continued assistance for families that move from Project-Based VASH Units as outlined in section 3 of [Notice PIH 2011-50](#).

- c. the address of the property
 - d. the location by census tract
 - e. the total number of buildings
 - f. total number of units by bedroom size in each building
 - g. the number and bedroom sizes of HUD-VASH units in each building; and
 - h. the target population, if any, of any non HUD-VASH units.
2. **Scoring criteria: Project Readiness (15 to 25 points available)** – the property may be existing housing or newly constructed or rehabilitated units. In line with HUD [Notice PIH 2015-11](#), more points are available for proposals for existing housing. Referrals for VASH vouchers must come from the VA medical center and be authorized by Home Forward. Projects proposing a minimum of 15 Project Based VASH units are preferred in order to create staff efficiencies for VA VASH workers.
- a. **25 points available: Existing housing** that will be ready for occupancy by new homeless HUD-VASH clients within 90 days of selection date for PBVs under [Notice PIH 2015-11](#), which is anticipated to be October 28th, 2015. For existing projects, all units applied for must be unoccupied at the point Home Forward begins the Project Based VASH contract which must be within 90 days of selection for PBVs under [Notice PIH 2015-11](#).

For existing housing, describe your occupancy plan for these designated units. In anticipation of receiving referrals for VASH eligible veterans, describe your plan for unit availability and the time line leading to 100% occupancy of designated VASH units.

- b. **15 points available: Newly constructed or rehabilitated units**, developed in accordance with PBV requirements found at [24 CFR Part 983 Subpart D](#), that will execute an Agreement to enter into a Housing Assistance Payments contract (AHAP) and start construction within 18 months of selection date for PBVs under [Notice PIH 2015-11](#), which is anticipated to be October 28th, 2015. These PBV requirements include the selection of a PBV proposal, an environmental review, subsidy layering review, the execution of an AHAP prior to construction or rehabilitation, and standards for conduct of development work.

For newly constructed or rehabilitated units, the Proposer should provide a project timeline including these major milestones: (1) execution of Agreement to Enter into a Housing Assistance Payments contract (AHAP); (2) construction start date; (3) occupancy/lease-up start date; and date project will reach 100% occupancy of VASH units.

For newly constructed or rehabilitated units, the Proposer must have control of the land where the property is located by the HUD set-aside VASH voucher application deadline, currently August 28, 2015, and submit evidence of that control with the application. Acceptable evidence of site control is a document that has a complete and accurate legal description and is either:

- A recorded deed or conveyance showing the applicant has ownership;
- A valid purchase and sale agreement;
- A valid option to purchase;
- A valid option for a long-term lease; or
- Other evidence satisfactory to Home Forward

Proposers should describe the current status related to site control and how they expect to comply with this requirement.

3. **Scoring criteria: Deconcentrating Poverty (15 points available)** – The proposal must provide a poverty rate based on property address and describe how the location of the property will expand access to economic opportunities.
 - a. It is Home Forward’s goal to select a site for PBV housing that provide for de-concentrating poverty and expanding housing and economic opportunities. When approving sites for PBV housing, Home Forward considers both local practices and site location in census tracts that have poverty concentrations of 20 percent or less. Home Forward may grant exceptions to the 20 percent standard when Home Forward determines that the PBV assistance will complement other local redevelopment activities designed to expand housing and economic opportunities in census tracts with poverty concentrations greater than 20 percent.

4. **Scoring criteria: Accessibility and Access to Amenities (10 points available)** – Provide a detailed description of the property’s accessibility to transit, the VA Medical Center or VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC), employment opportunities, and to key neighborhood assets such as quality grocery stores, banks, libraries, parks and recreational facilities. Be specific and provide names of amenities and services identified. This statement must include transit options for the immediate area around the property such as rail, bus, ride/bike share, and may include scoring indices for neighborhoods, such as a Walk Score (<http://www.walkscore.com>).

5. **Scoring criteria: Experience (15 points available)** –
 - a. The proposal must include a description of the experience of the owner and/or Property Management Company involved in the management and development of supportive housing units for veterans, homeless, elderly and/or disabled families. (10 points available)

 - b. Additional points will be awarded for experience administering Project Based Vouchers including waiting list administration and effective program administration. Please describe your experience administering Project Based Vouchers if applicable and/or your experience managing other supportive housing with access via referrals from partners. (5 points available)

6. **Scoring Criteria: Design (5 points available)** – Provide a description of how the property design will support the housing success of the target population. At a minimum

the description should include information regarding availability of group meeting space and private office space available for Veterans Administration VASH staff to meet with VASH participants.

7. **Scoring Criteria: Housing First (10 points available)**—Projects/Properties must comply with a Housing First approach. The proposal must include:
- a. an affirmative statement that the owner/property management understands and intends to adhere to a Housing First approach; and
 - b. a description of how the property will integrate the Housing First approach into its admission and occupancy policies and its service practices, including a commitment to using tenant admission screening criteria for Project Based VASH units that are no more restrictive than those outlined in *Attachment A*.

Occupancy policies must not require being clean and sober upon admission or to maintain housing. Policies and practices should also demonstrate how negative exits will be avoided; how a respectful, warm, and compassionate environment for Veterans will be created and maintained; and how a recovery oriented environment will be established.

8. **Scoring Criteria: Supportive Services (15 points available) (limit of 3 pages)**
- a. Provide a detailed description of any supportive services available to the residents of the property, in addition to the VA case management services provided with the voucher. If any additional services are proposed to be provided by the property owner, the source of funding for those services should be identified, as well as the status of the funding commitment for those services. Proposers should clearly indicate how the principles of Housing First will be incorporated into the provision of supportive services. Supportive services must reflect the specific needs of the target population. Proposals must include a description of on-site as well as off-site services, what these services include, who provides the services (e.g., VA, property owner, or other provider), the length of time services will be available to each client, total number of hours per week that services will be available, how off-site services will be accessed, and how these services will be monitored by the VA or other responsible party. Specifics of what the supportive services will entail are required. For example, if employment services are provided, then the Proposer should detail what kinds of employment services will be provided and how they will be delivered.
 - b. Provide a description of how the property will coordinate with the Veterans Administration Medical Center for the provision of case management and other supportive services.

Evaluation and Award:

Proposals will be evaluated and award(s) made to the proposal(s) deemed the most advantageous to Home Forward based upon the criterion described above. Home Forward will conduct this evaluation in coordination with community partners and representatives from the VA Medical Center. During the evaluation process, proposers may be requested to submit additional clarifying information or may be requested to attend an interview at which their proposal will be considered. Home Forward expects that the evaluation process will be completed by August 14, 2015, at which time Proposers will be notified of results.

If a property is accepted as an existing property, the selection will be conditional on the completion of an environmental review as outlined at 24 CFR 983.58 prior to the execution of a Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract, unless the environmental review process has already been completed.

If a property is selected as new construction or rehabilitation, the selection will be conditional on the completion of an environmental review (unless the environmental review process has already been completed) and subsidy layering review prior to the execution of an Agreement to Enter into a Housing Assistance Payments contract (AHAP).

The owner(s) of selected property will be required to:

1. Develop and operate the property in accordance with PBV program requirements found at 24 CFR part 983, Implementation of the HUD-VASH Program (Operating Requirements) published in the Federal Register on March 23, 2012, the requirements found in section 3 of Notice PIH 2011-50 (Project-basing of HUD-VASH Vouchers, Notice PIH 2011-54 (Guidance on the PBV Program) or any successor notices, and Home Forward's Section 8 Administrative Plan.
2. Comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of Federal civil rights laws, including but not limited to the Fair Housing Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, and Titles II or III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as applicable.

To facilitate a successful application to HUD for the set-aside vouchers, the selected partner may be requested to provide additional information and/or assistance by Home Forward to complete the HUD application.

ATTACHMENT LISTING:

- A. Allowable tenant admission screening criteria

LINKS TO WEB CONTENT:

[HUD Notice PIH 2015-11](#)

<http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=pih2015-11.pdf>

[hudexchange.info](#)

<http://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Housing-First-Permanent-Supportive-Housing-Brief.pdf>

Section 8 Administrative Plan

<http://homeforward.org/sites/default/files/Section%208%20Admin%20Plan%20March%202015.pdf>

24 CFR Part 983 Subpart D

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title24-vol4/pdf/CFR-2011-title24-vol4-part983-subpartD.pdf>

Attachment A

Project-Based VASH Screening Criteria

Supportive Housing Screening Criteria- Applicants qualify for and come with a commitment of intensive services

Denials – Denials have the option for a hearing/reasonable accommodation

Convictions for

- Felonies involving murder, manslaughter, arson, rape, kidnapping, sex crimes, robbery, assault A, assault B, firearms, and manufacturing or delivery of a controlled substance – no timeline;
- Robbery;
- Non-violent, non-property related felonies and misdemeanors not included below in the allowed section that have occurred more than one time in the last three years;
- Other crimes that have occurred more than one time in the last three years, including, second degree burglary, assault C and assault D, misdemeanors not listed below.

And

- Damages to an apartment, less than three years ago, that exceed \$1500.00 BUT if unable to verify difference between rent owed and damages, then total amount owed to landlord that exceeds \$2500.00;
- Amounts owed to a past landlord, who is also the prospective landlord.

Community resources can be used to address past debt.

Notes: Applicants can ask for a reasonable accommodation- applicant will be denied in any public housing unit if a registered sex offender or if manufactured meth in a publicly assisted unit.

Denials but allowed without a hearing if provider sends a letter explaining mitigating circumstances

If there has been an arrest five times or more over the last two years:

- Disorderly conduct;
- Prostitution;
- Possession of illegal substances.

Allowed – no hearing/extra process required

- Misdemeanors connected to theft of less than \$750 in value, forgery, criminal trespass, alcohol use, public indecency, littering;
- Crimes connected to disorderly conduct, prostitution, and possession of illegal substances that have happened fewer than five times in the last two years;
- Crimes connected to driving, tobacco, wildlife, animals;
- Possession of illegal substances;
- Zero income;
- Bad rental history;
- Bad credit;
- Non-payment of rent (agencies should reach out to former landlords to determine if amounts owed are for non-payment of rent or for other charges, e.g., damages. See note above under **Denials** for when rent amounts are owed to a past landlord who is also the prospective landlord. Community resources can be used to address past debt.)