

**Transitional Housing  
Concept Paper  
August 20, 2020**

**Overview**

The New York City Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) seeks to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for transitional housing units. The City will baseline and expand transitional housing services for criminal justice system-involved residents of New York City experiencing homelessness and/or unstable housing who would likely face incarceration without this housing resource or require housing post-release to support stabilization in the community. Individuals may be engaged in an Alternative to Detention (ATD) program, an Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) program, Supervised Release, and/or reentry services upon release from incarceration. This transitional housing initiative will also ensure access for participants to supportive services including, but not limited to, assistance finding permanent housing, connections to substance use treatment, mental, behavioral, and physical health-care, paid transitional employment, and holistic case management.

Transitional housing will be offered to diverse groups of New York City residents, including special populations such as pregnant women, women with children, young people, older adults, LGBTQIA individuals, individuals with complex medical problems, individuals with Serious Mental Illness (SMI), and individuals engaged in the sex trade. Housing may be provided in a variety of models including, but not limited to, congregate, scatter site, and/or family unit settings.

The anticipated length of stay in a transitional housing bed is approximately 6-9 months, according to historical averages, though some individuals may stay for shorter periods of time and some may stay for longer periods of time.

**Background**

On October 17, 2019, the City Council approved the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) application for the Borough-Based Jail system, allowing for the closure of all the jails on Rikers Island and the existing borough jail facilities. Accompanying the ULURP was a historic package of investments focused on communities most impacted by mass incarceration. Included in the package were several housing investments, including for transitional housing for homeless or unstably housed individuals who have been involved in the criminal justice system.

This transitional housing resource aims to reduce incarceration by providing individuals a safe, supportive environment in which to live as they participate in voluntary and/or court-mandated services to reduce their likelihood of re-arrest and/or re-incarceration. The Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH) model, which provides immediate permanent supportive housing to individuals with the highest rates of shelter and jail use, has proven to reduce returns to jail by thirty-eight percent.<sup>1</sup> This significant impact underscores the importance of timely stable housing for those with criminal justice involvement to avoid future touches with the justice system. Transitional housing fills a much-needed gap in the transition from housing instability to permanent housing. This kind of immediate housing resource provides individuals a stable place to live and access services while figuring out permanent housing possibilities including preparing and awaiting response on various housing applications, finding family or friends to stay with,

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<sup>1</sup> Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, "[Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, Department of Health Announce Successful Rollout of "Justice-involved Supportive Housing" Program Stabilizing Individuals Who Frequently Cycle Through Jail and Shelter](#)", 2017

and/or other long-term options.

## **Purpose of the Proposed RFP**

MOCJ proposes to issue an RFP to procure transitional housing beds for justice-involved individuals to avoid incarceration and or stabilize post release. Initial funding will cover approximately 250 beds in FY22 with the opportunity to scale up to 500 beds by FY23, subject to funding availability.

## **Goals**

1. Reduce the use of incarceration through the provision of housing
2. Prevent further criminal justice system involvement
3. Address gaps in services between short term emergency housing and permanent housing
4. Provide housing for individuals engaged in Alternative to Detention (ATD), Alternative to Incarceration (ATI), Supervised Release, and/or reentry programs
5. Provide holistic, wraparound services for transitional housing residents including mental, behavioral, and physical health-care
6. Reducing recidivism and costly stays in the criminal justice system.

## **Structural Challenges and Opportunities:**

In the United States, formerly incarcerated individuals are ten times more likely to be homeless than the general public.<sup>2</sup> The lack of sufficient immediate housing resources for justice-involved individuals contributes to unnecessary jail stays where individuals instead could be safely supported in the community, as well as negative outcomes for individuals upon release, such as behavioral and physical health deterioration and potentially repeat criminal justice involvement. Conversely, investing in stable housing has been found to limit unnecessary encounters with law enforcement, as well as safely reduce the number of people in jail.

Additionally, housing instability makes it difficult for individuals to maintain engagement with stabilizing services including mental health and substance use treatment, job training, and educational assistance, while also making it harder for individuals to reconnect with family and community. Therefore, these transitional housing resources provide an opportunity for justice-involved individuals to receive the support they need under a safe, caring roof to stabilize in the community and avoid future touches with the criminal justice system.

## **Services to Be Provided**

In addition to transitional housing beds, services provided by housing providers may include, but are not limited to, individual and group counseling, case management, education and employment assistance, and substance use and mental health treatment. Housing providers may also refer clients to other social service providers for particular services not provided in-house, which may include, but are not limited to, residential substance use treatment, education assistance, job training and placement, etc.

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<sup>2</sup> Prison Policy Initiative, [“Nowhere To Go: Homelessness Among Formerly Incarcerated People”](#), August 2018



Providers should have adequate program staff available to meet clients' needs, including social workers and housing specialists, as well as any necessary administrative and/or maintenance staff to support operations. If providing substance use mental health treatment, providers must employ the appropriately licensed staff.

### **Funding**

The allocated funding is \$12.5 million in FY22; potentially increasing to up to \$25 million by FY23 and then base-lined at the FY23 funding level in out years, subject to the availability of funds. Providers may propose cost and budget structures up to approximately \$50,000 per bed. Funding from this RFP may not be used for capital improvements or construction. Therefore, providers are encouraged to partner with private sector and/or philanthropy to cover capital costs. The awarded amount must cover all operational expenses and costs associated with delivering programs and services. Providers are encouraged to share example budgets and staffing models to help the City best assess cost implications and funding needs.

This RFP will be awarded based on an open-ended competition. MOCJ will award vendors on an ongoing/rolling basis until all transitional housing beds have been contracted out.

### **Payment Structure and Contract Term**

It will be anticipated that the payment structure for these contracts will be performance-based. Housing providers may enter into subcontracts with other service providers to provide additional housing resources, subject to MOCJ approval. Providers are also able to partner with philanthropic and/or private organizations to meet capital funding needs not covered by this RFP.

It is anticipated that each contract term will be for a period of two years with an option of two two-year contract renewals.

### **Basis for Award**

Award selection will be based on the best technically rated proposals for which the price falls within the price per bed. Proposals will be evaluated according to criteria that will include the quality and quantity of successful relevant experience and proposed approach and design of the program. Organizations selected for award will be those that demonstrate successful experience providing similar services to similar populations as those targeted by the RFP, as well as those that demonstrate cultural competence working with the target population and extensive partnerships with other community-based service providers.

Organizations are welcome to propose new and innovative models to serve both a specific target population and a broader population. Organizations that offer either a single or multiple specialized services to transitional housing participants, such as substance use treatment, mental health treatment, and/or physical health-care, will be considered for funding. Priority will be given to organizations providing on-site mental and/or behavioral health care.

Providers may propose to scale up operations throughout the contract term. Given that this will be a rolling RFP, in cases where a provider has been selected to provide transitional housing to a particular population, to provide particular services, and/or to use a particular housing model, and that provider later seeks to serve an additional population, provide different services, and/or use a different housing model, the provider will need to submit an additional separate and complete proposal detailing this.

### **Procurement Timeline**

It is anticipated the RFP will be released in Fall 2020 with contracts starting summer 2021.

## **Provider Conferences**

Three virtual provider conferencing sessions will take place before the issuance of the RFP to receive input from housing providers and other experts in the field. Time will be reserved during each session to specifically discuss special populations including women, older adults, LGBTQIA individuals, individuals with complex medical problems, and individuals engaged in sex work.

### **MOCJ will be seeking input specifically regarding how to ensure:**

- Special populations (including those mentioned in this concept paper) are provided the necessary transitional housing resources and services to address their unique needs
- Appropriate referrals are made to transitional housing providers, and transitional housing providers make appropriate referrals to other providers for services not offered in-house
- Effective communication and coordination of services among transitional housing providers and other service providers (particularly when clients are mandated to certain services)
- Eligible population has recent justice system involvement (i.e. number of years post-incarceration, type of criminal justice system involvement)
- Choice and autonomy in transitional housing program/provider selection by potential clients
- Cultural competency and deep relationships with community organizations and institutions
- Addressing trauma is a central component of transitional housing models and services

Providers are welcome to attend one or multiple of these conferencing sessions, and multiple staff from the same organization are welcome to attend the same and/or different sessions. These sessions will all cover the same topics (as described above). They will take place during the following dates/times:

- Wednesday, September 9th, 3:00pm-5pm
- Thursday, September 10th, 11:00am-1:00pm
- Tuesday, September 15th, 10:00am-12:00pm

To RSVP for conferencing sessions and to receive the WebEx link, please email Isadora Spillman-Schappell at [ISpillmanSchappell@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:ISpillmanSchappell@cityhall.nyc.gov).

## **Use of HHS Accelerator**

To respond to the forthcoming RFP and all other client and community services (CCS) Requests for Proposals (RFPs), vendors must first complete and submit an electronic prequalification application using the City's Health and Human Services (HHS) Accelerator System. The HHS Accelerator System is a web-based system maintained by the City of New York for use by its human services Agencies to manage procurement.

Only organizations with approved HHS Accelerator Business Application and Services Applications for one or more of the following will be able to propose:

- Alternative Justice Management



- Discharge / Re-Entry
- Homelessness Prevention
- Housing
- Shelter
- Non-secure placement
- Outreach
- Family Reunification/Community Engagement

To submit a Business and Service application to become eligible to apply for this and other CCS RFPs, please visit <http://www.nyc.gov/hhsaccelerator>

**Contact Information/Deadline for Questions/Comments**

All comments and feedback regarding this Concept Paper must be received no later than **October 2, 2020 by 12PM**. Questions regarding this RFP must be transmitted in writing to the Agency Contact. Please email comments to [MOCJProcurements@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:MOCJProcurements@cityhall.nyc.gov).