



**Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice**

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## **CONCEPT PAPER FOR EMERGENCY HOUSING FOR CRIME VICTIMS**

### **I. OVERVIEW**

The New York City Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) seeks to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for temporary emergency housing for individuals and families impacted by violent crime. These victims, witnesses and survivors often have immediate safety needs that require relocation, especially if the crime involves gun violence. While existing systems like the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and the Human Resources Administration (HRA) may provide options for relocation, these options take time – there is a critical gap in the days and weeks after being impacted by violent crime when individuals and families are vulnerable to further violence and trauma. This initiative aims to fill this gap, providing temporary emergency housing and wrap-around supports in the immediate aftermath of violent crime so that individuals, families, and communities can address their physical and emotional needs.

Emergency housing will be offered to diverse groups of New York City residents on a temporary basis, including special populations such as families of homicide victims, families with children, pregnant women, young adults, older adults, LGBTQIA+ individuals, individuals with limited English proficiency, and people with disabilities. Eligible individuals and families must be experiencing homelessness or housing instability related to experiencing a violent crime as the victim or a family member and must not have access to other City-funded emergency housing. Participation with any criminal legal process related to the crime is not a requirement to obtain emergency housing.

Housing may be provided combining a variety of models including, but not limited to hotels, scatter site, family unit settings and/or short-term rental assistance. The anticipated length of stay in emergency housing is approximately 6 months, though some individuals and families may stay for shorter periods of time, and some may stay for longer periods of time.

### **II. BACKGROUND**

The City of New York has a longstanding and ongoing commitment to supporting survivors of crime and abuse. This includes providing emergency and transitional housing for survivors of domestic violence through HRA, as well as a variety of community, court and precinct-based supports tailored to specific forms of victimization such as gender-based violence, child abuse or elder abuse. MOCJ oversees several critical programs that serve all crime victims regardless of the type of victimization experienced, including the Crime Victim Assistance Program, which places victim advocates at precincts and Police Service Areas (PSAs) across the City; the Domestic Violence and Crime Victim Hotlines, which function as the gateway to victim services for New Yorkers; and Safe Horizon's community programs, which provide borough-based services to survivors of crime. This network of services provides non-judgmental support, crisis counseling, safety planning, case management, long

term counseling, children's services, housing navigation services, civil-legal services and linkage to government resources for tens of thousands of crime victims annually.

One of the most critical needs for victims and witnesses of violent crime is emergency housing in the immediate aftermath of an incident. While existing systems like NYCHA, HPD and HRA may provide options for relocation and existing housing navigation services may provide support connecting to these resources, successfully accessing these options can take a protracted period of time, with victims and witnesses waiting for months in unsafe and/or traumatizing housing conditions before they receive safety transfers. There is a critical gap in the days and weeks following a violent crime when victims and their families often feel more vulnerable to additional violence and trauma. MOCJ's goal is to bridge that gap by providing emergency housing under specific conditions including when there are no safe housing placement options, or when the housing options available are inaccessible or unsafe to the victim.

MOCJ's Office of Crime Victim Supports (OCVS) consulted with relevant stakeholders, including NYPD, Bronx DA, Queens District Attorney's Office (QDAO), Office to Prevent Gun Violence (OPGV), Human Resource Association (HRA), Housing Preservation Development (HPD) and Crisis Management System (CMS) providers to understand the patchwork way in which these individuals and families are currently being served. Nearly every conversation revealed opportunities for improvement on the resources currently offered by NYCHA, DHS, HRA and HPD, to address the *immediate* housing needs of victims of violent crime. Offering immediate housing assistance not only protects victims of crime but removes hurdles to engagement with victims often faced by social service providers. MOCJ independently sponsors many programs that help communities develop and scale-up solutions to public safety issues by directly engaging networks most affected by gun violence. However, MOCJ leadership, alongside our external stakeholders, agree that a coordinated, consistent response is needed to ensure victims and witnesses receive the housing, clinical and employment supports they need to heal. Other considerations for these families include having flexibility and options for immediate housing placement depending on their unique needs, consistent biopsychosocial assessment for all impacted, the need for ongoing trauma-informed therapy and the need for ongoing support through case management and navigation to long-term housing.

MOCJ's emergency housing program would utilize elements from systems that work as well as implement research-informed best practices to meet the needs of individuals and families.

### **III. GOALS AND SERVICES**

MOCJ proposes to issue an RFP to procure temporary emergency housing beds for individuals and families experiencing housing instability stemming from a violent crime. It is anticipated that initial funding will support approximately 100 individuals and families during each contract year, providing housing and wrap around supports for approximately 6-9 months.

#### **A. Program Goals**

1. Reduce traumatic impacts of violent crime through the provision of housing and social services.
2. Address existing gaps in emergency housing for crime victims.
3. Provide holistic, wrap around services for victims of violent crime to address mental health, emotional, physical and employment needs.

4. Support transition to permanent housing for program participants.

## **B. Services Provided**

In addition to providing temporary emergency housing beds, the program provider will also provide the services outlined below, either directly or through partnerships with other providers. Providers should ensure 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. All services should be language accessible and accessible in compliance with Local Law 30, and housing facilities should ensure access for people with disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All services provided should be consistent with the Human Rights Law as set forth by the New York City Commission on Human Rights.

Emergency Housing Placement: The program provider will place individuals and families in safe housing within 72 hours of receiving a referral. Placement should consider both safety and accessibility needs, avoiding locations and individuals that are known to be unsafe for program participants and ensuring participants can attend school, work, frequently visited doctors and other critical supports. Housing should meet the client/family's needs in terms of family size, with adequate sleeping space for each family member. Whenever possible, housing should include a kitchen or kitchenette, providing options to prepare meals at home. Housing options should include locations across multiple boroughs to meet safety needs as well as options outside of or on the outskirts of New York City. Placement should also include transportation for the client/family and their essential belongings. Arrangements may be available for storing furniture and other belongings.

Intake/Assessment Services: The initial intake process for individuals and families should be as streamlined as possible in order to reduce re-traumatization and limit barriers to access for participants. The program provider should collect only information that is essential to confirming participants' eligibility and determining placement. Once program participants are placed in temporary emergency housing, the program provider should have a dedicated social work staff meet with clients either virtually or in person to complete an intake that includes:

- Safety assessment and safety plan.
- Comprehensive housing assessment that includes: identification of any temporary housing option through friends/family/community; eligibility for emergency transfers through NYCHA, Section 8 or existing City voucher; eligibility for new enrollment in City rental support or voucher programs; ability to sustain and relocate into private housing; exploration of options to relocate outside of New York City with family/friends or independently; options to return to current housing situation and enhance security through changes to living space or use of personal security devices.
- A comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment that helps identify: (i) concrete needs and eligibility for public benefits; (ii) trauma-related needs including individual, group and family therapy; (iii) any mental health needs; (iv) any active substance abuse concerns; (v) employment/Financial needs.

Case Management Services: Each individual or family that receives housing will be connected to a dedicated case manager to support service coordination and meet day-to-day needs. Case managers will be responsible for making referrals to appropriate mental health, employment, substance and safety supports based on the needs identified at intake.

Clinical Services: Each individual and family that receives housing should have the option to engage in clinical services provided by a mental health professional including individual, group and/or family therapy. Services may be provided by dedicated program staff or through a referral.

Housing Navigation Services: Each individual or family that receives housing should receive support navigating housing systems to obtain permanent housing from dedicated program staff. Clients will be expected to actively work with their provider on such efforts.

On-Site Security: The program provider must ensure 24-hour 7 day per week security of housing provided through the use of on-site security staff, confidentiality agreements with participants, surveillance cameras in common spaces and/or onsite security intelligent access control systems.

### **C. Referral Sources**

MOCJ anticipates that clients will be referred to the program from existing resources operating in community, including but not limited to:

- MOCJ's Office of Neighborhood Safety and its contracted providers
- The City's Crime Victim Assistance Program
- The City's crime victim and domestic violence hotline
- NYPD's Families of Homicide Victims Liaison Unit and
- NYC's District Attorney's Offices

Clients referred must not have access to other City-funded immediate emergency housing/shelter through HRA or HPD either due to ineligibility or capacity constraints, and must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Have been impacted by a violent crime in the past 90 days and are experiencing housing instability relating to that crime
- Have been impacted by a violent crime in the past 90 days and that violent crime occurred in the home
- Have been impacted by a violent crime in the past and have received threats related to that experience in the past 90 days, resulting in housing instability

### **D. Data Reporting and Security**

The program provider will collect client-level data to comply with the City's data reporting requirements and share data in aggregate through regular reporting. MOCJ anticipates that providers will collect and maintain individual case-level data but report to MOCJ in aggregate on key program indicators such as: number of intakes into the program, family size, demographic information, victimization type, services provided, discharge status (i.e. where they went after the stay in emergency housing) and average length of stay. MOCJ would not collect or maintain any individual case level data. The program provider is also responsible for ensuring data security in compliance with guidance from NYC Cyber Command and all local, state and federal laws surrounding personally identifying information (PII) for victims of crime. This includes plans to guard against data breaches and remedy them if they do occur.

### **E. Liability and Indemnification**

The Program Provider must be well versed in working with victims of crime, demonstrate cultural competence, and have a proven history of operating in the most negatively impacted neighborhoods. Program Provider is free to subcontract in order to fulfill the terms necessary to provide emergency housing, in accordance with all local, state, and federal procurement requirements. The Program Provider must indemnify, defend and hold the City harmless in all claims or actions that arise in connection to this emergency housing. The Program Provider acknowledges that they are liable for any negligence that occurs by the acts of its employees or employees of their Subcontractor (if applicable). Program Provider must have at least those security measures as noted above in place at the location utilized for the emergency housing. Program Provider must have experience (directly or through Subcontractor) in providing data security and remain responsible for any data breaches. Program Provider must indemnify the City of any harm, damages or any other liabilities that result from a data breach.

#### **IV. PROPOSED CONTRACT AND PAYMENT STRUCTURE**

It is anticipated that there will be one contracted housing provider across all five boroughs. The contracted housing provider will work with other temporary housing providers, security staff and social service providers as needed to deliver the services outlined above. Housing providers may also 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.

The contract will include a line-item payment structure subject to annual deliverables and milestones as agreed upon with MOCJ.

#### **V. FUNDING**

- Annual funding amount shall not exceed \$3,500,000, for a total agreement amount not to exceed 10,500,000.

#### **VI. CONTRACT PERIOD**

It is anticipated that the first contract term will be for a period of three years starting on July 1, 2023, with the option to renew twice for three years each for a total of 9 years.

#### **VII. BASIS FOR AWARD**

MOCJ anticipates awarding one (1) vendor to provide services under this RFP. Award selections will be based on the highest technically rated proposal(s). The applicant selected for award will have demonstrated successful experience providing similar services to similar populations as those targeted by the RFI. Proposals will be evaluated according to criteria that will include successful relevant experience, organizational capacity, and proposed approach to the program model.

**Submission must include budget detail with line-item budget and narrative**

#### **VIII. PROCUREMENT TIMELINE**

It is anticipated the RFP will be released in fall 2022 with contracts starting summer 2023.

**IX. USE OF PASSPORT**

PASSPort is a web-based system maintained by the City of New York to manage procurement. To submit comments to the upcoming RFI, all vendors must create an account within the PASSPort system. Please visit [www.nyc.gov/passport](http://www.nyc.gov/passport) to create an account or to log into the system to view this Concept Paper and the future RFP.

**X. REQUIRED SERVICE PRE-QUALIFICATIONS**

The Emergency Housing for Crime Victims RFP will be released exclusively through the PASSPort system. To become eligible to apply for this and other HHS RFPs, visit <http://www.nyc.gov/passport>.

**XI. COMMENTS**

Please email written comments to [MOCJProcurements@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:MOCJProcurements@cityhall.nyc.gov) no later than **Friday, September 2nd**. Place “Emergency Housing Concept Paper” in the subject line. Questions regarding this RFI must be transmitted in writing to the Agency Contact. Please email comments to [MOCJProcurements@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:MOCJProcurements@cityhall.nyc.gov).