

Ending Community Homelessness Coalition
(ECHO)

Governance Planning
Request for Proposals

December 2019

Background:

The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) was created to serve as the lead agency of the Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care (CoC) and to administer the local Housing Management Inventory System (HMIS) database system. Austin City Council and Membership Council have both adopted the [Action Plan to End Homelessness](#). ECHO administers the local HUD Continuum of Care NOFA, that funds approximately \$9 million in federal dollars in 2018 dedicated to homeless services. The majority of funding committed to ending homelessness in the Austin community is administered by the City of Austin.

ECHO is a local nonprofit and is governed by a nonprofit board who is responsible for overseeing the organization's activities. As such, the ECHO nonprofit board follows their adopted by-laws. One of the activities in which the Board provides oversight to ECHO includes adopting the agency's budget and strategic direction. A separate governing board, called Membership Council, serves as the CoC Governing Board for the community's homeless system and is elected by CoC Stakeholders each year at ECHO Fall Stakeholder meetings. As the CoC Board, this board provides oversight to the policies, functions, and funding that is associated with receiving federal dollars through the Annual CoC NOFA Competition. ECHO is the designated CoC Lead Agency responsible for applying for these federal funds and in return is also responsible for managing the homeless system with the oversight of the CoC Governing Board (Membership Council).

Goals for Governance Planning:

- A governing body structure, which could include keeping both boards or combining them, to lead the homeless response system, ECHO, and the Coalition of providers.
- A governance structure that sets clear goals and ensures that goals are accomplished. Performance across the system is used to create ongoing funding priorities.
- A clear purpose, with buy-in from the community, of the leadership role of the governing board of the homeless response system to include ECHO's role within that structure.
- A clear process to ensure Conflicts of Interest are limited and/or removed and does not create a barrier to accomplishing system goals/responsibilities/roles.
- The governance structure should ensure respect for diversity and inclusion of people with lived experience in decision making processes.
- A clear communication plan to ensure that all stakeholders and the lead agency are informed about the work in the community.

Scope of Work

The consultant will be responsible for accomplishing the following:

- Research and SWOT Analysis – Through a potential combination of surveys, focus groups, and interviews with key stakeholders, determine the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the current governance structure of ECHO. Research will include a survey and analysis of other CoC Boards and governance structure options. Results will be prepared for presentation to the Governance Planning Committee.
- Create Governance Options – Work with a Governance Planning Committee to create recommended options for Governance of ECHO that will most effectively lead the community to ending homelessness and provide oversight of the homeless response system.
- Facilitate a half day retreat with the ECHO nonprofit board and identified members of the Membership Council to determine the new Governance Structure of ECHO.
- Review current committee and workgroup structure of the ECHO board and Membership Council and create recommendations for changes to facilitate both oversight of the homeless response system and governance of ECHO as a nonprofit.
- Draft changes to the ECHO Governance Charter and ECHO nonprofit by-laws to reflect the new structure and the roles and responsibilities of these changes.

Required Qualifications

- Experience and expertise with governing systems, specifically with other CoCs
- Expertise in the homeless response system
- Strong facilitation skills
- Experience at creating a neutral environment for, and soliciting input from, individuals from various sectors
- Experience at gathering and utilizing research and a SWOT analysis and research to inform the planning process

Timeline

December 13, 2019 – RFP Released

January 3, 2020 – Proposals Due

By End of January 2020 – Consultant Selected

April 2020 – Governance Plan due to Community

Proposal Submissions

General Information

The scope of work requested may be conducted by a single consultant, a consultant group, or by a partnership of consultants. The proposal should provide the name, title, address, telephone number, and email address for each person engaged in scope activities. Further, if a consultant group or partnership of consultants is proposed, the proposal should indicate who will serve as the “point” person for the purposes of this RFP and the engagement.

Consultant Qualifications and Roles

The proposal must describe the consultant’s qualifications to conduct the RFP scope of work activities, including expertise, knowledge, and experience. Experience should include examples of conducting similar or related work.

If a consultant group or partnership of consultants is proposed to conduct the RFP scope of work, the proposal must indicate which activities each consultant will conduct as well as information about their level of expertise, knowledge and experience to conduct those specific activities.

Work Plan

The proposal should contain a detailed description of the activities to be conducted by the consultant in order to complete the requested scope of work, including:

- the specific activities to be conducted at each stage,
- a timeline for the activities at each stage,
- milestones and deliverables tied to those activities, and
- a budget for each stage, along with a proposed payment schedule tied to project milestones and/or deliverables.

References

The proposal should include three references of individuals who can speak to their experience with the consultant in conducting projects of similar scope. Information regarding each reference should include the individual’s name, address, telephone number and email address.

GENERAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

Inquiries and Point of Contact

ECHO is serving as the point of contact for inquiries related to this RFP. All questions/inquiries regarding this RFP may be directed to Kate Moore, at katemoore@austinecho.org.

Submissions

Submissions should be emailed to Kate Moore, at katemoore@austinecho.org by 5pm on January 3, 2020.

Proposal Selection

ECHO staff will work with a Governance Committee, made up of members of the ECHO Board and the Membership Council to select a proposal to complete the scope of work. The committee and ECHO reserve the right in negotiation with the contractor to amend the scope of work and timeline.

Contract Management

The selected firm will have a contract executed with ECHO. However, the Governance Committee will provide oversight and guidance for the process and final product.