

County of Riverside Department of Public Social Services
Request for Allocation to Implement a CalWORKs Housing Support Program

Purpose:

The purpose of the Riverside County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) CalWORKs Housing Support Program (HSP) will be to address homelessness among CalWORKs (CW) families participating in Family Stabilization Services (FSS). The Department of Public Social Services will leverage resources from two divisions within the agency to implement this program: the Self Sufficiency Welfare to Work (Family Stabilization Services) and the Adult Services Division which includes the Homeless Programs Unit that serves as administrator of the county's Continuum of Care homeless and housing network.

The combined experience of these two divisions in administering the county's CalWORKs program and shelter and housing services for homeless individuals and families provides an optimal foundation to build upon existing community resources and partnerships to provide homeless families with a full array of services. Leveraging existing resources and systems will allow DPSS to quickly implement the CalWORKs Housing Support Program (HSP) to assist homeless CWs families achieve housing stability to reduce barriers toward self-sufficiency. DPSS's Family Stabilization Services have existing teams of employment counselors and eligibility staff in each of the county's 12 Welfare to Work offices; and the Homeless Programs Unit has specialized knowledge and partnerships with public and private community Rapid Rehousing (RRH) providers. DPSS will create a team of staff representing each of these entities to coordinate and administer the county's CalWORKs Housing Support Program, with the Welfare to Work (WTW) division as project lead.

The goal of the DPSS CalWORKs Housing Support Program (HSP) is to help homeless families receiving CalWORKs secure permanent housing by removing barriers. This program will initially focus on families participating in DPSS Family Stabilization Services (FSS) that are currently homeless, however, any CalWORKs family identified as being homeless will be eligible.

Required Elements:

- 1. Describe the problem of homelessness and housing instability in your CalWORKs program:** Homelessness and housing instability are major barriers to housing for CalWORKs families that impact children's well-being and parents' ability to engage in activities leading to employment. The County of Riverside Department of Public Social Services reports that almost 8% (3,790) of its CalWORKs caseload was homeless during the calendar year 2013. In addition, more than 36% (17,566) of families are reported as being at-risk of homelessness because they have been denied temporary or permanent housing

assistance and/or have reported three or more address changes to their CalWORKs case worker.

The estimate of CalWORKs families that are in homelessness is based on the following:

- Approved applications for temporary or permanent homeless assistance
- Journal entries indicating homelessness or homeless assistance
- An address indicating homelessness or general delivery
- A review of 100 randomly selected “Good Cause” status Welfare-to-Work cases with a status reason of “Other Substantial and Compelling Reasons”
 - 12 cases (12%) were determined to be in the status due to homelessness
 - All 12 cases were already included in the data through one of the other three indicators and therefore will not be used in the estimate for homelessness

The total estimate of CalWORKs cases with homelessness, Housing Instability or both for CY 2013 is:

	#	% of CalWORKs Caseload
Homelessness	3,790	7.82%
Housing Instability	17,566	36.24%
Both	3,402	7.02%
Distinct Total	17,954	37.04%

In Riverside County, the demand for rental housing subsidies far outweighs the supply based on a not-yet-released 2014 Community Indicators Report for Riverside County. The report shows a challenging housing environment for CalWORKs families and others who are very-low to low income. According to the report:

“Rising rent or mortgage costs, foreclosure, loss of a job, or simply not having enough money to afford the upfront costs of renting or buying are challenges that can force many families into living conditions they would not choose otherwise. Living doubled- or tripled-up due to economic constraints can place stress on personal relationships, housing stock, public services and infrastructure. When shared housing is not an option, the result can be homelessness. “

The 2014 Community Indicators report also shows housing instability continues to grow for school-age children, a direct impact for the county’s CalWORKs families:

- In 2012/13, 22,244 Riverside County students mostly in grades K-12 were identified as homeless or lacking stable housing, representing 5.2% of total enrollment.

- Most (94%) are living doubled- or tripled-up in a home due to economic hardship, 4% are living in shelters, 1% live unsheltered in cars, parks or campgrounds, and 1% live in motels.
- These figures represent an increase of 8% from the previous year and 89% over five years.
- On a per enrollment basis, Riverside County has more students who are homeless or lack stable housing than the California average and is in the mid-range among Southern California counties.

2. Identify any possible target populations for your Housing Support Program. Describe your selection criteria and how participants will be identified. If your program plans to serve families who are facing housing instability or at imminent risk of losing their housing, how will this instability or risk be determined and documented?

Target population: Based on the significant portion of CalWORKs families in Riverside County that are identified as being homeless (almost 8%), DPSS will prioritize homeless CalWORKs families that are living in an emergency shelter, in their car or on the streets, or in a place not meant for human habitation to receive housing support services with funding received from the California Department of Social Services.

Specifically, DPSS will assist aided adults and families currently in or eligible for Family Stabilization Services which means that at least one adult is aided under CalWORKs and is Welfare to Work (WTW) mandatory. CalWORKs only adults and families who are homeless, can request to be made WTW mandatory so they can benefit from the services available through Family Stabilization Services. Best practices have shown that coupling housing support with intensive case management services ensures successful outcomes. DPSS Family Stabilization Services can provide this intensive support to families in the Housing Support Program to help them: 1) remove barriers to housing (by providing rapid rehousing); and 2) help them achieve permanent housing stability.

Describe your selection criteria and how participants will be identified: WTW mandatory adults will be identified during their WTW 24-month time clock period when they are referred or self-refer for Family Stabilization Services. They will be screened for housing instability at the FSS Evaluation and during development of the Family Stabilization Plan (FSP). Housing instability screening will include homelessness or imminent risk of homelessness such as an eviction notice, pay or quit or three day notice. Priority will be given to keeping families in their current housing and then to those that are homeless and living on the streets, in a vehicle or in a shelter.

3. Describe how your county will structure its program:

The County of Riverside Department of Public Social Services' (DPSS) Homeless Programs Unit (HPU) serves as the Collaborative Applicant for the county's Continuum of Care (CoC) network, made up of a diverse group of public and private organizations to coordinate housing and services to end homelessness. The DPSS HPU also serves as the administrator for the county's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a database that tracks homeless individuals and families and the housing and services they receive.

As the lead agency for the county's Continuum of Care and administrator of CalWORKs and other public assistance programs, DPSS is requesting funding to implement a housing assistance program that specifically serves CalWORKs families and is designed to:

- Promote housing stability for CalWORKs families in Family Stabilization Services using a "Housing First" approach that removes this major barrier by placing families in permanent housing first and offering supportive services and interventions that focus on keeping them permanently housed.
- Target CalWORKs families in Family Stabilization Services that are homeless and living in emergency shelters, in cars, streets, or places not meant for human habitation;
- Partner with existing community-based homeless and housing organizations within the county's Continuum of Care that are currently implementing Rapid Rehousing programs through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as part of Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP), an evidenced based model that has been proven to be more cost effective and successful in maintaining permanent housing and stability for families.
- Augment CalWORKs Homeless funding and support services with proposed CalWORKs Housing Support funding and wrap-around supports to maximize resources for families and improve long-term housing stability. Housing Support may supplement already existing programs and will be available to those previously participating in CalWORKs temporary and permanent homeless assistance programs.
- Embed data collection in HMIS (if allowed by CDSS) and/or a separate Housing Support Program database for progress monitoring and outcomes measures and tracking as essential elements in the implementation of the program and work closely with the DPSS research unit (RADS).
- The CalWORKs Housing Support Program will be administered by Welfare to Work (Family Stabilization Services) within Self Sufficiency. Family Stabilization Services are currently provided by teams in each of our 12 welfare to work offices composed of an experienced employment services counselor and a clinical therapist (contracted by the County Mental Health Department). FSS provides flexibility and varying levels of support based on each family's needs as documented in the Family Stabilization Plan.
- Provide intervention and service support that is tailored to meet the unique needs of each family and is only necessary to: 1) Assist families in securing housing; and 2) help them stay permanently housed.

DPSS will subcontract with existing public and non-profit providers of Rapid Rehousing (RRH) housing and support services. Sub-contractors will be empowered to implement a "progressive engagement" approach when working with families so they are neither over assisted or under-assisted in achieving their housing goals. DPSS will implement the program using a team of experienced and compassionate Welfare to Work Family Stabilization Services staff and a Senior

Program Specialist in the Homeless Programs Unit who will serve as a liaison between DPSS and program partners, including:

- DPSS Family Stabilization Services staff
- Continuum of Care and HMIS agencies
- DPSS Research, Analysis, and Decision Support (RADS) Unit
- Existing public and private partners that receive Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) and Continuum of Care Program funding to implement Rapid Rehousing throughout the county; and
- Housing partners, including: affordable housing providers, landlords, County's Housing Authority and other housing providers that are currently providing and/or are trained in the Rapid Rehousing model.

A. Will your county's rapid re-housing program link or supplement any already existing programs or services? If yes, please list any program partners and stakeholders with whom your county will work, including information on whether the partners are in-house or if they will be contracted and to what extent.

As lead agency for the County of Riverside's Continuum of Care, DPSS will partner with existing community-based homeless and housing organizations within the CoC that are currently implementing Rapid Rehousing projects funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (as part of Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP), an evidenced based model that has been proven to be more cost effective and successful in maintaining permanent housing and stability for families).

DPSS will identify and solicit subcontract agencies that are currently providing the core components of Rapid Rehousing program, including county agencies such as the Housing Authority. A streamlined process will be conducted to solicit qualified sub-contractors that can provide the following core components of the CalWORKs Housing Support Program in partnership with the Continuum of Care and DPSS CalWORKs FSS Unit, including:

- Comprehensive and Coordinated Entry with community partners within the County of Riverside Continuum of Care: The City of Riverside was selected for the 25 Cities Project, a partnership between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) to receive resources and assistance to create a Coordinated Assessment Housing and Placement (CAHP) system to assess and place homeless individuals and families with existing housing resources. The county's CAHP system is being developed and implemented by a community team of homeless outreach representatives from community-based and public agencies that are becoming housing navigators to reduce barriers to permanently house homeless individuals and families.
- Identify appropriate housing for families in the Family Stabilization Unit: The Homeless Programs Unit Senior Program Specialist will receive referrals of families from the FSS Unit and work with Rapid Rehousing subcontractors to:
 - Recruit and engage landlords

- Address potential barriers to landlord participation
 - Assist and empower CalWORKs households in finding and securing appropriate rental housing.
- Provide rent and (as needed) moving assistance to cover move-in costs, deposits, and the rental and/or utility assistance necessary to allow individuals and families to move immediately into permanent housing. These costs can include lot rent for an RV/manufactured home; application fees; credit check fees; legal fees and fines. Prior receipt of the “once in a lifetime” CWs homeless assistance does not make families ineligible for HSP assistance. Family Stabilization staff and the HPU Senior Program Specialist will seek to leverage funds to aid families but not duplicate funding or services. During the FSS Evaluation process families will be screened for domestic abuse which could make them eligible for additional homeless funding through CalWORKs. The DPSS HSP team will ensure existing CalWORKs homeless funding (CW Single Allocation) is used before a family receives limited HSP funds.
- Case management and services to provide appropriate engagement for families participating in Family Stabilization Services: Targeted families will receive intensive case management services which includes weekly, and if needed, daily contacts, referrals for mental health, substance abuse, domestic abuse and other specialized services such as child psychiatric services and any other needed services available through local or community entities. Due to the short time limit of FSS, staff are very action oriented and will assist adults and families to resolve destabilizing factors contributing to their housing instability.
- Helping families address issues that may impede access to housing: Preliminary FSS data shows that a majority of our current cases include homelessness along with another destabilizing factor such as mental health, domestic violence or substance abuse. We will seek to address these co-occurring factors and help stabilize families before requiring the WTW mandatory adults to participate again in WTW activities.
- Helping families negotiate manageable and appropriate lease agreements with landlords: The DPSS Homeless Programs Unit will serve as the lead in assisting sub-contracted agencies providing Rapid Rehousing services to identify landlords willing to house CalWORKs families that may have prior evictions and other barriers to increase the pool of available and affordable permanent housing.
- Providing appropriate and time-limited services and supports available to families to allow them to stabilize in permanent housing: The DPSS Housing Support Program Team will work with sub-contracted Rapid Rehousing providers to respond to the unique needs of each CalWORKs family that is housed to ensure they remain in housing.
- Ensuring that services provided are client-directed, respectful of individuals’ rights to self-determination and voluntary: The DPSS Family Stabilization Services program is designed to maximize the limited six month period to help families overcome their destabilizing crises and return to full functioning. The goal remains to help the WTW

mandatory adults begin or continue participation in WTW activities. We will do outreach with adults who are sanctioned or are in non-compliance and they will be given assistance to overcome and resolve the destabilizing situation and full participation. It has been the policy of our county not to sanction adults who are participating in FSS but to transfer adults who no longer want FSS back into regular caseloads. Our policy pre-dates SB 855 which makes it illegal to sanction adults while their cases are in FSS.

B. What is your county's strategy for implementing housing identification services?

The DPSS Homeless Programs Unit will assist sub-contracted agencies providing Rapid Rehousing services in identifying landlords willing to house CalWORKs families and building and sustaining relationships with housing providers.

- (i) **How do you propose to manage landlord recruitment and engagement?** The DPSS HPU Senior Program Specialist will assist Rapid Rehousing providers within the CoC to recruit and educate landlords by serving as a point of contact and liaison between landlords and housing providers. DPSS HPU will conduct regional outreach events focused on recruiting new landlords. The events will educate prospective landlord partners regarding the benefits of taking part in rapid rehousing programs while emphasizing HPU's role as an intermediary between the landlord and the program participants. HPU staff will also conduct trainings to sub-grant recipient staff regarding outreach and relationship building with potential landlord partners.
- (ii) **With whom will you work to identify potential housing units and ensure participants are accessing housing that meets habitability and safety standards?** The DPSS Homeless Programs Unit has staff that are trained in doing inspections of housing units for safety and habitability. As required by HUD, housing units that serve homeless individuals and families are inspected (at a minimum) on an annual basis and when a tenant moves in or out of the unit. DPSS also has a contract with the County of Riverside Housing Authority to use one of their housing inspectors to assist.
- (iii) **If your program will work with families facing housing instability or at imminent risk of losing families, describe your county's housing retention strategies.** DPSS will target CalWORKs families that are currently homeless for this project.

C. With respect to service array, please describe: Families in FSS are eligible for child care, transportation and ancillary services. Families will be eligible for mental health, substance abuse and other supportive services including limited financial services based on need as documented on their Family Stabilization Plan.

(1) Services to be delivered will include:

- Rental and security deposit assistance
- Utility deposit and arrears assistance
- Family Stabilization Services
- Case Management
- Advocacy with Landlord/Property Owner

(2) How services will be delivered: FSS teams will evaluate and refer homeless families for Family Stabilization Services and assess their immediate needs for housing. The case will be referred to the Senior Program Specialist in the Homeless Programs Unit. HPU will refer the family to an appropriate RRH provider for assessment and placement in housing. Payments for housing, security deposits and other allowable services will be made by the FSS WTW staff in conjunction with HPU and the RRH provider. The HPU Senior Program Specialist and FSS staff will meet quarterly to discuss HSP and other homelessness issues or more often as needed.

(3) The approximate number of participants to whom services will be delivered if your county receives the level of funding requested; DPSS is requesting \$1 million for the period of September 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015 to serve between 150-200 CalWORKs families based on the level of intervention needed to rapidly rehouse each family and provide supportive services to assist each family in maintaining housing with the long-term goal of becoming self-sufficient. With this funding amount, each family will receive an average between \$4,200 and \$5,600 worth of direct support to assist them in securing and maintaining permanent housing, including: security deposits, rental assistance, utilities, etc.

(4) The anticipated duration of each service: Mandatory WTW adults are eligible for six months of Family Stabilization Services which can be extended to nine months based on a special evaluation. While the WTW 24-month time clock stops while adults are receiving services within the six month period, it would not stop during the extended three month period. When a family is rapidly rehoused, they will work with the housing stability team (listed above) to develop their unique housing retention goals that will align with the Family Stabilization Plan that has been developed. There will be ongoing assessment by the FSS team and the Senior Program Specialist to determine if housing needs have been met especially at the point where adults and families exit FSS.

While each family will need a different level of intervention based on their challenges and barriers, Rapid Rehousing assistance for rent will be provided for a minimum of one month and a maximum of 12 months (for families with severe barriers). An estimation of the level of assistance families will receive is as follows:

- 1-3 months of rental and/or utility subsidy that may or may not include a security deposit: **40% of families.**
- 3-6 months: **35% of families**
- 6-9 months: **20% of families**
- 12 months: **5% of families**

D. What are your selection criteria for families to participate in the program? How will participants be identified? Families will be selected for HSP based on the following criteria:

- Currently participating in Family Stabilization Services with a destabilizing factor of homelessness or imminent risk of homelessness.
- Welfare to Work mandatory adults who are currently sanctioned or in non-compliance when homelessness or imminent risk of homelessness is identified as a barrier and they agree to participate in Family Stabilization Services.
- Families that are CalWORKs recipients and at least one adult agrees to become WTW mandatory and participate in Family Stabilization Services.

E. How will you assess a family's housing needs and barriers? DPSS will develop an intake process based on existing models that specifically address needs and barriers working toward the development of a Housing Case Plan that will involve the family, the FSS counselor, HPU staff and the sub-contract agency providing housing services. The Housing Support Team will meet with the family weekly or monthly for the first 90 days of intervention and less frequently as the family is housed and stabilized. The Housing Case Plan will be completed by the family with assistance and guidance by the CalWORKs Housing Support team and will include primary goals focused on keeping the family in permanent housing as they work toward self-sufficiency.

F. Describe how your program will determine the duration and amount of rental assistance, along with any criteria your program will use to evaluate participation in, or renewal of, assistance. Individualized case management will address the strengths and weaknesses of each family. During this process the family will be challenged to develop a housing plan which will include their own goals for the achievement of housing stability. These goals may take into consideration several different factors such as employment, mental health issues, or substance abuse treatment.

The evaluation of program success and ongoing participation will be based on measurable compliance and completion of case plan goals. If appropriate and allowed by CDSS, the progress and success of CalWORKs families may be tracked through the county's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), administered by the DPSS Homeless Programs Unit.

During development of the Family Stabilization Plan and on a continuing basis, the FSS Team (FSS counselor and FSS clinical therapist), will work closely with the Homeless Programs Unit to ensure a unified plan of action on each case and that continued housing assistance is based on verified need. The priority for FSS will be on achieving housing stability, resolving any other destabilizing factors and then participation in Welfare to Work activities and employment. The Housing Support Team will ensure that any additional financial assistance available to families assisted in HSP be included to help to preserve funding assistance to maximize all resources available. For example, if a family dealing with domestic abuse receives temporary homeless assistance and a one-time payment of permanent homeless assistance, the funding for HSP can be reduced and used to assist

another family. Any exceptions to the once-in-a-lifetime limits for physical or mental illness or a family living in an uninhabitable place will also be explored by the DPSS HSP team.

G. Describe your capacity to collect data about your program and its effect on clients. This may include administrative and/or qualitative data.

As the administrator of the county's Continuum of Care homeless provider network and CalWORKs (TANF) programs, DPSS has the capacity and resources to effectively collect and analyze data to measure both quantitative and qualitative outcomes.

The DPSS Research, Analysis, and Decision Support (RADS) Unit is a clearinghouse of data relative to the CalWORKs families who will be identified and targeted to receive housing assistance. The DPSS Homeless Programs Unit will provide oversight of the Rapid Rehousing providers contracted to provide housing services and input demographic and outcome data into the county's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) (if allowed by CDSS).

All Family Stabilization Services case information is entered into C-IV, our SAWS system that tracks all benefits and case actions. A limited amount of data will be stored in a special HSP database that DPSS will develop. It will be similar to databases we currently have for Family Stabilization Services and Expanded Subsidized Employment that are used for reporting purposes and for program research with our RADS unit.

DPSS has the capacity and expertise to collect data in one or both systems (SAWS and HMIS), however, we will wait for guidance from the California Department of Social Services as to whether or not CWs data may be entered into HMIS.

H. Describe strategies you will use to maximize direct services and minimize administrative expenses.

DPSS will enhance an existing system and infrastructure to streamline rapid rehousing services for CalWORKs families through the County's Continuum of Care homeless provider network and through an established Family Stabilization Unit that will identify CalWORKs families that are homeless. DPSS will streamline a selection process to contract with county and/or non-profit homeless services providers that are currently doing rapid rehousing programs to serve this population. These RRH subcontractors will use and expand the support services and housing resources needed to serve these families through a "progressive engagement" approach that provides an appropriate level of intervention to help each family obtain permanent housing and retain the housing with the long-term goal of economic self-sufficiency and independence from public support. DPSS will use 84% of the request (\$843,682) toward subcontracts with Rapid Rehousing subcontractors who will provide direct housing assistance to families.

DPSS will provide as in-kind support and leverage to this project a portion of time for up to 12 eligibility staff assigned to the Family Stabilization Program, 50% of the HPU Senior Program Specialist, along with varying levels of analyst, management and support staff in the

agency's Self-Sufficiency, Adult Services Division, Contracts, Management Reporting Unit (MRU) and Research, Analysis, and Decision Support Unit toward this project.

DPSS is requesting minimal administrative funding (11%) to pay 50% (\$53,381) of the salary of a Senior Program Specialist in the Homeless Programs Unit who will lead the coordination of the project. In addition, a 1.0 FTE (\$55,563) clerical support position is being requested to assist both the Homeless Programs Unit, Family Stabilization Unit and Management Reporting Unit (MRU) with clerical support, including scheduling meetings, following up with families, documenting progress through meeting minutes, collecting data and coordinating a schedule for reporting.

DPSS will also use 5% of this funding (\$47,374) for data collection and reporting for both the DPSS Research, Analysis, and Decision Support (RADS) Unit and Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) Unit. This funding will be used for a .5 FTE administrative assistant position to collect data, prepare reports and evaluate clients' progress. The RADS Unit has trained research staff who are experts at both quantitative and qualitative data collection, with an administrative and oversight structure already in place. Both RADS and HMIS staff will use existing data collection, reporting and evaluation systems to track each family's progress.

I. Describe the anticipated timetable for implementing this program

August 15:	CalWORKs Family Support Program Proposal submitted to CDSS
Sept. 1:	Funded counties notified by CDSS.
Sept. 1-30:	DPSS Housing Support Program team begins weekly meetings to develop protocol for identifying and prioritizing families and begin developing housing plans.
Sept. 1-30:	HPU Sr. Program Specialist conducts first of monthly Landlord Workshops (east and west county) to educate landlords about the benefits of housing CalWORKs families and the rapid rehousing model.
Sept. 1-Nov. 28:	DPSS identifies an existing Rapid Rehousing provider to subcontract with for services.
Oct. 1-30:	DPSS HSP identifies first group of families to receive rapid rehousing services and meets with families to develop housing plans.
Sept 1-Oct 30:	DPSS Research, Analysis, and Decision Support and HMIS Unit develop data collection and tracking protocol with assistance by the HSP team.

Dec. 1:	Contracts with Rapid Rehousing providers are in place; families begin to receive housing services.
Dec. 31:	First progress report is completed and submitted to CDSS.
Jan. 1 June 30:	Between 150-200 families receive housing support services from contracted agencies that may include: rental assistance, security deposits, intensive case management, assistance in locating a place to live, etc.
March 30:	Second progress report (including data outcomes) is completed and submitted to CDSS.
June 30:	Final report (with data outcomes) is completed and submitted to CDSS.

4. What is the amount of funding that you are requesting:

The County of Riverside Department of Public Social Services is requesting \$1 million for the period Sept. 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015 (see Section H above for an explanation of how this funding will be spent). The request is broken out by the following:

Operating costs (84% of total):	\$ 843,682
Administrative costs (11% of total):	\$ 108,944
Data collection and tracking (5% of total):	\$ 47,374
Total:	<u>\$1,000,000</u>