

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES – DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)  
ENHANCED EMERGENCY SHELTER PROGRAM FOR TRANSITION AGE YOUTH  
(AGES 16-25) UNDER THE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT SERVICES (MHSA)**

**QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION  
September 7, 2007**

**Participant:** Is the form (this is in reference to a draft invoice form) in Excel and will it be available for the computer?

**Panelist:** Yes. It is in Excel. It is not ready yet, but it will be available for all approved enhanced shelter providers.

**Participant:** Is there a minimum or maximum number of beds you have to have reserved for the Transition Age Youth (TAY) clients?

**Panelist:** There is no minimum or maximum number of beds that has to be reserved. We wanted to encourage agencies to be able to demonstrate a bit of creativity on serving this population. As you know, this is a difficult population to serve. You need to be able to and we want to encourage some creativity to serve this population. We'll be doing some data analysis to look at this enhanced shelter program for TAY and the effectiveness of different models of sheltering, so we encourage agencies to practice some creativity.

**Participant:** I have three questions. The first question is, can a program select the 18-25 age group because there are different housing requirements, or the 16-17 age group?

**Panelist:** Yes, an agency may choose to serve 18 to 25 year-olds. We are not requiring you to serve the entire age range. That's also where creativity can be demonstrated.

**Participant:** Can a provider work with TAY System Navigator to generate referrals and provide outreach?

**Panelist:** Yes, how we envision this program is that the primary gate-keeping responsibility will be handled by our TAY System Navigators and Housing Specialists. So, they will be working closely with the shelter programs where we have kids.

**Participant:** Okay. So if an agency was able to generate some referrals, working closely with the System Navigator, the referrals will just flow?

**Panelist:** Yes.

**Participant:** Can you speak to the "single bed" definition? Two people in a room with two beds?

**Panelist:** There can be two folks in the same room. I think that's fine. There is nothing against that. What you have to consider are personal safety and the clients' personal items. You have to think about security measures in making sure that when these kids come in with their personal property, they need to be able to have their personal property secured while they are there. So this is some of the two-person-to-a-room issue. If the

room has a door, the door needs a lock if their stuff is in it. But you also need to have staff with a key to have access to the room if they need to get in the room.

**Panelist:** Or lockable storage space.

**Panelist:** Shouldn't be any size room. I think the size of the room space will let you know how many people each room can accommodate.

**Participant:** What would that be?

**Panelist:** A bed, chest of drawers, and someplace where they can lock their things up. So if it is a real large room, maybe you can even fit three beds into the room. But that depends on the size of the room.

**Participant:** The square foot requirement or just what is reasonable?

**Panelist:** It is cubic feet.

**Panelist:** Per person.

Audience member: For board and care, it is 75 square feet. Housed in that room are typically a nightstand, dresser, bed, lamp and chair. That's under the board and care licensing.

**Panelist:** That's what we would be looking at.

**Participant:** In terms of the 24/7 availability, what services were you looking to be able to provide to those transition age youth at that time?

**Panelist:** A number of different things. We are looking for someone to provide some level of case management in terms of getting these kids to the places they need to be. So, some of it may involve transportation issues, some of it is linkage, and some of it may be just some brief screening like, "Wait a minute, looks like this kid is having another issue. Who do I need to get in contact with to let them know this kid has another issue we need to address?" It is paying more attention to the kids you have there.

**Participant:** What is the per client reimbursement rate?

**Panelist:** The rates will vary depending on the type of enhanced services that you provide. But the beginning rate is at the board and care rate which means that you are providing no enhanced services. If you are going to provide enhanced services, the rate can go up to \$70 dollars per night; the rate will be determined upon contract negotiations.

**Participant:** Okay, so if there are no enhanced services, then there is no reimbursement?

**Panelist:** If no enhanced services, then the rate will be approximately \$30-31 a night.

**Participant:** Okay, I think this other question we already answered about who would be referring the client?

**Panelist:** Gatekeepers will be the TAY System Navigators and Housing Specialists; however, anyone can refer Seriously Emotionally Disturbed (SED) TAY that need enhanced shelters to the gatekeeper(s) for the particular Service Planning Area (SPA).

**Participant:** I think you answered my first question about the age population. If we serve

only 16-17 age group, we are still qualified to respond?

**Panelist:** Yes, as long as you are serving those that are legally emancipated.

**Participant:** Sorry, my second question was if we respond to the RFI after September 28<sup>th</sup>, it will be reviewed on an on-going basis?

**Panelist:** Yes.

**Participant:** So if you find our agency is qualified, we will just be on hold until you need an agency?

**Panelist:** About the first cut of September 28<sup>th</sup>, we will determine the next cut-off time based on the number of response packets received. Say we received a hundred by September 28<sup>th</sup>, we would be really hard-pressed to work those hundred. But if we received fewer, say we only receive 2 by September 28<sup>th</sup>, and October 1<sup>st</sup> we kept receiving others, we would go ahead and process the other ones. It really needs to be based on the need. We need to try to build up the capacity, but we just put the September 28<sup>th</sup> cut off date because we had to try to look at what we have at this point. So we would definitely look at your proposal. It would be evaluated under the same circumstances.

**Participant:** I have three questions. The first one is do you have an anticipated number of TAY that you think you will be serving by the Enhanced Emergency Shelter by SPA or region?

**Panelist:** We have funding to cover all eight SPA Countywide. We don't have it set aside by SPA or region. Across the county, we have enough money to cover, I think, about approximately 7,000 nights. Some will be used more and some will be used less but we are hoping to actually serve at least 400, 500 clients per fiscal year. We think we can get to that number.

**Participant:** My next question is must the lead proposer be the shelter provider? Or can the shelter provider be the sub under another agency (the lead agency)?

**Panelist:** Either way is fine. Subcontractors can apply on their own or as part of collaborative with a lead agency, as long as they are able to meet the criteria indicated in the RFI.

**Participant:** My question is the opposite. If we plan to be the lead and subcontract the shelter nights to a shelter, is that okay?

**Panelist:** That will be okay; again as long as they meet the criteria in the RFI.

**Participant:** If that's the case, is the 3-year minimum experience with the lead agency or the shelter?

**Panelist:** In that situation, the lead. If the contract is with the lead agency, then it assumes all responsibilities and obligations in the contract.

**Participant:** Okay great, thank you. And the last question is if you imagine that some of the TAY will actually have family, for example, if it is a mother coming in with two kids, then are we talking about three slots, or a family slot?

**Panelist:** It would be a family slot.

**Panelist:** If you have a family slot, I think in the RFI, we talk about a partial rate. Say that you go in and the parent or the parent TAY is 20 and she has two kids. There is the standard rate for the parent, whatever that is, if it is \$70 for the parent, then \$70 for the parent. For the two kids it would be like half of that rate or something like that. But it's something we could discuss during contract negotiations and establish those rates to be sure they make sense for the agency.

**Participant:** So we don't need to identify those rates for children in the budget form?

**Panelist:** You can, and should if possible, even if it's an estimate at this point.

**Panelist:** Part of it is that you're kind of estimating what it is going to be because we noticed that as we brought MHSA forward through the last year and a half, that what things cost then are significantly less than what things cost now. That's the reality, so, we are not holding you to anything in terms of, "Okay, you put in here so it is going to cost this." We still need to look at it in a contract-negotiations-type of environment to see what makes sense at the point in which we go forward. We just have that upper level at seventy dollars (\$70).

**Participant:** I have a quick question and my question is will the client be able to stay past the 29 days provided they are waiting for more permanent housing?

**Panelist:** That will be considered on an individual case-by-case basis.

**Participant:** My question is will there be an incentive to house the typically hard-to-place youth, the people who have history of arson or sex offense?

**Panelist:** There will not be incentives for serving these types of TAY clients.

**Participant:** Will the clients be screened for severe persistent mental health disorders, in and out with several placements? Who will screen? The housing or the actual agency?

**Panelist:** It will depend on the types of program but we expect that our Navigators or navigation teams will be involved in that process.

**Participant:** I work with an agency that has an extensive experience in vocational assessment and employment development, specifically for the TAY 18 and above. Would the services be considered as enhanced services?

**Panelist:** Yes.

**Participant:** And can they be included in collaborative agreement at a cost per TAY assessment?

**Panelist:** They would be considered an enhancement for sure. And the next part of your question?

**Participant:** If in collaboration with a lead agency, say we would provide these kinds of services, the cost would then be incurred within that \$70 maximum?

**Panelist:** Within that lead agency. So you would be one of the collaborators we talked about, a potential collaborator of that lead agency. So say that lead agency says, "As part of my enhanced TAY program, we have a community agency that comes in and does

some vocational screening-assessment kind of things and gets kids hooked in with some school stuff.”

**Participant:** A job.

**Panelist:** That comes out of their rate. Whatever that is will be decided through the contract negotiation process.

**Participant:** And in the provision of those services, could a lead agency say these are the kinds of services we provide or have to be in a collaborative kind of situation?

**Panelist:** Number one issue is to be sure you have the shelter.

**Participant:** Fine, I got my answer.

**Participant:** You stated earlier that the client has the right to decline our services. Do we have the right to turn the client away if we don't think they are acceptable?

**Panelist:** Yes.

**Participant:** When billing, how would a Housing Manager differentiate between a TAY client and an adult client?

**Panelist:** If they are going into their enhanced program, they would have to designate. For example, our Adult System of Care would not gate-keep a client into the Enhanced TAY Shelter Program. They can gate-keep and they continue to gate-keep kids under their regular shelter program. So what we are saying is there is an overlap here. The dollars don't overlap but the shelter—when you just say shelter program—overlap. So say you have someone who is 18 years old and they have been in an adult shelter. That person can continue to be served in an adult shelter under the circumstances they are served now and it would come out of our Adult System of Care's shelter pot of dollars. The same person might be 18 and in fact that person might be better served in a TAY Enhanced Shelter Program in some cases. Then, the TAY navigation team who provides the gate-keeping needs to make that decision or that differentiation that this kid will be better served in the enhanced TAY program because it has enhanced services not the regular shelter programs. Going into a TAY enhanced program does not mean that a TAY-aged person would lose their eligibility for access to the regular DMH shelter programs.

**Participant:** I have a residential care home for the ages 18-59. And I have had an emergency shelter program before for the Adult Protective Services (A.P.S.). Basically, I recently gave it up because of the fact that I wasn't getting any clients. And I was empty for about maybe 8 or 9 months. No clients came through. I was paying enormous insurance and a lot of costs. I said hey, this is not benefiting me when I don't get clients.

My question is, with this emergency shelter program, what happens when a person comes in and they don't have the proper medications with them? Or they come in with no medicines? Will that ever be something that you have to deal with? Because you have to know whether they have some sort of medical coverage like Medi-Cal or Medicare and if you have your own doctors, at least they will be able to see someone. So what happens with that? Who is responsible for that?

**Panelist:** We are not asking you as a shelter provider to provide for medical care and

medications and those kinds of things. That's above and beyond. I know our Department has medication programs and those kinds of things; but we are not expecting you as a provider to dip into your pocket to do that. If the kid that you get into your program happens to have Medi-Cal, although they are not paying for these shelter services, but if you have relationship with, say a psychiatrist who is a fee-for-service Medi-Cal provider, there is nothing that prevents your psychiatrist from seeing that kid and billing Medi-Cal. But that does not come out of your rate on this program.

**Participant:** I understand that part. I guess my question is, like for instance, I had a guy that came in one time. They brought him there and basically he was like in a wheelchair practically. So when they brought him, the taxi brought him and the case manager hadn't gotten there. So the taxi guy just left him on the sidewalk. I don't have a ramp --

**Panelist:** We are not asking you to provide recuperative beds here. The issue here is there is a gate-keeping function that we are trying to make sure that we honor. That's why we have the TAY Navigators involved in that gate-keeping function. They are at the front end of that, and they will know what to do or what needs to happen in those kinds of situations. We are not asking you to accept, nor would we be sending someone over to you from the emergency room who has weeping wounds and bandages and needed some type of nursing care. That's not what we are looking for here in this program. You should not be receiving those kinds of referrals from our TAY unit to do that kind of work.

**Participant:** So when the person comes, will they come by themselves or with someone?

**Panelist:** It will depend. In some situations, you may be asked as a provider to come and pick them up. And other situations, we may be transporting them there. But you have the right at the front end of this to say, "I will not be able to work with this client."

**Panelist:** You have that right and we expect that because if it doesn't work for you, it won't work for the client and may build up to bad things.

**Participant:** Can you have a straight facility just for that or basically it is good for someone that has --

**Panelist:** For?

**Participant:** For the emergency shelter program?

**Panelist:** Yes. Without enhancements? Yes, if you want you can do that. But we think that this program really works with enhanced services because otherwise what you would be providing is just what we are already providing as a Department in our regular shelter program. So we are really encouraging and looking for agencies with enhanced services and we are willing to pay for those enhanced services. So why not take a shot at it if that's something that you can do.

**Panelist:** And the creative part is an opportunity to serve the SED TAY population based on its particular needs.

**Participant:** We have all worked with the TAY population. I was just wondering if a child is at a facility or shelter and there for the entire week but just decides to take off for the weekend and the agency is still actively trying to engage the kid back to the facility, are they allowed to bill for that time?

**Panelist:** Probably so, unless it is a circumstance that can't be supported.

**Participant:** Then how long can they keep the bed open or --

**Panelist:** If the kid has gone missing or AWOL, I will expect them to call our housing specialist, Navigator, or whoever placed and gate-kept that person there. I really expect them to have that conversation with them saying, "Little Richard is gone on. . ." or whatever the situation is. Sometimes these kids are in trouble or whatever, but we do expect—this is all part of enhancement—you to take on some level of responsibility for these SED TAY. It is not like, well, he is gone, okay, just go on to the next one—like he is a free agent and he is an adult and he can do what he wants to do. That's not the attitude we are looking for. We are looking for someone to say, "You know what, there is someone missing here and I need to get in touch with someone about this person and what to do about this situation."

**Participant:** So they will be allowed to return after maybe gone for a few hours or a day or two?

**Panelist:** We just need to work it out. This is something that we are trying to be not only creative, but we need to have the flexibility in here to be sure that it is something that is going to work for this population. If it is not flexible enough for the population and the providers who are doing this, this thing is just not going to work. So we are trying to build in enhancements that will make this program work for the SED TAY population.

**Participant:** I do have a question in reference to any incentives based on providers who are providing enhanced services to all age groups, emancipated through age 25, for the target population. And based on scoring and evaluation and various services, being that you are going to be looking at various incoming RFIs in serving this target population with the enhanced services, in having probably minimum of six years' experience as a lead agency, would consideration be given to that particular provider first and foremost? Or how is selection process really work?

**Panelist:** I think you may have arrived late. We talked about --

**Participant:** I did. I apologize. I had another meeting.

**Panelist:** This is very different from all of the RFSs or RFPs that you have been involved in. This is an open solicitation. It is a pass/fail but if you fail, it doesn't mean you fail forever. It means you put your boots back on and figure out what it is you are short on and once you figured that out and corrected that, you get in contact with us. Then we go out, and we can add you to the list if you have corrected any outstanding components or issues.

**Participant:** Any deficiencies.

**Panelist:** Yes, whatever the issue is. So your program is not in competition with another program in your SPA. You can both be contracted participants in this program because you are not competing. You are providing.

**Participant:** If we have a bed reserved for TAY client and haven't received any referrals, will we be getting paid for that bed?

**Panelist:** One of the reasons we did this RFI is we did not want to have to pay for empty

beds. We want to pay for beds that have bodies in them and are using the services. So part of it becomes, the better you do that, people want to go to your program. That's up to you, right?

**Participant:** I wanted to find out how many times a client would be eligible to participate in the shelter bed per year?

**Panelist:** No cut-off. What we have set is the initial amount of time—we look at the initial period of time of up to 20 days. Although we are thinking they need far less. But in any case, 20 days with up to three 3-day extensions bringing the total to 29 days. We did not want to get into this establishing tenancy stuff when you get over 30 days. We have not envisioned this program as kind of providing barriers for kids who actually need this type of service at their point in need. So yes, a kid may go to a shelter in one of these programs, may leave, may go do something else, and may come back. So be it.

**Participant:** My question is, how much time between a participant's program is allowed before they are able to be reinstated? If a participant stays and has had three 3-day extensions to meet his/her 29 days and he/she has to now leave. If he/she hasn't been connected with another permanent housing or another transitional program and wants to return, can he/she return two days later? Three days later? Four? Has that been thought out?

**Panelist:** We have not put that barrier in place. So what we'll do is: we haven't decided if that works in TAY's best interests because we have to look at how the SED/SPMI TAY population uses mental health services. They tend to use them in a way that is little bit nontraditional. Generally, mental health services are not a magnet for them, and we know they kind of come back and forth. And maybe they begin to trust that this is something they need to do. Then they will do it, but this might not occur until maybe on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, or 6<sup>th</sup> attempt. So we have not established that they must be out X or Y number of days. What we have established is we are trying to get to a point where we can deal with these kids on an individual "what-is-your-need," "what-is-your-issue" basis. And then try to figure out why things are happening or not happening and try to put in place a plan to be sure something is happening. That's the enhanced part of services. As an enhanced shelter provider, you are taking some level of responsibility to ensure that the kids have what they need or have some effective linkage resource available versus "you are out of here, here is the front door, bye."

**Participant:** Saying that, you bring up another question. In regards to reporting responsibilities, will the lead agency being the shelter or its collaborators be responsible for reporting each month on the challenges and successes with particular participants or all participants? And if so, in that report, would they have to include anticipations of such barriers that I mentioned before and how to address those barriers?

**Panelist:** Ultimately, if your collaboration is set up where there is a lead agency, the lead agency is responsible for making sure all of these requirements are met because the lead agency has the contract with us. So they are responsible for performing the contract terms and conditions including the data that needs to be submitted and all of those related types of requirements.

**Panelist:** Please remember that when you submit your proposals, bring them to the

Contract's Office on the fifth floor. Also for those agencies that have never submitted a proposal to us, be sure that they are secured in a good manner. Don't just put a rubber band on them as copies or pages may get lost. It is your responsibility to be sure that the entire document is secured. So however many we have asked for, please be sure you submit those copies to us. And as far as the contact name is concerned, that will be attached to the transcript that is going to be posted on the website.

**Participant:** How many copies?

**Panelist:** We need one original and two copies.

**Participant:** Is there a time on the 28<sup>th</sup> it has to be in by?

**Panelist:** The building closes at 8. Unlike the other RFSs or RFPs which has 5:00 pm deadline, this is just an issue of getting in that first group. And after that, it is a rolling process.

**Panelist:** Thank you everyone for coming and participating in this process. We hope everyone submits some really, really good stuff so that we can do good work with these really, really needy kids. Thank you, bye.

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