

Program Work Statement

Program Goals and Objectives

The AAUL Helping Our Members Effectively Stabilize (H.O.M.E.S.) program provides Street Outreach for individuals experiencing homelessness with a focus on provide comprehensive housing supports to Austin/Travis County/Central Texas individuals and households to eliminate homelessness, mitigate housing insecurity, and provide stabilized housing options.

Provide immediate Homeless & Housing Insecurity Offset support to those facing housing insecurities due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus public health crisis, residual winter Storm Uri impact, and most importantly sustained or chronic homelessness. The AAUL is currently works to reduce homelessness and increase housing stability among populations eligible for the Emergency Housing Voucher program (EHV) in the Austin/Travis County CoC (Continuum of Care).

Providing Rapid Re-Housing via short-term rental assistance and supportive housing services. The goals are to help people obtain housing quickly, increase self- sufficiency, and stay housed. Rapid re-housing is offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety) and the resources and services provided are typically tailored to the needs of the individual or households. Some exceptions to this open policy include criminal charge related to manufacture or production of methamphetamines, lifetime registry on a sex offender list, and failure to sign and submit consent forms. Targeting individuals who have recently entered into homelessness is of utmost importance. Sometimes all that is needed to end a persons homelessness is one-time financial assistance to cover an apartment application fee or to help pay for transportation to stay with friends or family.

Distribute Direct Financial assistance for Diversion and Rapid Exit

Diversion/Rapid Exit: This service refers to very time-limited (often one-time) financial assistance and problem-solving conversations intended to help a client exit homelessness without formal enrollment into a housing intervention like PSH or RRH. It can entail a wide variety of potential solutions and funding sources, but locally has most often been focused on family reunification and related transportation assistance. Effective and accessible Diversion services mean that anyone who can end their homelessness with this type of assistance can do so as quickly as possible (minimizing the amount of time spent experiencing homelessness)

In addition to efforts via the housing programming AAUL also serves the unhoused population via AAUL Justice & Advocacy division and through special initiatives for emergency response.

The AAUL H.O.M.E.S continuum of care/homelessness response system model and holistic housing advocacy coordination approach is the Austin Area Urban Leagues signature model in ensuring an equitable quality of life for all those in the central Texas region. Central to H.O.M.E.S success is that of the Unhoused Community Council which is a body of representatives with lived experience as homeless, unhoused or facing housing insecurity throughout Austin. The model, supporting and surrounding The Ambassadors as representatives, is a model component that is designed to empower the voices of the unhoused in local and regional decisions and solutions that impact them while providing the necessary direct support and wraparound supports to ensure the Ambassadors stabilization in the ever-evolving terrain that is Austins homelessness crisis.

Finally, the AAULs Crisis, Disaster, Emergency (CDE) response and recovery involves a set of policies, tools, and procedures to enable the actions or continuation of vital services and supports following a natural or human induced CDE. AAUL efforts focuses on the systems supporting critical human service infrastructure functioning despite significant disruptive events. CDE response and recovery assumes that the most impacted and vulnerable community members are accessible and prioritized to the top of the list to be serviced and supported. It is important to have adequate administration that supports the CDE response and recover to reduce instances of further harm and trauma to vulnerable community members. Currently AAUL provide three main umbrellas of service delivery:

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Provision of and Relocation to lodging

Material Support for those choosing to shelter in place in outdoor encampments (e.g., supplies, equipment and resources, etc.).

Distribution center administration for distribution of supplies (e.g., supplies, equipment and resources, etc.)

In addition to the AAULs experience in executing and administering related programming, AAULs partner network has years of experience in the functions related to the proposed actions.

Program Clients Served

The program utilizes the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of homelessness to verify that persons receiving services are eligible. The AAUL H.O.M.E.S. Program is designed to focus on clients who are:

- 18+ years old
- adult individuals
- Individuals exiting high-priority encampments
- Referrals from partner agencies
- Working towards a housing plan, with the ability to secure housing

Program Services and Delivery

Referrals:

Mobile Street Outreach- This service refers to all the contact, engagement, and follow-up steps that involve bringing services to a client rather than asking the client to physically go somewhere themselves in order to receive a service. Locally, this entails initial contact street outreach (There is a campsite here and I don't think anyone is talked to them about services yet), warm hand-off services (There is a program opening coming up, but AAUL need some complex paperwork to prove eligibility to the government), and responsive/affirmative communication network steps for service news (I was working on a housing application with this client, but now I am not sure how to get in touch with them). Services

- Premises are operated 24 hours-7 days per week for 365 days per year
- 3 meals are provided per day (no commercial kitchen on site)
- Operator will work with clients with the intention to accommodate client pets
- Southbridge staff will provide services in a manner that is flexible to best meet clients needs and schedules

Housing Plans:

- Each client will then be prioritized for rapid rehousing through City funded HEAL Rapid Rehousing contracts and assigned a Case Manager by those programs. Those programs currently are run by Family Eldercare and Integral Care; Contracted programs and agencies may change.
- Housing Plans will be established by the RRH providers, with the support of Southbridge staff, and will follow a Housing First approach, working closely with the client to find and secure housing

Contracted Agency:

-Agrees to provide supervision, to the extent that said activities are carried on in a safe and orderly manner, for all areas defined as a part of this agreement.

Per Council direction, all shelter employees will be paid at least the City of Austin living wage.

System for Collecting and Reporting Program Data

The agency should utilize the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) as administered by Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO), to track and report basic client information. Agency staff will work to ensure a high standard of data quality in the HMIS system.

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Performance Evaluation

AAUL Program Compliance is a system of processes, policies and procedures, and controls that are developed to ensure compliance with all applicable rules, regulations, contracts and policies governing the actions of the organization. The AAUL compliance program is a living, ongoing process that is a intention internal control mechanism which demonstrates commitment to the values and ethics of the organization as well as compliance with applicable ordinances, laws, regulations and oversight. The AAUL compliance division assists individuals within the organization to be aware and understand the expectations efficacy and integrity in operations and implementation. Continuous Quality Improvements describe the process for identifying problems or other issues in service delivery, designing activities to overcome these problems, and following up to ensure corrective actions have been effective.

Quality Improvement

Data management is the AAUL practice of collecting, keeping, and using data securely, efficiently, and cost-effectively. The goal of AAUL data management is for stakeholder groups (clients, participants, sponsors, contributors) and connected things to optimize the use of data within the bounds of policy and regulation so that they can make decisions and take actions that maximize impact and outcomes for clients/participants and to the benefit to the agency for continuous service quality improvement.

Service Coordination with Other Agencies

Service Coordination Referral refer AAUL and partners connecting clients/participants to other professionals when the other professionals specialized knowledge or expertise is needed to serve clients/participants fully or when service provider believe that they are not being effective or making reasonable progress with clients/participants and that other services are required. The AAUL will utilize a 2-way referral process with network partners that includes Direct, Tangible and Community referrals which may include:

SOAR Services- SOAR is an expedited benefits application process by which people experiencing homelessness who are also living with severe and persistent disabling conditions can much more quickly and effectively access federal disability benefits (monthly financial assistance as well as access to health benefits through Medicaid and/or Medicare). Overall, it has a much higher success rate and a significantly faster turnaround time than clients attempting to apply for benefits through traditional routes. Diversion/Rapid Exit- This service refers to very time-limited (often one-time) financial assistance and problem-solving conversations intended to help a client exit homelessness without formal enrollment into a housing intervention like PSH or RRH. It can entail a wide variety of potential solutions and funding sources, but locally has most often been focused on family reunification and related transportation assistance. Effective and accessible Diversion services mean that anyone who can end their homelessness with this type of assistance can do so as quickly as possible (minimizing the amount of time spent experiencing homelessness).

Coordinated Assessment Access- Coordinated Assessment refers to a consolidated housing application process whereby anyone experiencing homelessness (including those fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence) in Austin/Travis County can apply for all possible Homelessness Response System housing programs at the same time and get the same answer about all immediate and future program openings. One critical piece of this process is the "front doors" who provide access to this assessment (usually by pairing the process with similar first contact services such as emergency shelter, drop-in day services, and street outreach). The assessment process is mobile and can be completed at any physical location. More assessment access options mean that people in need of services can request them faster, more easily, and less traumatically, and reduce their time spent experiencing homelessness.

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Service Collaboration with Subgrantees

The primary/lead organization (AAUL) will partner with service provider to deliver comprehensive Street outreach and coordinated assessment services. Potential Partners include Walk By Faith, We Can Now, Saffron Women's Trust as well as others in the AAUL partner network. AAUL service collaboration are structured in to 3 tiers (Tier 1 Partners receiving subcontract, Tier 2 Collaborators connected through Memorandums of Understandings that defines each organization commitments to the relationship and the services to be provided to client/participants. Tier 3 Contributors that contribute non-binding in-kind supports administrative or programmatic service (voluntary).

Community Planning Activities

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