



**Housing First Scattered Site Supportive Housing for Homeless Adults
WNY and LI Region
RFP#MH253017
Questions & Answers**

Q1. The Housing First Scattered Site Supporting Housing for Homeless Adults WNY and LI Region RFP states on page 1, "Mental health or other diagnostic criteria are not required to access housing through this initiative."

It also says on page 13, "3.13 NYS and OMH Policies The applicant/contractor must agree to comply with all applicable New York State and OMH policies, procedures, regulations and directives throughout the Term of the contract." and on page 17, "Contractors must comply with the OMH Supportive Housing Guidelines."

The OMH Supportive Housing Guidelines state on page 2, "All individuals served in OMH Supportive Housing must be at least 18 years of age, have a primary diagnosis of serious mental illness (SMI) as per the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), and experience substantial impairments in functioning in several areas of role performance due to their clinical condition, for an extended duration on either a continuous or episodic basis. Qualifying adults are dependent on treatment, rehabilitation, and support services to maintain functional capacity. (Emphasis added.)"

These statements seem contradictory. Can you please clarify whether residents will be required to have mental health or other diagnoses? If they are not required to have diagnoses, do we simply disregard that statement in the OMH Supportive Housing Guidelines, and if so, are there statements that should be disregarded/that are not applicable here?

A1. Tenants are not required to have mental health or other diagnostic criteria to access housing through this initiative.

Q2. Can you please clarify which OMH policies and procedures would and would not be applicable to this program?

A2. Agencies are expected to follow the Supportive Housing Guidelines except where a procurement specifies different requirements. For this procurement, tenants do not need to have a SMI and agencies will follow the referral process outlined in the RFP.

Q3. Will awardees be required to obtain any kind of OMH license? If so, please share which license(s) will be required and whether applicants need to have that license in place in advance of submitting applications to be considered.

A3. OMH's Supportive Housing program is an unlicensed model of housing.

Q4. Our organization has a large portfolio of Scattered Site Supportive Housing Units; however, we have mostly been working with the Federal government. Per the RFP, eligible applicants must have 1 year of experience providing mental health services to persons with serious mental illness in New York State through an OMH or County Contract. Would OMH consider our experience with the federal government sufficient experience to meet the eligibility requirement?

A4. No. Eligible applicants must have 1 year of experience providing mental health services to persons with serious mental illness in New York State through an OMH or County contract.

Q5. Will the SOS team and or ACT teams refer individuals to the applicant/agency? If so, will each of those teams be responsible for providing services for up to a year with the tenants in the program?

A5. Yes, as noted in section 5.1 Introduction, referrals will be made by the teams. Also in section 5.1, teams will be responsible for providing services for up to one year to individuals enrolled in with their team.

Q6. Will the salaries for the SOS team and the ACT teams come from the awarded funds of the applicant/agency?

A6. No.

Q7. Can you please confirm the number of people, "45," that is mentioned in the RFP? How would the number of 45 persons be accommodated in 25 units (combined with both counties)?

A7. The total number of units being awarded through this RFP is 45. Twenty (20) units will be awarded in Steuben and Chemung Counties, and 25 units will be awarded in Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

Q8. The unit size states a studio or 1-bedroom. Are these the only unit sizes to lease to tenants?

A8. As stated in section 5.1 Introduction, "renting studio or one-bedroom apartments is required under this initiative, except in the rare instance where a consumer wishes to live with another resident." In the case of the latter the awarded applicant would be expected to work with the appropriate OMH Field Office to determine the appropriate apartment size.

Q9. If the applicant/non-profit agency is partnered with a CoC, can the agency accept referrals from the CoC for the homeless (staying in shelters and or hotels)?

A9. As stated in section 5.1 Introduction, the referral sources for this initiative are Safe Options Support (SOS) Teams or Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams only.

Q10. How many grants will be awarded for Suffolk/Nassau County?

A10. As indicated in section 4.3.1 of the RFP, one 25-unit program will be awarded to serve individuals in Suffolk and Nassau County.

Q11. Can organizations request an advance, and if so, for how much?

A11. OMH contracts are paid in quarterly advances.

Q12. Must there be 24-hour/7-day staff coverage for the project?

A12. OMH encourages a staffing plan with off-hour coverage during the evenings and weekends to ensure residents have access to staff for routine assistance as well as to address any emergencies that arise. See section 5.1 Introduction.

Q13. Is the project allowed to contract with private landlords?

A13. Yes.

Q14. Is it required to cluster apartment "hubs" and what if it's not possible to establish a "hub" but make units available otherwise?

A14. Establishment of a hub is encouraged but not required.

Q15. The amount of \$38,008 per unit/per person is for each year of the contract, so \$38,008 will be allowed per unit? Is \$2,106 a separate amount from the \$38,008?

A15. The \$38,008 per unit/per person is for awards made in Nassau and/or Suffolk counties and includes the \$2,106 SSI supplement.

Q16. Are 25 units required for the first year or a total of 25 units over the 5-year term of the contract?

A16. The awarded applicants will have eight (8) months from the date of contract approval to develop all awarded units.

Q17. If an organization is partnered with a CoC and uses HMIS, is this sufficient for data collection for the homeless population?

A17. The awarded applicants will be required to submit data through OMH's Children and Adults Information Reporting System (CAIRS).

Q18. Under the Housing First Scattered Site Supportive Housing model, is OMH requiring that leases and utilities be in the participant's name, or is it permissible for the provider to hold the lease and/or utilities while still meeting Housing First and tenancy requirements?

A18. As noted in section 5.1 Introduction, the selected applicants are expected to have apartments ready for immediate occupancy; units should be rented, furnished, with utilities turned on, and stocked with necessities. This will often necessitate having the lease and/or utilities in the providers name. In that circumstance, a sublease is required. Following established occupancy where appropriate, it is also encouraged that the lease and utilities be transferred to the tenant.

Q19. For the Long Island Region award, is OMH requiring that new Housing First Scattered Site Supportive Housing units be established in both Nassau and Suffolk Counties, or may all units be located within a single county?

A19. It is expected that units will be sited across the identified counties based on need.

Q20. For the Long Island Region (Nassau and Suffolk Counties), does OMH require applicants to apply for the full 25 Housing First Scattered Site Supportive Housing units, or will proposals requesting fewer units be considered?

A20. Applicants may not apply for fewer units

Q21. Can we utilize any of this funding for the legal costs of going to housing court if tenants are unable to pay their share of the rent and the agency would need to pursue eviction or other housing court proceedings. Would that be an allowable expense on this grant?

A21. No.

Q22. What type of housing is appropriate for this funding?

A22. Individual studio or one-bedroom apartments.

Q23. Is it preferable for apartments to be located in one building or separate buildings?

A23. OMH anticipates that the apartments will be situated in different buildings, although some apartments may be located within the same building.

Q24. For an organization that is already providing Tenancy Support Services (TSS), may an applicant for this program plan on also providing such TSS to participants of this program? If so, please clarify at what TSS rate, and please specify where within the budget template (or elsewhere in the application) OMH would like applicants to reflect this revenue stream toward the program's total operations? How much money are applicants advised / allowed to budget for such TSS during the start-up year(s) and operational years thereafter?

A24. Applicants may provide Rehabilitative Tenancy Services (RTS; or TSS as posed in the question) and can include that in their budget. The rate is \$1200/year/unit for Long Island and \$600/year/unit for Chemung/Steuben

Q25. RFP Page 5 indicates, "The applicant agency will be required to accept referrals from any Safe Options Support (SOS) Team or Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team..." Question 2: Should applicants / grantees prepare to receive & accept such referrals from programs only that operate within the designated two-county area which the applicant is proposing to serve, or might referrals (requiring acceptance) also come from SOS, ACT and/or AOT across borders, potentially including sources in neighboring counties not mentioned in the RFP?

A25. OMH anticipates referring teams will be operating within the counties discussed in this RFP, however there is always a possibility a referral will come from a team outside these counties if an individual's desired residence is within one of these four counties.

Q26. What criteria will OMH expect SOS and/or ACT teams use to decide to refer someone to this supportive housing program (vs. refer to potentially higher-level-

support-residential programs like a Congregate Residence, an Apartment Treatment Program, or another OMH or non-OMH residential program)?

A26. SOS and ACT teams will be educated on the level of support provided in Housing First to ensure referral to the appropriate level of care.

Q27. If a participant referred to this supportive housing program is shown a qualifying, available apartment by the grantee and that person declines to choose living in that unit, to honor a person-centered experience, does the person's SOS team or ACT team retain the primary responsibility to show the client other housing options? (Does the Housing First SSSH staffing ratio and its overall State Aid budget account for grantees potentially retaining a separate, long-duration roster of individuals referred from ACT or SOS who may be time-intensive to place if they choose to decline one or more qualifying apartments?)

A27. To be clear, individuals are not admitted to the supportive housing program until they are placed in the apartment. If the Housing First provider has not secured all apartments for this program and receives a new referral, they should work with the individual to secure an apartment that meets the individual's needs.

Q28. Given that this initiative serves a two-county region and that residents, even with strong support and advocacy from programs like SOS, ACT, and case management services, have consistently encountered major obstacles of transferring their Medicaid enrollment from one county to the other (due to known procedural barriers), how would OMH prefer grantees to proceed in the event that a referred person from one county finds that the only available Housing First Scattered Site unit(s) are presently in the other county? (Would OMH prefer that grantees offer individuals from one county a unit in the other county within this region, even if that results in the individual losing or having delays in their housing/rental support through Medicaid (and thus this rent cost/burden potentially falling onto the State for an extended period of time)? Or does OMH prefer that the referring SOS or ACT team in their county-of-origin continue to help the person find available housing within that county (including, potentially, this SSSH program, should space in that county become available)?

A28. As stated in section 1.3 Allocation of Scattered Site Units, in these programs, where multiple counties are served, it is the expectation that units will be sited across the identified counties based on need. Although individuals may transfer counties based on their desired living location, individuals should not be referred to alternate counties simply because that's where there is an available apartment.

Q29. If a landlord, acting in good faith, wishes to evict a tenant/program participant after an experienced grantee has exhausted all prevention efforts and methods, what is OMH's expectation about what happens next?

A29. Agencies should refer to Section XVII of the Supportive Housing Guidelines in these circumstances.

Q30. RFP Scope of Work, section 5.1 on page 16 indicates, "Under OMH supportive housing a resident should hold their own lease or sublease and have the same rights and responsibilities as any tenant." Given the elevated needs of this program's population-of-focus (including compared to other Supportive Housing programs), is OMH open to a

sublease—vs. lease—whenever needed to promote a Housing First model, to increase rapidity of placement and reduce barriers?

A30. Awarded applicants are required to have apartments ready for immediate occupancy. Due to this scenario, OMH expects that most if not all tenants will have a sublease at least initially.

Q31. RFP Page 1, Section 1.3, “Allocation of Scattered Site Units” notes that 20 Total Units will be sited in Steuben and Chemung counties and 25 Total Units will be sited in Nassau and Suffolk, indicating that “In these programs, where multiple counties are served, it is the expectation that units will be sited across the identified counties based on need.”

For application and budget-preparation purposes, multiple months prior to contract start, should applicants assume a relatively equal split of allocation across the two-county area?

A31. Yes.

Q32. RFP section 43.2 (p17) indicates, “Please note any agency awarded housing will have eight (8) months from the date of contract approval to develop all awarded units.” By when does OMH expect such agencies to have all such units filled and occupied (at the established 90% occupancy standard referenced in the 2022 Supportive Housing Guidelines)? In pursuance of the above, are applicants free to use the experience of their own and peer agencies to estimate by what date developed units will become 90-100% occupied?

A32. Yes.

Q33. Given applicants’ knowledge of real / current local housing market conditions plus this initiative’s 8-month-maximum development timeline, will OMH allow applicants to allocate rental costs for studios and 1-bedrooms at rates higher than FMR in order to hew to the reality and most current actual market rents (provided that the rest of the budget still fits within OMH’s maximum annual allocation)?

A33. Q33. Yes, if the cost is reasonable and fits within budget / existing resources.

Q34. RFP section 6.5 (p22) indicates, “Prorate Year 1 and Year 2 budgets, as needed, keeping the program start-date and phase-in schedule in mind.” P23 indicates, “Your agency’s phase-in schedule will determine total rental costs and client contributions in Year 1. For programs that require rental units, there are no additional start-up funds available, aside from Year 1 standard operating funds. Lower rental costs in Year 1 will allow your agency to use standard operating funds for start-up expenses.”

Please define what expenses belong in Start-Up vs. Operational budget columns (especially regarding staffing / pro-rated roles allocated during phase-in when all or some units may be not yet occupied)?

A34. Since there are no funds for startup being provided, all expenses belong in the operational budget columns.

Q35. Can budgeted Start-Up expenses be incurred during part of Year 2, if consistent with projected phase-in schedule (i.e., gradual ramping up of clients occupying units)? Or must 100% of start-up expenses be incurred in Year 1?

A35. Yes, you can prorate Year 1 and Year 2 budgets, as needed, keeping the program start date and phase-in schedule in mind.

Q36. For budgeting purposes, understanding that "Start Up" costs (during ramp up / phase-in) will be essential to securing all units by Month 8 and having them occupied as soon as possible—can applicants budget, for Start-Up expenses, up to the total OMH annual funding amount minus the anticipated operating costs for each year during phase-in/ramp up? In other words, are allowable total Start-Up expenses expected to equal the remaining balance of the total amount of State Aid allocated in Years 1 and 2, minus operating costs for rented and/or occupied units? And, relatedly, should Start-Up cover any rent for unoccupied units (awaiting referral placements), or should those costs go under the relevant Year's operating budget?

A36. Since there are no funds for startup being provided, all expenses belong in the operational budget columns.

Q37. Where within the Budget Excel template does OMH prefer applicants to allocate revenue expected from program participants (i.e., 30% of their net income)? For example, Row 32 "Contribution of Other Revenue", Row 25 "Patient Fees", etc.?

A38. Row 25 "Patient Fees".

Q39. For the "Your Unit Bid Price" field that appears near the bottom of the "Event Details" page in SFS, OMH indicates on RFP Page ii to please indicate the "total amount of funding your organization is requesting from OMH." Would OMH like to see a 5-year total, since this would be a 5-year contract or would OMH prefer applicants to indicate only a 1-year total equal to the "Full Annual Value Operating" budget (i.e., reflecting Column E in the Budget spreadsheet)?

A39. Please enter the 1-year full annual value.

Q40. For this opportunity (OMH01-MH253017), near the bottom of the "Event Details" page in SFS, is the reference to "New York State Clubhouses" instead meant to say, "Housing First SSSH Western and Long Island"?

A40. Yes, this is a typo and should say Housing First SSSH Western and Long Island.

Q41. In the Appendix B Excel budget, tab 1, how does OMH define (and how would OMH like applicants to distinguish between) Row 30 "Direct State Expenditures (State Program)", Row 31 "Grants (specify source)" and Row 35 "State Aid"? Are applicants correct in understanding that OMH would like funding requested from this OMH initiative to be allocated in Row 35 "State Aid" beneath the "Government Support" heading?

A41. Yes, OMH would like funding requested from this OMH initiative to be allocated in Row 35 "State Aid". For Row 31 "Grants (specify source)", this would be any funding from a specific grant being used to supplement this OMH initiative. For Row 30 "Direct State Expenditures (State Program)", this would be any funding being paid directly on your behalf from a state program.

Q42. In the RFP, whenever the phrase “anticipated SSI revenue” appears (i.e., pp17-18), does OMH intend this to be interchangeable with “SSI / SSDI” (Supplemental Security Income and/or Social Security Disability Insurance)? Or does this refer only to SSI?

A42. No. SSI and SSDI are not interchangeable terms and the “anticipated SSI revenue” is only referencing SSI.