

FINAL 8-2-2023

Request for Proposal (RFP)

**Community Engagement, Facilitation,
Financial Analysis, and Plan Development of the
Five-Year Okanogan County Homeless Housing Plan**

Issued by the Okanogan County Housing Coalition

RFP Posted and Available:

August 4, 2023, at:

www.occac.com/news

**Closing Time for Accepting
Proposals: 10:00 AM, October 4,
2023.**

Proposal Review:

October 2023

Notification of Award:

November 2023

**Submit Proposals to
Okanogan County Community
Action Council
ATTN Rena Shawver,
Executive Director
424 S 2nd Ave, PO Box 1067
Okanogan, WA 98840
Ph: 509-422-4041**

Okanogan County Housing Coalition Members



Okanogan County Five-Year Homeless Housing Plan

I. Need Statement

Okanogan County is facing a housing crisis for all income levels, but especially for low-income and homeless populations. The waiting list for a low-income housing unit can be up to three years. There is a lack of shelter beds, hotel rooms, private rentals, transitional housing, and permanent housing. Additionally, social service agencies working to support people living without housing are spread thin and often lack capacity and resources to deal with issues of homelessness. Sometimes services are duplicated, and systems are not in place for better collaboration for wrap-around support. Furthermore, the lack of living-wage jobs, transitioning out of incarceration, drug and alcohol addiction, mental health issues, and other factors play into the challenge of helping support people in need of housing.

Okanogan County has a record number of homeless individuals and families, and a housing shortage of crisis proportions to make placements. A rough estimate of the homeless, as defined by HUD, in our county is around 3,500-5,500 including youth, families, individuals, and veterans. The Washington State Department of Commerce's 2023 PIT Count verification for Okanogan County was 290, although 600 forms were collected and entered in the HMIS data base. The county's Point-in-Time (PIT) count conducted in January 2023, which is a challenging time to count the homeless as we generally have three feet of snow on the ground, was a county-wide effort involving multiple agencies.

There is not enough housing available no matter the number. There are youth and adults couch surfing, and others living in RVs that are not hooked up to permanent water, electric, or sewer. Very few hotel rooms are available for shelter and homeless clients are asked to leave during high-tourism events like the Omak Stampede. Even with no-barrier housing there are some homeless who do not want to participate in receiving services for multiple reasons including personal safety.

There has been a lot of activity in the county toward creating more housing with the housing authorities and trusts, including the Housing Authority of Okanogan, the Oroville Housing Authority, the Colville Tribal Housing Authority, Okanogan Land Trust, and Methow Housing Trust. Other government and nonprofit agencies join these organizations in working to support people in need of housing, but it still is

not enough to meet demand. We acknowledge more work needs to be done in a more coordinated manner.

Currently, the Housing Authority of Okanogan County is planning to build 50 low-income units in Twisp and recently completed 46 low-income homes (1, 2 & 3 bedrooms) in a new development called Meadow Point Family Housing located in Omak. Meadow Point filled within one month of opening applications. The Oroville Housing Authority is building 16 low-income housing units. The Colville Tribal Housing Authority is building and plans to build apartments in East Omak. New Life Church runs the Okanogan Homeless Shelter, which is finishing up over-night shelter for about 12 men and women. Additionally, the new Foundation for Youth Resiliency and Engagement (FYRE) is working on a plan for temporary sheltering of youth in a dormitory-style, staffed building.

Some winter shelters are opening for the hardest to serve clients and offer protection from the cold at night but often do not provide protection during the day:

- The Okanogan Homeless Shelter, operated by the New Life Church in the Town of Okanogan, opened in November to shelter single men and women between 7 PM and 7 AM.
- OCCAC has contracted with WFLA (farmer workers housing) to use their facilities for winter sheltering for mostly families and shelters people in hotels rooms, when available. As of the end of July 2023, OCCAC had 7 people in hotel rooms for shelter and 20 on the waiting list for shelter.
- In 2022, the county lost the winter shelter agreement with the Oroville Housing Authority who sold farm-worker trailer units and will be using the land to build 16 new low-income housing units. During the winter of 2021, around 80 homeless used the trailer shelter.
- At the two remaining winter shelters, drug and alcohol use are not acceptable at either of those facilities, leaving many still using tents and make-shift shelters during winter months.
- The Support Center continues to provide shelter for victims of domestic abuse, and has capacity, but their grants limit the use of the beds to domestic violence survivors.
- The same is true for the Shove House run by the Okanogan County Behavioral Health who can provide temporary shelter/housing for only patients receiving mental health services with their agency.

Most all shelter services are high barrier, but even with no-barrier housing there are some homeless who do not want to participate in receiving services for multiple reasons including personal safety. During the pandemic, the Okanogan County Health Department took over finding shelter for the homeless who require COVID isolation and quarantine for the homeless, placing them in hotel rooms, when they were available. That practice has ceased now.

The bottom line for our community is more housing of all types – single family, tiny homes, apartments, senior housing, youth and young adult appropriate housing, migrant housing, low-income housing trust models, behavioral health housing, and assisted living are all needs in Okanogan County. For this five-year plan, however, our focus is on shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing for homeless and low-income individuals and families.

Okanogan County tasked the Okanogan County Housing Coalition to work on identifying areas of need and make funding recommendations for funds derived from HB2163, the Homeless Housing Assistance Act, which allows the County to collect and use real estate recording fees for homeless housing.

Recording fees are down 23% from 2021 to 2022. In 2022 recording fees collected under HB2163 for the Okanogan County Homeless Housing Program resulted in revenue of \$309,882.14 with \$238,783 in distributions to homeless program service providers. The County also receives a share of the state's portion of sales tax through HB1406 for the Affordable Housing Fund. This fund is intended for acquiring, rehabilitation and construction housing costs, plus grants to non-profits and housing authorities. In 2022, revenue collected under HB1406 totaled \$132,882. Total revenue from Okanogan County for affordable housing and homeless housing programs, combined, were less than \$443,000 in 2022.

There is not enough money being collected to use for capital projects, but it has helped local service agencies fill funding gaps for programs. A financial analysis for the possibility of additional county and municipal funding sources, along with state and federal capital sources for housing, is needed.

The Okanogan County Housing Coalition needs to work on the 2025-2030 Homeless Housing Plan in 2023-24, and plans to finish the planning document by December 2024 when the plan is due to the Washington State Department of Commerce. That process and plan product will be much different than

the current 2019 plan which was produced in house. The Housing Coalition is posting this RFP seeking to hire a consulting firm to help expand our stakeholdering process and address complex issues of homelessness during a housing crisis which is affecting all sectors of our community.

In the past year, several community meetings in the towns of Omak and Okanogan have been held to discuss the “problems created by the homeless” whom have been accused of theft, criminalized for their living conditions on the streets, and generally frowned upon by local businesses and residents. Although law enforcement has told these business owners and residents that generally the homeless are not the ones stealing, the misinformation and stigma around homelessness is significant.

As a part of planning for the next five years, the Okanogan County Housing Coalition would like to review its mission and goals, hire staff, and establish a website to keep the community informed of its progress.

The current five goals of the Housing Coalition under the Okanogan County Homeless Housing Plan are:

1. Make homelessness rare.
2. Make homelessness brief.
3. Make homelessness one-time.
4. Continuously improve the homeless response system.
5. Expand community engagement.

As always, the goal of the Okanogan County Homeless Housing Plan is to strive to keep homelessness a rare, one-time occurrence. However, in our county with the current housing shortage, that occurrence could last up to three years.

About Okanogan County

Okanogan County is located in North Central Washington, with the Cascade Mountains to the West, Columbia River to the East, Canadian Border to the North, and to the South the nearest large metro area is the City of Wenatchee (population 35,500) in Douglas County. Okanogan County population is 42,000 with 25% of residence living below the poverty level. The County is rich in agriculture with apples and stone fruit, beef cattle, and small farms representing the largest sector of the economy followed by tourism. About 75% of the land in the County is

owned by state and federal sources, and subject to large wildfires every year which affects housing. The Colville Nation makes up another large portion of the County with about 17% of the County population represented by Natives and 25% by Hispanic members. The County is not just rural, but isolated rural. The largest community in the county is the City of Omak with under 4,900 residents. In 2021, the County collected about \$770M in sales tax revenue. The State of Washington considers Okanogan County “distressed”.

II. Sample Plan

We’ve included the City of Olympia’s [One Community Plan](#) as an example we’d like to follow. The plan includes strategies for responding to the immediate homelessness crisis, as well as long term prevention strategies; it aims to help people experiencing homelessness as well as the broader community.

We agree that to effectively address homelessness requires strong and committed regional partnerships. This will be a dynamic undertaking as we measure our progress and learn and adapt our actions based on what works.

We also acknowledge that not everyone will agree with every aspect of this plan. However, the Okanogan County Homeless Housing Community Work Group will ensure our plan reflects the voice of our community, with a balanced approach comprised of compassion and accountability.

The City of Olympia’s plan focuses on three areas, which are examples we would like to follow in our Okanogan plan:

- Focus area 1: Streamline rapid response & wrap around services.
- Focus area 2: Expand affordable housing options and homelessness prevention.
- Focus area 3: Increase public health and safety.

Additionally, we are looking for funding strategies to support the implementation of the new five-year plan.

III. Request for Proposal

The Okanogan County Housing Coalition is looking for a vendor that will be able to help with stakeholder engagement, financial analysis, and plan development of the county's five-year homeless housing plan.

The vendor will assemble stakeholder groups across the county for discussions around homelessness that will lead to a greater understanding of homelessness among the stakeholders – addressing misconceptions, building awareness, gathering ideas, and uniting the county in a common goal/plan for supporting people living without housing.

IV. Consultant Scope of Work

Vendor will assist in the design, support, and analysis phases of the Homelessness Response Plan Process. This preliminary stage of work is anticipated to run from Fall 2023 through November 2024. The vendor will perform all work tasks to be completed by November 2024.

The following outlines suggested tasks and deliverables to be produced by a consultant.

Task 1 – Mission and Goals of the Okanogan County Housing Coalition

Support the Okanogan County Housing Coalition in reviewing its Mission, Goals, Strategies and Action Steps. Create a website where the work of the Coalition in developing and implementing the Five-Year Homeless Housing Plan can be posted for community information and to raise awareness of issues around homelessness and county plans to address the housing crisis.

Deliverable: New mission statement and goals. Establish a website for the coalition's work.

Task 2 -- Project Team Planning Sessions

We anticipate holding an average of two one-hour planning team sessions per month. Planning sessions will cover community input planning and debriefs, engagement approach strategies and other topics as required to successfully move the process forward. Consultant will be responsible for meeting agendas and summaries.

Deliverable: Meeting agendas, summaries, and assignments.

Task 3 – Meeting Design Support

Consultant will review and provide structural insights for all community input engagement agendas. Considerations include venues, topic flow, desired outcomes, audience roles and rules, situational context and other factors.

Deliverable: Proposed agenda edits and/or feedback within 48 hours of each draft.

Task 4 – Community Events Observation and Input Capture

Consultant will help organize and attend all community engagement events. We anticipate up to a dozen events – at least one per community to engage stakeholders in the county-- averaging two-hours in length. Consultant role is to take detailed notes and produce summaries for future compilation and analysis. Propose to engage City staff in organizing and facilitating meetings in Oroville, Tonasket, Omak, Okanogan, Conconully, Brewster, Pateros, Twisp, Winthrop, and additionally include Colville Tribal Government in Nespelem.

Deliverable: Community input summaries.

Task 5 – Community Work Group Support and Strategy

Consultant will assist with meeting prep, attend, and present information at Community Work Group meetings. We anticipate needing at least seven two-hour meetings scheduled between January and September 2024. Consultant presentations will focus on findings from community input events.

Deliverable: Presentation(s) of findings from community input events.

Task 6 – Input Sorting and Analysis

Consultant is responsible for assembling, sorting, and analyzing all collected input. The database will serve as the central clearinghouse from which themes, options and other Community Work Group discussion threads will be assembled.

The goal will be to develop a summary table or matrix that outlines key challenges and opportunities as well as potential strategies, actions or resources that could be applied to address them.

The consultant will also reserve time to present findings and/or tool explanations to stakeholders at various levels, depending on staff needs and direction.

Deliverable: Database and analysis/discussion tools; presentation(s) as needed.

Task 7 – Financial Analysis and Resource Development

Consultant is responsible for analyzing the need for homeless and low-income housing for the county, analyzing current resources and determining needed resources, providing financial analysis to support the plan, and outlining a reasonable and achievable fund development plan including available tax revenue, federal and state grant sources (HUD, Dept of Commerce, tax credit investors, etc.), and other revenue streams to support the implementation of the five-year plan.

Deliverable: Financial analysis, fund development plan, outline current and needed resources to implement the plan.

Task 8 – Social Service System Collaboration and Wrap-Around Support

Consultant is responsible for analysis of crisis response system and social service support for people living without housing and providing recommendations for either additional services and/or better service collaboration to reduce homelessness. Barriers for homeless populations include lack of living-wage jobs, drug and alcohol addiction (no local treatment center), childhood and racial trauma, mental health issues, incarceration, navigating complex systems, discrimination, domestic abuse, generational poverty, and more.

Deliverable: Map out the services in place, identify service gaps, and make recommendations for system collaboration for crisis response and wrap-around support.

Task 9 – Written Five-Year Okanogan County Homeless Housing Plan

Completed by November 2024

Consultant is responsible for providing a written five-year plan for Homeless Housing in Okanogan County that is achievable for our communities. Sample plans include City of Olympia’s “One Plan”. The plan should include responsibilities of county governance and city municipalities, state agencies, nonprofit agencies, social service agencies, housing authorities, housing and land trusts, and other key stakeholders.

Deliverable: Easy-to-follow, achievable, written plan that can be shared with the community and serve as a guide to stakeholders for implementation.

Task 10 – Other Duties, Research and Coordination as Assigned

Given the multi-faceted nature of the project and myriad stakeholder interests, the consultant will reserve time to assist in Coalition-directed research, engagement or other assignments that advance the project.

Deliverable: As directed.

V. Supporting Documents for Background

Okanogan County Housing Needs Study, October 2022 ([download here](#))

Okanogan Homeless Housing Plan, 2019-2024 ([download here](#))

[Living Without Housing - Okanogan County Community Action Council \(occac.com\)](#)

[Local Government 5-Year Plans - Washington State Department of Commerce](#)

[State Strategic Plan, Annual Report and Audits \(wa.gov\)](#)

Sample Plan: [One Community Plan \(olympiawa.gov\)](#)

VI. Okanogan County Housing Coalition Members

[Okanogan County Community Action](#)

[Housing Authority of Okanogan County](#)

[Oroville Housing Authority](#)

[Colville Indian Housing Authority](#)

[The Support Center](#)

[Room One](#)

[FYRE](#)

[Okanogan Community Homeless Shelter](#)

[Okanogan Behavioral Health Care](#)

Questions and Answers

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Community Engagement, Facilitation, Financial Analysis, and Plan Development of the Five-Year Homeless Housing Plan

Issued by the Okanogan County Housing Coalition on 8/4/23

Q/A Updated: August 28, 2023 by Rena Shawver, renas@occac.com

1. Do I need to send a cover letter with the proposal?

Yes. Please address your cover letter to the Okanogan County Housing Coalition, c/o Rena Shawver, Okanogan County Community Action Council.

2. Should I list the staff that would be working on the project and their experience?

Yes. Any information that would help the review group determine the experience related to this request would be advisable including a list of similar projects and examples of work like that in the RFP.

3. Do we need to submit a written plan for how our firm plans to carry out the work?

Again, any documentation that will demonstrate experience, knowledge and approach to the work is recommended, including a timeline with milestones for performing the work.

4. Is there a budget for the project?

This project is being funded through public county funds. Responses to this RFP should include a specific program budget. The amount of funds available will depend on the proposal and approval by the Okanogan County Commissioners.

5. Can this work be done remotely?

Some of the work can be done remotely, like research, meetings with the planning team, and writing. However, we are looking for a consultant who can involve our community in the planning process. Community engagement work cannot be done successfully in our community remotely. People require face-to-face opportunities to connect. Plus, we're in an isolated rural area of Washington State and internet connectivity is not great here.

6. What criteria will the reviewers use to score the proposals?

Section IV. Consultant Scope of Work outlines what the reviewers will be looking for in the proposals under Task 1-10. The Okanogan County Housing Coalition is currently working on the values and final weighted score for each section.

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