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January 29, 2024

RFP Name: Monroe County Homeless Services Continuum of Care Inc

Use and Occupancy for Rapid Rehousing

1623 Spalding Court (Unit 3)

Date Issued: January 5, 2024

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Submittal Accepted Until: February 1, 2024

Florida Keys Outreach Coalition, Inc. (FKOC) and AH of Monroe County Inc. (AH) have more than 37 years of experience in providing housing options to Monroe County, Florida.

FKOC currently owns and operates eight facilities, which provide shelter programs for 174 residents; these facilities include Emergency and Transitional Shelter, Mental Health Housing, Rapid Rehousing, and Permanent Supportive Housing for individuals and families including households with special needs. Seven of these facilities are currently located at the Poinciana Special Needs Housing within the inventory of the Monroe County Homeless Services Continuum of Care (MC-CoC).

AH currently owns and operates five facilities with 127 units of permanent housing which includes a housing first facility, two PRAC Section 811 facilities for households with a disability and two low-income tax credit facilities. AH is currently in the process of building 98 units of workforce housing to open Summer of 2025 as well as working with the City of Key West (LRA), Housing Authority, and the MC-CoC for redevelopment of Poinciana Special Needs Housing.

FKOC and AH integrated its operations January 1, 2024, under AH of Monroe County Inc. and are interested, along with collaborative partner Cornerstone Alliance (KOTS), in utilizing 1623 Spaulding Court for a Rapid Rehousing Program, pursuant to the MC-CoC policies and procedures and a Housing First philosophy. This would be a continuation of a current FKOC Rapid Rehousing program currently in 1623 Spaulding Court (Unit 1).

The Rapid Rehousing Unit (the unit) is designed to accommodate individuals/families during a brief period of housing instability. This is a "low barrier" for entry unit, which means that the requirements for entry are limited or minimal. With a focus on harm reduction, participants in low-barrier rapid rehousing seek resources that eliminate obstacles that may have led to homelessness.

The overall purpose is for FKOC, AH, and Cornerstone to use its resources for both 1623 units 1 and 3 to move individuals/families facing homelessness into permanent housing within six months, then repeat the process. The goal: to create a process that moves people out of a homeless situation into a short-term Rapid Rehousing unit, in tandem with working with scattered site landlords during a housing inventory crisis in Monroe County.

Qualifying for a Rapid Rehousing unit starts with an initial assessment and a service plan, then used to identify, and empower households to participate in programs that will assist with employment and interact with Housing Case Management to find permanent housing and build tenant/landlord relationships.

The service plan identifies Housing and service options that are tailored to meet the unique needs of each individual or family. Participants can access services that they reasonably believe will help them achieve their goals, with an emphasis on engagement and problem-solving over therapeutic goals. Participants are not required to participate in services and are *not terminated* from the program for failure to do so. However, if not successfully placed with a permanent housing option within six months, the participants will be referred to FKOC's Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing Programs. Participation in services or compliance with service plans are not conditions of tenancy but are regularly reviewed and offered as an incentive to tenants with the focus on moving to permanent housing. Services are informed by a 'Housing First' philosophy that recognizes that drug and alcohol use and addiction are a part of some tenants' lives. Tenants are engaged in non-judgmental communication and are offered education regarding how to avoid risky behaviors and engage in safer practices. The goal is for participants to recognize on their own that substance use in and of itself, without other lease violations, may very well be the barrier that they need to address prior to moving onto permanent housing.

Rapid Rehousing participants work in tandem with two case managers, with an AH Housing Case Manager, from day one of entry into the unit. The service plan is a roadmap for both the participant and Case Management to work together to eliminate barriers to permanent housing within six months. Examples of barriers that are addressed within the individualized service plans are:

- Rental Subsidy Applications
 - Section 8
 - VASH
 - HOPWA
- Lack of housing inventory
 - Open to living anywhere within Monroe County or outside of Monroe County
- Landlord Tenant Relationship
 - Leases and Tenant Responsibilities
- Housing Applications and Waitlist
 - Participation and actively searching for housing via applications and waitlists

The goal is to create a working relationship between the participants and Case Management to secure permanent housing.

The second case manager is an FKOC Program Case Manager to address economic and therapeutic barriers within the individualized service plan. Examples of economic and therapeutic barriers:

- Lack of income – due to employment
- Other income sources and programs – SSI, SSD, SNAP, Food Banks, and Health services.
- Substance Abuse
- Mental health

The goal is to create ongoing relationships and referrals to programs to address economic and therapeutic barriers during the six-month period, as well as after participants have been placed in permanent housing.

Property Management and maintenance of the unit will be part of the 254 units within 14 facilities currently managed by AH Housing Services, a subsidiary of AH of Monroe County.

FKOC/AH/Cornerstone Repaid Rehousing Units at 1623 Spaulding Court is only one piece of the homeless puzzle for our community. Other FKOC/AH/Cornerstone programs and services complement the Rapid Rehousing Unit program. Information, referrals, and movement between FKOC/AH/Cornerstone programs are part of the existing loop of service plan options available for all FKOC/AH/Cornerstone clients, such as:

- **Rapid placement into permanent housing.** Placement into permanent housing is a priority either in an AH facility or scattered site facility. Upon entry into KOTS, Neece Center Emergency shelter (ES) & Poinciana Men's, Women's, and Family's transitional housing (TH) programs, households are assessed and referred to programs or other permanent housing options. Permanent housing placement is not delayed while the household works through a service/goal plan.
- **Remove barriers to entry.** Persons experiencing homelessness are not screened out of or discouraged from participating in programs because of such factors as:
 - Lack of income or employment
 - Poor credit or financial history
 - Active or history of substance abuse or completion of treatment
 - Having a criminal record, with the exception of legally mandated restrictions
 - History of domestic violence
 - Behaviors that are interpreted as indicating a lack of "housing readiness" (*people with disabilities are offered clear opportunities to request reasonable accommodations within applications and screening processes and during tenancy, and building and apartment units include special physical features that accommodate disabilities*)

The internal process of FKOC/AH/Cornerstone participants moving through individualized service plans is critical to assessing the success of each program. An AH Internal Compliance Director works with staff to evaluate the referral process and the success or failure of each program. Evaluation and updates to policy and procedures, communication, programs, facilities, and ongoing training are required.

The FKOC/AH/Cornerstone internal process complements existing policies and procedures of the MC-CoC, its members, and referral agencies with a global perspective of addressing homelessness throughout Monroe County.

Movement between existing Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing, and housing Agencies are part of assessing and identifying a household for a Rapid Rehousing unit.

Rapid Rehousing is not the solution to homelessness.

It is a tool that is part of the integrated services among community providers to address a homeless housing to be less than six months.

Movement along a continuum of providers with specific and specialized services to address barriers, housing inventory, and other housing programs are critical to ending homelessness in Monroe County.

The goal: to determine if three Agencies, working together by moving homeless participants through assessment, ES or TH housing programs and rapid rehousing to permanent housing, will demonstrably increase exit rates and reduce a repeat of homelessness.

Sincerely,
Scott Pridgen
Executive Director/CEO
AH Monroe County and Subsidiaries

Attachments
Documentation non-profit status
Board of Directors
Proof of Insurance