Suspension of Competition Acquisition Request

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1. Fully describe the product(s) and/or service(s) being requested.

   The Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) is seeking to utilize the last of one-time Innovation funds from the Mental Health Services Act to test a secondary phase to a lodging pilot project that seeks to address unhoused persons, who are not engaged in care, and are in the pre-contemplation stage of change. The initial pilot was conducted with RH Community Builders, who were selected through a request for proposal process in 2020.

   The project uses a specific model and staffing (specifically the use of 24/7 peer support personnel) in a standalone setting to try and engage persons not in care and historically resistant to care. The project's first phase which presently has run for four years, has yielded positive results in engaging the majority of the participants with the model and approach that has been tested.

   The second phase seeks to now apply the same exact model, staffing (specifically peers and certified peers), and setting to a broader population, including those referred from outreach teams, housing teams, mobile crisis, LPS conservatorship, post crisis, those with a substance use disorder (SUD), co-occurring diagnosis including some additional rehabilitation care for those with SUD on-site.

   DBH needs to build on the existing project, to test the viability of these additions to the second phase for an effective approach to supporting persons with various behavioral health issues needing care. These models are necessary to help support future requirements for the county to effectively serve this population.

2. Identify the selected vendor and contact person; include the address, phone number and e-mail address for each.

   RH Community Builders
   Katie Wilbur,LCSW
   Executive Director
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3. What is the total cost of the acquisition? If an agreement, state the total cost of the initial term and the amounts for potential renewal terms.

   The proposed project and contract are for $4,000,000 for three years. This is the same as the initial plan/agreement for the phase one of the project. The second phase will not go beyond the three years, and the one-time funding is limited to just the pilot phase.

   The breakdown per fiscal year is stated below:
   FY 25-26 - $1,340,000
   FY 26-27 - $1,330,000
   FY 27-28 - $1,330,000

4. Identify the unique qualities and/or capabilities of the service(s) and/or product(s) that qualify this as a Suspension of Competition acquisition.

   The services being sought are very specific to this research project which required approval for funding from the California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission. For the second phase to be tested and to operate, it has to build upon the current phase of the project in order to maintain consistency (same model, build upon lessons learned thus far, etc.). The current project's model was customized to the County's needs and was operated by only one provider with a specific staffing set-up.

   The project seeks to test specific models and approaches for engagement of a target population that is unhoused, or at-risk of homelessness, with a behavioral health condition, but is not engaged in care and has historically been resistant to care services. The test is designed to help identify effective engagement in a specific setting geared towards supporting those individuals. The second phase seeks to broaden the population served to also target individuals living with a substance-use disorder.

   The project has a limited timeline for use of the available funds. The proposed project has to build on the existing work and lessons learned. Any delays, changes to the setting, or changes to the provision of care can create a disruption to the current services and skew the research and evaluation of this project.

The planned second phase will continue to focus on key personnel of peers and certified peers as primary care providers in this 24/7 care setting that is seeking to support the specified population of individuals with a behavioral health challenge.

To remain consistent, the project seeks to continue testing the model in a temporary lodge setting and thus a facility conducive to this model is necessary. A facility that already meets capacity, clearance for the number of persons to be served at a time (30), with spaces for different genders, mobility needs, and care needs is also needed for consistency.

The current vendor is able to implement phase two without any delays that having a new vendor would create (ramp-up period). The current vendor has the facility necessary for the project, with the required capacity, site certification, and clearances, to continue to provide the services without delay or interruption. The current vendor also possesses the necessary space to include additional populations and specific stand-alone buildings necessary to implement additional care on-site. The Medi-Cal certified site that the current provider has and is using for this project will also result in cost savings for the County and increase sustainability.

The identified vendor has been involved with the development, and implementation of the model of operating services, and does not require training, or hiring of personnel, to implement the second phase. Based on the need to maintain the continuity of the model, it is imperative to have the providers involved in phase one be a part of phase 2, or else the data and approach on fidelity could be compromised and impact the model of care that is being sought to be used in other settings. It is imperative to determine if this model is effective to meet new state care requirements and mandate.

5. Identify from Administrative Policy #34 what circumstances constitute a Suspension of Competition.

- ☐ In an emergency when goods or services are immediately necessary for the preservation of the public health, welfare, or safety, or for the protection of County property.
- ☐ When the contract is with a federal, state, or local governmental agency.
- ☐ When the department head, with the concurrence of the Purchasing Agent, finds that the cost of preparing and administering a competitive bidding process in a particular case will equal or exceed the estimated contract amount or $5,000 whichever is more.
- ☐ When a contract provides only for payment of per diem and travel expenses and there is to be no payment for services rendered.
- ☐ When obtaining the services of expert witnesses for litigation or special counsel to assist the County.
- ☒ When in unusual or extraordinary circumstances, the Board of Supervisors or the Purchasing Agent/Purchasing Manager determines that the best interests of the County would be served by not securing competitive bids or issuing a request for proposal.

6. Explain why the unique qualities and/or capabilities described above are essential to your department.

The Department needs to increase engagement with persons who are unhoused and have behavioral health challenges. Various new legislation and mandates required expanding capacity and options to serve this specific population of persons who are unhoused and have untreated behavioral health challenges. Testing this model and learning how to best implement such care prior to the mandated changes and increase engagement required from the Department in FY 2026/2027 is critical to effective care.

To maintain continuity of the project, it is essential for the existing program to implement the second phase of the project. The fidelity of the project is more likely to be maintained by continuing the work with the current vendor. As this project has limited funding availability and limited timelines for implementation and assessment, the challenges of having a new provider (having to ramp up, having to acclimate with the project's parameters, securing the space, credentialing staff, etc) would delay the project. Also, a shift to a different/new vendor could risk the integrity of the research and evaluation of the program model and effectiveness. RH Community Builders has been involved with the program from its inception and has all the components in place (personnel, facility, training, understanding of the model and its application, as well as capacity to meet the additional aspects of the second phase).

7. Provide a comprehensive explanation of the research done to verify that the recommended vendor is the only vendor with the unique qualities and/or capabilities stated above. Include a list of all other vendors contacted, what they were asked, and their responses.

Historically, most new vendors for DBH have needed an average of 90 days to ramp-up services. Working with a new vendor for the second phase of this project would likely create a break in the existing services to persons served. Additionally, the program will need to leverage Medi-Cal billing for some of the services, as part of the cost and sustainability, Medi-Cal site certification may take up to 90 days for approval and that would impact the operational costs and thus total project costs. Third, there are not many existing providers who have facilities to house such a program as a stand-alone at that location. The setting for these services has been modeled to be a stand-alone facility (meaning there are no other services or businesses operating at the location), in order to avoid risking the fidelity of the model being tested. The county has other providers who have facilities, but those facilities currently

provide other care and would need to reduce the current care they are providing or push individuals out of care to make room for the Lodge program. A new contractor would likely need to secure a new site (to be a stand-alone), which would need new site certifications, clearances, etc. which creates additional delays that can have a negative impact on the project. There are challenges to finding such space with capacity for the number of persons to be served, and be service ready (not requiring renovations, etc).

Fresno Rescue Mission
-Does not have a site that currently can be dedicated to this model. The time needed for a new provider to secure a site, personnel, licensing/site certification, and develop the understanding of the existing model and to implement would expend limited funds and time on a time-limited project.
-Does not have experience or familiarity with the existing Lodge Model which is imperative to building on for the next phase of the research.

Povorello House
-Does not have a site that currently can be dedicated to this model. The time needed for a new provider to secure a site, personnel, licensing/site certification, and develop the understanding of the existing model and to implement would expend limited funds and time on a time-limited project.
-Does not have experience or familiarity with the existing Lodge Model which is imperative to building on for the next phase of the research.
-Is not currently up to date on usage of the county's electronic health record and billing that are key parts of the program, and thus costing the county. With limited project funding, this is not viable.

WestCare
-Does not have a site that currently can be dedicated to this model. The time needed for a new provider to secure a site, personnel, licensing/site certification, and develop the understanding of the existing model and to implement would expend limited funds and time on a time-limited project.
-Does not have experience or familiarity with the existing Lodge Model which is imperative to building on for the next phase of the research.

TURN Recovery Services
-Does not have a site that currently can be dedicated to this model. The time needed for a new provider to secure a site, personnel, licensing/site certification, and develop the understanding of the existing model and to implement would expend limited funds and time on a time-limited project.
-Does not have experience or familiarity with the existing Lodge Model which is imperative to building on for the next phase of the research.

Fresno Housing (formerly the Fresno Housing Authority)
-Does not have experience or familiarity with the existing Lodge Model which is imperative to building on for the next phase of the research. This vendor has provided housing and is experienced in housing services but does not have experience in the area of providing these types of care services directly.
-Does not have a site that currently can be dedicated to this model. The time needed for a new provider to secure a site, personnel, licensing/site certification, and develop the understanding of the existing model and to implement would expend limited funds and time on a time-limited project.

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Requested By: Title

I approve this request to suspend competition for the service(s) and/or product(s) identified herein.

sholt 1/31/2025 8:29:07 AM [⌫ Sign] Double click!
Department Head Signature

rblackburn 2/25/2025 10:51:37 AM [⌫ Sign] Double click!
Purchasing Manager Signature