



Summit County Continuum of Care

**Request for Proposal
Summit County Framework for Ending Homelessness
& Summit County CoC Strategic Plan**

Request for Proposals

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Homelessness is not a new issue in Summit County, Ohio. For more than 20 years the City of Akron (“City”) took the lead in coordinating the Continuum of Care to respond to the challenge. The Summit County Continuum of Care (“SCCoC”) is now established as a 501(c)3 with a full-time executive director and governing board. Despite this ongoing commitment to supporting individuals and families experiencing homelessness, the SCCoC has never had a holistic plan for doing so strategically. This lack of a holistic plan also extends to Summit County which is home to a diversity of communities in which the nature and scale of homelessness varies. While homelessness is present across the County, the City of Akron, as the largest metro area, often plays an outsized role in providing and supporting homelessness services. As a result, the City is overburdened; there is unmet need for those requiring support; there is a lack of consistent coordination and use of resources across agencies and government entities; and public misperception about the scope and scale of homelessness in Summit County.

To determine the best pathway forward for addressing these issues, SCCoC and the City engaged with Spirit for Change Consulting on an earlier phase of work in 2021 that involved a stakeholder survey, SWOT analysis and stakeholder interviews. Informed by the insights from that earlier phase of work, the City and SCCoC are now seeking a consultant or a team of consultants to lead the development of a framework and strategic plan to address preventing and ending homelessness in Summit County.

PROJECT DETAILS

The City of Akron, Ohio (“City”) and the Summit County Continuum of Care (“SCCoC”) is seeking a consultant or a team of consultants to lead a dynamic, inclusive process that will result in two separate, but related documents to further catalyze preventing and ending homelessness in Summit County:

- A framework for preventing and ending homelessness in Summit County that will provide guidance to a diverse set of stakeholders directly and indirectly engaged with homelessness policy and programs across Summit County.
- A strategic plan for the Summit County Continuum of Care that will provide guidance to SCCoC staff, leadership, and member agencies.

The framework is intended to be a high-level strategy that speaks to the diversity of stakeholders needed to prevent and end homelessness throughout Summit County. The resulting document should be one that identifies a clear vision and set of shared principles; can be endorsed by multiple governmental and nonprofit entities upon release; and can be used to create a “north star” for those entities as they develop or refine their individual strategic plans or programs of

work. The ideal timeframe for the framework (e.g., five-years vs. ten-years) should be determined through the engagement process.

The SCCoC strategic plan should be designed to align closely with the framework and is intended to define a three- to -five-year programmatic and operational strategy for SCCoC. The resulting strategic plan should provide clear guidance to SCCoC staff, leadership, and members by addressing the following: any needed refinements to mission and vision; staffing needs and organization structure; diversifying programmatic and operation funding sources; and building and sustaining a more diverse, engaged board and membership.

In addition, *both* documents should:

- Develop measurable goals and strategies with clear timelines and roles.
- Address how to best implement Housing First approaches across the homelessness system for all entities whether they are part of SCCoC or not.
- Utilize data and other evidence to inform recommended strategies and approaches and provide outcomes-focused metrics to track progress.
- Utilize a racial equity analysis and embed an equity lens to process and outcomes that is well-defined and actionable.
- Engage and build power with the community—including those with lived experience—to be part of the planning process and outlined solutions.
- Address and build capacity across the community and network of organizations engaged in housing and homelessness to respond to current needs, embrace nimbleness, and see opportunities for collaborative approaches in the future.
- Develop a shared vision county-wide for the framework and among SCCoC members and partners for the strategic plan.
- Account for ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and address community resiliency in the face of future health, economic and social crises.

The City and SCCoC anticipate the planning process for both documents will include a robust, shared engagement process that is centered on co-creation, rooted in lived experience, and employs creative approaches to engagement to reach diverse stakeholders.

Respondents to this solicitation will be responsible for all costs incurred in the preparation and presentation of their proposal.

QUALIFICATIONS

The City and SCCoC seek a consultant or consultant team with the following experience and qualifications:

- Experience developing strategic plans.
- Experience developing community frameworks that cross sectors, geographic boundaries, and silos.
- Experience applying racial equity analysis to all aspects of the process.
- Experience in designing strategies to prevent and end homelessness.
- Experience co-creating with diverse stakeholders.
- Experience designing and facilitating engagement processes including working with those with lived experience.

RFP PROCESS

RFP Issued	December 8, 2023
Deadline for RFP Questions	December 29, 2023
Proposals Due	February 2, 2024
Proposal Evaluation and Shortlist Notifications	February 9, 2024
Interviews Conducted	Week of February 19, 2024
Selected Firm(s) Notified	February 27, 2024
Contract Negotiations and Contract Awarded	Week of March 4, 2024
Performance Period Begins	March 11, 2024 - March 31, 2025 (negotiable)

SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

Submit proposals electronically at planning@akronohio.gov by 5 p.m. ET on February 2, 2024.

The proposal should be submitted as a single .pdf file, with the subject line: (Name of Lead Consultant Organization) Response to RFP: Akron/Summit County Homelessness Plans.

Incomplete submissions or late submissions will not be accepted.

PROPOSAL INQUIRIES AND QUESTIONS

Respondents should submit questions and/or clarifications to the Helen Tomic at City of Akron htomic@akronohio.gov or Mar-quetta Boddie at the Summit County Continuum of Care at mboddie@summitcoc.org no later than 12:00 p.m. ET on December 29, 2023. Questions must include the proposer's name, telephone number, email address, and name of the organization(s) being represented. All questions received by the deadline will be answered via email.

EVALUATION CRITERIA¹

Proposals will be evaluated by a selection committee that includes members of City of Akron staff, Summit County Continuum of Care staff and board, as well as representatives from key partners engaged in this effort. The committee will use the following criteria assess each proposal:

- Capacity to manage concurrent processes and deliver a high-quality strategic plan for SCCoC as well as the county-wide framework within the suggested timeframe.
- Demonstrated experience co-creating successful, collaborative processes with both nonprofit and government partners that develop impactful, accountable strategic plans or similar deliverables.
- Familiarity with the key issues and national trends associated with strategies for housing affordability as well as preventing and ending homelessness.

- Demonstrated understanding of the unique challenges faced by non-profits and local governments in small- and mid-sized cities in terms of available resources, housing quality and availability, demographics, governance, and operations.
- Experience with embedding the principles of equity in the strategic planning processes as well as in resulting deliverables.
- Demonstrated successful experience leading inclusive engagement processes with a range of community stakeholders including those with lived experience.
- Quality and experience of the Project Manager and key team members who will be working on the project.
- Overall design of the proposed and efficiency of proposed cost structure.

INTERVIEWS

Upon comprehensive review of proposals submitted, the [Name of Entity] will schedule interviews with select applicants to discuss the details of the proposals. The costs of interviews (including travel) are the responsibility of the applicant.²

FEE PROPOSAL AND TERM OF CONTRACT

City of Akron and The Summit County Continuum of Care looks to the proposer to present a high-quality scope of work and cost-effective fee proposal, with a maximum budget of \$100,000.

It is anticipated that the initial term of the contract shall commence March 11, 2024], and shall expire up to twelve months thereafter, [March 31, 2025]. The selected consultant(s) must remain available to the extent of any scheduling delays.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

The City and SCCoC request that submitted proposals contain the following information in the ensuing order:

1. Table of Contents
2. Letter of Interest: A letter expressing your interest or the team's interest in being considered for the project. Please include a statement regarding your availability to dedicate time, key project staff and resources to this work over the next 12 months
3. Project Understanding and Approach: A statement demonstrating your understanding of the proposed project and describing your approach to completing your proposed scope of work within the provided timeframe and budget.
4. Team Organization and Description: Please include information about the specific relevant experience for the proposed Project Manager, the Principal-in-Charge (if that person is different from the Project Manager) and all other applicable staff. A Project Manager must be

identified as the primary point of contact. If using subconsultants to complete your team, please provide a description of each of the individual firms that will be a part of the team; their role on the team and involvement in each task; and how the team will be organized.

5. Project Manager/Key Staff/Team Experience: For key team members, please provide recent examples of experience with developing similar strategic plans and successful community engagement processes. Please provide references for each example cited, including phone number and email address of contacts

6. Scope of Work and Schedule: Please provide a detailed scope of work, planned deliverables, and a task-by-task schedule.³ Deliverables must include at a minimum draft and final versions of both the framework and strategic plan, a community engagement strategy, presentations of the final plans to the public.

7. Budget: Please provide a detailed budget outlining the cost for each service, each deliverable, and any other costs related to completing the scope of work outlined in the proposal.

8. Sample Work Products: Please attach up to three (3) relevant sample plans or reports. If the plans or reports are publicly accessible online, please feel free to instead list the links to those sites.

9. References: Please provide a minimum of three (3), but no more than five (5) references. Preferably references will be for projects that are similar in type, scope and/or value of this solicitation. For each reference, include the name, organization, email address, telephone number as well as one sentence indicating which project the reference can speak to.