

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR DROUGHT RELIEF RENTAL SUBSIDIES PROGRAM

The Department of Housing and Community Development (Department) solicits a request for a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) from qualified local government agencies and/or nonprofit organizations to administer \$10 million of State rental assistance funds for the purposes of disaster relief to persons rendered Homeless or at Risk of Becoming Homeless due to Unemployment, Underemployment, or Other Economic Hardship or Losses resulting from the drought. The Rental subsidies shall provide rental assistance on behalf of individuals who are Unemployed or Underemployed because agricultural or other businesses are affected by the drought conditions, and to other persons who have suffered economic losses due to the drought conditions. Of the \$10 million, \$270,000 may be awarded at a later date to provide additional administrative funds to support HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program funded Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) drought relief efforts from the State HOME Activity Delivery Set-Aside. Any grant agreement resulting from this RFQ may be subject to amendment for this purpose.

A. Project Description

1. Pursuant to emergency legislation set forth in Chapter 3, Statutes of 2014 (SB 104), the Department has established the 2014 Drought Housing Rental Subsidies Program (Program) to provide short term rental assistance, including rent paid to landlords and utility bills paid to utility companies on behalf of persons rendered Homeless or at Risk of Becoming Homeless due to Unemployment, Underemployment, or Other Economic Hardship or Losses resulting from the state of emergency proclaimed by the Governor on January 17, 2014.
2. The rental assistance subsidy is limited to no more than 30 days of rent in arrears and up to 60 days of current and future assistance.
3. The Grantee(s) selected for this project will be required to adhere to the final Program Guidelines, which can be found at <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/fa/>, and the resulting Standard Agreement (grant agreement) to administer Program funds associated with this effort.
4. It is the intent of the State to award Program funds to as few providers as possible to provide seamless service delivery in the multi-county Drought Impacted Areas. If one provider cannot serve all designated Drought-Impacted Areas, the Department will select the appropriate number of providers so that all designated areas are served.
5. Selection of provider(s) will be based on the criteria described in this RFQ and on the Applicants' documented ability to provide the required services in the Drought Impacted Area(s).

B. Definitions

1. **“Applicant”** means any qualified local government agency or nonprofit organization that has submitted an application for funding under the 2014 Drought Housing Rental Assistance Request for Qualifications (RFQ).

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2. **“Department”** means the State of California, Department of Housing and Community Development.
3. **“Drought Impacted Areas”** means the following counties as defined by the initial designation methodology established by the California Department of Social Services: Amador, Butte, Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Lake, Lassen, Madera, Merced, Modoc, Monterey, San Benito, San Joaquin, Santa Cruz, Sierra, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo and Yuba. (*List of State designated Drought Impacted Areas is subject to change pursuant to increased effects of the drought over time*).
4. **“Eligible Household”** means a household that is Unemployed or Underemployed, or has suffered an Economic Hardship or Loss, and is Homeless or at Risk of Becoming Homeless due to the drought, and has income at or below the federal poverty level. Current federal poverty rates may be found at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/index.cfm>.
5. **“Grantee”** means one or more Applicants who receive funding pursuant to Chapter 3, Statutes of 2014 (SB 104), to distribute on behalf of drought affected persons and households.
6. **“Homeless or at Risk of Becoming Homeless”** means a household who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; has a primary nighttime residence not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; is living in a shelter; who will lose their housing (including housing they rent, or live in without paying rent, are sharing with others, and rooms in hotels or motels not paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations); or who has insufficient resources immediately available to attain housing stability.
7. **“RFQ”** is the acronym used for the Request for Qualifications. The RFQ is the document used by the Department to request a statement of qualifications from Applicants.
8. **“Other Economic Hardship or Losses”** means the household’s income, expenses, debt, or economic stability has been significantly harmed as a result of the drought.
9. **“Program”** means the Department of Housing and Community Development, 2014 Drought Rental Subsidies Program.
10. **“Qualified Local Government Agency or Non-profit Corporation”** means that the agency or corporation has at least twelve (12) months direct experience operating a rental assistance program for lower income persons or households and has at least five years of consistent and substantial funding history.
11. **“Rental Subsidies”** means rent, security deposits, and utilities (excluding telephone, cable/satellite television, and internet service).

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12. **“State HOME Activity Delivery Set-Aside”** means the funding set aside for State HOME Activity Delivery Costs.
13. **“State HOME Activity Delivery Costs”** means expenses, as defined at 24 CFR 92.206(d), up to 4.5% of the total HOME funding for Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) awarded from the State HOME Activity Delivery Set-Aside to cities and counties to provide drought-related TBRA assistance.
14. **“Unemployed or Underemployed”** means a household whose current wages and salaries have declined by 15% or more compared to calendar year 2013 due to the drought.

C. Scope of Services

The Department anticipates that the selected Grantee(s) will provide the following services to administer the Program:

1. Accept and review an eligibility intake form from Eligible Households seeking assistance. Each intake form shall provide all information necessary for the Grantee to determine eligibility per the definition of Eligible Household, as well as any requested demographic data needed for the Department to complete reports for the Governor’s Office and the Legislature that may be required. The household seeking assistance shall self-certify that all information is correct and that they will notify the Grantee of any changes.
2. Make payments to landlords and utility providers on behalf of assisted Eligible Households.
3. Maintain accurate financial and demographic records that, at a minimum, include the grant agreement with the Department; any third party contracts/sub recipient agreements; any documentation required by the Department substantiating eligibility (income and drought tie-in) of the Eligible Household; characteristics and location of the Eligible Households; compliance with special Program requirements; budget and expenditure information (including draw requests and amounts awarded to each household); and the status of the Program progress and assistance to Eligible Household. Records must detail and track all transactions by county, which relate to the grant, and shall be reported to Department on a weekly basis.
4. The Grantee shall make their records, administrative offices, and personnel, whether full-time, part-time, consultants or volunteers, available to the Department upon request. The Department may conduct visits before, during, or after disbursement of any grant funds.
5. A real-time database system that will provide the following:
 - a. Process for preventing and identifying fraud (duplicate services for households applying in separate counties/cities),
 - b. Robust weekly reporting of all Program parameters pursuant to C3 of this section.

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6. Outreach to Drought Impacted Areas, and respective populations, including those areas with a high agricultural-worker employment rate, to ensure maximum distribution of funds and Program access for affected Eligible Households. Outreach materials shall be available in languages, media, and formats designed for persons of Limited English Proficiency (LEP), including language(s) prevalent among the agricultural worker population of the Drought Impacted Areas.
7. In the event the State designates Drought Impacted Areas beyond those currently listed in this RFQ, the Department reserves the right to amend any Grantee(s) contract awarded under this RFQ to include the additional areas without releasing a subsequent RFQ, provided the Grantee(s) have capacity to provide services in the additional areas.

D. Submittal Deadline

Statements of Qualifications must be received by the Department by **5:00 p.m.**, Pacific Daylight Time, on **Friday, May 23, 2014**. They may be mailed, hand delivered or emailed to the address listed below. Statements of Qualifications may not be faxed. Please direct all questions in writing to Susan Naramore.

Department of Housing and Community Development
Division of Financial Assistance
ATTN: Susan Naramore
2020 West El Camino, Suite 500
Sacramento, CA 95833
(916)263-7494
[Email: Susan.Naramore@hcd.ca.gov](mailto:Susan.Naramore@hcd.ca.gov)

E. Submittal Requirements/Qualifications:

1. Each Application must be submitted in a format consistent with the following sections and include supporting documentation, as applicable:
2. **Letter of Interest:** Summarize the Applicant's qualifications and provide details supporting at least 12 consecutive months of direct experience relevant to administering a rental assistance program(s). A principal or officer of the Applicant authorized to execute contracts or other similar documents on the Applicant's behalf must sign the letter.
3. **Qualifications/expertise of Applicant's ability to administer the Program**
 - a. **Appropriate Staffing**
 - 1) Provide verification of consistent and substantial organizational funding history and funding source(s) over at least the last five years.
 - 2) Provide a an organizational chart and a list of key personnel to be assigned to the Scope of Services, including proposed sub-consultant(s) indicating the specific role of each, including the following information:

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- 1) The project manager responsible for Program implementation; the fiscal manager responsible for maintaining financial data; and, the Program contact responsible for reporting. Sub-consultants must be currently licensed to conduct business in the State of California. Include resumes for the Project Manager and Fiscal Manager.
- 2) Indicate number and positions of bilingual/multilingual staff including predominate language(s) spoken.

b. Description of Applicant's ability to perform the required services across the designated Drought Impacted Areas:

- 1) Describe the proposed Program implementation plan that includes the overall approach, including organization and work tasks necessary to accomplish the objectives and reach the targeted beneficiaries.
- 2) Describe proposed methods of outreach to target beneficiaries.
- 3) If it is the Applicant's intention to have any specific sub-category(ies) of the Scope of Service, as described in Section C of this RFQ, performed by sub-contractor (s), please identify the sub- contractor(s) anticipated for the sub-contract, indicate their specific role(s), and outline their experience on similar or related work.
- 4) Describe Applicant's quality control process, including but not limited to existing eligibility screening procedures and real-time database tracking systems that enable comprehensive weekly reporting.
- 5) Submit the Applicant's plans for fraud detection and mitigation.
- 6) Describe related services currently provided by the Applicant, geographic areas served, and the Applicant's ability to carry out the Program in any of the designated Drought Impacted Areas where they are not currently providing services.
- 7) Describe existing relationships in the Drought Impacted Areas with organizations or businesses that serve, house, or employ agricultural and/or low income workers.

4. Past performance and record of successful completion of similar work:

- a. Provide historical quantifiable experience and success accomplished within the last three years through similar rental assistance programs (period of time, people/communities served and program budget). Provide a list of recent references and contact information for such work.
- b. Provide evidence of all rental assistance activities including amount of funding and type of assistance (one-time payment, monthly payments, etc.), number of households and persons served per calendar quarter (one to five year history).
- c. Provide evidence of experience in working in the designated Drought Impacted Areas (as identified in 3. of this subsection) with targeted beneficiaries, including agricultural workers with Limited English Proficiency, and/or evidence of entities' ability to conduct outreach to affected communities and populations (i.e., period of time outreach conducted, methodology, success rate).

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- d. Pursuant to item 4b of this subsection, provide a historical comparison of the number of beneficiaries originally planned to be assisted versus final outcome.
 - e. Describe Applicant's experience and process in tracking and reporting demographic data such as targeted community and population served as well as data collection down to the individual and family demographic level.
 - f. Describe Applicant's compliance with program and fiscal audits, and respective results and resolutions to audit findings that have occurred in the past five years. As applicable, provide a copy of audit clearance letters that relate to audit findings and resolutions

 - g. Identify partnerships with state, local or non-profit organizations in rental assistance programs (length of partnership, name of program, program budget amount, populations served, number served and dates of service).
 - h. Note any additional information useful in demonstrating successful results on prior rental assistance projects.
- 5. Evidence of availability of staffing to begin immediately upon award of the grant agreement with the key personnel on the team to administer the Program:**
- a. Identify the specific full-time equivalents (FTEs) available upon the date of grant agreement approval (approximately 7 calendar days following Notice of Award date) for each identified Scope of Services team member, projected out 12 months from grant agreement approval date.
 - b. Identify any subcontractors the Applicant intends to work with on this Program, and describe any hiring or procurement process needed prior to the organization(s) commencing work on this program, and indicate when they will be able to commence work on the Program.
- 6. List and document any State or Federal emergency/disaster program implementation experience.**

F. Consultant Evaluation Criteria

Consultant's SOQs will be evaluated based on the criteria listed in this section. In preparing the SOQ, it is important to clearly demonstrate expertise in the areas described in this document. SOQs must demonstrate expertise and the Applicant must have available adequate quantities of experienced personnel in all of the areas described in the appropriate discipline either through in-house staff or with sub-consultants.

Applicants are encouraged to identify and clearly label in their SOQ how each criterion is being fully addressed. Evaluation of responses to this RFQ will be based only on the information provided in the SOQ package, and if applicable, interviews, and reference responses. The Department reserves the right to request additional information or documentation from the Applicant regarding its SOQ documents, personnel, or other items in order to complete the selection process.

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The following criteria, based on provisions of subsection E. of this RFQ, with a point system of relative importance, with an aggregate total of 120 points will be utilized to evaluate the qualifications of each Applicant.

Evaluation Criteria		Weighting
1a	Qualifications/expertise of Applicant's ability to administer the Program: ability to perform the required services across the designated Drought Impacted Areas	Up to 40
1b	Qualifications/expertise of Applicant's ability to administer the Program – Appropriate Staffing	Up to 30
3	Past performance and record of successful completion of similar work	Up to 20
3	Evidence of availability of staffing to begin immediately upon award of the grant agreement with the key personnel on the team to administer the Program	Up to 15
4	Applicant has administered emergency disaster program(s) and associated funding	Up to 15

G. Submission Requirements

1. Upon receipt of each SOQ, the Department will date-stamp the submittal to show the exact time and date of receipt. Upon request, the Department will provide the Applicant with an acknowledgment of receipt. All SOQs received will become the property of the Department and will not be returned.
2. Required Number of Copies: Applicants responding to this RFQ shall submit one original SOQ along with 1 copy of the SOQ either on a compact disk, thumb drive or paper format to the address indicated in Section C of this RFQ. If SOQ submission is made via email, no additional copies are required.
3. The Department reserves the right to waive as immaterial any irregularities in SOQs and/or to reject any or all submittals.

H. Selection Process

1. All responses to this RFQ will be screened for eligibility. A selection panel will rate eligible responses, according to the criteria listed above, and may conduct reference checks as part of the process. If there is insufficient information, the Department reserves the right to request additional information, and to interview the Applicant(s)

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to discuss their SOQs, if time permits. Given the urgency of conditions present, all selection decisions by the Department are final.

2. This solicitation does not obligate the Department to award a grant agreement to any respondent. And, pursuant to A.4. above, the Department reserves the right, after this RFQ process is complete, to fill any service area gaps at any time by augmenting existing provider contract(s), awarding funding to additional applicants that applied under this RFQ, or, in the interest of time, directly awarding funding to a qualified provider operating in the identified gap area(s). The Department may set-aside, as a contingency, a sum deemed appropriate to fund any service area gap(s).
3. If the Department awards funding under this RFQ, a successful Grantee shall be issued in writing a Notice of Award. The Department will develop a grant agreement, which the successful Grantee shall execute within 10-calendar days from the date of Notice of Award. Failure by the successful Grantee to execute an agreement within the stipulated 10-day period may constitute non-conformance with this RFQ, allowing the Department to unilaterally withdraw and terminate such award, which may provide cause for the Department to issue the Notice of Award to the next highest scoring applicant.

4. Selection Timeline

SOQ Deadline:	May 23, 2014
Notice of Award Issued:	May 30, 2014
Grant Agreement Executed:	June 9, 2014
Grantee must be able to provide initial disbursement on behalf of beneficiaries:	June 16, 2014