



**Proposal for RFP #8635-0-2017-LR
Community Development Division
Tenant Services in City of Madison/Dane County**

Submit application to CDDapplications@cityofmadison.com

**Deadline: 12:00 pm (noon) CST on Friday May 26, 2017
PROPOSALS RECEIVED AFTER 12:00 NOON WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Please limit your proposal and responses to the form provided. Any materials submitted in addition to this application form will not be considered in the evaluation of the proposal. *Do not attempt to unlock or alter this form.*

Applicant Organization:	Tenant Resource Center, Inc.		
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Federal EIN	39-1360105		
Legal Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Limited Liability Company <input type="checkbox"/> General Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Sole Proprietor <input type="checkbox"/> Unincorporated Association <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 501 (c) 3		

Required Proposal Narrative

1. Please provide a detailed description of your program and be sure to address the following issues in your response:
 - a) They type of services to be provided to tenants and landlords as well as outreach efforts you will make to potential clients.
 - b) Will this funding expand services, or maintain existing services?
 - c) It is a priority of the City of Madison and Dane County that services are coordinated, how do you envision working with Coordinated Entry and other homeless providers in the local Continuum of Care with this program.
 - d) Detail to what extent the agency adheres to Dane County CoC Written Standards and/or participates in the Dane County Homeless Services Consortium in relationship to this program.
 - e) How would you prioritize your clients given the overwhelming need for these services.
 - f) Describe the expected performance measures the program will achieve July 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017 and January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018.
 - g) Submit three references with the application. References should be specific to the services being offered.

STATEMENT OF NEED

Over the last 6 years, the rental landscape in Dane County has changed: Available rental housing is scarce. The laws are constantly changing. The number of renters is far above the national average and continuing to increase. Rental housing is not affordable to many people, and new housing is primarily built to meet the needs of young professionals and Epic employees. Certain rental problems have shown to disproportionately impact people of color and families with minor children.

Vacancy rates: Madison has consistently had a very low rental vacancy rate. In 2015 Prof. Revel Sims of the UW Madison Department of Urban and Regional Planning reported that almost 44% of the census tracts in Dane County have less than 0.5% vacancy, and that 47 census tracts (out of 105) have zero vacancy rates.

Law changes: Dane County and the City of Madison's ordinances to protect tenants were eroded by recent law changes. Over 4.5 years, 5 law changes (2011 Wis. Act 108, 2011 Wis. Act 143, 2013 Wis. Act 76, ATCP's 2015 CR 14-038, and 2015 Wis. Act 176) significantly impacted tenants' ability to rely on the laws to defend their basic needs. Finally, less than 1% of tenants being evicted in Dane County are represented by an attorney. According to "Evicted" author Matthew Desmond, "eviction is a cause, not a condition of poverty, that's leaving a really deep and jagged scar on the next generation." Law changes make protections nearly impenetrable.

Large renter population: Dane County has approximately 215,000 renters, about 42% of the overall population (in stark contrast to the national average of 36%). The City of Madison has the greatest population of renters (52%). In Dane County, outside of the City of Madison, renters make up approximately 33% of the non-City population.

Affordability: The National Low Income Housing Coalition's 2016 "Out of Reach" survey indicates that in Wisconsin, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a 2-bedroom apartment is \$828. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities - without paying more than 30% of income on housing - a household must earn \$33,115 annually, which translates to a statewide "housing wage" (the minimum hourly wage earned to afford a housing unit) of \$15.92/hour. In Dane County, that hourly housing wage is higher - \$18/hour. In order for someone working full-time at an (actual) minimum wage job, their rent would need to be \$377/month, or less, for their rental unit to be affordable. For SSI recipients, that number is even lower - an affordable unit is \$245 or less, approximately a third of the cost of most FMR 2-bedroom units. The 2015 "Housing Needs Assessment: Dane County and Municipalities" (written by Kurt Paulsen, Associate Professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at University of Wisconsin Madison) estimates that Dane County needs 22,356 affordable housing units right now to address gaps in housing.

Disproportionate impact: The Dane County Consolidated Plan asserts that "greater needs exists most predominately for Black/African American, Hispanic, and Asian households." In the 2010 version of Dane County's Consolidated Plan, there was a startling quote: "All of the African-American Elderly renter households had one or more housing problems compared to just 43.1% of the White, Non-Hispanic Elderly renter households." We don't see that this problem has been resolved.

According to the Dane County Housing Needs Assessment, "more than 80% of all persons-of-color in the County reside in just 3 municipalities: [the City of] Madison, Town of Madison, and Fitchburg." Further, "communities ... with the highest cost burdens for renters were the Cities of Fitchburg, Sun Prairie and Middleton, and the Town of Madison." Communities of color see higher housing costs and a higher likelihood of experiencing at least one housing problem. Discrimination is on the rise - preliminary research for Prof. Sims of the UW Madison Dept. of Urban Planning indicates that for every one unit percent increase in the number of female-headed family renter households in a neighborhood, the incidence rate ratio for eviction increases between approximately 500% to 24,000%.

Furthermore, we know from years of experience that landlords have the upper hand in the rental relationship. We find tenants tend to believe that the landlords know what they are talking about and don't question if the landlord is correct in their statement of rights and responsibilities. We often find that landlords modify their leases by telling the tenant they have to sign something, and the tenants sign it without question. They don't even think they have the right to negotiate with the landlord or tell them "no" and that they want to stick with the original terms of the agreement until the end of the lease period. When tenants have repair problems the landlord neglects, they are afraid to call the building inspector for fear of retaliation. And, when the landlord illegally withholds from a tenant's security deposit, tenants decide it's too much hassle to go to court. That is, unless they go to our

website, pick up a brochure, call us or stop by, and then we work with them to determine the best solutions for their situation.

CURRENT TENANT SERVICES PROGRAMMING

Housing problems in Dane County and the City of Madison are complex. We have multiple aspects of our housing counseling, outreach and education program designed to meet various needs. Primarily we provide the following tenant services: housing counseling (information and referral services about tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities, provided to tenants, landlords and services providers), housing search, outreach and education.

We also provide the following homeless services: mediation, eviction prevention clinic (information and financial assistance) and rapid re-housing. These often overlap with tenant services. While the lines are not always very clear, our homeless services require us to meet very specific grant guidelines based on our funding sources, meet the ever changing written standards, and participate in the Homeless Services Consortium (which takes a huge amount of time). Additionally, our homeless programs that overlap with tenant services are designed to help our clients most at risk of becoming homeless (previously homeless, in subsidized housing, large family, needing an accessible unit) and we are not funded to serve people who do not meet those guidelines - i.e. tenants who are not at risk of homelessness, but at risk of eviction.

Our Current Tenant Services (total funding = \$179,124, city and county funding = \$92,585) are funded through the Tenant Resource Center as follows:

A. HUD - Statewide Housing Counseling outside Dane County (\$20,000) - October 2016 - March 2017 with an extension to September. Serves 190 clients with cumbersome follow up and reporting requirements, and we serve thousands more clients without follow up. We provide the majority of these services that don't require follow up through volunteer hours supplemented by UW funding. Clients who need follow up are provided services through our Housing Resource Specialists.

B. UW - Housing Counseling and Outreach Services for UW Madison Students (\$60,000) - 5 year contract, currently in our 3rd year (funded July - June.) The goals are to provide office hours and email and phone availability exclusively for students. Reporting requirements are minimal and extremely informal. Our contract has different hours for fall semester (25), spring semester (20) and summer (15), however we must maintain 20 hours of office usage in order to keep our office at the Student Activity Center.

C. Dane County CDBG (approximately \$18,000) - We still don't have a contract for 2017. We have begun tracking our activities this month but don't know the exact amount of our funding or what the program measurements will be. We have applied for \$30,000 for 2018 to provide services outside the City of Madison.

D. "2017 TRC Housing Counseling Outreach and Education and Mediation" (\$92,663 - \$11,539 for ESG funded homeless mediation services = \$81,124) - Our contract is for a calendar year and has been renewed with minimal changes since 2012, with the exceptions of exhibits 2 & 3 (budget and program reports.) It is a combination of City GPR dollars and a small amount of ESG (amounts vary each year), so it is a combination of tenant services and homeless services. The TRC had always considered our contract 100% tenant services, but at some point it became funded through a homeless services ESG grant. Tenant Services include:

- i. Housing Counseling, Outreach, and Education (\$37,445 wages, \$20,000 Operating & Space)
 - Provide housing counseling to low-income tenants and landlords to prevent or solve rental housing disputes. 4,500 households
 - Provide workshops/ presentations to educate low-income rental households of housing rights and responsibilities and teach skills needed to successfully find and maintain rental housing. 24 workshops/presentations, 300 households.
- ii. Bilingual Housing Resource Specialist (\$23,579 wages)
 - Provide one-on-one housing counseling to ESL persons in Spanish or Hmoob. 150 persons.

--Provide workshops/ presentations to ESL persons in Spanish or Hmoob. 12 Workshops/Presentations, 75 households.

PATH TO MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

With improvements needed in so many areas and so many unfunded program elements, it is hard to prioritize but we have set the following priorities to achieve the following goals:

1. Hire a Program Director (\$18/hour). The program director would be primarily tasked with volunteer coordination (to leverage 40 - 80 hours of volunteer labor) and outreach coordination (to return to the robust outreach we used to have and coordinate the many outreach activities.) They will also assist with writing and editing materials, providing additional staffing to finish large projects, attendance at HSC meetings, coordinating the mediation program, grantwriting, fundraising and teaching seminars.

2. Staff restructuring/retention.

a. We have a long history of staff turn-over every two years. Staff come to the Tenant Resource Center, receive training and skills, realize there's no room for advancement and that raises will be a maximum of 3% every year, and then re-evaluate their career path and leave for better paying jobs. This puts a huge burden on us to train new staff and results in gaps in services while we go through the hiring process. These are difficult jobs, dealing with humans in crisis and the accompanying emotions, and it's hard to keep doing these jobs without burnout. This grant alone cannot solve this issue, but can help take a step towards fixing it.

b. Our Board of Directors feels strongly that we need to pay our staff a minimum of a housing wage of \$15 per hour. Many of our staff have had 2nd and even 3rd jobs, have been on BadgerCare, have needed a roommate to afford an apartment, have lived at home or are forced to live in the affordable housing programs they are helping clients apply for. This means they have colleagues in the Homeless Services Consortium that have control over their lives and that they are forced to participate in case management services that they are providing for others. At least three of our staff receive food stamps or regularly use food pantries currently. With this grant, all staff will start getting paid at least \$15/hr and there will be 3 - 6% raises for other staff who have been here for a year or longer.

c. Our wages are suffering from years of wage compression. The positions at entry level pay for the agency continue to get much larger increases than the staff with more responsibilities. We have been slowly trying to rectify this through various grant opportunities, but we there really aren't many chances to do so. We can ensure that any new staff gets paid appropriate wages, but flat funding or minimal increases don't keep pace with raises required to attract high quality staff. This grant alone cannot solve this issue, but can help take a step towards fixing it.

d. Succession plan. Our Executive Director currently gets paid \$53,731 per year. While we hope our Executive Director is here for another 10 - 15 years, that may not be realistic. Additionally, finding someone to step into her shoes at that wage rate will be very difficult given the multiple skills and legal training that is required to do a good job or it may require further changes to job duties or additional positions to have sufficient skills on staff. There are no retirement benefits for this position and TRC only pays a portion of her health insurance coverage since she got married (was full coverage prior to that). This grant alone cannot solve this issue, but can help take a step towards fixing it.

e. Grant restructuring. Losing the county funding after 17 years unraveled some of our structure, leaving us with lots of part-time people filling gaps. It is going to take some work to put the Program Director position back into grants and move some of our core services work back to this grant and return some full-time positions to our staff with benefits. This grant alone cannot solve this issue, but can help take a step towards fixing it.

3. Hire an additional Case Manager/Housing Resource Specialist (\$16/hr). We've been using some of our discretionary money from fundraising and small grants plus interns partially paid through the university to keep several part-time staff to do much of the housing counseling for people with less complex needs. The UW students just graduated and we don't have time to train new staff (takes 2 full days of classroom training, plus weeks of shadowing and being shadowed). This grant will let us put the pieces back together and hire one full time staff person with benefits. We want this person to

have a social work/case management background (formal or informal training) to pick up some of the additional requirements in this RFP.

4. We need more space! Our current space is overflowing. More than half the time, we have no rooms that are unoccupied, which prevents us from having private conversations with clients without getting creative. This fall, we will have the opportunity to rent additional space in the building, but would require several moves over the course of several months. The initial additional space will cost us an additional \$600 per month. The final space will cost us an additional \$1,000 a month. We have researched and looked at other office space, but it is at \$17 - 17.50 per square foot. Our space at the SJC is currently \$15.66 per square foot. We are researching a variety of options and because we would be the largest tenant in the building and if we leave it would significantly impact SJC the board is looking at way to incentivize us to stay in the building. We are also talking about other options which could include TRC buying the building or purchasing it with one other partner in the building, but that would likely not happen quickly, but may be a solution in a few years.

5. Solve our technology and computer issues. We need to buy some additional computers, create a stronger back up system for our network, solve our software problems and attempt to integrate our software. We will work to get as many services described as possible for free (such as in-kind donations from local businesses, etc.) but we anticipate that with our significant needs, we will exceed the technology budget of \$10,000 proposed in this grant.

6. Improve ability to finish projects that make us financially stable. Once we have our Program Director on board and trained (will take 3 - 6 months) our Executive Director can return to doing one job. It will take some time to catch up on a backlog of projects and use her 6 weeks of vacation that has been acquired. When that is completed, we hope to return to many projects that we see as income generating for our organization. We have the footage for the training videos we can sell on our website, but it needs to be edited. We have our forms and letters that can be sold to landlords that are near completion. We have looked into other ways to monetize our website, but haven't had the staff with the skills available to implement them. We will also return to doing seminars twice a year and hopefully get our Apartment Management and Tenant's Rights books done. We have had so many setbacks in the last 6 years and our work has become increasingly complex during that time, and that has made getting to these projects done near impossible without additional staffing.

During 2017, funding will be used as follows:

A. Salaries

\$18,720 Program Director salary

\$16,640 Case Manager salary

\$3,840 Translation services

\$8,418 Raises

\$11,700 Taxes and Benefits

Total = \$60,100

B. Non-Salary costs

\$10,000 computer and software upgrades, professional consulting and new programs or services to resolve technology issues

\$2400 additional rent costs Sept - Dec.

Total = \$12,400

2018 funding, if funded, will be used as follows:

A. Salaries

\$37,400 Program Director Salary (we will begin to split this with homeless services in future grant writing opportunities and charge more housing counseling and outreach services to this grant)

\$33,280 Case Manager Salary

\$20,000 Taxes and Benefits

Total = \$90,720

B. Non-salaries

Rent = \$4,280

Our goal is that with additional staff we can raise additional funds, write more grants and make more money in users fee to sustain the raises and pay for the additional rent costs.

PROPOSED PROGRAMMING:

If funded, the TRC would use this grant to both maintain and expand current services. Due to a series of funding changes, lapses, and surges, our programs are full of funding gaps. We hope to use this grant to bridge those holes, and extend our services beyond what we are currently offering. This necessary step of re-building partially lost infrastructure, along with maintenance of current services, will allow us to offer a clearer programmatic front for future tenants and landlords in Madison and Dane County.

In each of the areas below we describe the services being maintained, the areas in need of improvement and potential new services:

1. Basic Housing Counseling

A. Maintaining Services

The majority of our services and the base of everything we do is one on one housing counseling about tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities under Wis. Stat. 704, ATCP 134, fair housing and other tenant-landlord related laws. Housing counseling involves listening to a tenant's situation, identifying possible areas of the laws that the tenants need to be educated about and helping to form, with the tenant, a course of action for them to follow up on. Most of the services we provide result in an plan for the tenant to act on. Our services are deeply rooted in empowerment and self-determination. We provide information and resources for the clients to help themselves when able. We are available for additional questions in these situations at any time Monday - Friday 9am to 6pm through phone, email and walk-in services. We also have a campus office where we provide 15 - 25 hours of service per week (see website for hours that change by semester.) Basic level services are mostly provided by volunteers and part-time staff, while clients needing more in-depth assistance are served by Housing Resource Specialists (see section #2). The main topics we typically cover are Security Deposits, Repairs, Breaking a Lease and Eviction. We also cover topics like lead paint, landlord entry, bedbugs, credit reports, debt collection, small claims court procedures, discrimination, foreclosure, landlord retaliation, parking, pets and service animals, tenant property left behind, roommates, subletting and more.

B. Improved Services and Infrastructure

i. When we lost county funding we were no longer able to keep a full time Program Director. With this grant we will be able to hire a Program Director to do the following to improve our housing counseling services and infrastructure:

a) Volunteer Coordination. We have limped along and done minimal volunteer recruitment, training, scheduling, support, retention and recognition activities. There has been no volunteer training since last year because we don't have the time to coordinate and provide the classroom training and follow up supervision necessary for new volunteers. Our Executive Director was responsible for all volunteer scheduling for a period of 8 months and now the new Office Manager is able to do those duties. We have had no staff time for retention and recognition activities and have been relying on our Board President for minimal activities. Additionally, without a Program Director to split responsibilities, our Executive Director is responsible for answering all volunteer questions for the 45 hours a week the office is open and when she leaves the office, it is up to staff who are typically on the phone or with a client to assist our volunteers with answering their questions. These frequent interruptions make it difficult for her to do her other work during office hours and often things get stuck on her desk waiting for approval and it slows the work of the entire agency down. Without a volunteer coordinator to help with ensuring quality services, we were beginning to consider dropping our volunteer program and only have staff do our housing counseling because we cannot dedicate sufficient time to on-going training and support. With a Program Director to do volunteer coordination we could once again do three volunteer trainings per year (mid-winter, summer, fall), provide at least 3 volunteer re-fresher or

advanced trainings per year. By recruiting more volunteers we will be able to answer phone calls in a shorter turn-around time.

b) Timely financial and program reporting. These duties currently fall to the Executive Director and are often done after hours or on weekends when there are no staff and volunteers to interrupt. A Program Director could help ensure that reports are being completed on time and provide more timely turn around for funders requests.

c) Regular and focused program oversight to ensure compliance with the ever changing grant requirements. This is being minimally performed by the Executive Director. Things have been on auto-pilot and there is little time for detailed program assessment and improvements.

ii. Additional staff means that we have a greater chance at returning all calls within 48 hours. In the past year and a half, we were up to 400 phone calls behind at one point. When this happens, we just stop answering calls from outside the City of Madison and focus on local calls. This is a very flawed system and local callers don't get a call back if it appears they are calling from outside the county. We have many people who are calling about a City of Madison issue who have phones with area codes that make them appear to be from outside the area.

C. New Services and Infrastructure

i. Technology Upgrades

a) Our computer database frequently crashes, and is difficult to use. Because of the frustration, user compliance is low for our staff and volunteers, so they don't always enter the information for us to track how many clients we are serving. In 2016 we made 22,440 outgoing calls. A significant number of them we leave messages, but we only have 5,101 statistics for clients we talked to through walk in's and phone calls. We know we have a better connection rate for our calls than 25% and we have 5 - 20 walk-ins a day. We need a different database that is more user-friendly for staff and volunteers, affordable on an ongoing basis, where we don't have to pay the person who designed the unique database to fix it when we need changes due to changed grant requirements. We prefer a cloud based solution so we can access it from our campus office and when doing outreach. This is the minimal work we need to have done by the end of 2017. A new Program Director would be able to help manage this project and ensure it gets completed.

b) Our email statistics are not currently being reported. In 2016 we answered emails from over 3,000 individuals (some individuals required multiple replies), we got statistics back from 72 people. Those are not integrated into our database and as a result we haven't been reporting these statistics. We would like to work with the tech staff to see if there is a technology solution that will help us get a better response rate and be able to integrate the responses into the database. A Program Director would be responsible for helping to manage this project.

c) Our larger dream is to integrate our housing counseling materials (knowledge base) into our phone system and make it so our database is connected so our staff and volunteers can find the information they need to provide quality services, make phone calls and record the data we need in one program instead of three. Currently we need our computers to have double monitors to manage all the information we need to access to do our jobs. We have been consulting with Scott Resnick from Starting Block who has introduced us to Jilliana Peterson at Zendesk and they are looking at how they might assist us in reaching our goals. If we are successful in doing this, we will only need to train our volunteers on one system and we may even be able to find a way to integrate it with our HMIS data collection needs. A new Program Director would be able to help manage this project and write additional grants if that is what is required to do this additional step.

ii. Additional funding and additional staff would allow us to do more consulting for nonprofit landlords with questions. We are aware of multiple issues with nonprofit leases that should be addressed. Within the last two weeks nonprofit staff have asked us about what the laws are for property left behind for a tenant (Housing Initiatives) and to review roommate and room rental agreements (Briarpatch). With a new Case Manager/Housing Resource Specialist and a new Program Director, this will free up time for senior staff to assist nonprofits with their housing questions in a timely manner.

2. Advanced Housing Counseling (Letters, Additional Assistance, Bi-lingual in Spanish and Hmoob/Hmong)

A. Maintaining Services

Housing Resource Specialists serve clients who need additional assistance due to barriers such as low literacy/computer skills, cognitive disabilities, mental health issues, English as a second language, or lack of access to computers and other issues. Housing Resource Specialists offer housing counseling fluently in English, Spanish, and Hmong, and volunteers bring a wide range of language skills (examples from past volunteers include: Mandarin Chinese, German, French, Dutch, Italian.) When clients speak a language that we can't personally understand, we use a language line to help. We have Housing Resource Specialists help them write letters to landlords. When facing barriers to written communication, Housing Resource Specialists assist the tenant in crafting the letter and ensure it says what the client wants and assist in clarity and wording around information about rights and responsibilities. We also assist in making sure the "ask" is clear and that the expectations of the next steps are clear. Lastly, small time landlords, and non-profit landlords (ex: Housing Initiatives, Briarpatch) are crucial as solutions to affordable, accessible and flexible housing for tenants struggling to find housing. Housing Resource Specialists support these landlords through housing counseling, which is imperative to comprehensive tenant services.

B. Improved Services and Infrastructure

- i. We aren't really funded to provide (English) advanced housing counseling, we just recognize that our clients need assistance they are not getting from other agencies and we try to squeeze it into currently funded services. Over the past 6 years our work has grown increasingly complex due to both the types of clients we are seeing and the issues involved. We need to work with our new Program Director and the new database structure to find a way to capture this additional service we are providing so we can report it.
- ii. We often work with people with significant barriers and challenges. Our staff helped a client get adult diapers and clean clothes when they soiled themselves in our office (two weeks later he was hit by a car and killed near Rethke Ave.), we have called for an ambulance for extremely inebriated persons, dealt with people threatening to commit suicide (on the phone and in person), helped with active domestic violence situations, dealt with mental health crises, and just last week helped a blind client drive her U-haul van to a hotel (off-duty sheriff dropped her off at office) and drove a homeless person to the hospital to have a portion of their foot amputated. None of this is in our contracted services, but we deal with humans in crisis regardless of if they fit neatly into our funded services. We work with a lot of people who have slipped through the cracks of other services. We don't ban anyone from our services and frequently work with clients who have been banned from elsewhere or have found that other services do not fit their needs (we seek to be as culturally competent as possible with our diverse staff, and encourage using communication techniques rooted in harm reduction, trauma informed communication and motivational interviewing). Our new Case Manager can help us with these more involved cases. We will have to work with our new Program Director to develop a way to track these activities in our new database.
- iii. We let clients use our phones, charge their phones, and use our wi-fi or computers for housing search. We aren't currently funded for this either, but we find that if we are going to help people look for housing, they have to have the tools to do so and transportation is often a barrier to get to other services. With increased office space and improved computers, we should be able to allow more people to this. We will have to work with our new Program Director to incorporate tracking these services in our new database.
- ii. Many of the "easy" phone calls we used to get are solved by people obtaining information from our website. Consequently, the calls we get are typically the ones that are more complicated or from people who can't access our website or have a lower skill levels. Our phone calls are typically longer than they used to be and require more from our volunteers that do this work. Having an additional staff person to help ease the load will help us keep to our goals of returning all phone calls within a 48 hour period.

C. New Services and Infrastructure

- i. Our new Case Manager with the assistance of our Social Work Intern will work on formalizing our procedures for referrals to mainstream resources and long-term supportive services (i.e. payee, CCS,

stabilization case management). They will establish written procedures for how to connect tenants with these services to assist them in staying in their housing. Currently our system is a combination of a three ring binder in our Lead Case Manager's office and information the Executive Director and others on staff hold in their head. We will definitely have to work on staff training in this area and likely figure out how to prioritize clients that receive these additional services as it could quickly overwhelm us. With another Case Manager on staff, we will also be looking into providing services through CCS. Housing Initiatives staff have agreed to have their staff assist us with that process if we have issues, but that will not happen until 2018 or later depending upon staff capacity.

ii. The Case Manager will help tenants communicate effectively with their landlords when there are gaps in this communication. This could be done by making phone calls on behalf of tenants, helping tenants practice their own communication skills, and helping document the conversations that tenants have had in the past. This, in addition to the housing counseling we are already doing, will be able to help level the power imbalance that often exists between landlords and tenants in order to help tenants exercise their rights effectively.

iii. Our new Case Manager will work with the Eviction Clinic staff to train staff in diversion strategies. TRC will raise minimal funds to continue our diversion program that was funded in 2017 through the EOP grant. Our staff will attend any Diversion training that the community does and we will continue to work with Written Standards and the HSC to determine how best to provide diversion programming in our community.

3. Housing Search

A. Maintaining Services

Housing Resource Specialists assist potential tenants in finding housing by providing information about the rental market and tips and tricks for tenants who are frequently rejected by landlords. This housing search assistance includes using CAC's housing lists, our own internal housing lists as well as the lists we maintain about subsidized housing, section 42 housing, housing authorities, shelters, cheap hotels and other short term housing options. We do assist in filling out applications when clients don't have the skills or ability to do it on their own. We have W-2 and DVR volunteers who assist us in maintaining internal housing lists that are updated daily. Additionally, our Rapid Re-Housing Program has developed its own resources to assist our clients in finding housing. The resources are informed by the work we do in the Eviction Clinic and the landlords with whom we develop working relationships.

B. Improved Services and Infrastructure

i. With the exception of a limited number clients (Rapid Re-Housing), we aren't really funded to search for housing for clients, but it is part of the seamless services we have provided for the past 18 years. The funding ended last year but our staff are highly skilled in explaining the rental market, how to overcome barriers, how to appeal when landlords reject tenants and knowing which landlords might overlook which tenant shortcomings. Additionally, we know many landlords from our small claims court experience and can assist clients in knowing what to expect from certain landlords in terms of repairs, enforcement of rules and eviction practices. Additional staffing will allow us to continue to provide this service and allow us to build additional relationships with landlords to help get our clients into housing. Since other agencies are primarily funded to do housing search for homeless individuals, we will prioritize working with individuals who are currently housed and looking for a new homes (usually this indirectly prevents homelessness - people in precarious situations don't move unless they have to.) We will need to work with the new Program Director in the design of the new database to make sure we are accurately tracking these activities. At the Housing Help Desk we had separate tracking mechanisms for this and we'd like it to be integrated into our new system.

ii. We often find ourselves helping clients with limited skills or other barriers fill out their housing applications. We also have many clients that have the CDA and DCHA applications and wait list notifications sent to our office as back up. Some of these clients are still from when we provided services at the Housing Help Desk or are people we have worked with for years. Others are new, but not getting sufficient services elsewhere. We will continue to provide this service for non-homeless individuals. We will work with the new Program Director to develop a way to track this in our new database.

iv. We don't currently get paid to maintain the many lists we developed over the last 18 years. We had hoped other agencies would maintain those lists (so we could use them for our clients), but that did not happen. We have been forced to continue developing and maintaining our specialized housing lists, in order to best serve our clients. Without a Program Director, we don't have staff to do this, so it falls to our Housing Resource Specialists to maintain these lists as they notice needed changes, without systematic updating of the materials like we used to do. We have gotten assistance with the Subsidized and Section 42 housing list updates from the ADRC staff, but the woman who helped us recently retired. Our new Program Director will work with staff to make sure these lists get updated quarterly.

4. Written Materials

A. Maintaining Services

i. We have a Housing Counselor Training Guide which is what supports staff and volunteers use as they work with clients. We also use it for teaching seminars throughout the state. (We make about \$20,000 a year to support our services doing this.)

ii. We also have a brochure series with a corresponding set of know your rights webpages. Topics include: Apartment Safety, Carpet Cleaning, Renting with a Criminal Conviction or Arrest Record, Credit Reports, Debt Collection, Discrimination, Ending a Lease, Eviction, Foreclosure, Landlord Entry, Landlord Retaliation, Moving Out of One Apartment and into Another, Parking in the City of Madison, Pets and Service Animals, Preparing to Rent, Tenant Property/Property Left Behind, Quick & Dirty Guide to Renting in Madison, Repairs in Madison, Repairs in Wisconsin, Roommates and You, Security Deposits in Madison, Security Deposits in Wisconsin & Subletting. Prior to the onslaught of law changes, all of these materials were also translated into Spanish.

iii. We (theoretically) have the following sample forms available (most are aimed at landlords, but we find that better landlord communication leads to better tenant housing stability): Leases, 5-Day Cure or Quit Notice, 14-Day Termination Notice, 30-Day Cure or Quit Notice, 60-Day Nonrenewal Notice, Application for Co-Signer, Application for Residential Tenancy, Application Standards Letter, Check-In Form, Check-Out Form, Credit Check Notification, Landlord Entry Notice, Landlord Reference Questions, Lead-Based Paint Disclosure, Letter for Acceptance of Rental Application, Nonrenewal of Month-to-Month Tenancy, Not Sufficient Funds Letter, Rejection of Rental Application, Renewal of Lease, Rent Payment Agreement, Rental Application Checklist, Repair Request, Roommate Agreement, Security Deposit Deductions, Security Deposit Payment Agreement, Smoke Detector Notice, Sublet Agreement, Termination of Tenancy by Mutual Agreement.

iv. We (theoretically) have the following sample letters available (most are aimed at tenants, because the more they are able to show a paper trail, the more likely they are to be successful in litigating their rights): Basic Letter, Basic Rental Concern, Breaking a Lease, Explanation of Credit Score to Prospective Landlords, Explanation of Criminal History to Prospective Landlords, Explanation of Past Landlord Reference to Prospective Landlords, Explanation of Money Owed to a Previous Landlord to Prospective Landlords, Responding to a Breach of Lease Eviction Notice, Responding to a Non-payment of Rent Eviction Notice, Disagreeing with an Incorrect Eviction Notice, Heat is Not On, Lease Violation (from a landlord, before an eviction notice), Contesting Nonrenewal Due to Discrimination, Security Deposit Return Dispute.

B. Improved Services and Infrastructure

i. None of this is explicitly paid for with any of our on-going grants. These are all materials we developed over the years to assist our clients and volunteers. We pride ourselves in having information available in many formats for our clients to assist them to advocate for themselves. With a new Program Director, we will be better able to keep these materials updated, make continuous improvements and develop new materials as needed.

ii. Law changes since 2011 have exhausted us. Every time the laws change, we have to spend staff time tracking the changes as they go through the legislature, provide analysis of what the changes mean, retrain our staff and volunteers, review and rewrite all our written materials and website, and re-educate the community. There were substantial changes to the laws with 2011 Wis. Act 108 (effective December 21, 2011), 2011 Wis. Act 143 (effective March 31, 2012), 2013 Wis. Act 76 (effective March 1, 2014), ATCP 134 changes (effective November 1, 2015) and 2015 Wis. Act 176 (effective March 2, 2016). The effective dates on the laws are incredibly complicated as many of them go into effect with

specific rental events (when the lease is signed, when the eviction notice is issued, etc.) Our summary of the changes is now over 15 pages long. As time goes by, past preempted/changed laws impact fewer and fewer tenants, but a tenant with a security deposit return issue could be impacted by several of these past laws depending upon when a lease was signed, how it was renewed and when the security deposit was given to the landlord. Plus, we fully anticipate that we will continue to see more law changes. A Program Director is instrumental to surviving these many changes as they help with the written updates as well training.

iii. We don't have money to pay graphic designers, editors, professional printers etc, so we produce and publish all our materials in house. Without a Program Director, the Executive Director has been doing this work with part-time staff, and much of the work has gotten bottlenecked on the Executive Director's desk for final editing and approval. Editing in the office, with the constant interruptions from staff and volunteers is nearly impossible and has to be done outside of office hours (M - F 9 - 6) A Program Director will take the pressure off the Executive Director to answer all the questions and help clear the large backlog of materials waiting for approval.

iv. Because we produce these materials in so many different formats, we believe there is a technology solution that will allow us to simultaneously update our written materials in the various formats. However, we need funding to find the correct solution and pay for the software upgrades we will need. The Program Director will help us explore this when we are working on our other technology issues.

v. In the past, we produced an Apartment Management book and a Tenant's Rights in Wisconsin book which we sold and made thousands of dollars a year which supported our services, but we don't have the staff to keep up with all the law changes and additional editing required to produce these guides. After we are caught up on all the other work that hasn't gotten done over the past year and a half, we hope to get to re-write these other books. We would hope to complete the Apartment Management in Wisconsin book by the end of 2019 and Tenant's Rights in Wisconsin by 2020. These books will help us to raise funds to further support our organization. We hope to be able to sell these items on-line as well as in print.

vi. Some, but not all of our brochure series have been translated to Spanish. We need to complete this task. Our Bi-lingual Housing Resource Specialist who is leaving has done translation and will work for us hourly in 2017 to finish that project.

vii. There is some work to be done on completing our sample forms and sample letters. A Program Director will be able to assist in this project and ensure that it gets finished at the end of 2017.

C. New Services and Infrastructure

i. Briarpatch and the Madison School District asked us to develop an informational brochure series for youth. We never had time to get to this project and support this vulnerable population. We are hopeful that if we can get caught up, and the laws don't change in the interim, we could get this partially done in 2018.

5. Website & Social Media Presence

A. Maintaining Services

i. We maintain a website that contains (or should contain if we had the staff to maintain it), all our brochures, housing lists, law change guides, service information, grievance policies, forms and sample letters, and information about our events. We have it google translated in Spanish and Hmong. It also contains a blog to which, until we lost county funding and our Program Director, we had been posting weekly content. Our blogger had to switch duties to fill in some of the gaps. In 2016 we had over 640,000 visitors (over 80,000 of whom were from Dane County) and over a million page views. We also have plans to use our website to sell form packets to landlords and provide webinars and video trainings.

ii. Our social media presence consists of a two facebook pages, a twitter account and an instagram account. We also participate in the Big Share fundraising event and have used crowd source funding to assist our clients in paying rent. Our website is linked to facebook and twitter, and could be a very powerful tool for us if we had the time and training to use it appropriately.

B. Improved Services and Infrastructure

i. Again, technically, we aren't explicitly required by any of our grants to provide these services. Clearly, technology has moved much faster than our grant funding and it is an expectation of our

customers to have access our services via social media. Our website is very well used. As a result, our clients are better informed when they call, but the calls we get are more complicated. A Program Director will be able to work with our Office Manager to make timely and relevant updates to our website.

ii. Our part-time blog and social media staff member has been pulled into more critical duties in the absence of a Program Director. Neglecting this non-fundraising content has impacted our fundraising success, since our voice is missing in the online community. With a Program Director, our Program Assistant can return to maintaining our social media and blogging weekly. These services are critical not only to our clients, but also to our volunteers who use these blog posts regularly while housing counseling.

iii. We have developed and filmed a seminar, to be made available for sale online. This would support our agency, and free up staff who otherwise cross the state giving in-person seminars to landlords and service providers statewide. Unfortunately, the project is stalled with our Executive Director who is using her personal equipment, skills and time to film and edit. A Program Director and additional staff member should free up our Executive Director's time to finish this project.

C. New Services and Infrastructure

i. Our Executive Director has a much bigger following on social media than the TRC and while she can continue to bolster the TRC's social media presence, we need to find ways to convert some of her supporters to TRC supporters and have the TRC social media be the primary means of communication to supporters instead of the the Executive Director's older more established personal accounts. Our Program Assistant has been working on strategies to make this happen and with a Program Director, she can return to her regularly assigned duties.

6. Presentations & Outreach

A. Maintaining Services

i. We currently can offer presentations in English, Spanish and Hmong/Hmoob. Examples of our recent presentations in English include: Senior housing complexes, high school classes, UW dorms, TEP trainings, MUM housing fairs and others. In the past we helped teach YWCAs Second Chance Project, had regular sessions at Salvation Army and were requested to do regular presentations at Briarpatch. Our current goal is to do 24 per year and serve 300 household through these presentations.

ii. We typically do tabling at the following events: WORT block party, Marquette Waterfront Festival, Juneteenth, Le Fete de Marquette, Atwoodfest, Schenk's Corners, Orton Park Festival, Willy St. Fair, Labor Fest, Africa Fest, School of Social Work Resource Fair and MUM Resource Fairs. In the past we also went to Triangle Ethnic Fest, Fiesta Hispana and other events as requested.

iii. Our prior contracts required us to do press releases, public service announcements and articles for neighborhood newsletters. At some point those got dropped from our contracts but we tried to keep up with 12 PSAs and 12 press releases that result in press coverage per year and considered our blogging to replace the newsletters. In 2016 we didn't have the staff needed to do these things. Our most important time for PSAs are around August 15th (when the leases change over), we didn't have time or staff to reach out to our usual media contacts (including morning news shows, print media, video interviews and WORT morning and afternoon talk shows). Typically the Program Director partnered with the Executive Director to make sure these things happened and did some of the media interviews.

iv. Our Hmong Outreach is done by our Hmong Bilingual Housing Resource Specialist. Twice a month she has office hours at Kajsiab Housing and Bayview. She also does brief presentations each month.

v. Our Spanish Outreach is suffering from consistent staffing, although we have no problem getting Spanish speaking clients as they are the majority of our bilingual housing counseling clients and 4% of the total housing counseling we do. We have a one Housing Resource Specialist, a Program Assistant, a Case Manager and a part-time Housing Counselor on staff all speak Spanish. While we know we need to increase our exposure in this area beyond attending the monthly LaSup meetings, and would do so with increased staff levels that will free up time to provide these additional services.

B. Improved Services and Infrastructure

i. Due to county funding cuts, clients are confused about who we can serve. There has been a drop in referrals and significant confusion among service providers. For housing counseling services about tenant rights and responsibilities, there is no other agency that has the depth and breadth of knowledge, and understanding of tenant-landlord law as the Tenant Resource Center. We make referrals to Legal Action of Wisconsin (eviction for people with subsidized housing or 5-day no-cure criminal evictions, limited money case referrals through their volunteer lawyers project), the Fair Housing Center or EOC (discrimination), the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (violations of ATCP 134), and private attorneys, but their services are all specialized and different. Hopefully the confusion will change when we get our County CDBG contract signed and can again publicize our services county-wide, but we expect the learning curve to be slow and it will take a significant amount of outreach to areas outside the city to restore these services. Our Program Director as well as increased staffing for Housing Resource Specialists will help free up the Executive Director to get the word out.

ii. We need someone to coordinate our outreach activities. Without a Program Director, this falls to the Executive Director with the help of the Office Manager to coordinate so we have been doing the bare minimum. We would like very much to return to a robust outreach program that we once had and do more outreach into neighborhoods. In 2016 we did not have enough staff to do the tabling and had to skip some events or cut our tabling shifts short. Already in 2017 the Executive Director had to take shifts to cover events. Our goal is to get outside the City of Madison and do additional tabling in other Dane County communities. While we included this in our 2017 CDBG grant, we only got half the money we applied for and we don't have program requirements yet, so we don't know if they will be included in that grant. A Program Director will be able to help coordinate all these tabling events, ensure staff coverage, and reach out to find out what other events (particularly in low income neighborhoods we could table at) We used to table at Allied and Darbo and we understand there is a new event at Elver Park. The Program Director will look into these and other events.

iii. Tabling fees are getting expensive and we've noticed less and less non-profits tabling events. Additional funding and a Program Director who helps increase our other funding will help us cover the fees.

iv. In 2016 we did ZERO press releases and public service announcements. We just didn't have the staff to pull this off, particularly in August of last year.

v. We are still looking for a northside and southside Hmong Outreach location. Our staff have been working with Hmong staff at other agencies to try to figure out how best to do this. With more staff this will allow more time for those efforts.

vi. We need an outreach plan for Spanish-speaking clients. We are currently hiring for this position as well as hoping to hire a Case Manager and Program Director. We are desperately hoping we can find new staff who further increase the diversity of our office and who speak Spanish for at least one of the three positions. We have been working with the community to find someone who is latinx to be our Bilingual Housing Resource Specialist to provide our housing counseling and outreach services to the latinx community.

vii. In the past, we offered seminars in cities statewide to support landlords and service providers (twice a year, for at least 10 seminars total). These seminars impact the narrative of tenant-landlord law statewide, bolster our funding and are only possible when we have enough staff to cover other basic services. In 2016 we only did one round of seminars and we currently don't have plans to do them in 2017. We need to decide in the next two months if we can do this while training the new staff and enhancing our current programs. These seminars require us to drive to a city, set up all the registration and materials, organize coffee and snacks, teach for 8 hours, pack up and drive back to Madison, usually resulting in a 14+hour day. We need two staff people to do the seminars, and more to prepare all the materials - both in terms of updates and preparing the seminar materials. New staffing will free up the Office Manager to do the logistical work instead of working with the Executive Director to do the Program Director's job, as well as allow for an additional person to teach the seminars with the Executive Director while ensuring someone remains in the office to answer questions of the volunteers and remaining staff.

C. New Services and Infrastructure

i. If funded under this grant, twice per year, we would offer a training to the Homeless Services Consortium. One training would be more general and the second would be targeted to housing providers. We would charge a fee if we included gave away the Housing Counselor Training Guide as part of the materials. We would also like to ask for assistance from the Coordinated Entry, Outreach/Inreach Committee or the Consortium staff to assist in finding a room and publicising these services.

ii. We'd like to explore being included in the Neighborhood Resource Teams when they are dealing with tenant landlord issues. We see that they do a great job of including the landlords and police in dealing with neighborhood issues, but no one is there to advocate for the tenants and make sure the practices they employ are actually legal. We struggle with the police department encouraging landlords to do things that are illegal and the landlords end up with the consequences once the case reaches court. We believe that if we are involved in early conversations, we can help to ensure that both the police and the landlords understand the potential consequences of their actions. Over the years we have seen several models for these teams and each one varies and we can't get fully involved in 9 more groups, so we might have to limit our full participation in the nine teams. Our Executive Director and Program Director would reach out to the lead staff for each of these teams and explore the possibilities of being included and perhaps even do some trainings for these groups. We hope to be persuasive in convincing them that we can be an asset.

7. Homeless Services Closely Related to Tenant Service

A. Current Services

Other Contracts for Homeless Services (\$170,119, \$112,147 for staffing and \$57,972 for client funding in 2017 if 2017-2018 ETH funding recommendations are approved) Include:

i. "2017 TRC Housing Counseling Outreach and Education and Mediation" has been renewed with minimal changes since 2012. It is a combination of City GPR dollars and ESG (amounts vary each year) so it is a combination of tenant services and homeless services. Homeless Services include: Some Mediation Services (\$9,539 wages, 2,000 Operating - 2016 was 100% City ESG funds, and I believe 2017 is as well but it's difficult to tell from the new reports.

--Tenants who avoided eviction as result of housing mediation at 6 month mark. Goal 70%. We count "WISP" (or HMIS) and non-WISP mediations during this follow up.

--Tenants participating in housing mediation who will not enter shelter as evidenced through WISP for 12 months following mediation. 70% We only count WISP (City ESG funded and ETH funded) mediations for this follow up.

--We do report mediations that do not meet the requirements for ESG funded mediations but they are for information only. These mediations are ones for which we couldn't get the client to fill out all the information that we need for WISP or that had income that was too high. We no longer have a requirement for the number of mediations we have to do. Previously we were required to do 70 City ESG, 70 ETH and 140 non-WISP mediations. However, there has been a 20% drop in the rate of evictions filed in small claims court and therefore we have had less mediations.

ii. 2016-2017 ETH Funds \$115,262 in 2016-2017, \$144,938 recommended in 2017-2018)

--Eviction Prevention Clinic - \$27,662, with \$12,007 for eviction prevention funding and \$15,655 for staffing in 2016-2017. Recommended for \$63,500 with \$33,500 for eviction prevention funding and \$30,000 for staffing in 2017-2018.

--Rapid Rehousing - \$70,000, with \$35,000 for rental payments and \$35,000 for staffing in 2016-2017. Recommended for an additional \$438 in 2017-2018.

--Outreach - \$6,600 in 2016-2017. No funding in 2017-2018.

--Mediation - \$11,000 for staffing in 2016-2017 and recommended again for 2017-2018.

iii. 2016 Bilingual Housing Resource Specialist (\$18,480) - this provides services for people who are at-risk of homelessness.

iv. 2017 Emerging Opportunities Program (\$10,000 total, \$8,000 for staffing and \$2,000 for client funds) We are meeting the day before this grant is due to discuss contract requirements. We are working closely with Salvation Army who will be serving families and have discussed assisting in spending their diversion funds since they were not awarded staff funding needed to administer their \$10,000 in client funds.

B. Improved Services and Infrastructure

In order to truly provide the services that our clients need, we must provide supportive (non- “tenant services”) services seamlessly with our tenant services. Our clients are don't come in neatly wrapped packages and their needs vary from client to client and day to day. We assist the client before worrying about which grant will fund them (with the exception of financial assistance and Rapid Re-Housing). Our staff are trained to greet the person, find out what they need, and see how we can assist. We try not to turn anyone away because the grant funded person is unavailable. For instance, we don't send a Spanish speaking person away because our Bilingual Housing Resource Specialist is in our campus office, we have one of our other staff assist the client. This level of service and client-first mentality has resulted in unfunded services over the years. We will use our 13 column timesheet to continue to track how much time each staff person spends on each grant and coordinate with our CPA to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all of our funding sources. It will take some time to spread the funding for each of the staff over the various grants, but we find that providing services this way this leads to our staff being cross-trained, more satisfied in their jobs, it allows us to be more flexible with staff needs outside of the workplace and it leads to greater stability for our organization.

C. New Services and Infrastructure

In order to provide the full spectrum of services that we hope to provide, we will need to:

- i. Continue to provide non-WISP mediation services for those who are only at risk of eviction, not just at risk of homelessness.
- ii. Continue with the diversion skills we learn through the EOP grant. We can fundraise \$2,000 a year to continue to provide these services and will continue to work with the Salvation Army on evaluating our pilot project.
- iii. With more staff, we can become more integrated into the Homeless Services Consortium and relieve the time burden of many meetings from the Executive Director.
- iv. We will train both the new Case Manager and the Program Director in HMIS.
- v. Our Case Managers will be busy in Small Claims Court, but our Program Director will attend Homeless Services Consortium General Membership Meetings at least three times a year and attend when the Executive Director cannot attend.

COORDINATION WITH COORDINATED ENTRY

A. Current

- i. TRC Tenant Services - It's unclear to us how Tenant Services fit into Coordinated Entry at this time. The system is designed to serve homeless persons, which is only about 1% of the population of non-homeowners. Specifically, the system is focused on getting chronically homeless and veteran people into Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Re-Housing, so the system is focused on roughly 300 - 500 households. Those who do not qualify for Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Re-housing currently are unable to receive services through the coordinated entry system. Tenant Services are to serve the 52% renter households in the City of Madison and 42% of renter households in Dane County and not be limited to the few hundred households.
- ii. TRC Homelessness Prevention Services (Not Tenant Services) - At this time, even our Homelessness Prevention (Eviction Clinic, Eviction Funds and Mediation and soon follow up case manager) and Diversion programs are not currently part of the referral hotline. And honestly, we don't feel that it makes sense to have our clients get a recording leading to a phone tree that then transfers calls to us, at which point they enter our phone tree, leave a message and wait for a call back. We would be much more interested in a warm hand-off directly to a staff person.

Even our Rapid Re-Housing Program for singles is not currently part of the regular discussions at the Housing Placement Group. We have found that the singles Housing Locator was unresponsive and did not assist in helping us find housing for our clients. We are left on our own to do the outreach (often with the help of Will from Porchlight or Mary from Tellurian) to find our clients, provide for basic needs (with the help of Friends of the State St. Family and Stone Soup), provide the housing locator services (with the help of our W-2 and DVR volunteers), assist in moving in and furnishing apartments (again with the help of Stone Soup and Friends of the State St. Family) and do case management for our clients. Our programs are not integrated into the coordinated system.

As part of Homeless Services/Not Tenant Services we participate in the Coordinated Entry system in the following ways:

1. VI-SPDAT - We use the VI-SPDAT assessment with clients we know are currently homeless and do not have an assessment in HMIS with a referral to the priority list.
2. Outreach meetings - Our Executive Director and Rapid Re-housing case manager currently attend these meetings. We will attend until we are no longer funded for outreach, then our Executive Director may volunteer to continue attending when there is time. We are very hopeful about Sankofa being hired and hope that our presence to advocate for our (mostly unfunded) clients becomes unnecessary.
3. Housing Placement Group - Our Executive Director and/or our Rapid Re-housing Case Manager regularly attend these meetings. Our clients are typically not discussed at these meetings but we know many of the people being discussed and they often are clients we see but don't fit neatly into the funding categories we have.
4. Coordinated Entry Committee - Our Executive Director is on the Coordinated Entry System Committee and has been attending since they started meeting again. She is working on Written Standards as well, to re-shape the coordinated entry process by the 2018 deadline set by HUD. Our Executive Director was also part of the leadership team that was trained in Washington DC to move our community towards reaching functional zero for veteran and chronic homelessness. As a follow up she has been watching many webinars and reading resources available to continue to learn about improvements that can be made to our Coordinated Entry program.

B. Proposed

- i. Tenant Services - Because of our homeless services contracts we will remain involved at the Board level as well as committee level to continue working on changes to the Coordinated Entry program and if there is a place where tenant services fit into that system, we are happy to work with the group if it makes sense.
- ii. Homeless Services - there are no homeless services proposed in this grant.

C. Challenges

- i. Tenant Services - We are happy to receive any housing counseling referrals from Coordinated Entry staff if we can avoid clients getting lost in the combination of our two phone trees.

We are also happy to refer people to Coordinated Entry. Our general policy is that we don't turn anyone away and we don't complicate things for our clients by referring them to another agency if we can help them without additional transportation, time or other complications for our clients. The big question for us is, what tenant services referrals would be appropriate? We have been told by funders that the Housing Resource Desk is qualified to do everything we do because they took our training. We wholeheartedly disagree and we think they do, too. We often find (with recent noticeable increases), that their staff refer clients to us who, according to the funders, they should be helping. We don't want to send our clients running around town unnecessarily or make them call another phone line that no one answers and they have to wait for another phone call back.

Practically speaking, and funding issues aside, it would seem that minimally it would be appropriate for CAC to refer the following cases to us: anyone at-risk of eviction with questions about their rights or responsibilities or the small claims court process; complex or less common questions about tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities.

Honestly, we feel we have gotten mixed messages from funders and need guidance in this area of tenant services and are willing to continue to work on issues. We find that the services CAC say they provide are not what we see from our clients who still have needs when they come to our office. It would seem it would be appropriate for CAC to refer all currently housed tenants for housing counseling to our offices if they have questions about their rights and responsibilities.

A more complex issue is that of housing search. While homeless people need housing search assistance, so do tenants. CAC currently uses many of our materials to assist their clients. The housing lists they produce are often near useless as the listing are old and unavailable, and our

clients don't like to use the list because they get yelled at by landlords who filled their vacancies weeks ago. Consequently, we have our own housing list that is developed through the use of W-2 and DVR workers when they are available. We don't put any paid staff time into the listings, but we often find they are more useful to actually find available housing units. Also, because we are at small claims court we know which landlords are flexible and about which criteria those landlords are willing to be flexible. We no longer create a flexible landlord listing because landlords were overwhelmed with requests and had no vacancies, but when they have openings we can appropriately direct our clients to them. At least two other agencies are handing out lists and landlords frequently complain to us, assuming those are our listings. Also, because we were unsuccessful with the Housing Locator, we have our own database of landlords and their screening criteria that our staff use to help clients find housing. We believe our strategies are more effective than those currently being used by CAC and continue them (unfunded) in order for our clients to have the best chance at being successful in housing. We would much prefer CAC keep their list current. And, prior to losing our contract, we were going to start doing the list twice a week because with Craigslist, apartments go quickly and we find weekly lists are not sufficient. Apartments often get rented within a few days.

ii. Homeless Services - There are also many challenges with homeless services and we will continue to try to address those through the Homeless Services Consortium.

COORDINATION WITH CONTINUUM OF CARE

A. Tenant Services - We are aware that the Dane County Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness currently includes language as follows that could pertain to TRC tenant services:

Objective 1.1: Identify barriers and improve access to tenant services

1.1.1 Conduct a focus group/survey of diverse people (race, age, gender, family/single, LGBT, etc.) with lived experience of homelessness to identify barriers to tenant services and recommend ways to improve access to these services

Responsible Partners: Community Plan Oversight Committee, Continuum of Care Coordinator, Tenant Resource Center, Legal Action of Wisconsin

Benchmarks: December 2016 – Tenant Services Access Focus Group/Survey

Target Year: 2016

1.1.2 Evaluate how prevention dollars are being spent and develop ways to ensure that the funds are reaching those with the most need

Responsible Partners: Performance & Peer Review Committee, all HSC member organizations, United Way (FEMA)

Benchmarks: N/A

Target Year: 2016

1.1.5 Establish consensus eviction protocols and decrease the number of evictions by non-profit, affordable and subsidized housing by 20% annually

Responsible Partners: Non-profit housing providers, Community Development Authority, Dane County Housing Authority, Legal Action of Wisconsin

Benchmarks: December 2016 – Establish consensus eviction protocols

Target Year: ONGOING

1.1.6 Train case managers and member organizations about eviction prevention strategies, tenant laws, legal remedies for eviction notices, and educate about fair housing and reasonable accommodation laws

Responsible Partners: Tenant Resource Center, Fair Housing Council, Legal Action of Wisconsin

Benchmarks: Two (2) HSC and/or community education opportunities annually

Target Year: ONGOING

We see our names assigned and will help accordingly, but for some of this, we would need assistance or additional funding.

1. We don't have the expertise to conduct focus groups and I'm not sure how we could participate in getting clients to the focus groups. We can aid in advertising, but our clients are often in the midst of housing trauma and not interested in participating in these types of exercises. We have not been successful in getting clients to participate in additional activities beyond solving their housing problems.
2. We are participating in the Written Standards Committee meetings that are evaluating of the use of prevention dollars. We provided data on our clients, aided in developing the assessment tool and intend to fill out the assessment tool for evaluation.
3. We intend to be involved in helping with eviction protocols for housing providers and talking about how to reduce evictions.
4. We have no issues providing staff for training, but would need assistance setting a date, time, and place; organizing materials (depending upon how comprehensive the training is), and marketing the training opportunities. It costs us \$35 to produce our full housing counselor training guide and would like assistance printing those books if they are needed. We also charge \$150 per person (\$125/person if an agency sends 3 or more attendees) to our seminars, which caters to landlords and service providers. We would be hesitant to lose that income by developing our own, free, competing training opportunity for local service providers.

We would do two trainings per year for the Homeless Services Consortium. These are not the same as our complete seminars - we see them being 2 - 4 hours in length, and would create one for non-profit housing providers and one for service providers in the rest of the consortium. We often find ourselves to be the "bad guy" when we are advocating for a client and informing Permanent Supportive Housing Programs and Rapid Re-Housing Programs about tenant-landlord laws. We find that many programs have illegal eviction practices and are extremely reluctant to change their procedures. We feel that a training, in which we can discuss issues without a client in mind, will be much more productive and help preserve inter-agency relationships.

B. Homeless Services (Not Tenant Services)

We currently participate in the PIT count. Our Board President and Lead Case Manager participated in the last count and our Case Manager attended meetings getting ready for the count. Our Board President has served as a lead in the downtown area for a couple of years now.

Our Executive Director is one of the few Executive Directors who regularly attends the Homeless Services Consortium General Membership Meetings. Our Lead Case Manager also attends when she is not needed for coverage of office duties, Bubbles or Small Claims Court. Tuesdays are a challenge for TRC to attend meetings due to the services we provide specifically on Tuesdays.

Shenise Morgan, one of our Housing Resource Specialists serves on the Board of Directors of the Consortium.

Our Executive Director has helped to score the CoC Applications for the past two years and will do so again this year if the Tenant Resource Center does not apply for funding.

Finally, TRC Staff regularly attends the following committee meetings:

- Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness Oversight Committee - Executive Director
- Application Committee - Executive Director
- Coordinated Entry - Executive Director
- Performance Review - Executive Director
- Legislative Committee - Executive Director (serves as the de facto chair)
- Data Committee (currently suspended) - Executive Director
- Nominating and Governance Committee - Executive Director

Most recently our Executive Director went to Washington D.C. and participated in the Built for Zero training with a core leadership group of leaders in the consortium (Sarah Lim, Linette Rhodes, Casey Becker, Heather Campbell). This required advanced preparation, follow up conference calls, meetings

and webinars. She also plans to attend the follow up conference in Chicago and will stay engaged in helping to end veteran and chronic homelessness.

We expect to continue to participate in the Homeless Services Consortium meetings at the same level of participation. However, we may be able to shift some of these responsibilities of the Executive Director to the Program Director and other staff we are able to hire as part of the ETH funding cycle. Our goal is to have each staff member providing homeless services as a major portion of their job to participate in a meeting or two and lighten the load and create greater understanding of the homeless services system and goals.

COORDINATION OUTSIDE OF CONTINUUM OF CARE AND COORDINATED ENTRY

In addition to coordination within the Homeless Services providers, the Tenant Resource Center regularly collaborates for Tenant Services with the following groups and organizations:

- Legal Action of Wisconsin
- Fair Housing Center
- Dane County Bar Association & individual Private Attorneys
- Dane County Law Library
- Dane County Court Commissioners
- Landlords
- Schools
- Neighborhood Groups
- City of Madison Building Inspection
- Dane County Housing Authority
- Law School

We have a list of agencies we regularly refer to, in 2016 these were the top referrals we made: Landlords (typically one of the first things we ask if the tenant talked to their landlord and we recommend to 20% of the callers that they talk to their landlord), the Building Inspector has by far the largest amount of referrals after landlord. Legal services (private attorneys, State Bar, Neighborhood Law Clinic, Legal Action of Wisconsin), ADRC, CAC or CAP agency, Housing Authority, Consumer Protection, Fair Housing/EOC/ERD, Small Claims, Police/Sheriff and Public Health Department are those we make the most referrals to after landlords and the Building Inspector.

In 2016, according to our clients we received the most referrals from the following agencies: First Call for Help, Word of mouth, Internet/Social Media, ADRC, Government Office, Building Inspector, CAP Agency or CAC, Housing Authority, Centro Hispano, Fair Housing, Legal Action, landlords, police and sheriff offices (not locally)

WRITTEN STANDARDS

1. Tenant Services - Tenant Services are not even envisioned as part of the written standards. Our Executive Director serves on the Written Standards Committee and has worked with Attorney Heidi Wegleitner from Legal Action of Wisconsin to work on portions of the Written Standards that impact tenant/landlord issues.

2. Homeless Services -

A. Program Standards - We are in compliance with all but one of the written standards. Our one weakness in the "Program Standards" is that we are not currently using the full SPDAT, but we don't believe any other agencies are either. Our Executive Director attended the training, but didn't get the materials and was unaware there was a follow up webinar that needed to be completed to be considered fully trained. Our Lead Case Manager attended the most recent training in Milwaukee, but we have not started using the tool and question its value given that it is not trauma informed or allowed to be administered in any language besides English.

We believe in putting client needs first, and making sure the housing is suitable for the client, as determined by the client. We are not only aligned with, but actively working on the Zero Initiative and on the Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. Our Executive Director was part of the leadership

team that went to Washington DC in April to attend a working session to reach functional zero for veterans in 4 months and significantly reduce the number of chronically homeless individuals. She also helped with the analysis of various versions of the Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness and worked with others to make recommended changes. She continues to serve on the oversight committee for the plan. We are actively using the VI-SPDAT, despite its flaws, and we currently have 145 active referrals in Service Point. While we primarily work with singles without children, we frequently coordinate with and present for the TEP program. Our eligibility criteria is very clear for RRH (see requirements previously stated.) We use the Mainstream Benefits Checklist. We have translation services available as well as staff who speak Spanish and Hmong.

B. Case Management- We offer to meet with our clients at least weekly when we begin working with them and monthly after they are in housing, unless more is needed. We are flexible with this guideline - some clients have barriers which prohibit weekly meetings (for example, no ability to charge a phone make it complicated to set up meetings). We incorporate all the necessary elements for case management service. We respect and follow clients' expectations and choices for short and long term goals. Goals are reassessed at least every three months, if not more frequently.

C. Personnel - The Tenant Resource Center hires only qualified staff. We provide extensive training on tenant-landlord law, finding housing, types of subsidized housing, and referrals to other services, as well as other in-house and outside training as necessary. Additionally, our staff receives close supervision and ongoing support. We have three staff members trained in HMIS with at least 94% data quality. Our Executive Director has a Juris Doctorate and a Criminal Justice degree as well as 26 years of experience at our agency, and has been Executive Director for 22 years. Kieth Sayles our part-time housing counselor and mediator also has a J.D. Our case manager has a Masters in Social Work. We also have staff who have experienced homelessness themselves. All staff have a written job description. While we are exempt from the Affirmative Action plan for the city, we use affirmative action best practices in hiring and follow all equal opportunity laws. Our case manager has a mostly manageable caseload and the cases are discussed regularly with the Executive Director.

D. Housing First - Our program does not reject anyone based on sobriety or use of substances, completion of treatment, credit reports, lack of income, poor rental history, criminal offenses or lack of "housing readiness." We do not turn clients away because they are "difficult to work with." We take clients based on our priorities in our grants and the priority list. We do require case management for our Rapid Re-Housing Programs as required by HUD. In the duration of our RRH programming, we have only had one client evicted by a private landlord. We attempted to transfer him from RRH to PSH but were not successful at the time. We continue to work with that client and seek housing with him. Our staff is trained in and continues to practice motivational interviewing. We practice harm reduction strategies when needed.

E. Eviction Prevention Services - These services are provided for people who meet the HUD definitions of at risk of homelessness and are below 30% CMI. Services are only provided when they are necessary to help the program participant regain stability in their current housing or to move to other permanent housing. We do not typically provide services beyond three months, but if we do, we re-evaluate client qualifications. We do not currently require notifications about changes in household income or composition. We do not provide ongoing financial assistance so we do not need to do home visits.

F. Eviction Prevention Funds - In addition to meeting the requirements for eviction prevention services, we follow written standards for financial assistance, unlike some of the other agencies receiving far more funding than we get. We are currently only serving families or individuals that have been literally homeless in the past 5 years or have a household of 6 or more or live in or need an accessible housing unit. We use the shared prioritization tool currently in the written standards to assess priority for our clients. If any of this criteria changes in the written standards, we intend to comply with it. We spread our funds out over the entire grant period. We do a budget with our clients to help determine the amount of assistance and they receive the minimum amount of assistance necessary to stabilize their housing situation.

G. Rapid Re-Housing - Our clients meet all eligibility requirements in the written standards – they are literally homeless or fleeing domestic violence, have an income below 30% CMI, are assessed using the VI-SPDAT and have a score of 8 or below. Exceptions to the VI-SPDAT score were made, in accordance with our grant, to clients who are transgender or if they were a client from our former outreach grant. Our goal is to have our clients reach self-sufficiency within 24 months. While in the

program, clients receive on-going case management, depending upon need. (See the above description of case management frequency.) All clients have written leases. We use progressive engagement to determine the level of financial assistance needed, and case management is based on the client's needs as determined by them. We use the mainstream resources checklist and connect people to income and non-cash benefits where possible. All of our new clients come directly from the priority list.

Due to the fact that we are working with clients who have been homeless for years, we have not always been able to house clients within 60 days. Most of our clients, particularly the men we work with, do not use shelter, so their shelter stay average is very low. We did have one woman who stayed in shelter for 5 months. Salvation Army granted her extended stay due to her language and cultural barriers and vulnerability on the street. Since our program is less than a year old (it began in July 2016, with subsequent training and roll-out time), we don't have long term statistics. So far we have housed 8 people with individual private landlords, with only one being evicted by the landlord. With the permission of the Housing Placement Group, we are working with Salvation Army to spend our remaining funds for the year. We hope to reduce a gap in services provided in the community because single women rarely make it to the top of the list due to the large numbers of men on the list. We chose this partnership because we were very successful placing a client with many barriers in housing when we worked with Salvation Army case managers. With our current case load, we anticipate we will have approximately \$7,500 left to spend for the year that we can use to work with the Salvation Army, which may be less if we find more placements from our current caseload by the end of June.

H. Other

1. We participate in the coordinated entry system, however there isn't much of a system for singles Rapid Re-Housing placement – we are largely on our own without help from the housing locator or housing placement group which we regularly attend. Coordinated entry just doesn't discuss Rapid Re-Housing Clients and the Housing Locator does not attend those meetings.
2. We don't terminate people from our program if they are eligible and still want to participate. Our termination and grievance policies are posted on our website.
3. We are in compliance with all record-keeping requirements as we understand them. We have three staff members trained in HMIS and are doing entry/exits for our ETH and ESG funded programs. Our last audit had no significant findings, and we are in compliance with all record keeping requirements according to our accountant/CPA and our auditors. Participant files are kept for at least 6 years, are confidential, and are in compliance with all requirements of the written standards.

PRIORITIZATION OF CLIENTS

We don't refuse services to anyone who wishes to access them. We are available to all tenants, landlords, and service providers with questions about tenant-landlord law in Wisconsin. We believe that our very accessibility sets us apart, and that it changes the rental culture (and compliance with laws) in the State of Wisconsin, which results in better access to stable housing for all renters.

While we don't deny access, we do prioritize clients who seek to receive housing counseling services in the following way:

1. Office walk-ins. Walk-ins get responses before other clients.
2. Phone calls are triaged in the following order:
 - a. Evictions & safety issues (domestic violence, etc)
 - b. Clients calling for a particular staff member
 - c. Madison and Dane County calls, if more than 200 calls are waiting for responses.
3. Emails. Emails are triaged by date sent.

The clients self-select on the phone calls, so we have an urgent call-back log and a regular call-back log. Volunteers typically do the non-urgent calls. Staff focus on the walk-ins, staff calls and emails, urgent calls and then the normal call back log. We have been over 400 calls behind for an entire week and couldn't get caught up so we had to have all staff come in for a weekend for 6 hours to get through the calls. We also allowed some experienced volunteers to make calls from other locations, but that means we were unable to collect the statistics for the calls.

Many of our grants require that we prioritize low-income clients, but nearly all our clients are low, very low or no income, and so it hasn't been necessary for us to assess income before providing services. In 2016, 70% of the people we served were under 50% of the AMI. Another 19% were between 50% and 80% AMI. Only 11% of our clients were at 100% of AMI or above and many of these were small landlords that we helped. Those who are not low income often donate to our organization or are funded through University funding. Nationally, low income renters are severely cost burdened and paying more than half their income towards rent. In September of 2015 Enterprise Community Partners and the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies did a study Projecting Trends in Severely Cost-Burdened Renters: 2015–2025, which examines how demographic and economic trends over the next decade are likely to affect the near record number of renters with severe housing cost burdens—that is, paying more than half their income in rent. The bottom line: assuming current economic conditions remain constant, they expect demographic trends alone to increase the number of severely cost-burdened renters by 11 percent to 13.1 million in 2025, up from 11.8 million in 2015. On the other hand, if current trends continue, where rent gains outpace income growth, the number could reach 14.8 million.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

A. Current Annual Goals

- Mediation - Non-ESG funded Activities - Info Only
- Tenants participating in housing mediation will avoid further eviction action after 6 months post-mediation - 70%
- Tenants participating in housing mediation will not enter shelter as evidenced through WISP for 12 months following mediation. - 70%
- Provide housing counseling to low-income tenants and landlords to prevent or solve rental housing disputes. - 4,500 households
- Provide workshops/ presentations to educate low-income rental households of housing rights and responsibilities and teach skills needed to successfully find and maintain rental housing - 24 Workshops/ Presentations, 300 households
- Provide one-on-one housing counseling to ESL persons in Spanish or Hmoob. - 150 persons
- Provide workshops/ presentations to ESL persons in Spanish or Hmoob - 12 Workshops/ Presentations/75 households

B. July 1, 2017 - December 31, 2018 Goals

- Finish near complete brochures (including Spanish ones), forms and letters.
- Create a new database system for collecting statistics.
- Inform non-profit landlords of consulting opportunities.
- Do one volunteer training.
- Weekly blogging and social media resumes in September
- 2 press releases and PSAs
- Find two locations for regular outreach to Spanish speaking clients
- 1 training for the HSC if desired by the group.
- Contact the Neighborhood Resource Teams and determine if there is interest or resistance in our participation
- Distribute brochures to at least 6 locations.

C. Proposed Annual Goals

- 200 Non-WISP Mediations/ Non-ESG funded Mediations - Only about 1/3 of our mediations get entered into WISP. There are multiple reasons for this such as: mediators don't like to ask the questions, clients don't like to give their social security number and birthdate, if the result of the mediation is a move out date the clients are typically emotionally charged and don't want to wait to finish paperwork, tenants don't like to fill out that information in front of their landlord. On more rare occasions the tenant is over income, didn't indicate how many people are in their household and we can't tell if they qualify or there is too much information missing because clients start filling it out and quit part way through.
- Provide housing counseling to low-income tenants and landlords to prevent or solve rental housing disputes. - currently 4,500 households, increase to 6,000.

- Provide one-on-one housing counseling to ESL persons in Spanish or Hmoob. - currently 150 persons, increase to 200.
- 3 new volunteer trainings per year, 3 trainings for experienced volunteers
- 20 consultations with non-profit housing providers
- Weekly blogging and social media posts.
- 15 neighborhood and community tabling events per year.
- 6 press releases and 6 PSAs per year about current tenant issues (moving day, heat, flooding basements, etc.)
- Maintain 3 locations at which we can do regular outreach to Hmong/Hmoob speaking clients.
- Establish 4 locations at which we can do regular outreach to Spanish speaking clients.
- Maintain website and update written materials within 6 months of any new law changes.
- 2 trainings annually for the Homeless Services Consortium: one for non-profit housing providers, one for service providers
- Attend 12 Neighborhood Resource Team meetings per year.
- Train staff and volunteers within 3 months of any law changes being passed.
- Continue to work with the Homeless Services Consortium to track diversion activities. We will participate in evaluating that process and report as needed.
- For the items that will be new to being tracked in our database, we will work with funders in 2017 to develop performance measures for the following and set goals for 2018.
- Distribute brochures annually to at least 12 locations around the city, restock as needed when notified by agencies that have our materials or when we are made aware of the need.

2. Provide additional information about the clients you proposed to serve as well as outreach efforts to underserved populations. Be sure to address the following in your response:

- a) Describe how aspects of your program (e.g. hours of availability, response time, location, staffing and outreach and engagement efforts) ensure that a diverse client base will find your program accessible, culturally responsive, welcoming and effective in achieving household stability.
- b) What is your plan to market your services particularly to underserved populations?
- c) Will your agency make additional accommodations for language barriers (i.e. other accommodations than phone interpretation services)?
- d) For providers already provided tenant services please describe current client demographics.

DIVERSE CLIENT BASE

We minimize barriers for our clients by all the following:

- Providing services in English, Spanish and Hmong and having access to the language line.
- Having more than one office location.
- Being open 9am - 6pm to allow for people on various shifts to access us. Anyone can walk in at any time without an appointment.
- Providing services by walk-in (no appointment necessary), phone and email.
- Attempting to answer all phone calls within 48 business hours.
- Bringing our services to the courthouse for mediation and our eviction prevention clinic.
- Doing presentations and tabling to increase awareness.
- Having extensive information available on our website.
- Making sure our materials are easily readable for people with lower reading skills and ensure that services are available that don't require reading.
- Providing bus-accessible office locations.
- Training our staff to provide client centered and client focused services without judgment.

For a small staff we are extremely diverse. Our staff includes people who are transgender, African American, Hmong, Latina, come from poverty backgrounds and have been previously homeless. Our student employees were interns who were first generation college students and we work with families in the W-2 program as well as with volunteers through the DVR and WISE (veterans) program. Our volunteers are diverse, some have physical disabilities, several are seniors and we work with many people who have court ordered community service.

MARKETING

Due to the overwhelming demand for our services, and the need to focus on law changes, training and written materials, we have dropped all marketing efforts in the last 5 - 8 years. We don't have staff for general outreach activities and don't need to drum up business. However, this has led to a really unfortunate problem: we are serving fewer and fewer local people and more and more people from around the state. We see a great need to re-engage in the local community in a very strong and meaningful way. We believe we are doing well with the Homeless Services Consortium knowing our services, but we have lost connections in the neighborhoods. We propose a multi-pronged strategy in which we increase our social media presence and meet face to face with people in the community.

NEW ACTIVITIES

Outreach

- We would like to return to having all our brochures in various locations around the city, such as JFF sites and the Dane County Job Center, with particular emphasis on getting our Spanish brochures further out into the community.
- Consistent summer tabling and increase to new events, particularly in low-income neighborhoods.
- More press releases and PSAs.
- Recruitment of volunteers from low-income neighborhoods.
- We also strongly believe that when the city (and perhaps county) include landlords in Neighborhood Resource Teams and in working with JFF workers, the Tenant Resource Center should be at the table as well.

Social Media

- Return to weekly blogging.
- Incorporate more video.
- Relevant and informative weekly Facebook, Twitter and Instagram posts.

LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Currently we have one staff member who speaks Hmong, we would love to hire a second if someone qualified applies for our current open positions. Monthly we do outreach to Bayview, Kajsiab House and are constantly looking for additional opportunities to do outreach.

Currently we have a Housing Resource Specialist, a Lead Case Manager, a Program Assistant and two part-time housing counselors on staff who speak Spanish and can do Spanish Housing Counseling. We also have at least one volunteer who also speaks Spanish. We have additional staff who can greet guests and ask them to wait for more qualified staff.

We are hoping that in our hiring process, that we will hire one additional person who speaks either Spanish or Hmong. Currently several of our Program Director applicants do speak Spanish and we are very much hoping to hire a native speaker. We have had 5 other staff people who have been native speakers in the past 18 years but have struggled recently to get applicants.

CURRENT CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographics we collected (see previous discussion of data collection challenges) for the people we served in 2016 with our housing counseling programming only were as follows:

LANGUAGE

- English - 94% • Spanish - 4% • Hmong - <1%

AGE

- 18-24 - 12% • 25-54 - 65% • 55-61 - 12% • 62-72 - 9% • Over 72 - 3%

RACE

- White - 71% • Black - 18% • Asian - 3% • Native American - 1% • Other/Bi-racial - 5% • No Answer - 2%

HISPANIC

- Yes - 8% • No - 92%

INCOME

- Very Low (< 30% AMI) - 42% • Low (< 50% AMI) - 28% • Moderate (<80% AMI) - 19% • High (above 80% AMI) - 11%

OTHER

- Female - 65%
- Students - 11%
- One or more disabilities - 32%
- Veterans - 4%
- Victims of domestic violence - 1%
- SSI/SSDI - 27%
- Section 8 or other rent subsidy - 7%
- Food Stamps - 33%
- Badger Care/Medicare/Medicaid - 39%

We gather other statistics but we figured these were of most interest and these are only for walk-in or phone calls for housing counseling activities. These do not include statistics for people who emailed us. These statistics do not include any demographics for any of our written materials or outreach and education activities.

3. Please describe the qualifications of the application organization. Be sure to address the following issues in your response

- a) Detail qualifications of the agency and individuals who will provide the services, including relevant training and licensing obtained. Please provide information regarding staff turnover. If you had 20% or more turnover in a certain staff position/category, please explain. Also address any noteworthy staff retention issues or policies to reduce staff turnover.
- b) Describe any programmatic or administrative improvements that have improved your agency's ability to deliver services. Also describe any ongoing quality assurance procedures and practices your agency has in place.

ORGANIZATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Since 1980, Tenant Resource Center has worked for housing justice in Wisconsin, offering real solutions to real problems, keeping families safe in their homes, and unlocking the doors to affordable housing. With 37 years' experience, we are the state's only source of free, comprehensive assistance for all tenant-landlord issues. We are often reminded that we are unique in the nation when other communities call us trying to figure out how we have managed to continue to be funded and seek our expertise.

We have been offering Housing Counseling services in Madison since 1980, and to the wider Dane County community through our office at the Housing Help Desk (from 1998-2015). We are the only HUD-certified housing counseling agency in Wisconsin to offer rental rights counseling, and HUD contracts with us to offer that service to Wisconsin tenants outside of Dane County.

Since 1996, we have also run the Housing Mediation Service of Dane County, preventing homelessness at eviction court. In 2015 we began a housing case management program for homeless and chronically homeless people. We fundraise for and administer a much-needed security deposit loan program for homeless clients seeking housing in the City of Madison. In 2016, we began offering Rapid Rehousing funds and case management for chronically homeless individuals, and homeless transgendered individuals. In the past year, we began offering housing counseling and eviction prevention funds directly during eviction hearings at Small Claims Court, to make sure that the most vulnerable clients have access to us when their housing is most at risk. And most recently we were awarded EOP funding for diversion services.

INDIVIDUAL QUALIFICATIONS

TRC has a vast variety of education, skills, languages and life experiences distributed among our staff members, which helps us to empathize and work with any client who contacts us. The staff allocated to work with clients under this grant will be: Megan Osowski, Shenise Morgan, Cristina Lor, Lauren Siech, Alix Shabazz, Keith Sayles, Jessica Franco-Morales, Anne Brethauer, Kelly Wehrle, Lee Beltz, Laura Dixson-Kruijf and Brenda Konkel. Plus, we will be hiring a Program Director and a Case Manager. We are in a transition period right now; Lauren Seich, our current Bilingual Housing Resource Specialist is leaving and Anne, Kelly and Alix are filling in her hours over the summer until we get new staff hired and trained.

- **Legal Education:** Brenda and Keith have Juris Doctorate degrees. As a result, our staff and volunteers have incredible support in understanding and translating laws for clients.
- **Languages:** Lauren, Megan, Jessica, Anne and Laura are Spanish-speakers, and other staff are able to greet and do basic communication in Spanish. Cristina speaks Hmong. Our volunteers also have diverse language skills.
- **Race/ethnicity:** We pride ourselves on hiring diverse staff. Of our 12 staff members, 33% are people of color (2 are Black, 1 is Asian, 1 is Latina). We believe that this helps us to be accessible and culturally competent for clients who access our services.
- **Multicultural households:** Cristina is an active member of the Hmong community in her personal life and through her work with the TRC. Laura lived in a number of countries for short periods, and currently lives in a multicultural household with a dual citizen husband and children. Megan studied in Argentina, and worked in Spain. Anne lived in Nicaragua as a child, and was in the Peace Corp in Madagascar as an adult. These diverse experiences brought forth by our staff members help us to be culturally competent and act in a way that feels safe for clients who walk in our door.
- **Gender:** Newly relocated to Madison, Lee is an active member of the transgender community. Outside of his work at the TRC, he connects with transitioning Madison students and their parents. Because of his expertise, he supports TRC staff as we strive to assist transgendered clients, and helps build trust with these clients and their service providers. We also have volunteers who are transgender.
- **Additional experience:** Two of our staff members are trained in responding to interpersonal violence: domestic abuse (Laura) and sexual assault (Alix). One staff member is formerly homeless. Keith has recently become a certified mediator. Volunteers contribute so much to our organization, including diverse languages, and experiences with homelessness.

A. FULL TIME STAFF

Brenda Konkel has been Executive Director of the Tenant Resource Center since 1995 (22 years). Prior to that she was a board member for 1 year and the volunteer coordinator 3 years. She has literally started every single program we have with the exception of our core housing counseling program. She has been key to developing all our written materials, our training format, our website content, the brochure series and the staff culture of the organization. She has a law degree from UW Madison and a BA in Criminal Justice with an English minor from UW-Platteville. She has been on the Board of Directors of several local non-profits, helped to start the Occupy Madison Tiny House village, was instrumental in saving WYOU from closing its doors when it lost funding, and helped to keep Rainbow Bookstore alive for an extra year or two. She brings many skills such as: blogging and website skills; video and audio recording and editing skills (and equipment); she's an early adopter of many new technologies, she's a trained mediator and facilitator, she served on the city council for 8 years and is a local government expert; she is experienced in talking to the media, including hosting her town radio and television shows in the past. She is an active member of the Homeless Services Consortium and she is an active advocate in the community around many issues.

Megan Osowski is our full-time Lead Case Manager. She has a master's degree in Social Work and can supervise Social Work students. Her primary role is running the Rapid Re-Housing Program, which consists of much more than just case management. She is responsible for providing outreach to identify clients, figuring out what barriers the clients might face, providing Housing Locator services for our clients, assisting clients in being prepared to visit apartments, fill out applications and in having the skills to talk to the landlord about their barriers. She assists in helping clients with basic needs while they are homeless as well as furnishing their apartments once they are housed. She continues case management with our clients until they are stabilized in housing (sometimes intensively) and then provides services at least monthly. In addition to these duties, she has been trained in housing counseling and housing search, is bilingual in Spanish, is responsible for screening clients for Eviction Prevention funds, assists with mediation phone calls, works with the Bubbles program, helps staff the Eviction Prevention Clinic, attends many Homeless Services Consortium meetings and is trained in HMIS. Megan has developed

relationships with the outreach workers from various organizations and case managers at the Salvation Army to work in partnership with them when we have clients in common. She also has good working relationships with Outreach as we work with transgender clients. Megan has been with the Tenant Resource Center for nearly a year. Previously, Megan has worked in a social work capacity in nonprofit organizations in Madison (Centro Hispano, Literacy Network) and in multiple schools in Dane County. She also worked for a women's advocacy group in Buenos Aires.

Shenise Morgan has been a full time Housing Resource Specialist for nearly two years. She has extensive knowledge of client rights and responsibilities (tenant-landlord and fair housing laws), appropriate referrals, subsidized and affordable housing requirements, homeless resources, filling out housing applications, assisting with appeals and letter writing with clients. She is our lead eviction clinic staff person and is at small claims court every Tuesday. She was recently trained in HMIS and she is on the Board of Directors of the Homeless Services Consortium. Because she and her family are formerly homeless, she is very familiar with various services and mainstream resources and is great at helping clients navigate various systems. Currently, Shenise is seeking information about landlord screening practices in order to develop our database to assist in faster housing placement for our Rapid Re-Housing Clients.

Cristina Lor started out at the TRC as our Office Manager but for the past 2 years she has been a Bilingual Housing Resource Specialist. She does all our Hmong outreach and services.

Lee Beltz is our current Office Manager. He started last December and is a whiz at Quickbooks and has adapted as best as one might expect to our extremely chaotic office environment and the world of nonprofit accounting. His background is in being the right hand person for busy executives and is now key to staff and volunteer scheduling (which is a skill of its own given our multiple offices and the many part-times staff we have), getting checks for rent, eviction prevention and security deposits out on time, collecting for our security deposit loan program, and supervising our office volunteers.

B. PART TIME STAFF

Laura Dixson-Kruijf is our Jill-of-all-trades part-time Program Assistant and has been instrumental in helping us limp through this time without a Program Director. Lately she has been assisting with grant writing, program development and improvement, fundraising, coordinating the mediation program and volunteers and just about any odds or ends you can think of. She has worked for the Tenant Resource Center for 8 years and was a FTE Spanish Bilingual Housing Resources Specialist for several years before going part-time. Once we regain our Program Director position, Laura will return to her blogging and social media, assisting as needed in teaching seminars, along with less intensive grant writing and fundraising assistance. Previous to working at the TRC Laura was a staff member at Madison's Domestic Abuse Intervention Services, and prior to that, worked with the Latinx community in Virginia, in the metro DC area.

Keith Sayles has a law degree, doubles as a mediator when we don't have a volunteer and has been a part-time housing counselor with us for at least three years.

Alix Shabazz is one of our new part-time staff that was hired to help us as small claims court. She has extensive connections in the community, is a community organizer and has affiliations with Young Gifted and Black, Freedom Inc, and Operation Welcome Home, among others.

Anne Brethauer was a full time Bilingual (Spanish) Housing Resource Specialist for us for a year and a half. She went back to school to become a midwife. She is going to be working over the summer while we train our new staff.

Lauren Seich just resigned as our Bilingual (Spanish) Housing Resource Specialist to take a (better paying) job at the Catholic Multicultural Center, which will allow her be certified to practice law under an attorney. She will stay on with us helping to finish our project of translating our brochures into Spanish.

Kelly Wherle is a teacher who works for us part-time in the summer helping us keep up with all the housing counseling calls.

Jessica Franco-Morales recently graduated from UW Madison and will be helping us fill in the gaps at campus and as a Bilingual Housing Counseling over the summer, until new staff are hired and trained.

C. VOLUNTEERS

1. Housing Counselor Volunteers - we have 2 retired seniors (one is a psychotherapist), 1 person getting a paralegal degree, 3 law school students, 2 teachers, 1 counselor, 2 graduate students and 1 social worker. This is a very low number of volunteers for us at the moment but we don't have the staff to support a volunteer training, and to mentor the volunteers as they get started. We have a large number of people wanting to volunteer for us at the moment and we hope to train them in the fall.

2. Mediators - We have six professionally trained mediators who volunteer at eviction court for seven hours each week at a value of nearly \$50,000 a year.

- Howard Bellman, a retired world renowned mediator. He has extensive national and international mediation experience. He has mediated complex multi-party disputes for the Federal Trade Commission, the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, US Department of Agriculture, the National Park Service and the states of Wisconsin, New York, New Jersey, Washington and Florida. He's been a guest lecturer at Cornell, University of Minnesota, Oberlin College, Harvard, Yale and UW-Madison. In short, we can't believe we are so fortunate to have him volunteering for our project AND providing guidance on program issues.

- Sara McKinnon is a professor at UW-Madison in the Communication Arts department. She is bilingual in Spanish. She teaches mediation classes and is interested in incorporating students into our program.

- Danielle Carne is an adjunct professor at UW Madison Law School teaching labor relations. She is both a mediator and arbitrator. She has her own business Carne Dispute Resolution and used to work as an arbitrator at the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission.

- Sue Robbins is retired and has been mediating with us for over 10 years.

- Sheila Spear is retired and has been mediating with us for just under 10 years.

- Allison Cooley is the newest volunteer mediator. Allison is a facilitator/leadership coach (mostly in corporate contexts), and runs her own business called Effectibility. She has been significantly influenced by Harry Webne-Behrman (who taught Brenda transformative mediation), and hopes to move towards mediation as a career in the future.

- Helen Findley recently retired after being a steady long-time volunteer.

3. Office Assistants - We typically have 2 - 5 office assistants depending upon how many hours they have to work for the program they are in. These volunteers answer our phones, keep our brochures folded and stocked, help with miscellaneous projects around the office, enter program data for the Bubbles program and help us with the housing vacancy list we maintain.

STAFF TURNOVER

2016's staff turnover was 25%. We hired 4 new staff members in 2016, and lost 3 staff members. They didn't all directly replace one another – Anders, our part-time quasi program director, wasn't replaced after he took a teaching position at UW- Madison. Matt, our office manager left to help manage a campaign during the last national election cycle and has continued with the campaign but is here in the building and helps out frequently. The person we hired to replace Matt transitioned from Office Manager to Bilingual Housing Resource Specialist, replacing Anne as she left for a midwifery program. So, we hired another office manager, Lee. Every one of our employees lost in the past year remain a regular part of our agency, and some come back to work for us part-time the following year!

Staff turnover is a constant problem for us. As noted earlier, people get jobs here, learn skills and after about 2 years, tend to move on to more schooling or better paying jobs. We attempt to keep people engaged in our work by allowing them to do multiple duties within their jobs and assigning tasks based on staff interests and strengths. We talk with staff about program expansions and what interests them. We also encourage self-care and "mental health" days to avoid burnout. Bottom line is that the wages don't keep people here. We have been paying a bit above the city living wage, but clearly that is not enough to keep people in these positions. See our staff retention and restructuring comments in the beginning of the grant for further details.

Our plan with this grant is as follows:

- Raise everyone making less than \$15 per hour to \$15 per hour.

- Our new office manager will get a 3% raise.
 - Our Lead Case Manager who has worked out better than we could have dreamed is getting a 6% raise to be at the same level of pay as the new Program Director.
 - Shenise will be getting paid \$16 per hour because of the additional duties she has been taking on.
 - Keith will be getting paid \$16 per hour because he became trained as a mediator.
 - Laura and Brenda who have been here the longest will each get a 5% raise.
- Total = \$8,418 in 2017 and \$16,836 in 2018.

This will not solve all the issues we outlined in the beginning of the grant, but it is a step towards addressing our issues. Our biggest challenges remain our succession plan and lack of retirement benefits. We feel that the outlined wages will resolve most of our most pressing concerns and will reduce turnover, but we will still need to address the Executive Director's salary, for succession purposes, in the future.

PROGRAMMATIC OR ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENTS

See the lengthy answer to the first question for a list of programmatic and administrative improvements we hope to accomplish with this grant.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Our quality assurance practices include that all phone calls are recorded for future reference, and emails are accessible, as well. We check the number of calls and statistics each staff member does during the month. Our Executive Director has final approval on all our written materials. Volunteers and staff are rarely here by themselves to ensure that if people get stuck with a conundrum, they can ask another person. We have an extensive training course and written materials, and we hope to have on-going trainings for our volunteers and staff. Our accounting is overseen by a CPA on a quarterly basis and we have an annual audit.

4. Please provide a timeline of key activities.

2017 ACTIVITIES

- July 17 new staff start
- July 17 - end of August staff training (agency orientation, housing counseling, housing search, homeless services, VISPDATs, HMIS, introduction to HSC and small claims court, reporting requirements, referrals and more) concerted efforts to inform the public we again serve tenants outside the City of Madison (media, listserves, social media, etc.)
- August - begin translation of final Spanish brochures, update housing lists, media around moving day
- September - begin database project, mainstream resources written procedures, work on back log of written materials projects and coordinate volunteer training, start search for outreach locations for Spanish speaking clients, resume weekly blogging and social media posts
- October - volunteer training, continued work on written materials and technology project, contract Neighborhood Resource Teams, find places to place brochures, reach out to non-profit landlords for consulting services
- November - continue working on database project, written materials and mainstream resources written standards and resources, training for HSC
- December - complete technology project, Spanish translations and written materials, update housing lists.

2018 ACTIVITIES

- January - Full volunteer training, begin youth materials, editing of video
- February - Ongoing volunteer training
- March - Quarterly list updates, video seminars completed
- April - Raise Diversion funds
- May - Volunteer Training, Training for HSC
- June - Quarterly list updates
- July - Ongoing volunteer training
- August - Moving Day media
- September - Quarterly list updates

- October - Volunteer training
- November - Ongoing volunteer training, Training for HSC
- December - quarterly list updates

2019 ACTIVITIES IF CONTINUED FUNDING
Apartment Management in Wisconsin

2020 ACTIVITIES IF CONTINUED FUNDING
Tenants' Rights in Wisconsin

5. **Disclosures:**

A. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest. Disclose any potential conflict of interest due to any other clients, contracts, or property interests, e.g. direct connections to other funders or City funded or potentially funded organizations, or with the City of Madison.

None.

B. Disclosure of Contract Failures, Litigations. Disclose any alleged significant prior or ongoing contract failures, contract breaches, any civil or criminal litigation or investigation pending within the last three (3) years which involves your firm. List any contracts in which your firm and any subcontractor that has been found guilty or liable, or which may affect the performance of service to be rendered.

None.

6. **Budget:**

Summarize the budget for this project budget by estimated costs.

BUDGET EXPENDITURES	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	AMOUNT OF CITY \$ REQUESTED	AMOUNT OF NON-CITY REVENUE	SOURCE OF NON-CITY FUNDED PORTION
A. Personnel Costs (Complete Personnel chart below)				
1. Salaries/Wages (show detail below)	\$119,120	48,400+70,720		
2. Fringe Benefits and Payroll Taxes	31,700	11,700+20,000		
B. Program Costs				
1. Program supplies and equipment				
2. Office Supplies				
3. Transportation				
4. Other (explain *)	12,000	10,000+0	\$2,000	fundraising
C. Space Costs				
5. Rent/Utilities/Telephone	6680	2,400+4,280		
6. Other (explain):				
D. TOTAL (A + B + C)	\$169,500	\$167,500	\$2,000	

Explanation of "Other" expenses: (500 characters)

The first number in the budget is for 2017, the second number is for 2018. The numbers are also explained in question number one.

Other is the computers and technology upgrades in 2017 and Diversion Funds in 2018..

Our tenant services funding is also explained in question number one.

Please note: Wages/Stipends/Fringe costs for interns should not be included in the budget expenditures above. These expenses will be paid by each of the City Departments/Divisions that host an intern through the contract awarded through the Community Development Division.

7. Personnel Chart:

Identify and describe the role of key staff positions and affiliate partners who would become directly responsible for the various aspects of the contract, if awarded. For each position, please note if duties will be provided by a current staff position (no additional FTE), a new position, or expanded hours for a current staff position (additional FTE)

Title of Staff Position	Total Expected hours to be spent in this project	Proposed Hourly Wage*	Role With This Project
Executive Director	.3 FTE	\$27	Hire, train, supervise, technical expertise
Program Director	.5 FTE	\$18	Volunteer and outreach coordinator, training, written materials, program management
Case Managers	1 FTE	\$16	Assisting with more complex cases and follow up
Housing Resource Specialists & Housing Counselors	2 FTE	\$15	Housing counseling, housing search, information and referral, outreach activities
NOTE: This budget is for a typical year. 2017 and 2018 will need some adjustments in other grant funding sources to get to our ideal staffing pattern. Because our staff are cross trained and we work as a team, charges to each grant will be charged based on time sheets and our cost allocation plan.		\$	
TOTAL	3.8	 	

**Note: All employees involved in programs receiving City of Madison funds must be paid the established Living Wage required under City of Madison Ordinance 4.20. Effective January 1, 2017 – December 31, 2017, the Living Wage is \$12.85 per hour. On January 1, 2018 Living Wage increases to \$13.01.*

-SIGNATURE PAGE-

1. Affirmative Action:

If funded, applicant hereby agrees to comply with City of Madison Ordinance 39.02 and file either an exemption or an Affirmative Action Plan with the Department of Civil Rights. A model Affirmative Action Plan and instructions are available at <http://www.cityofmadison.com/dcr/aaplans.cfm>.

2. Living Wage Ordinance:

All employees involved in programs supported by City of Madison funds must be paid the established Living Wage as required under City of Madison Ordinance 4.20 Effective January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017, the Living Wage will be \$12.85 per hour. On January 1, 2018 Living Wage increases to \$13.01. For more information on Living Wage requirements, go to <http://www.cityofmadison.com/finance/wage/>.

3. City of Madison Contracts:

If funded, applicant agrees to comply with all applicable local, State and Federal provisions. A sample contract that includes standard provisions is attached to the RFP Guidelines document. If funded, the City of Madison reserves the right to negotiate the final terms of a contract with the selected agency.

4. Acknowledgement

By entering signature below applicant acknowledges receipt of City of Madison Community Development Division **RFP #8635-0-2017-LR** Guidelines and Requirements document.

5. Signature: (*Any applications submitted without a signature will be considered incomplete and will not be considered.*)

Enter
Name:

Brenda K. Konkel

By entering your initials
in the box,

bkk

You are electronically signing your
name and agreeing to the terms above.

Date:

5/26/2017



Friends of the State Street Family
Giving HELP and HOPE to the homeless in Madison

May 16, 2017

To Whom it may concern,

The Friends of the State Street Family would like to express support for the Tenant Resource Center's Application for the Tenant Services in City of Madison/Dane County Grant. Over the past six years we have worked closely with the staff and administration of the Tenant Resource Center (TRC) and have experienced a tremendous level of success with mutual clients who needed guidance and assistance in obtaining housing help and navigating the social service housing system. Throughout the Housing First program, we have partnered with the TRC to enter the VI-SPIDATS our outreach teams complied into the system, they have worked with us to help people with high needs get the support they needed to settle into a new housing situation, and helped people come up with funding for deposits and kept people who were housing insecure, from losing housing through advocacy, funding and education of both Tenants and Landlords.

I know that some people at the county and city may have strong feelings one way or another about the TRC, but from the standpoint of a group advocating for an underserved and vulnerable population-they KNOW what they are talking about, and go the extra mile to serve the people they are able to serve.

Ever since another agency was granted a chunk of the TRC's funding, we have had several instances of poor communication with clients, workers who did not have all of the facts and could not offer expert guidance, and what really shocked us was it seemed that they didn't add any value to services, the bare minimum was done, and that they were paid to copy the TRC's work and disseminate it as their own. Combined with the large amount of turnover in the past several years at that agency, we have had very inconsistent levels of service and availability, and the Housing Crisis Line has had so many instances of mechanical difficulties through the years... it's hard to feel good about referring a person who is new to homelessness to that crisis line and have it just take a message, and sometimes not call them back.

The people who call it are in crisis, an answering machine is a very poor substitute for a live person who can assuage their fears and explain options and how things work in a way they can understand.

Earlier this year, we attended an HSC meeting where one of the employees of the that agency laughed about the Housing Crisis Line collecting data of frequent wrong buttons pushed and hang-ups and thought nothing of investigating why it was happening, or changing it to be more client-friendly and easier to understand. We were visibly frustrated with that response and asked them to look into it because it's an important service that our mutual clients need, and they owned it.

The employees of the Tenant Resource Center treat all human beings with respect, they respond to their calls and work tirelessly to understand people who are from different cultures, who have mental illnesses and have difficulty expressing themselves in a succinct way, and who are upset and distraught. They are professional and compassionate, and we know when we refer clients to them, they will get undivided attention and that they know and understand every housing option out there for people and will try everything until something comes through for them.

We get no money from the city, county or any agency for that matter, so we have no reason to be biased regarding funding here. Our only bias is toward the clients we share- who are all people who are in crisis and suffering. We feel compelled to express this endorsement of the Tenant Resource Center because they are simply the best at this work in Madison. Removing funding from them was a disservice to the clients in the Greater Dane County area (outside of Madison) and felt punitive rather than sensible. Their non-profit suffered, but most of all, our clients suffered.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter, and for giving the Tenant Resource Center the opportunity to do what they do better than anyone else in this area.

Respectfully,

Tami Fleming

Tami Fleming
Executive Director

Friends of the State Street Family

Website: www.friendsofthestatestreetfamily.org

E-mail: fssfhomelessoutreach@gmail.com

Outreach Line: 608-535-9394 (Voice to Text)

Herrick & Kasdorf, L.L.P.

Carousel Andrea Bayrd
Patricia K. Hammel
Scott N. Herrick
Robert T. Kasdorf
Juscha E. M. Robinson
David R. Sparer
J. Adam Woodford

Law Offices
16 N. Carroll, Suite 500
Madison WI 53703

Robert L. Reynolds, Jr. (1930-1994)

May 24, 2017

TO: City of Madison Community Development Division

RE: Application by the Tenant Resource Center
for RFP # 8635-0-2017-LR
Tenant Services in the City of Madison / Dane County

Greetings:

I have been an attorney practicing in the Madison / Dane County area for just short of 40 years. During that entire time I have focused my practice in large part upon representation of tenants in all manner of issues and in all legal forums. About 60% of my work involves this type of representation. Given that focus of my work it is probably no surprise that I have regular contact with the staff and volunteers at the Tenant Resource Center (hereafter TRC), as well as with every other agency and organization that works with landlord and tenants.

Let me start by saying that the need for a place for both tenants and smaller time landlords to go and get advice and education about the fine points of landlord tenant law is overwhelming. The law is not found in one nice straight forward location. Instead it is found spread out between state statutes, state administrative codes, city ordinance, as well as in court decisions over decades. How the rulings in these various locations all interact is certainly something that takes a lot of training and experience to understand. Inexperienced tenants and landlords have no idea where to find these laws, how to parse the legalese, or how to enforce their rights, even once they find the rules.

This can cause havoc in our community. Tenants don't know what obligation they have. Landlord's don't know what rights they have, or how to enforce them. Landlords end up doing crazy things and harming tenants. Any or all of these individuals show up in court and, not knowing their rights or how the law works, make life very difficult for court personnel and judges.

The TRC has for decades been the primary place one can go to get the answers to all these questions. The TRC has done an incredible job of providing free advice to literally thousands of tenants and landlords. Their staff and volunteers are sufficiently trained to be able to give callers clear advice, and help them work their way through an otherwise scary and complicated set of rules and requirements. I have seen the TRC develop programs which end up serving multitudes of people, write manuals relied upon by numerous people - landlords, tenants, and other service

providers too. They have created a very useful website, which provides lots of training and information. I am aware that they conduct many training seminars for people who work in this area, including property managers, police and public officials and community gatherings. I know that they keep track of a threshold where they need to refer people to a lawyer, and when it is worthwhile to do so, and then they make referrals. They keep an actively updated list of attorneys willing to take these cases and help people. I know that their staff also gets in touch with me to clear up difficult questions when they arise, so that the advice they give people is the best and most comprehensive advice.

Most importantly, they continue to demonstrate a commitment to service. It is clear that they are unwilling to compromise the quality of their service. Through past budget cuts and piles of legislative changes, which have challenged their ability to get their work done, they have kept quality of service as a top priority. That is what we need from whomever gets this grant.

I have worked with the TRC and the staff and volunteers there for many many years. I recommend them highly for the funding from this grant.

Sincerely yours,



David R. Sparer

DRS/ms
cc: TRC

the road home

DANE COUNTY

Solutions for homeless families
May 24, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

The Road Home Dane County works with families who are currently experiencing homelessness and families who have been formerly homeless. We support the Tenant Resource Center's application to provide services under the Tenant Services RFP with the City of Madison. Our case managers and the families we serve have relied upon the Tenant Resource Center (TRC) to offer fundamental housing counseling and mediation over the years and believe their services are an important part of preventing and ending homelessness in our community.

Our current housing environment is more reason we need to expand these services, so I thank you for recognizing the importance of this and releasing this RFP. As you're probably aware, more than half the city of Madison is comprised of renters; over the past 6 years, protections for tenants have been reversed, Madison rental vacancy rates are high enough so as to exclude tenants who have even mild barriers to housing, not to mention those who truly struggle because of racial discrimination, their socio-economic status, their disabilities, or the makeup of their household including children.

Many of our clients have called upon TRC for help and therefore have higher outcomes in regards to stable housing. The employees of the TRC treat all clients with respect, regardless of ethnic heritage, disability status, trauma history, etc. and do so while responding to thousands of calls each year. Clients are able to find legal education and possible remedies through TRC, which allows them to receive informed support as they assert their legal rights. This kind of self-advocacy is crucial to clients who are on the brink of homelessness and/or recently rehoused. We are eager to see their services expand if awarded these funds. We are too familiar with the need that outpaces the available services.

The TRC works tirelessly to improve the housing landscape of Madison and Dane County, in order to satisfy the needs of our shared clients. Families we serve have found the housing counseling services at eviction hearings at Small Claims Court extremely helpful. They have also found their website, call-in system and walk-in availability helpful as well. Services are helpful but must be accessible, and they ensure clients have an array of options when needed.

In addition to their more known services described above, TRC is expanding more into rental assistance and Rapid Rehousing programs. We appreciate this because we believe it takes a team and the entire community to prevent and end homelessness. No one agency can do it alone.

We view TRC as a leader in tenant services in Madison and look forward to referring more clients to be served to them if they are awarded these funds. If you have any questions or if I can be of any additional help, please don't hesitate to call or email me at 608-294-7998 ex.302 or kristinr@trhome.org.

Sincerely,



Kristin Rucinski, MSW
Executive Director

