

EMERGENCY PROCUREMENT - REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Warming Center Facilities & Staffing for Extreme Weather Events

Issued By:

City of Providence, Department of Housing & Human Services
444 Westminster Street, Suite 3A
Providence, RI 02903
401-680-8400

RFP Release Date: February 6, 2025

Proposal Due Date: February 14, 2025

1. Introduction

The City of Providence is seeking to identify non-profit service providers and facilities with capacity to staff and/or operate warming centers for unhoused individuals during extreme weather events in Providence. The selected provider(s) will deliver staffing, site coordination, and trauma-informed care from the date of award through April 30, 2025 as need requires. This is an emergency procurement conducted in accordance with Sec. 21-29 of the Providence Code of Ordinances, and we seek to minimize the effort required for proposal responses due to time constraints. The anticipated funding source for this procurement is federal (Treasury SLFRF). The City reserves the right to award all, some, or none of the funds to respondents as deemed in the best interest of the City. Up to \$70,000 in funding is expected to be available for new awards. Additional funds may be added.

2. Proposals Requested

The City is soliciting proposals from 1) facilities with space that can be offered for warming center operations, 2) qualified providers with per diem capacity to staff and coordinate warming sites, and/or 3) existing warming operations that can expand or extend their operations with additional financial support.

Warming Center Operations

- Operation of a warming center, or providing qualified per diem staffing to partner sites to do so, when extreme cold weather is forecasted, providing temporary refuge from the elements to unhoused individuals.
- Ensure the center provides a safe space and warmth, adhering to safety and cleanliness protocols, including posted occupancy load limitations for the facility. (If occupancy load is not known, please contact Dennis Gonzalez, Housing Resource Coordinator, dgonzalez@providenceri.gov, 401-680-8509, to assist with scheduling an occupant load determination with appropriate City departments.)

Staffing and Site Coordination

- Provide trained staff for warming sites, ensuring adequate coverage during open hours.
- Maintain a clean and safe environment for all utilizers and staff.
- If applicable, manage any logistics necessary to ensure building is cleaned and ready for any alternative programming (if sharing space).

Trauma-Informed, Low-Barrier Services

- Provide relevant case management services, including referrals for available shelter beds, housing, healthcare, and social services with client consent.
- Apply harm reduction principles and a trauma-informed approach to all interactions.
- Minimize barriers to utilization and access through program design.

Collaboration and Reporting

- Collaborate with local agencies and service providers, including participation in HMIS and case conferencing with the Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness to ensure timely placement of warming center guests in more permanent shelter and housing options.
- Provide regular updates to City on operations and client needs.

3. City of Providence Support

The City of Providence will provide the following:

- **Physical Location:** Funding will be prioritized for providers that have space immediately available for this service however, if a site is needed, the City can assist with pairing offered space(s) at no cost to the provider to be available during extreme weather events.
- The **City's Mobile Health Unit** will be operating under extended hours (9am to 9pm) during extreme weather events to provide additional support in making referrals and transport to warming centers and providing wellness checks on known encampments. This van is equipped to provide basic medical care and is staffed with an EMT and a dedicated clinician. Assistance can be sought by dialing the Non-Emergency Fire Department Line: 401-274-3347.
- **PEMA:** Emergency management supplies/supports such as bottled water, paper goods, and medical supplies are available through the Providence Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) as supply permits.
- **Housing & Human Services:** HHS will sponsor periodic trainings for staff and volunteers of warming centers on harm reduction and provide concierge and coordination services to providers to ensure access to the above referenced City supports.

4. Warming Center Operational Guidelines

- Warming centers assisted through this funding opportunity shall be open to the public during periods of extreme cold weather to prevent injury related to exposure to the elements.
- Assisted facilities should anticipate being activated with 48 hours or greater notice when the weather forecast calls for low temperatures, or a combination of precipitation, wind chill, and temperatures that “feel like” temperatures of 20° F or below. Respondents are encouraged to propose a plan to operate more frequently at their discretion if staffing and funding permits.
- During emergency situations, additional warming centers may also be activated through other community partners. When approaching capacity, referrals and transportation to the network of alternative sites shall be coordinated by the provider.
- Drug use, smoking, and consumption of alcohol shall not be permitted within any warming center buildings (with the exception of RIDOH-licensed overdose prevention centers) but staffing plan and program design shall be appropriately tailored to minimize barriers to utilization of warming centers by unhoused constituents with substance use disorders.
- Providers shall submit a staffing and safety plan that outlines the staffing ratio and emergency plans in the event of an evacuation. The staffing plan must include an awake, responsible person for all hours of operation.
- Providers and facilities shall possess and maintain minimum insurance levels required to contract with the City of Providence (Commercial General Liability insurance with a combined single limit of not less than One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence and Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000) general aggregate; Worker’s Compensation insurance; Automobile Liability insurance covering vehicles owned, hired, and used by Provider with policy limits of not less than One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) per accident; Professional Liability insurance covering negligent acts, errors and omissions in the performance of professional services with policy limits of not less than Two Million dollars (\$2,000,000) per claim and in the aggregate.

5. Proposal Requirements

Please submit the following (as applicable):

Organization Overview

- A brief summary of your organization’s mission and experience in providing shelter and case management services.

Staffing Plan

- A list of proposed staff roles and their qualifications.
- Staff availability (days or nights per week).
- Leveraging of volunteers is encouraged.

Work Plan

- A brief description of how you will operate a warming center, including an overview of the facility (if one is identified) including occupancy capacity and available hours of operation, and plan for intake and service provision.

Budget

- Budget estimate for staffing, site operations, and services. Premium pay and overnight pay differential is allowable, as necessary and reasonable under federal cost standards, for staff anticipated to be engaged in overtime work, weekend hours, overnight shifts and holiday coverage. An indirect cost rate of 15% is allowable for overhead/administrative costs.
- Providers and facilities should budget for a minimum of 10 days of extreme weather event-related operations but are encouraged to propose per day rates for additional days.

6. Submission Instructions

Please submit your proposal by February 14, 2025, via email to efreedman@providenceri.gov.

7. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed based on:

- Experience and capacity to operate a warming center and/or provide relevant services.
- Approach to trauma-informed care and harm reduction.
- Budget feasibility and ability to mobilize staff quickly and with limited notice.

8. Contract Term

Awarded contracts will run from the date of award through April 30, 2025.

9. Contact Information

For questions, please contact Emily Freedman at efreedman@providenceri.gov; 401-680-8400.