

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE  
Inter-office Memorandum

**DATE:** February 24, 2015

**TO:** Marina Dimitrijevic, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Héctor Colón, Director, Department of Health and Human Services  
*Prepared by James Mathy, Administrator, Housing Division*

**SUBJECT:** Report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, requesting authorization for the Housing Division to enter into a purchase of service contract with Guest House of Milwaukee, Inc. for up to \$390,385 to administer the Milwaukee County Safe Haven Program

**Issue**

Section 46.09 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances requires County Board approval for the purchase of human services from nongovernmental vendors. Per Section 46.09, the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is requesting authorization to enter into a 2015 purchase of service (POS) with the Guest House of Milwaukee, Inc. for up to \$390,385 to administer the Milwaukee County Safe Haven Program for homeless adults.

**Discussion**

Milwaukee County's Safe Haven Program, in operation since 1996, assists people who are disabled, have a lengthy history of living on the streets and/or cannot adjust to shelters. Historically, these disengaged individuals have been unable or unwilling to participate in support, medical or other services and have no income. Safe Havens provide the type of environment that allows these individuals to begin the recovery process.

Safe Havens offer a housing first soft entry program that provides private rooms, food, bathing facilities and other necessities of daily living, but does not require that the guests participate in services or accept treatment as an entry requirement. Rather, Safe Havens provide security, support and allow for a process of engagement so that the guest may eventually accept case management, mainstream services and move onto permanent housing. Each guest has a case manager who works on the engagement process while the individual is at a Safe Haven. When the individual is ready to move onto permanent housing, a case manager is assigned to work with the individual.

Milwaukee County's very unique Safe Haven Program serves 23 individuals at a time in six scattered site shared housing units (three duplex sites) and seven clustered apartments at one site. Each of these four sites is overseen 24 hours a day by formerly homeless individuals with a disability who have successfully completed extensive recovery and educational programs and have graduated from the Guest House Resident Management Program. Guest House continues to provide case management and other supports to the resident managers until they are ready to move onto regular employment. Guest House professional staff supervises Safe Haven operations and provides 24 hour on call service.

Each year, approximately 70-80 difficult-to-serve individuals reside at the Safe Havens. Milwaukee County collaborates with the entire Continuum of Care (CoC) and directly partners with a number of agencies in order to do outreach and operate the Safe Havens. Community Advocates Homeless Outreach Nursing Center, Outreach Community Health Center and other agencies do homeless outreach with individuals who are in need of and eligible for Safe Haven. These agencies work directly with other CoC members to identify seriously mentally ill, homeless individuals. Once referred to a Safe Haven, the referring agency continues to engage with the individuals until they are ready to move onto mainstream services and permanent housing.

Milwaukee County's quiet, homelike, consumer-run Safe Havens are very successful in achieving HUD's goals and the 10-year goals of the CoC. During the last program year, 20 individuals who left the Safe Havens moved into permanent housing and six into transitional housing. Nine individuals secured disability benefits prior to exiting the program.

Under this contract, Guest House will provide 24-hour on-site resident management services to ensure that Safe Haven guests comply with all house rules and building rules; that the Safe Havens function with regular household routines; that a peaceful, cooperative atmosphere is maintained; and that there is professional and appropriate communication with the Safe Haven team and others (e.g., law enforcement, neighbors).

To do this, Guest House will provide Resident Managers who are to be self-selected, previously homeless individuals who are case managed in an aftercare Resident Manager Program. Resident Managers are participants in the Resident Manager Program and are not employees of Guest House. The Resident Manager Coordinator shall provide supervision for the Resident Manager Assistant and case management of the Resident Managers. Guest House will assign Resident Managers, one per 8 hour shift, in each of the Safe Haven dwellings, as agreed upon with Milwaukee County. On-site 24-hour coverage will be provided through a mixture of Resident Managers, professional staff, and 24-hour on call professional staff.

Principal duties and responsibilities of the Resident Managers and Guest House include, but are not limited to:

- Guest intake
- Professional communications (written and oral)
- Neighborhood relations
- Record keeping and other "paperwork"
- Compliance with House Rules/Building Rules
- Building and resident safety (to include weekly smoke detector testing)
- Monitor activities
- Guest interaction
- Meeting attendance
- Coordination of meals and assistance/oversight of meal preparation
- Room checks
- Housekeeping (cleaning, laundry, etc.)

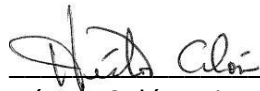
- Minor building repairs
- Exterior upkeep (picking up trash, grass cutting, snow shoveling)
- Compliance with program procedures, HUD rules and regulations, and Milwaukee County requirements
- Coordinate with appropriate agencies regarding guest behavior
- Notify appropriate agencies for any emergency service needs
- Maintain all guest records, program inventory, program records, Resident Manager Program records, staff records, and accounting records

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the County Board of Supervisors authorize the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, or his designee, to enter into a purchase of service contract reflecting federal fiscal year 2015 with Guest House of Milwaukee, Inc. for up to \$390,385 to administer the Milwaukee County Safe Haven Program.

### **Fiscal Effect**

The 2015 Budget includes funding to support this purchase of service contract. A fiscal note form is attached.



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Héctor Colón, Director  
Department of Health and Human Services

cc: County Executive Chris Abele  
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