



COOK COUNTY JUSTICE ADVISORY COUNCIL

REENTRY INITIATIVE: Rental Assistance and Services for Returning Residents



Funding Opportunity Questions & Answers

February 24, 2023

This resource has been prepared by the Cook County Justice Advisory Council (JAC) to provide answers to questions posed about the 2023 Wraparound Services for Returning Residents funding opportunity. Questions have been consolidated and adapted for clarity, and questions pertaining to specific organizations are not included. Questions and answers will be made available to the public on the JAC website on February 24, 2023. Following this date, additional questions and answers may be added to the document but are not guaranteed. If you have a question that is not covered by the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) or this document, you may email JAC.Info@cookcountyil.gov. Please note that we are unable to answer agency-specific questions. Questions are grouped under the following categories:

- Eligibility
- Programming and Services
- Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and Application Process
- Budgets and Financial Compliance
- Partnerships
- Next Steps and Contracting

Eligibility

Q: Is this funding opportunity only available to organizations with non-profit status?

A: For this funding opportunity, organizations must have 501©3 or (c)4 status, or partner with a fiscal agent who is a 501(c)3 or 501(c)4

Q: May new organizations without a significant track record submit a response to the RFQ? (Particularly if staff has experience with the population and/ or services sought)

Yes, newer organizations may apply but staff that will be principally carrying out the program and who do have a track record should be named and their experience articulated clearly.

Q: Are only organizations currently working in Cook County eligible to apply?

A: Yes, this initiative will serve residents returning from incarceration to communities within Cook County. Potential service providers must be operating in Cook County, but do not need to operate countywide.



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Q: Are organizations that have an existing or past grant or contract with the JAC eligible to apply under this RFQ?

A: Yes.

Q: Are organizations with other ARPA funded grants or contracts eligible to apply?

A: Yes

Programming and Services

Q: Will the organizations selected as qualified providers be facilitating rental assistance, or only providing wraparound services?

A: This funding opportunity does not include providing rental assistance; it is only to provide the types of wraparound services listed in the RFQ. The wraparound services will be provided to residents that receive rental assistance as part of the larger initiative, but that separate aspect of the program will be managed by the Housing Authority of Cook County and is not part of this RFQ.

Q: Will all clients served be a part of “the Rental Assistance and Services for Returning Residents Initiative”?

A: Yes, the clients that will be referred to receive wraparound services from contracted service providers will be part of the larger initiative that provides rental assistance *and* services to returning residents. The rental assistance aspect of the program is not part of this RFQ.

Q: What are the eligibility requirements for returning residents to receive services? How will residents be enrolled/ referred to the program?

A: This program will be offered to individuals returning to Cook County from the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC). Individuals who have been incarcerated in the last 24 months will be eligible for rental assistance and services.

Eligible returning residents will be enrolled in the program via direct referral from designated partner agencies. The specific referral pathways and process are being developed at this time and will be announced later.

Q: How many returning residents from Cook County will be served?



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A: This aspect of the program is being determined. The anticipated number of residents served will be announced at a later date.

Q: How long will clients be getting rental assistance for and how much assistance will be provided?

A: Participants will receive full rental assistance for 90 days. After the first 90 days, participants will contribute 30% of their income to rent and utilities for the remainder of the program. The remaining 70% of rent and utilities will be covered by County rental assistance through the Rental Assistance and Services for Returning Residents initiative. Individuals will have access to wraparound services for the entirety of the program.

Q: For legal services organizations, is there already any collaboration with Cook County Courts or the Clerk of Court?

A: The Reentry Initiative: Rental Assistance and Services for Returning Residents is a new program being developed for launch in summer 2023. The Justice Advisory Council will facilitate collaboration between county agencies and organizations selected as qualified providers for this initiative, as appropriate, including collaborations between Cook County's criminal justice system agencies and legal services organizations selected as qualified providers.

Q: What category of services would housing counseling and financial literacy training fall under? education or housing access advocacy?

A: Housing counseling and financial literacy training can fall under both service categories. Your organization can provide services that cover multiple categories listed in the RFQ.

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and Application Process

Q: Is this RFQ (Request for Qualifications) application process different than an RFP (Request for Proposals) Process?

A: Yes. The RFQ process being used for this opportunity asks that organizations provide information on specific programs and services they currently offer, as well as experience serving particular populations. This RFQ process is intended to identify a group of qualified service providers that could be contacted to provide specific services. The scope of work selected providers will be asked to complete will be established through a subsequent contracting process.



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RFP processes requires organizations to propose a specific program that would meet the project need. RFPs may include more determined structures and rely on the selected provider to coordinate more elements of program implementation.

Q: Can graphics/charts/graphs/etc. be included in Document 1? If so, can the font for any text in charts/graphs/graphics be smaller than 12-point-font?

A: Yes, graphics, charts and graphs can be included in Document 1. The font for these visualizations can be smaller than 12-pt, within reason. Text within Document 1 should be used to explain the content of the chart/graph/graphics rather than visuals serving as a workaround to the font size rule for the document as a whole.

Q: Do the RFQ questions have to be included in Document 1? If so, are all the questions posed in Sections 4 and 5 to be included verbatim in Document 1?

A: Yes, RFQ questions do have to be included in Document 1. Specifically, the questions from Section 5: Organizational Readiness, questions 1 through 5, as well as the questions under Section 6: Required Submission Documents > Document 1: Program Qualifications Document > Wraparound Services Qualification Description should be included verbatim.

The chart from the bottom of Section 5 should also be included, though it may be formatted as you see fit.

Q: In Document 3, would unaudited financials be acceptable in place of audited financials?

A: Yes. Unaudited financials are acceptable.

Q: For Document 3, are all 3 materials required? (Audited financials, Form990, Signed statement by Board Chair)?

A: Yes. All are required and must be included in your application submission. If an organization does not have audited financials, unaudited financials are acceptable.

Q: Is the References Page part of the 7-page limit? Will the questions count towards our 7-page limit?

A: No, the references page is an additional 1 page. Document 1 contains a 7-page maximum Wraparound Services Qualification Description (including the text of the questions) *plus* 1-page references page.

Q: Will submissions be denied if the qualifications document is less than 7 pages?

A: No, 7 pages is the maximum not a minimum.



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Q: Do you take into account the applicant's experience in other projects/programs with the JAC?

A: Yes, if there are such relevant projects you are encouraged to refer to them.

Q: Should applicants write responses to each bullet point/question of a given section, or as a larger piece of prose that addresses all the questions and bullet points?

A: The former, please record answers to questions under each section. This helps us to see the answers under each question rather than searching for them in a larger piece of prose.

Q: Should we include a proposed number of clients/referrals we can accept per year and a proposed cost per participant in the Qualification Description?

A: You may, but it is not necessary. If your application is deemed qualified, we would ask for this information in the contracting phase.

Q: Is there specific language required for the statement signed by the Chair?

A: No specific language is required. The chair should be confirming the information the organization is submitting.

Q: If your organization does not do an annual audit, are there alternative documents you accept? (i.e. compilation, or statement done in QuickBooks, etc.)

Financial Statements and Current Operating budget.

Q: Are organizations limited to one application?

Each lead applicant is limited to submitting one application/response to the RFQ. The application should include all services you are qualified to and willing to provide. Organizations can be represented as a partner/sub-contractor under another application submitted by a different lead applicant.

Q: When you go to submit a response to the RFQ, can you save works in progress before submitting?

No, the online system does not allow you to save work and return to submit. We recommend working outside of the system to gather all required documents and information before you input your information and upload your documents. We also advise submitting in advance of the deadline to allow time to submit and troubleshoot if needed.



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Budgets and Financial Compliance

Q: If a DBA (Doing Business As) of another entity is submitting a response to the RFQ, is the DBA budget required?

A: The DBA entity budget is required.

Q: Explain being “fiscally responsible”? Is this required for small/newer organizations?

A: Agencies need to be to show experience in financial oversight and stewardship in managing budgets and funding. This is required for all organizations applying for funding.

Q: Can funding be used to hire staff or create 1099 contracts with individuals to provide services?

A: Yes.

Q: If an organization with a fiscal agent is applying, are both the budgets of the fiscal agent and the organization required?

A: The budget is the fiscal agent is required.

Partnerships

Q: Can partnerships/organizations who are in collaboration apply for this opportunity?

A: Yes

Q: Are sub-awards permitted?

A: Yes, sub relationships are permitted.

Q: Are you accepting applications in which there are multiple partners?

A: Yes, we are accepting applications of multiple partners; they can submit together and should if that is how they intend to operate.

Q: Are you awarding contracts for organizations for one component of the wraparound services, or should we form a collaborative to address all components?



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A: We will be doing multiple contracts some for single components, some for more than one component. It is not necessary or required form a collaborative.

Next Steps and Contracting

Q: Is the May/June deadline for our being put on the provider list, or actually receiving contracts?

A: May/June is for receiving the contracts, specifically the phase in which we go for approval of them, as needed, before the County Board.

Q: What are the anticipated award amounts/ funding amounts?

A: There are not anticipated funding amounts at this time as it depends greatly on the types of services being offered. The overall ARPA allocation for the initiative is approximately \$7 million spread over three years.

Q: Does the JAC have an anticipated number of contacts that will be awarded?

A: No, but we anticipate multiple contracts to cover all the wraparound components needed.

Q: If chosen to provide services, what will be the length of the contract or funding award?

A: It may depend on the contract, but we intend on providing these wraparound services for the duration of the ARPA initiative – through the end of 2026. However, most contracts will likely be annual with renewal options to get us to the end of 2026.

Q: How will contracts be structured? Will they be based on the expected volume or the actual number of referrals/as used basis?

A: This will be determined by the type of service.

Q: Will contracted organizations be connected as a cohort to facilitate referrals for additional services to clients in the program?

A: The JAC along with any overall case management agency we bring on board will facilitate referrals from the rental assistance part of the program to the wraparound services providers.

Q: What are the expected data outcome targets?

A: Undetermined at this time and highly variable based on service type.