



# Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Inviting qualified non-profit or government organizations to operate mental health crisis response services (MHCRS) in Half Moon Bay and the surrounding Coastside communities.

**Date of Issue: May 1, 2023**

**Qualifications Due Date: May 19, 2023, by 5:00pm PST**

## Program Overview

In summer 2020, America experienced a widespread social justice movement focused on police reforms related to use of force and response to mental health and other crises. This movement resonated with the Half Moon Bay community, who had witnessed local killings of two individuals at the hands of law enforcement: Yanira Serrano-Garcia in summer 2014 and then Sandra Harmon in spring of 2020. The City Council prioritized community outreach and research related to public safety and law enforcement in Half Moon Bay to support these discussions. They also created a subcommittee to discuss the City's existing contract with the Sheriff's Office and law enforcement in general, and to identify recommendations for reforms to be proposed in Half Moon Bay. The data gathered through these efforts informed subcommittee and Council discussions, public safety response alternatives, and negotiations with the Sheriff, including the 2022 renewal of the contract.

The outreach, feedback and research ultimately led to the launch of the Crisis Assistance Response and Evaluation Services (CARES) program on March 16, 2022. The CARES program is currently operated through a contract with a nonprofit service provider and provides two-person mobile crisis response teams. Each response team consists of specially trained, bilingual crisis responders who are dispatched through the County's Public Safety Communications call center (911) and the 988 Crisis Hotline to calls where there are no immediate threats of violence.

The CARES team focuses on using culturally competent de-escalation, crisis-intervention, motivational interviewing, and suicide prevention tools to work with individuals in crisis. Examples of the types of calls the CARES team responded to in the last year include persons with suicidal ideations, persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol, persons experiencing a mental health crisis, parents calling with concern for an adolescent youth exhibiting unusual behavior, and community members reporting persons in some form of emotional distress.

The initial pilot program operated 40 hours per week and responded to calls within the City limits of Half Moon Bay, as well as the Moonridge Farmworker Housing Community just south of the City's limits in unincorporated San Mateo County. In the summer of 2022, the CARES team expanded services to the entire Coastside, including the unincorporated mid-Coast. In September 2022, the CARES team expanded its hours of operation by adding a second team. CARES now responds 7 days per week, from 8:30 am to 6:30 pm.

Since the CARES team launched one year ago, they have responded to more than 300 calls across the Coastside. By serving as an alternative and partner to law-enforcement, fire, and other first responders, CARES has diverted hundreds of individuals from costly visits to emergency rooms and unnecessary entry into the criminal justice system. Collaboration with local and regional non-profits, County Health, the Sheriff's Office, and the community have been key to the success of the program and partnerships will remain vital for the continued success of the program.

With the pilot phase completed, the City desires to enter into a longer-term agreement with a qualified operator, who can continue the success of the first year of the CARES program and offer an alternative response to calls for mental health and other crises.

## Qualifications

The City is seeking a service provider with a history of implementing and operating successful mental health and/or crisis response services to operate civilian-based mental health crisis response services (MHCRS). Experience with mobile crisis response and collaboration with law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services and other first responders are preferred. This Request for Qualifications is open to all qualified non-profit and government agencies, with priority consideration given to those located and/or providing services in the Bay Area, and particularly on the San Mateo County Coastside.

## Scope of Services

The City is seeking a qualified provider for the following services:

### **Crisis Response Team Service and Response**

1. Operate mental health crisis response services (MHCRS) that serve the City of Half Moon Bay and surrounding unincorporated Coastside communities, from the Tom Lantos Tunnels, south to the San Mateo County/Santa Cruz County line, and east to Skyline Blvd.
2. Respond at least 10 hours per day, 7 days per week, and 365 days per year (excluding agreed upon holidays or other exceptions), as described below.
3. Provide community-based crisis intervention, welfare checks, screening, assessment, and referrals to appropriate local and regional resources.

4. Provide a timely in-person response - with a targeted response time of 8-15 minutes from dispatch to arrival - deployed through the County's 911 Public Safety Communications radio communication system or the 988-crisis hotline.
5. When not responding to a call for service, provide follow-up services, cruise the Service Area, engage with community groups, members, and visitors, and build relationships with partner agencies and service providers.
6. Collect and report on data related to calls for service and other activities.

### **Hours of Service**

The selected service provider would operate MHCRS teams at least 10 hours per day, 7 days per week, and 365 days per year (excluding agreed upon holidays or other exceptions). The actual hours of service each day will be based upon community need and agreed upon with the City in consultation with first response partners. The hours of service will be subject to change at the request of the City, with reasonable notice, throughout the term of the contract.

### **Types of Service**

The selected provider will respond to calls for service that will include but are not limited to: welfare checks, triage, screening, assessment, emotional support, crisis intervention and de-escalation, risk assessment, risk of harm to self, suicide prevention and intervention, psycho-social support, peer support services, referral to local area resources including coordination with medical and behavioral health services and homeless services providers and resources, including housing assistance referrals, transport to local social services, non-emergency medical evaluations, first aid, public health support to those experiencing homelessness, and opioid overdose intervention.

The selected provider will collaborate with other first responders, mobile response services, and mental health and social service providers serving the San Mateo County Coastside. Specifically, they will work closely with San Mateo County Public Safety Communications, the San Mateo County Sheriff, and the City of Half Moon Bay in the development and implementation of policies and procedures for dispatching mobile crisis services.

The selected provider will follow existing practices and help establish new protocols, procedures, relationships, and practices with relevant providers and additional stakeholders to ensure that clients served are connected to additional care. Relevant providers and additional stakeholders may include but are not limited to the following: mental health services, inpatient referrals, outpatient scheduling, homeless services providers, linkages to shelter and housing navigation for clients experiencing homelessness, linkages to other basic needs and community supports, substance use disorder providers (linkages to treatment and resources, transport to sobering centers), assistance with transportation to a licensed facility or a family residence, bus fare, or ride hailing service (within reason).

### **Facilities and Equipment**

Except as otherwise noted in this RFQ or mutually agreed to, the selected provider will supply all facilities and equipment that may be required to perform the scope of work, which includes obtaining and maintaining:

1. An office within the City where its team members can complete necessary office work.
2. At least one vehicle for mobile crisis response, including appropriate back-up to always maintain response levels (the vehicle will enable a safe space to sit with, talk to, and provide care for clients).

3. Any other tools, supplies and equipment deemed necessary to fulfill the scope of work (cell phones, tablets, laptops, first aid, food, water, AED, etc....).

Due to the nature of the equipment utilized by San Mateo County for dispatch services, the City shall provide radio equipment for contractor to be dispatched. Such equipment is owned and maintained by the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office, and contractor will be liable for lost or damaged equipment.

### **Staffing**

The MHCRS teams shall be composed of a minimum of two Crisis Intervention Specialists. Each of the Specialists will be specially trained and/or experienced mental health workers who has demonstrated the ability to manage difficult, crisis situations. Required training will include, but not be limited to: CIT, suicide prevention, mental health first aid, motivational interviewing, and Basic Life Support for first responders. A licensed clinician is not necessary to fill this position, but the MHCRS teams must be supervised by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker or equivalent. At least one member of each team shall have cultural and language competency in understanding and working with the local populations to be served, including Spanish.

### **Data and Reporting**

The selected provider will work closely with the City to collect and report on data related to calls received and responded to, as well as other interactions and efforts within the community. The data will include but not be limited to demographic information about clients, preferred language, referrals to outside agencies, response times, follow up visits, and any other information necessary to evaluate the success of the provider and the program in serving the community. The provider will modify the collection, analysis and reporting of the data at the request of the City. The provider must be knowledgeable of and in compliance with HIPAA, 42 CFR, and other laws, regulations or best practices related to client data collection and reporting.

## **Term of Program**

The City intends to continue the operation of this program into the foreseeable future. Depending upon funding (as described below), the term of services provided under this RFQ shall be for up to five years.

## **Funding Assumptions**

The City has received a grant from the state's Behavioral Health Justice Intervention Services (BHJIS) program, which, along with City commitments, will fund the program through June 30, 2024. The City is actively pursuing the State's C.R.I.S.E.S. Grant Pilot Program, which would fund the program through April 2026. The County of San Mateo provided funding during the pilot period, and it is expected that additional funds may be made available if necessary to continue the program. The selected provider would be expected to work with the City to identify, apply for, and comply with other grant funding opportunities.

## **Evaluation Criteria and Process**

All submitted qualifications that meet the eligibility criteria listed below will undergo an evaluation process conducted by a review committee made up of City and County staff, and community members. Qualifications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated capacity to provide mobile mental health crisis response services and alternatives to law enforcement including but not limited to:
  - Respond to emergency calls at least 10 hours per day, 7 days per week.
  - Provide treatment, screening, and assessment.
  - Provide stabilization and de-escalation services.
- Commitment to establish or maintain relationships with existing community partners including City, County, mental and health providers, and community-based organizations to coordinate additional resources.
- Demonstrated cultural and language competency in understanding and working with the local populations to be served.
- Availability to start program delivery on July 1, 2023.

The review committee will evaluate all qualifying submissions based on demonstrated understanding of the scope of services and requirements from this RFQ. Respondents may be invited to participate in an interview. The partnering agency will be selected by the City Manager and notified via email. Once notification has been made, City staff will present a recommendation of final selection to City Council on June 20, 2023. The selected applicant will be required to provide a Letter of Intent to partner with the City and will work collaboratively to develop their application.

Proposers must submit applications in response to this RFQ including:

- Statement of qualifications
- Attachments to supporting documents.

## Timeline

Activity	Action Date & Time
RFQ Release	May 1, 2023- 8:00 AM
RFQ Deadline	May 19, 2023 – 5:00 PM
Evaluations	May 22-May 26 2023
Notice to proposers	May 30-June 2 2023
Interviews	June 5 – June 9 2023
Selected partnering CBO	June 12-June 16 2023
City Council Recommendation	June 20, 2023
Letter of Intent to Partner Due	June 23, 2023
Commence Services / Project	July 1, 2023

## Submittal

Submissions must be delivered electronically no later than **5:00pm PST on Friday, May 19, 2023** to [jacosta@hmbcity.com](mailto:jacosta@hmbcity.com)

The Statement of Qualifications should include the following:

1. Cover letter including organization profile and contact information.

2. Agency must be a public or nonprofit organization, or be fiscally sponsored by a nonprofit, that can demonstrate ability to effectively provide community-based alternatives to law enforcement and demonstrate involvement with the identified communities to be served.
3. Demonstrated experience and capacity to provide mobile mental health crises response services alternatives to law enforcement including but not limited to:
  - Emergency call response services at least 10 hours per day, 7 days per week.
  - Provide treatment, screening, and assessment.
  - Provide stabilization and de-escalation services.
  - Ability to coordinate with health, social services, and other support services, as needed.
4. Include data relevant to experience providing services to underserved populations including:
  - People of color.
  - People with disabilities.
  - Unhoused or homeless.
  - People who are gender non-conforming.
  - People who are formerly incarcerated.
  - People with immigration status issues.
5. Demonstrated understanding of local community language and cultural competency needs for populations served.
6. Necessary licenses and registration that demonstrate organization's accreditation to do business in California. Demonstrate accreditation where applicable.
7. Demonstrate the capacity to lead the proposed program with evidence of at least two years' experience providing crisis intervention services.

Questions: For any questions regarding the applications process, please email or call Julissa Acosta, City Manager's Office at [jacosta@hmbcity.com](mailto:jacosta@hmbcity.com) or (650) 750-2010.