

ENDING COMMUNITY HOMELESSNESS (ECHO) — DRAFT
Request for Proposals: Consultant to Review Data Quality & Reporting Systems

Project statement/Statement of need

ECHO is seeking a third party consultant to review and evaluate data systems, data quality, and reporting useful to the Homelessness Response System (HRS) anchored in system equity. The budget for this project is \$30,000. The consultant's report will be submitted to ECHO by June 30, 2022.

ECHO Background

ECHO is the lead agency for the Austin / Travis County Continuum of Care. ECHO works to engage policymakers, housing providers, those experiencing and with experiences of homelessness, and the community to end and prevent homelessness in Austin/Travis County, Texas. As the designated Continuum of Care (CoC) lead agency for Austin/Travis County, ECHO manages the collaborative process to develop and submit the Austin/Travis County application for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding for the annual HUD Continuum of Care Program. ECHO also administers the HUD required Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), is responsible for system wide outcomes and reporting to HUD and is the appointed facilitating agency of the community's Coordinated Entry system.

Governance Background

ECHO is a local nonprofit and is governed by a nonprofit board that is responsible for overseeing the organization's activities. As such, the ECHO nonprofit board follows their adopted by-laws. The ECHO Board consists of 9 board members and 5 Ex-Officio Members. The ECHO Board oversight of ECHO includes adopting the agency's budget and strategic direction. The Austin/Travis County Leadership Council serves as the Governing Board for the community's homelessness response system and is elected by CoC Stakeholders at CoC Fall Stakeholder meetings. ECHO staff provide support to the Leadership Council and the associated committees and workgroups as part of the CoC lead agency responsibilities. The awarded vendor will engage key ECHO staff and members of Governance Committees in the review and evaluation of data systems, data quality, and meaningful reports for the homelessness response system.

ECHO Data Quality & Reporting Systems

- ECHO currently uses WellSky's Service Point as the platform for the HMIS which stores longitudinal person-level information about characteristics and needs of persons who access the homelessness response system (HRS). HMIS connects homeless service providers within a community to help create a coordinated and effective housing and service delivery system.
- ECHO's Data Quality Division: The HMIS team is responsible for training new HMIS users on system use, data entry, data quality, client confidentiality and client data protection, responding to help desk tickets, building custom reports, and preparing and submitting HUD-required reports. The Research & Evaluation team manages the [HRS](#)

[Performance Monitoring dashboard](#), responds to stakeholder and community data requests, performs system-level evaluation, prepares HUD-required and community reports, and collects valuable qualitative and quantitative data to guide data-driven system improvement.

Project Background

ECHO and the TX-503 CoC is striving to be a more equitable, data-driven HRS. Some key initiatives include:

- Expanding our research and evaluation department to help our system understand how the HRS functions, including implications for racial equity
- Establishment of the public-facing [HRS Performance Monitoring dashboard](#) which is updated monthly and quarterly (available on the ECHO website)
- Supporting the new Leadership Council governance and the associated committees and workgroups
- Increasing system equity through intentional partnerships with community-based providers who have traditionally been excluded from the formal HRS, specifically Black and Brown-led organizations
- Supporting the community, in creating a prioritization tool which increases racial and gender equity within the community's Coordinated Entry System
- Development of a new Data Quality Plan through technical assistance and coordination of the HMIS database

System Data - Areas for Improvement

- Establishment of process metrics/inputs would improve system measurement and explain progress and/or obstacles
- Establishment of clear benchmarks for existing metrics would enable insight into system-wide goal achievement
- Alignment of common definitions for new and existing goals for system-wide initiatives would enable streamlined collaboration among stakeholders
- Understanding how to support small and under-resourced service provider organizations would promote complete and accurate data entry

Services to be Performed

- Assessment: ECHO is seeking a third party consultant to work with ECHO staff and key stakeholders to assess the following:
 1. What are the strengths, weaknesses, needs, and gaps in data quality and tactical practices (e.g., dashboard, data sharing/reports, cross-partner perf. monitoring meetings) that would improve the monitoring and performance of the HRS?
 2. How can existing key groups (e.g. committees, workgroups, PLE) that serve as anchor points within the HRS be integrated into tactical data quality and system improvement practices in a meaningful way?
 3. What are recommendations for strengthening data quality and reporting practices across the HRS in the coming year(s)?
 4. What are good examples where HRSs or other comparable systems are using and applying data well?

- Stakeholder discussions: Facilitate discussions with key ECHO staff and Committee stakeholders to assess usefulness of current data systems and recommendations for tactical improvements.
- Report: Creation of a report outlining the above mentioned assessment, stakeholder integration, recommendations for strengthening data quality and reporting practices, and providing examples of other comparable systems applying data well.

Required Qualifications

- Experience and expertise with assessment of HRS data systems (HMIS), analysis, planning, and best practices
- Experience and expertise in defining and developing HRS system metrics and benchmarks
- Expertise in applying a racial equity lens to HRS data systems and planning
- Strong facilitation skills
- Experience collaborating with HRS system users in a system improvement process

Preferred Qualifications

- Familiarity with the Homelessness Response System, including an understanding of federal guidelines and the roles and responsibilities of an HMIS Lead Agency
- An understanding of the impacts of racial disparity in the Homelessness Response System and the role of nonprofits in promoting and leading racial equity
- Experience at creating an equitable environment for, and soliciting input from, individuals from various sectors and with different levels of positional power
- Lived experience (homelessness, housing instability, poverty, disability, and/or recovery)
- Willingness to partner with a local BIPOC-led consultant or consulting group on this proposal

Proposal Submissions

General Information: The requested scope of work may be conducted by a single consultant, a consultant group, or by a partnership of consultants. The proposal should provide the name, title, address, telephone number, and email address for each person engaged in scope activities. Further, if a consultant group or partnership of consultants is proposed, the proposal should indicate who will serve as the “point” person for the purposes of this RFP and the engagement.

Consultant Qualifications and Roles: The proposal must describe the consultant’s qualifications to conduct the RFP scope of work activities, including expertise, knowledge, and experience. Experience should include examples of conducting similar or related work. If a consultant group or partnership of consultants is proposed to conduct the RFP scope of work, the proposal must indicate which activities each consultant will conduct as well as information about their level of expertise, knowledge, and experience to conduct those specific activities.

Work Plan: The proposal should contain a detailed description of the activities to be conducted by the consultant in order to complete the requested scope of work, including:

- Summary of Overall Proposal Vision, Scope, and Philosophy of Consulting
- The specific activities to be conducted at each stage
- A timeline for the activities at each stage
- Milestones and deliverables tied to those activities, and
- A budget for each stage, along with a proposed payment schedule tied to project milestones and/or deliverables.

References: The proposal should include three references of individuals who can speak to their experience with the consultant or consultant group in conducting projects of similar scope. Information regarding each reference should include: the Reference's name, address, telephone number, and email address.

Process Steps and Timeline

Phase 1	April 11 - May 13	First round - RFP released, Intent to respond, Q&A and initial introductory calls
Phase 2	May 16 - May 27	Second round - vendor presentations
Phase 3	May 30 - June 10	Execute service agreement
Kickoff	By June 17	Introductory meeting
Assessment	By September 9	System Assessment and Stakeholder Discussions
Wrap up	Before September 30	Report Submission

Inquiries and Point of Contact

ECHO is serving as the point of contact for inquiries related to this RFP. All questions/inquiries regarding this RFP may be directed to Angela de Leon.

Submissions

Submissions should be emailed to angeladeleon@austinecho.org by 5pm CST on May 13th.

Proposal Selection

ECHO Executive Leadership Team will work with key ECHO staff to comprise an RFP committee. The committee and ECHO reserves the right in negotiation with the contractor to amend the scope of work and timeline.