

Sullivan County, NH



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS SEEKING PROPERTY FOR SOBER HOUSING & RELATED SERVICES

**PROPOSALS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN 12:00 NOON ON
FRIDAY, MARCH 24, 2017
AND SHALL BE SEALED AND ADDRESSED TO:
Proposal for Sullivan County Sober Housing Program
Board of Commissioners' Office
14 Main Street
Newport, NH 03773**

Sullivan County, with facilities in Newport and Unity, NH, seeks proposals from property owners/agents or community partners for land or existing buildings in appropriate zones of Newport or Claremont or adjacent communities that may be developed, renovated, purchased, or leased – or some combination thereof -- for the uses described below.

In August 2010, Sullivan County's Department of Corrections opened its Community Corrections Center, where it houses its innovative rehabilitation and recovery treatment program for offenders with moderate-to-high risk drug or alcohol abuse and, if applicable, co-occurring mental health disorders. This program was named TRAILS, which stands for Transitional Reentry and Inmate Life Skills. Although TRAILS has been extremely successful – the rate of recidivism hovers below 20%, half of the State's recidivism rate – it has been more and more difficult to identify housing for the portion of the program that transitions the sober offender back into the community.

The County's challenge has been to find or develop reliably sober, affordable and convenient housing for an offender who is typically without a driver's license and a job and who needs access to continued treatment and recovery support during the 12-month post-release period called "aftercare," which is provided by the County and its partner, West Central Behavioral Health.

- A. Description of Space Needs:** The County seeks 6,000-8,000 SF in a building or standalone to use or adapt for use as dormitory-style housing for about 25 residents (two units, one for males and one for females, each with common kitchen and living area), as well as common conference rooms and office space for individual case management and counseling sessions.
- B. Zoning:** The County would prefer property located in commercial or mixed use zone districts with access to public utilities and public transportation or within walking distance to food and

services. Sullivan County's use is governmental and, subject to local government confirmation, likely to be exempt from zoning but not life safety requirements.

- C. Parking:** The County does not need parking for all 25 residents. Parking would be necessary for any office use and should endeavor to meet zoning requirements.
- D. Program Outline:** The County will be providing sober housing, case management, and counseling for the residents, who will be offenders on work release and electronic monitoring or released offenders supervised by Probation and active in the County's aftercare programming. Residents will pay weekly rent and will be responsible for their own food, clothing, linens, laundry, and personal items. A critical element of their reentry is that they contribute to their self-improvement and skill development by working or attending school for at least 40 hours per week. Residents will also be required to participate in recovery events, such as those offered at Hope for NH Recovery.

There is an expectation of accountability and performance for the residents; they will be required to sign and honor a housing contract and they will be supervised, undergo weekly urine screens, etc. During the workday, the program will be staffed by at least one DOC Community Corrections Officer trained in case management and the DOC clinicians will be on site for regular aftercare counseling and treatment. There will also be at least one recovery coach in residence.

- E. Potential for Grant Funding:** It is possible that Sullivan County could qualify for grant funds related to this project. Grant opportunities often include points for community partnership. Grants increase the chances of project funding but may extend the timeline.
- F. Timeline:** Schedule is dependent on the extent and cost of any construction, rehabilitation, permitting, approvals (including County Delegation approval), grant funding, etc. The timeline could range from 3-18 months, depending on scope of project and necessary permitting and funding approval processes.
- G. Proposal Requirements:** Proposals shall include:

- 1) Name and contact information of property owner and/or agent;
- 2) Location of property (please include map and current photo(s));
- 3) Description of property, including:
 - a) Size and number of entrances;
 - b) Existing conditions and any deficiencies or repairs needed;
 - c) Status of life safety/ADA compliance;
 - d) Zone district, public utilities, parking;
- 4) Management or maintenance contracts or arrangements;
- 5) Proposal for donation, sale or lease of property, including any and all terms, liens, encumbrances, etc.
- 6) Optional: If available, please include property surveys, site plans, or environmental studies

Proposals must be placed in an envelope securely sealed and labeled: "Proposal for County Sober Housing Program." *The County will not accept late, faxed, or emailed proposals.*

H. Frequently Asked Questions

- 1) *Will the general public be allowed to live in this housing?* At this time, the answer is “no,” and visitors will not be allowed into the living areas. These residences are intended specifically for offenders leaving the Sullivan County DOC, to fill a gap that we have identified in our corrections program. By serving only this population, we will know and have developed relationships with the residents that will allow us to provide counseling and support specific to their needs. The County is not opposed to exploring the idea of sober housing for the public in the future, but must focus on this population first.
- 2) *Will these offenders pose a threat to the neighborhood?* We believe that they will not. The residents of this housing will have chosen to live in this sober environment and will have agreed to live in a supervised environment with numerous conditions and high expectations. The offenders who will live here would live elsewhere in the community if this housing were not available, as they will have either completed their sentences or will be at the point where they could live in the community on work release. As said above, there will be *more* supervision and accountability than currently required of this population, and the community will be safer for it. A study conducted by the University of Cincinnati demonstrated that sober houses reduce recidivism for high risk/high need offenders, which is the population served by the County’s TRAILS program. We believe that this housing will lower recidivism and lead to *less* crime, not more.
- 3) *What about the safety of children?* There will be no sex offenders in the County’s housing. It is rare for sex offenders to be housed at the Sullivan County DOC, as those crimes are typically felonies that result in sentences at the NH State Prison, not county jails.
- 4) *Will this housing increase the municipality’s general assistance budget?* We believe the opposite will occur. We understand that former inmates often seek assistance for housing and other services. With our proposed housing model and our intervention at this stage, we anticipate being able to reduce the burden on the local welfare budgets.

The County reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal. The County further reserves the right to waive any technical defects or irregularities in any proposal submitted. For clarification and to ensure understanding of and responsiveness to the RFP, discussion may be conducted with parties that submit proposals.

Pursuant to NH RSA 91-A, documents submitted to the County may be deemed public records. The County reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to release for inspection or copying any document, plan, specification, proposal or other information submitted pursuant to a request.

Questions regarding this RFP should be e-mailed to Jessie Levine, County Manager, at manager@sullivancountynh.gov and/or to David Berry, Department of Corrections Superintendent, at dberry@sullivancountynh.gov.