**Minutes for Bidder’s Conference – VCEH Strategic Planning RFP**

**11/28/2017 from 3:38-4:30**

Attendees: Josh Davis, Laurel Chen Daniel Blankenship, Leah Schulz, Melany Mondello, Jane Van Buren David Tucker

Facilitated by Josh Davis, VCEH Co-Chair

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| **Question Raised** | **Reply** |
| Under the Desired Strategic Planning Outcomes, what is meant by “long-term perspective”? | Continuums of Care are HUD-mandated entities, which comes with a lot of responsibilities, but they are also drive by passionate people working in the field. We have to balance those two perspectives. We don’t have a lot of long-term direction or goals for the Coalition and would like to have that. Where do we want to take the Coalition in the next three to five years? |
| Are references part of the page limit? | No. |
| Are meetings held in White River Junction, and if not, where are they held? | VCEH meetings are held in Randolph every third Tuesday of the month from 10AM-12PM. |
| How many people will be involved in the interview process? | There are about 6 people on the Strategic Planning Committee, and 4-5 of them will be doing the interviews. |
| How many people is it expected the consultant will interview during their process? | We would lean on the expertise of the consultant, with guidance from the strategic planning committee, on key people to interview at the VCEH board level and Local Continuum of Care level. You could do multiple things to make time more valuable, such as devoted meeting time for strategic planning and using surveys for information gathering. There are a lot of people involved in VCEH at the state and local level, so it is about balancing the need to get multiple perspectives and making good use of time. |
| What do you envision as the implementation plan that is listed as one of the Strategic Planning Desired Outcomes? | A work plan of how we can take the information from the strategic plan and make sure we are able to actualize the goals that we’ve identified. |
| Are there any existing local plans? | Not that we are aware of however the Local Continuums of Care have made local goals that are more within the 6-12 month range. |
| Can you talk about the meeting structure and about on-site vs. remote work for the consultant? | The meeting structure, up to this point, has been primarily updates but that’s shifting. We just had one meeting focused on advocacy and next month’s meeting will have a section focused on the criminalization of homelessness, with someone from the ACLU of Vermont presenting.  We would like to see someone in-person but remote is also possible. Being at least one meeting and to present the plan would be important. We could streamline things to make good use of in-person time. Going to local Continuums of Care are not as integral and surveys or remote meetings could get at that aspect. |
| What is the committee’s perspective on stakeholder engagement throughout the process? | Josh would be the primary contact and a liaison for the committee to the consultant. The committee would want to have monthly check-ins for updates. Collecting information from the group, both VCEH board and Local CoCs, is vital. Stakeholders are multi-level: service providers, state agencies, and quasi state agencies (Vermont State Housing Authority). Information collection includes both internal (from stakeholders) and external (for example, the Point in Time Count Report, the Roadmap to End Homelessness). One central question is, how do we situate our work in relation to the other plans that are out there? And also, what is going on with other Continuums of Care? |
| How do you envision including folks with lived experience of homelessness? | Two people on our Board are people with lived experience of homelessness, and the consultant could tap service providers to find others who want to share information.  We are very open to ideas from the consultant. We may have our own ideas but are open to the consultant saying, well that’s good, but I think this may be a better route. |
| Can you talk about the environment you work in, in relation to politics and funding? | The Balance of State Continuum of Care, which is in essence VCEH, is the vehicle for a bit over $3 million of HUD funding. There is always some tension between HUD priorities and the work of providers at a local level. There is a balance between what we need to do to get more points for our HUD funding and what we can reasonably do as a volunteer coalition. There is also potential for advocacy and risk planning should there be HUD cuts in the future.  The Planning Grant funds, which fund the Continuum of Care Support Specialist Position, are not necessarily guaranteed forever. What if the Planning Grant funds become unavailable? Where are other sources of funding that we can tap and additionally, services are harder to fund because HUD does not fund services. These are areas that would be good to look into potential funding sources. |
| What are the other statewide entities that do similar work to the Coalition? | Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition, Vermont Council on Homelessness, and the Chittenden County Continnuum of Care (Chittenden County Homeless Alliance). |
| Is this plan primarily intended to help develop VCEH’s structure and functioning or is it to bring in funding? | More so formalizing our structure, so the former. We want to identify and codify a structure in our planning efforts that can support our short and long term goals.  How do other Coalitions similar to ours operate and function? What can we learn from them? |
| Can you speak to how you see the relationship between the firm, specifically is the strategic planning committee to play more of an advisory or participatory role in the information gathering and creation of the plan? | More an advisory role. |
| What’s your biggest fear in regards to this strategic planning? | That what comes out of it is not applicable and therefore a waste of time. However the Coalition is in support of this strategic planning and has approved the charter of the Strategic Planning Committee. We are ready and excited to do this |

Josh Davis, VCEH Co-Chair, shared with everyone that proposals are due Wednesday, December 6 at 5pm. From there, the Strategic Planning Committee will review proposals and invite finalists for interviews between December 14th and 20th. We plan to pick the final candidate in mid-January with a start date the last Monday in January. This will allow time to complete the plan by the end of the summer.