

FY2022 Clark County CoC Unsheltered Homelessness Set Aside Project: SSO-Outreach or SSO-Other

1. Agency Name

Share, Inc.

2. Your Name

Katie Duncan

3. Email

Kduncan@sharevancouver.org

4. Project Name

Outreach Access and Retention Services

5. Specify the Type of Project: Is your agency applying for SSO-Street Outreach (to fund street outreach activities or is your agency applying for SSO-Other (to fund stand-alone support services to those experiencing homelessness or who have been homeless in the prior 6-months but are now residing in permanent housing (that is not PSH or RRH). Specify SSO-Street Outreach or SSO-Other in the box.

SSO – Street Outreach

Project Description:

1. Please give an overview of the proposed project design. (10 points)

Share's Outreach Team serves those who are hardest to reach by going into the community and bringing services to them. Many of our clients struggle in accessing services due to mobility, physical and mental health concerns, or difficulty in being around large groups of people. Our Outreach Team works to bridge that gap so that everyone experiencing homelessness in Clark County has access to a variety of services that can better their situation.

In order to provide a higher level of support to our clients, work to transition more unsheltered individuals into housing and offer the highest quality intervention, we are proposing the hiring of two new employees to work with those who are chronically homeless or are struggling with a disability while being unsheltered. This will allow our Outreach team to dedicate time to these individuals, addressing their housing barriers, and working towards gaining permanent housing and helping them achieve other long-term goals. In order to achieve this, we would hire two

full-time employees with an emphasis on people with lived experience of unsheltered homelessness to join Share's Outreach Team.

The first new role would be a specialist in SOAR. The SOAR Specialist will work with individuals with disabilities on applying for Aged, Blind, and Disabled benefits and Social Security Income. This position will work closely with healthcare organizations, including behavioral health agencies, to secure the necessary documentation for SOAR applications and improve health outcomes. By having a person dedicated to doing this work the person could work on multiple applications at a time and form more relationships with our local social security office making them better situated to move people through the system faster.

The second new role would be a Housing Navigator. The Housing Navigator will work with individuals on applying for housing assistance programs and will develop relationships with housing agencies, local landlords and property management companies. The staff will support the client in being able to discuss their criminal history, rental history and credit history with a potential landlord.

The proposed program will work to move unsheltered homeless individuals into housing by working with specialists to address their unique barriers to housing. We aim to work with 100 individuals through the terms of this grant. The specialists would work with clients to gain housing as well as continue working with them for six months after they have exited the streets to provide additional support as the individual makes the transition into housing.

2. Please describe the programmatic strategies that will be used to reduce rates of households returning to homelessness and increase permanent housing placement. (5 points)

When working with unsheltered individuals, it is crucial to understand the barriers to housing each person is facing and determine solutions to ensure once housing has occurred, that the person remains housed in a shelter or permanent housing. In this time, obtaining food and other essential household items, increasing income, while also supporting the client in setting up supports for when they become housed to have healthcare needs addressed, behavioral health treatment, and connecting households to other support services. Additionally, we will support client choice in housing selection. We will review all the necessary information, attempt to answer any questions, and transport households to the housing property to physically see where they would be living so they can make an informed decision.

To increase permanent housing placement, we will attend By Name List Meetings, conduct coordinated entry housing and vulnerability assessments, and the Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT). The VAT assesses chronically unhoused individuals that have a disability and have been recommended Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) to refer them to a housing program. We will work closely with coordinated entry on housing placements to ensure households are

being referred to the most appropriate housing program for them based on their self-report and staff's recommendation. Lastly, our program will be proactive about removing barriers to housing and will ensure households have the paperwork necessary to expedite the move-in process for PSH.

Through Share's program, we aim to educate, support and assist individuals in overcoming their barriers to housing. Once we have worked to educate and assist in providing clients with the proper benefits and services, they will be able to focus on remaining sheltered or permanently housed with the help of Share program staff.

3. Describe the specific plan to coordinate and integrate with other mainstream health, social services, and employment programs for which program participants may be eligible. How will you ensure that program participants will be assisted to obtain all benefits for which they may be eligible? (10 points)

Through the work of Share's Outreach team, we understand that our clients require services and programs to assist with obtaining benefits they need to have a successful transition into housing.

We will coordinate and integrate with other mainstream services and will be utilizing Pathways HealthConnect to do so. The Pathways HealthConnect includes an assessment to help clients identify health concerns, both physical and behavioral, housing issues, transportation, food, education, childcare or parenting information and more. Staff will use this database to help focus on where the client would like to see change, then the staff would support the client by helping to meet the need, as well as referring to other agencies and then following up on those referrals both with the provider and the client to see how they went. Share has long partnered with other health, employment and social services in Clark County to provide our clients with the services they require. We will also ask individuals and families to sign releases of information (ROI) for any other programs they are or will be participating in so we can communicate with these agencies on their behalf.

We will ensure that program participants will be assisted in obtaining all benefits they may be eligible for by completing a program entry intake assessment. This will allow us to access what barriers they may have and what benefits they may be eligible for. We will then add these as goals to their case plan, set follow-up dates, and have releases signed to ensure service delivery. As needed, we will transport households to agencies and support them through the process of applying for and obtaining benefits.

4. What type of internal agency support services will be offered to program participants that will ensure successful retention in or help to obtain permanent housing? (5 points)

Share works to ensure that clients we will work with through the program can work through the circumstances that led to chronic homelessness to ensure successful retention in the program or securing permanent housing. Utilize Coordinated Entry to seek out housing programs, keep the clients connected through Pathways HealthConnect to aid them in their stability and follow up and other supports developed to ensure that those relationships continue even after the client is housed.

Many of our unsheltered clients require social security benefits. This is a long process that the clients do not have the resources to go through alone. The SOAR advocate will support people through the cumbersome process of applying for social security benefits. This person would be an ally to assist in making appointments, navigating forms and obtaining all the necessary documentation. At the current time, we have current members of our Outreach team assisting clients through this process. As they have other responsibilities, they are only able to do so much. By hiring a specialist, our program would be more efficient in helping our clients obtain these benefits. When our clients can access their social security benefits, this is a large step in achieving their goals of permanent housing or their other long-term goals.

5. How does the agency receive and incorporate feedback from persons with lived experience of homelessness? How will this project incorporate the feedback from persons with lived experience of homelessness? (5 points)

Share plans to administer Client Satisfaction Surveys to each of the participants to receive feedback and will use the survey results to incorporate necessary changes into the program. Surveys will be collected and reviewed by the Program Manager and Data & Operations Manager on a quarterly basis. From these surveys, we will work to incorporate the feedback provided by including persons with lived experience of homelessness in the decision-making process. We will do this by facilitating an advisory group that meets once a quarter. This group will be open to anyone with lived experience of homelessness and will be limited to 10 people per group per quarter.

Share will continue to seek opportunities to evaluate the program, and in addition to the surveys, program staff regularly solicit informal feedback from clients to evaluate the program's efficiency and reveal opportunities to improve services.

6. What strategies will this program use to ensure the needs of historically underserved populations are met? (5 points)

According to 2021 U.S. Census Bureau data, 85.2% of Clark County's population (511,404 individuals) identifies as white alone, and despite BIPOC communities making up less than 25% of Clark County's population, data from Council for the Homeless indicates that 42% of households entering local homelessness prevention programs during the past year were headed by a self-identified person of color. In recognition that Clark County has a

predominantly white population, and our systems are largely built to serve this majority, meeting the unique needs of BIPOC clients will require BIPOC staff working in our programs. With the support of our DEI team, Share is working to improve its hiring practices to ensure that our staff reflects the clients we serve.

In addition, our program will prioritize marginalized communities for housing and other support services. We recognize that to be equitable we need to allocate more resources and opportunities to marginalized communities to reach an equal outcome as these communities are disproportionately affected by systemic oppression. Furthermore, we will provide culturally responsive services by creating a safe space for marginalized communities by being non-judgmental, maintaining confidentiality, and through active listening and continuing education around the needs of oppressed groups. At Share, we are continuing to educate and improve our processes and programs to ensure all needs are met by the clients that we serve.

7. How has the agency reviewed disaggregated data, what did it learn and what is the current plan to create more equitable programs? (5 points)

In alignment with national data on racial disparities, systemic racism has contributed to the overrepresentation of BIPOC families impacted by homelessness in Clark County. According to 2021 U.S. Census Bureau data, 85.2% of Clark County's population (511,404 individuals) identify as white alone, and despite BIPOC communities making up less than 25% of Clark County's population, data from Council for the Homeless indicates that 42% of households entering local homelessness prevention programs during the past year have been headed by a self-identified person of color.

Share's new data and operations manager position has supported the organization in tracking our program outcomes and analyzing our data by race to evaluate successes in our equity work as well as opportunities for growth.

Through initial efforts to address inequities within our organization, we have learned that ensuring homelessness is short-term and one-time requires Share to actively address the effects of systemic racism in our community by tailoring our services to support families of color. In recognition that Clark County is a predominantly white population, and our systems are largely built to serve this majority, prioritizing and meeting the unique needs of households of color requires recruiting people of color to work in our programs. With the support of our DEI team, Share is working to improve its hiring practices to ensure that our staff reflect the households we serve.

Share's Compliance and Equity Manager, Deputy Director and a member of the Share E-team are currently participating in a Racial Equity Policy Intensive where our goal is to develop a policy and procedure around racial harm in the workplace.

8. Describe how the applicant is an active participant in the local Continuum of Care meetings. (5 points)

Share's deputy director, Amy Reynolds, is a member of Clark County's Continuum of Care (CoC) Steering Committee, which meets monthly to ensure best practices and effective services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Clark County. She has chaired the advocacy committee for the continuum, and Share staff participate in the CoC's HMIS Users and Chronically Homeless By Name List workgroups as well. In addition, Katie Louis, Share's Affordable Housing and Stability program director has been a part of CoC workgroups that are aiming to develop a referral method for those clients who have accessed rapid rehousing and need to transition to permanent housing.

I agree that the information herein is true and correct.

Yes