

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: BENEFITS NAVIGATOR PROGRAM**

**ELIGIBLE PROPOSERS:** Nonprofits, charitable organizations or Community Development Corporations (CDCs) to administer a Benefits Navigator Program for residents living in the city limits of Savannah, Georgia.

**SCOPE OF SERVICES:** The City of Savannah seeks to establish an agreement with an organization to conduct extensive street level outreach to households in Savannah neighborhoods where residents have a high probability of being eligible for public benefits and other family supports and to connect individuals and households to these benefits by administering a Benefits Navigator Program for residents living in the city limits of Savannah, Georgia.

Organizations with demonstrated experience in determining client eligibility for federal programs are encouraged to respond to Benefits Navigator Program Request for Proposals (RFP). The proposed programs and/or activities must benefit Savannah residents with a focus towards low-income communities, as residents who are benefits-eligible often do not access these benefits because of multiple barriers, such as: limited or no access to temporary childcare, an inability to leave their place of employment during business hours, limited literacy/reading skills, unreliable or lack of transportation, unable to access or understand documents, fear and/or confusion.

For more information about this opportunity, see the Benefits Navigator Program Request for Proposals on the City's website at [www.savannahga.gov/humanservices](http://www.savannahga.gov/humanservices).

**SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS:** Proposals must be submitted electronically to the City of Savannah, Human Services Department, no later than 5:00 p.m., February 10, 2022 at: [grants@savannahga.gov](mailto:grants@savannahga.gov).

## **Benefits Navigator Program REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

### **1.0 Broad Description of Project**

The City of Savannah is soliciting proposals from nonprofits, charitable organizations or Community Development Corporations (CDCs) to conduct extensive street level outreach to households in Savannah neighborhoods where residents have a high probability of being eligible for public benefits and other family supports and to connect individuals and households to these benefits by administering a Benefits Navigator Program for residents living in the city limits of Savannah, Georgia.

The program will provide residents with non-traditional access to the public benefits application process, such as mobile-friendly options and door to door outreach methods to educate residents about available benefits and to screen for City, State, and Federal program eligibility.

Many residents may be eligible for government programs to assist with the cost of health care, childcare and other necessities but are unaware or deterred by challenging application processes. Residents who are benefits-eligible often do not access these benefits because of multiple barriers, such as: limited or no access to temporary childcare, an inability to leave their place of employment during business hours, limited literacy/reading skills, unreliable or lack of transportation, unable to access or understand documents, fear and/or confusion. The Benefits Navigator Program will help clients navigate application processes for programs such as Medicare, Medicare RX, Medicare Savings Program, Medicaid, State Property Tax Assistance, Regular Home Energy Assistance, Telephone Assistance, Georgia Food Stamp Program, Social Security, Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI) and other benefits programs.

The City's goal is to get as many benefits-eligible residents of Savannah connected to the support necessary for their households to succeed. Therefore, the City is seeking a service provider that will employ non-traditional, creative strategies to outreach to residents with a high probability of eligibility, meeting residents where they live and congregate, educate them about possible economic and social service supports, and help them apply for benefits by administering the Benefits Navigator Program.

#### **Eligible Proposers**

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is available to nonprofits, charitable organizations or Community Development Corporations (CDCs) to administer a Benefits Navigator Program for residents living in the city limits of Savannah, Georgia.

For this RFP, a Charitable Organization is defined as any voluntary health, welfare or educational agency that is: (1) a private, self-governing, non-profit organization chartered or authorized to do business in the State of Georgia by the Office of the Secretary of State; (2) exempt from taxation; and (3) one to which contributions are authorized as deductible by Section 170 of the United States Internal Revenue Code, as amended.

### **1.1 Scope of Services**

The City of Savannah partners with State of Georgia's Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services as an Umbrella Organization to provide resident access to Georgia Gateway, the state government's web portal for accessing assistance programs, applying, and renewing benefits, uploading documents, and reporting any changes to benefits.

The selected vendor must be an existing Georgia Gateway Assisted Services Site or register and be approved as a site prior to program implementation.

An Assisted Services Site aids residents with the completion of their Georgia Gateway application. For this RFP, Assisted Service Sites are organizations such as nonprofits, charitable organizations, or CDCs.

#### **The Assisted Services Site (Selected Vendor) shall:**

- (a) Ensure that program participants are aware that the Assisted Services Site is a Georgia Gateway Community Partner by displaying a Georgia Gateway sign in the lobby and on marketing materials for the public to view.
- (b) Not charge a fee or request/accept donations for providing the services agreed to in its agreement with the City of Savannah.
- (c) Provide equipment such as, but not limited to, phone, internet service, fax, phone, computer, paper, toner and other general supplies.
- (d) Comply with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and any relevant federal and state laws, rules and regulations regarding the availability/accessibility of services provided because of a contract with the City of Savannah for residents with disabilities.
- (e) Make reasonable modifications in policies, practices and procedures to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate. This includes services for the deaf or hard of hearing, blind, visually disabled, deaf/blind, speech disabilities, manual, or mental/intellectual disabilities that require communication assistance. Title II of the ADA prohibits discrimination based on disability by state and local governments. The ADA and Section 504 cover issues pertaining to both physical access and program access.

- (f) Communicate with customers and companions with disabilities as effectively as it communicates with others.
- (g) Provide meaningful access to individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP).
  - i. This includes the use of interpreters in face-to-face situations or by telephonic language line services, including how to return telephone and email messages left in non-English languages. Ensure proper documentation is obtained and signed for each encounter with an individual with LEP or individual with a disability who may require communication assistance.
- (h) Be held responsible for information security, especially involving the access, transport or storing of sensitive and confidential information. Fulfillment of security responsibilities shall be mandatory, and violations may be cause for action, up to and including civil penalties or criminal penalties under Federal and State laws.
- (i) Immediately report knowledge or reasonable suspicion of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a child, aged person, or disabled adult to the Georgia Abuse Hotline on the statewide toll-free telephone number (1-800- 422-4453).

In addition to the federal, state or local requirements listed above, the selected vendor shall perform the following:

- (1) Develop and implement the Benefits Navigator Program in compliance with pertinent Federal regulations to include confidentiality and records retention.
- (2) Serve as the City's primary intake agency for Savannah residents seeking benefits assistance.
- (3) Develop a multi-faceted marketing approach and service delivery model for applicant benefits intake and requests.
  - (a) Include specific outreach strategies that integrate street level neighborhood outreach to individuals and families and a projected timeline outlining services to be provided to the targeted population.
  - (b) Develop workshops and public forums that promote and inform impacted residents of the available resources; provide benefits educational guides, informational handouts and paper applications as requested by customers.
  - (c) Create program materials such as intake forms, reporting documents, etc.
- (4) Utilize the Gateway Benefits Portal to evaluate and assess clients to determine eligibility for public benefit assistance.

- (5) Meet with prospective residents and provide information and technical assistance to assist with completing benefits applications. For some applicants, the communications may be by telephone and/or e-mail to accommodate the applicant.
- (6) Determine client eligibility and refer applicable clients to local social services programs and maintain sufficient documentation of all benefits applicants as required by regulations.
- (7) Maintain detailed records of all contacts and provide required reports to the City of all public benefits assistance, including but not limited to name, address, demographics, program eligibility, applications submitted, and benefits received by Savannah residents along with corresponding documentation.

## 1.2 Proposal Format

Proposals shall be submitted in the following format:

- (1) **Qualifications and Experience** – This Request for Proposals is limited to all nonprofits, charitable organizations or CDCs. Provide an overview of the entity's qualifications and experience, including:
  - (a) Background and history, including year established, type of ownership, public or private company structure
  - (b) Current Organizational Chart and name of Project Manager for this program
  - (c) Number and location of offices located in the City of Savannah
  - (d) Number of total current personnel and the number that will work on this program
  - (e) Experience implementing similar programs or services, including the number of years provided
  - (f) History and/or goals in community reinvestment
- (2) **Program Outreach Plan** – Proposers must provide a detailed and multi-faceted plan for outreach and marketing on the various benefits available to residents interested. The proposed Program Outreach Plan must include:

Specific strategies for outreach to Savannah residents at the street and neighborhood level, including a detailed strategy for outreaching to disadvantaged and minority residents to achieve the highest level of awareness and participation among these groups, with special attention to eligible, low-to-moderate income target areas.

  - (a) The types of benefits assistance that will be available to prospective residents by listing goals and objectives to deliver the correct information.

- (b) The projected implementation timeline that includes but is not limited to identifying target audience, implementation of program development, marketing and outreach strategies, data collection and evaluation.
  - (c) How the entity will document and report outreach activities to assure the City and the public that extensive effort has been made to ensure program participation is as inclusive as possible.
- (3) **Performance Targets** – Identify the following performance targets the organization will achieve:
- (a) Total number of targeted households (households with a high probability of eligibility for public benefits) the organization will reach through direct street level door-to-door contact and other direct engagement activities.
  - (b) Of the above number of households reached, the number/percentage of these households that the organization projects it will be able to register for Public Assistance Benefits
- (4) **Program Methodology** – Describe how the entity plans to implement the program, if selected, including:
- (a) **Program Services** –Please include how information on the Benefits Navigator Program can be accessed by residents, any support/assistance that will be available to residents and how quickly benefit assistance can be processed and managed.
  - (b) **Program Hours and Locations** – The program offerings must be accessible to all populations. Identify the specific locations, days and times when program services will be available, including physical addresses. If services will be available at multiple sites, indicate which services will be available at each site. For physical locations, indicate how the entity will comply with any City mandated COVID protocols.
  - (c) **Eligibility Verification** – Describe how the entity plans to manage collecting and validating the eligibility of City of Savannah residents who seek benefits assistance.
  - (d) **Partner Organizations** – The City of Savannah encourages organizations to partner with each other to reach as many areas of the community as possible where assistance may be needed. Please describe any new or existing partnerships the entity plans to pursue to assist with implementation of the program. Include letter(s) of support from partner organizations, with the proposed role(s) of partners and whether the relationship is/will be voluntary or paid. Identify the lead entity.

(5) **Program Timeline** – Describe the proposed timeline for administering the program.

(6) **Fee Proposal** – Identify the administrative costs associated with providing the services outlined in this request for proposals and the fee the entity is seeking to administer the program. All costs need to be generally recognized as ordinary and necessary for administration of the requested program.

**1.3 Basis of Award:**

Proposals shall be evaluated according to the following criteria:

<b>Qualifications &amp; Experience</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Program Outreach Plan</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Performance Targets</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Program Methodology</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Program Timeline</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Proposed Fees</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>

**1.4 Proposal Deadline**

Proposals must be submitted electronically to the City of Savannah, Human Services Department, no later than **5:00 p.m., February 10, 2022** at: [grants@savannahga.gov](mailto:grants@savannahga.gov)

All proposals must be submitted in accordance with the instructions contained in this Request for Proposals. All requested information must be uploaded at the time the proposal is submitted.

For more information, please contact the Human Services Department at: 912-651-6520.