(Selected Excerpts from Proposal)

Administrative Support of the Iowa Council on Homelessness

RFP #HC2013-001

Proposal

Submitted by State Public Policy Group, Inc.

October 11, 2013

www.sppg.com

4.2.3 Experience

4.2.3.1 SPPG is a private consulting firm providing issue-based practical approaches and solutions. The work of the company is, typically, closely related to public policy and does not take a partisan approach to our work. SPPG tailors services to the needs of each client to address unique goals, issues, and challenges involved that will achieve common ground and pave the way for successful implementation. SPPG is an Iowa-based small business that has served hundreds of public, private, and nonprofit clients for nearly 30 years in communities across Iowa, the Upper Midwest, nationally, and internationally. SPPG has applied its approach to facilitation, stakeholder engagement, project management, and system development in diverse issue areas and has a solid track record of assisting small and large groups to achieve outcomes and specific goals and deliverables. www.sppg.com

4.2.3.2 Now in its 30th year of business, SPPG has provided the services sought by this RFP as part of the core services since the founding of the company. State Public Policy Group is noted by many as unique in the region and the nation for its comprehensive scope of policy development, support, planning, and project management services available from a single firm. Specialized services that are pertinent to the proposed work include the following:

- Facilitation and process facilitation – 29 years
- Board development and organizational planning – 29 years
- Organizational development and sustainability – 29 years
- Issue planning and management – 29 years
- Outreach and stakeholder engagement – 29 years
- Project management – 29 years
- Design and materials development – 29 years

SPPG has established a reputation for straightforward approaches to engaging stakeholders, providing information from which to make decisions or recommendations, achieving the stated goals in a timely manner, and being successful in managing diverse groups to find common ground. Issues in which these approaches to policy development have provided the state of Iowa recommendations and plans range across the spectrum from policy regarding the Iowa Communications Network to training for direct care professionals to local emergency management.

4.2.5 Overview of Services and Demonstration of Vendor's Knowledge

4.2.5.1 The scope of work called for in this Request for Proposals (RFP) keenly focuses on the goals and purpose of the Iowa Council on Homelessness, that is, to develop a coordinated and seamless service delivery system utilizing existing resources to address issues that lead to and keep people homeless. While homelessness is an extremely complex topic, approaching solutions by developing statewide standards through engaging on-the-ground services providers can be effective across the array of homelessness issues.

State Public Policy Group, Inc. (SPPG) proposes to support the Iowa Council on Homelessness and Iowa Finance Authority through a closely coordinated set of activities to address the identified RFP strategies and meet stated deliverables. Essentially, the Iowa Council on Homelessness (ICH) seeks recommendations from a State Planning Advisory Committee comprising a diversity of service providers from across the state. Recommendations of that Advisory Committee will be made regarding service provider performance standards, service standards, and operating standards. The State Planning Advisory Committee members will be identified through a facilitated process to establish regions and draw service providers from those regions. A plan for implementation of the recommendations will include reporting and monitoring elements.

Much of this work is driven by changes in the federal programs funding homelessness services. Those changes include consolidation of programs under the umbrella of the Continuum of Care Program and alignment of Emergency Solutions Program goals. These changes in program guidelines and in the new requirements for standards, reporting, monitoring, and action to improve are likely, in and of themselves, generating mixed reviews among the state's service providers. Change naturally creates a period of uncertainty for stakeholders at all levels.

SPPG suggests that engagement of stakeholders in discussion and deliberation will assist in managing the uncertainty and provide a stronger foundation for the service delivery system statewide.

SPPG will implement the scope of work in three phases. Phase 1 will result in meeting the two deliverables outlined in Goal 1 – the determination of statewide planning regions and convening of the designated representatives in the State Planning Advisory Committee. Phase 2 will result in recommendations from the State Planning Advisory Committee for common performance standards, common service standards, and common operating standards for the array of homelessness services and providers. The documentation of these standards will be provided in a report from the Advisory Committee. Phase 3 will focus on utilizing those recommendations in work with the Iowa Council on Homelessness and HMIS provider to develop an implementation plan.

Upon award of the contract, SPPG will be prepared for a rapid launch of the work. We believe it is critical to meet early with the appropriate Iowa Council on Homelessness and IFA officials to establish the ongoing working relationship and expectation for the project. SPPG will designate a primary point of contact for project management, communication, and reporting, and ask that ICH/IFA designate a primary contact as well. At the initial meeting, the parties will determine the preferred means and frequency of communication and the contents to be included in monthly progress reports. At this first meeting, SPPG and ICH/IFA will share information and background resources as needed.

SPPG's approach to this effort emphasizes a long-term view for success. Our experience shows that engaging stakeholders early and in a meaningful way is more likely to secure a stronger and lasting commitment to implementation of the final recommendations. For this reason, SPPG expects to invest a good bit of effort early to provide and seek information from the stakeholders around the state. While it may not always be possible, SPPG's team and facilitators will work toward agreement at the local level in key elements of the project that include determining the regions, determining regional representatives to the Advisory Council, and in local review and support of the resulting draft recommendations of the Advisory Council.

Phase 1 Activities

SPPG will utilize existing networks and undertake additional efforts to inform existing homeless services planning and provider organizations of this statewide effort and include them in communications and opportunities for input. The RFP provides a short time frame, considering the holidays, for the initial work of ensuring statewide awareness, determining regions, and convening the State Planning Advisory Committee.

As part of the start-up activities, SPPG will make a few phone calls or visits to key spheres of influence in homelessness services and planning across the state. These informal discussions will give the SPPG team insights into perspectives and levels of knowledge that will help considerably throughout the process.

SPPG proposes to introduce the upcoming work of ICH and the Advisory Committee through a webinar available to all homeless services providers and planners statewide. This will offer the opportunity for everyone to get the same initial information, learn the expectations and their roles, and know the schedule for meetings in various areas of the state. We expect many have been keeping abreast of the program changes and new requirements, but may not have current information on the ICH/IFA approach to developing standards for performance, services, and operations.

At the same time, regions will be proposed based on the most logical grouping of homelessness services planning organizations and any regions organized around funding allocations, i.e., HUD. Considering the metropolitan areas and the Councils of Governments regions together will guide determination of the initial proposed regions.

SPPG will work closely with ICH and IFA officials along the way. SPPG expects that five or six regions will be most effective for these discussions and that there be rural and urban populations reflected in each.

Once the preliminary preparations and awareness have been completed, SPPG will go "on the road" to visit each of the proposed regions to convene homeless service providers and planning bodies in each region. The purpose of those meetings will be to get consensus agreement on the regions; to more clearly outline the rationale and expectations related to the statewide development of standards for homelessness services performance, services, and operations; answer questions relating to the process; and have participants identify up to three individuals from each of the regions to participate on the State Planning Advisory Committee.

The information gained from the five or six meetings around the state will be reviewed with ICH/IFA representatives and considered in framing the work of the State Planning Advisory Committee. This work will be completed by mid-December 2013, allowing for arrangement to be made for the first meeting of the Advisory Committee.

In January 2014, the State Planning Advisory Committee will meet for its first session. It is anticipated that all meetings of the Advisory Committee will be day-long sessions to maximize the value of participants who will be traveling from around the state. Meetings will be held in the Des Moines area. The first meeting will serve to bring people together in a cohesive working unit, frame their charge and the scope of work before them, and provide the necessary background and process information they can share with colleagues back home in their regions. This meeting will also serve as an assessment of what standards may be formally or informally in use in Iowa and how much consensus or dissent may exist in certain issues as the process begins.

Of course, for all meetings, SPPG will develop an agenda, work with IFA on posting meeting notices, facilitate the meetings and take notes, and provide meeting summaries. SPPG will also handle logistics for each meeting held throughout the project.

Phase 2 Activities

During Phase 2, Goals 2, 3, and 4 will be addressed and the related deliverables met in an integrated and cumulative facilitated process. By the end of April 2014, the State Planning Advisory Committee will have developed standards for performance, service, and operations for the array of programs providing homelessness-related services.

Three additional day-long sessions are anticipated to develop and flesh out the standards in large and small group discussions. SPPG suggests the three types of standards be developed concurrently and allow for discussion of interdependencies of the standards for performance, services, and operations. SPPG will facilitate all sessions and capture the issues, commonalities, and decisions as part of meeting notes and as information to be included in the report of the Advisory Committee. Between meetings, Committee members will be expected to share the discussions and progress with others

in their regions and bring back additional comments and ideas for discussion at the next meeting.

Agendas and the flow of the sessions will ensure the issues receive adequate attention and discussion, yet facilitators will manage the discussion toward decision points. Facilitators may choose to use a framework to help guide the discussion. Such a tool may include questions to answer that provide the information needed for a decision on a standard as well as how that standard might be measured or evaluated. Facilitators ensure that the discussion is not dominated by one or two people and all participants will have adequate time to contribute their expertise.

By the fourth overall session, the group will have moved through the discussions necessary to finalize recommendations. SPPG's responsibility is to take all the discussion and decisions and transform them into a draft report with recommendations to the Iowa Council on Homelessness. The Advisory Committee will have an opportunity to review the draft electronically before it becomes final. If necessary, SPPG will convene a final gathering of the group via conference call or webinar to ensure consensus on the recommended standards.

The report submitted to ICH and IFA will not only include the recommendations for standards in performance, service, and operations, but also some background, a description of the process, a list of the Advisory Committee members, and other relevant information. The report will be delivered electronically to ICH and IFA by the end of April 2014.

Phase 3 Activities

Among the most significant changes in the requirements for federal program funding for homeless programs is the addition of monitoring and evaluation of programs with expectations for improvement based upon the findings. With the standards development completed by the Advisory Committee, the Iowa Council on Homelessness will need to determine data that is necessary for monitoring and evaluation of programs. This final phase focuses on Goal 5 in working with the data systems and the ICH to determine those monitoring and evaluation measures so they can be reported and utilized for ongoing system improvement.

During the work of the Advisory Council in Phase 2, attention will need to be given to how to document and measure how well a provider is meeting the standards. This will be the time SPPG suggests first beginning work with ICH/IFA and the homelessness data system toward the goal of robust but efficient data reporting. SPPG considers work toward this deliverable as inclusive of Phase 2 activities as well as formalizing the strategy during this final phase. Consideration in developing these tools includes local capacity and inclusion of both quantitative and qualitative data to measure success.

SPPG expects that ICH or IFA staff will be closely involved throughout this planning process. SPPG will work with the appropriate staff and include input from the Advisory

Committee as needed in development of the strategy for implementation. With the local stakeholders actively involved in developing the standards and measures, they will be more enthusiastically compliant with new reporting and evaluative processes if there is continued engagement through this phase.

SPPG will deliver a written implementation strategy in electronic format by May 31, 2014, that reflects the priorities of the stakeholders around the state, ICH officials, and IFA staff as needed.

Timeline

The following table estimates the timeline for key activities of this effort.

October 2013	Award of Contract and Project Launch
October-November 2013	Initial statewide outreach to regional and local homeless services provider and planning organizations
November-December 2013	Regional in-person meetings
December 31, 2013	Deliverable 1.1 provided
December 2013-January 2014	Identify members and formalize State Planning Advisory Committee; schedule January meeting
January 2014	Facilitate first Advisory Committee meeting
January 31, 2014	Deliverable 1.2 provided
February 2014	Facilitate second Advisory Committee meeting on standards for performance, services, and operations
March 2014	Facilitate third Advisory Committee meeting on standards for performance, services, and operations
April 2014	Facilitate fourth Advisory Committee meeting on standards for performance, services, and operations
April 2014	Begin meeting with ICH, IFA, and HMIS regarding reporting and data gathering
April 30, 2014	Deliverables 2, 3, and 4 provided in single report
May 2014	Finalize implementation strategy with ICH, IFA, and HMIS participation
May 31, 2014	Deliverable 5 provided
May 2014	Final meeting with ICH and IFA for wrap up