

Questions Regarding the Request for Information to Operate Tiny Homes Village

The following questions were asked at the Briefing on the Request for Information to Operate Tiny Homes Village on Thursday, November 12, 2020.

1. How long would an individual be able to stay in a Tiny Home before moving on?

The Tiny Homes project is considered an Emergency Shelter, and our Emergency Shelters do not have time limits. The goal for this project is to provide housing stability for people experiencing homelessness, which includes securing a source of income and developing a long-term housing plan and to enable them to move-on.

2. If an organization is building the housing, would they have any say on the referrals and final residents or is this completely an “out-sourced” decision process?

Referrals would need to come through the Office of Homeless Services’ (OHS) Coordinated Entry system, CEA-BHRS. Although Organizations have the final say in accepting referrals, it is very rare for a match to be rejected. OHS follows the Equal Access Rule, which mandates that access to a shelter must conform and adhere to an individual’s self-expressed gender identity.

3. If this is considered Emergency Shelter, do the operating funds restrict the services that can be provided?

Yes, this considered Emergency Shelter and the services are defined by the funding source, the Emergency Solutions Grant administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The list of eligible expenses for Shelter Operations includes: Maintenance, Rent, Security, Fuel, Equipment, Insurance, Utilities, Food and Furnishings. The list of eligible expenses for Essential Services includes: Case Management, Child Care, Education Services, Employment Assistance & Job Training, Life Skills Training and Transportation.

4. What is the timeline for development?

No, OHS do not have a timeline. OHS will be extending the timeline for submission to Wednesday, December 16, 2020. This is likely to be a partnership with whoever builds the units and who operates them.

5. Will the Tiny Homes need foundations?

The developer will need to ensure that all the building codes that are applicable are applied. If these units are Shipping Containers, insulation will need to be installed to make it live-able, and all accessibility requirements must be met. The Tiny Homes can use a slab-on-grade foundation. Buildings under a certain square footage are not required to have a foundation, which may be applied in this scenario.

6. Would this project be open to Veterans?

Yes, if they are experiencing homelessness and highly vulnerable to COVID-19, then a veteran would be eligible.

7. Given the low-barrier funding restriction, is there a way for residents to invest in their own housing to build the site, help run amenities on site, etc.? Will residents have leadership and decision-making roles?

OHS encourages full self-governance, and if not, then as much ownership, empowerment and leadership as possible for residents. In a similar project in Seattle, residents take a very active role, acting as security guards and screening for new residents to enter. Although this is not a requirement, OHS wants to provide as much flexibility as possible.

8. Can the houses be move-able, or do they need to be anchored when occupied?

The Tiny Homes would need to be anchored when they are occupied, but it is not uncommon for manufactured housing to be removed from a site and relocated.

9. Is this project not intended for families with young people?

Correct. OHS would like to expand Tiny Home opportunities to families at some point, but this particular development, since the funding is tied to COVID and emergency zoning, it is not intended for families.

10. How many participants is the Tiny Homes village able to serve?

Based on the funding provided, OHS anticipates 12 to 24 participants.

11. Can OHS be permitted to see the Tiny Homes prior to the participant being placed there?

Yes.

12. Will the heat be gas or electric?

Most likely electric, because that would be the easiest way to heat these units, but gas doesn't need to be ruled out at this time.

13. Will the units be separated by genders?

Shelters are Equal Access and that means that all men, women and gender non-conforming individuals have equal opportunity to live in a Tiny Home.

14. What are the metrics that will be used to decide among the proposals?

OHS will be looking at partnership, feasibility of the project, expertise to provide units and services, a service model that meets the goals, and quality control. Organization who have strong reputation serving this population in a way that is high quality and positive way for population and for the surrounding community.

15. What is the City's role in facilitating the development?

The City has made the land available for the Tiny Homes village and provided connections to utilities. Operation funds will be made available through the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding.

16. What is the accountability for developers and service providers?

Accountability for the physical development is through the permitting process, and for the service provider, OHS has a Quality Assurance and Compliance Unit that will work closely with the organization to make sure that everything adheres to the requirements. The City has operating [Standards for Emergency Shelters](#), developed by OHS, that would also need to be adhered to as well.

17. Who retains ownership of the property?

The City retains ownership. There will most likely be an agreement around use due to insurance. The Office of Public Property is open to conversations about what this would look like, but most likely a nominal lease form.

18. What are the staffing ratios for the Tiny Homes village?

OHS would want the staffing ratios to adhere to OHS's [Standards for Emergency Shelters](#). These staffing ratios are as follows:

Daytime hours: 1:20 adult participants

One (1) direct service person per 20 individual adult participants during daytime hours. (Direct service staff person does not include janitorial or kitchen personnel in the provision of adequate staff ratios).

Nighttime hours: 1:40 adult participants

One (1) staff person per 40 individual adult participants shall be maintained during the nighttime hours.

19. What is the square footage of the land?

The parcel is large enough to accommodate the goal for the site, developing a Tiny Homes village. There will be a site visit to review the site. E-mail Thomas.McDade@phila.gov and include Liz.Hersh@phila.gov and Melanie.Haake@phila.gov for more information about this site visit.

20. What are these funding streams and exactly how they apply to the project? If granted the Mill Creek Aspen RFP, will these funds automatically be rewarded as well, or will another response to a separate RFP for the Rapid Rehousing/ESG funds need to be submitted?

The successful applicant will not be required to apply for Project Based Rapid Rehousing for the Aspen site nor for the Shelter through ESG for the Seattle Model Tiny House site. However, capacity to administer these programs will be part of the proposal review process.

Essentially, there is a set of costs that are billable through ESG for both Rapid and Shelter. The program administrator will provide the services and then bill the City. The Rapid Rehousing program is a rent subsidization program based on fair market rent and each person paying 35% of their income.