



## Clark County Continuum of Care Standard Renewal Project Application

1. Agency Name? Sea Mar-CSNW
2. Name? Jeni O'Neil
3. Email? JeniOneil@seamarchc.org
4. Project Name? Way Home Too
5. Assistance Type? PH-Permanent Supportive Housing
6. Target Populations? People who are Chronically Homeless
7. What type of lease will be used? Market Lease (Client holds the unit lease with Landlord)
8. How many units will be rented (master lease) or households will be served? 15\_\_\_\_\_
9. Is you project in the process of resolving and/or have any unresolved HUD audit findings? No
10. Was the APR for the most recently completed program year submitted on time to HUD? Yes
11. What percentage of the CoC funds were spent in the last full contract year? 95-99.9%
12. Does your agency have any outstanding or delinquent federal debt? No

**13. Does your agency have historically marginalized individuals (BIPOC, LGBTQ+, etc.) in managerial and leadership positions?**

Yes

**14. Does your agency board of directors include representation from two or more persons with lived homelessness experience?**

No

**15. What percentage of program participant households will remain stable of exit to permanent housing during the project's next fiscal year?**

80%

## Project Information

**16. Type of Project Application**

PH-PSH Renewal Project

**17. How will the project coordinate and integrate with other mainstream health, behavioral health, social service and employment programs and ensure program participants are assisted to obtain all mainstream benefits for which they may be eligible?**

Sea Mar-CSNW have cultivated strong relationships with network partners to leverage resources with other organizations to maximize the positive impact for the individuals we serve.

Our housing programs work closely with our street outreach teams to help with the warm handoff between homeless individuals to housing staff and other service providers. Our teams work collaboratively to assure the continuity of care is provided with dignity and respect. Our supportive housing case management is designed to help program participants reduce the barriers that cause housing instability. Our comprehensive needs assessments identify the specific barriers and challenges a client may face then individualized housing plans are created that outline goals for increasing self-sufficiency for the client. Case Managers assist with applications and provide opportunities for program participants to access medical and mental health services, substance abuse programs, public funding, entitlement benefits, supported employment and other necessary community resources.

Sea Mar-CSNW staff is a key collaborator with the local jail's Re-Entry program, providing outreach and service connection to individuals exiting the jail system. Our MOU between facilities allows our staff to enter the jail and connect with individuals prior to release to increase service connection and lessen the time a person will be homeless once released from custody.

Another great resource at our disposal is the use of the DSHS Benefit Verification System (BVS) which allows us the ability to check what DSHS benefits a client is currently receiving so we can help facilitate additional resources for which they may qualify. We have partnered with DSHS to

provide yearly updates and trainings for our staff on this system.

**18. How has your agency demonstrated participant success securing and maintaining permanent housing and increasing cash and non-cash income?**

Sea Mar- CSNW has grown to be a leading agency in Housing/Homeless Outreach efforts in Clark County. We hold numerous contracts with the county, state and government that support our local homeless system. SOAR and PATH (match) with the County; PathFinder, Parent Child Assistance Program (PCAP), Forensic PATH and PATH with the Healthcare Authority and several HUD contracts that have 34 additional permanent supportive housing subsidies attached. Our experience in delivering housing services makes us an ideal candidate to continue delivering facilitating these programs to help fight the homeless crisis in our community.

Sea Mar-CSNW housing programs have demonstrated much success with positive housing retention for our clients. Our programs use best practices including the "Housing First" model. Program participants move directly into permanent affordable housing in which our housing case managers help clients find, apply for and move into suitable housing that adheres to the Fair Market Rent guidelines. Clients without income are assisted to increase their income and then assume a portion of their housing expenses if and when that occurs. Housing staff make direct referrals to our SOAR program which assists with obtaining SS/SSDI income or work with clients through local employment programs to obtain employment and increase income. Case managers will identify households that could benefit from employment services for improving employment or vocational rehab services in order to continue permanent housing following program discharge.

Non cash income can include lessening the amount of debt one owns which often includes evictions, property debt or legal fees. A common tactic for dealing with an eviction or property debt is communicating with past landlords, on behalf of the client, to discuss the possibility of writing a letter of accommodation. We also assist in helping the client set up a payment plan with the property debt owner. Helping the client reduce debt allows more income to be brought into the home.

Housing staff also assist clients with obtaining SNAP benefits to increase the amount of cash/income available to them for housing costs.

Housing case managers are trained by Sea Mar-CSNW's SOAR Coordinator, on how to use the SOAR model to assist their disabled clients through this process as a means to increase income; therefore helping them successfully retain their permanent housing.

**19. 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?**

Being a part of a Community Health Center allow our staff to make internal referrals to our medical and dental services as well as the Sea Mar-CSNW behavioral health services under the Sea Mar-CSNW sites that include outpatient substance use and mental health services.

Sea Mar- CSNW is fortunate enough to have the Clark County SOAR Initiative in house at Meriwether, our site for all housing and outreach services. Housing case managers are trained by Sea Mar-CSNW's SOAR Coordinator, on how to use the SOAR model to assist their disabled clients through the application process; thereby helping them successfully retain their permanent housing. Housing case managers will also have access to one-on-one technical assistance from the SOAR Coordinator. One example of how this technical assistance can be utilized is the crucial problem solving, application support, and guidance on how to submit medical evidence to support a claim. Case managers will also have access to the most recent list of Social Security Authorized Payees in order to secure financial well-being (i.e. guaranteed rent payments, utilities paid, etc.) for their clients.

Sea Mar- CSNW will also continue to utilize our Homeless Outreach teams, PATH, PATH 2 and PATHFINDER, which provide outreach services including referrals to mental health and chemical dependency treatment, as well as limited case management for those accessing those services. PATH, FPATH and PATHFINDER outreach services may initially be provided to support engagement for program participants after the referral comes from coordinated entry. Our teams have a regular presence in homeless encampments, shelters, food banks, emergency rooms and inpatient facilities to help our housing staff locate and engage referred clients. Having our outreach teams in the same department as our housing programs has proved to be a valuable asset.

**20. What are the agency's most important strategies being used to progress trauma-informed, culturally responsive and person/survivor-centered approaches?**

Sea Mar-CSNW greatly acknowledges the need to understand and practice with a trauma-informed approach and incorporate trauma-informed principal's agency wide to engage our clients more effectively and assist in improving the overall well-being of the population we serve. Our agency has woven trauma-informed care into all policies, procedures and practices and offer regular trainings for staff to help realize the widespread impact of trauma as well as tools and strategies to recognize and approach specific treatment needs for our clients.

Some specific trauma informed strategies our staff implements into the care and service we provide to clients include:

- Client Empowerment: The use of an individual's strength to empower them in the development of their housing and/or treatment plan.
- Building Trust: Creating clear expectations and information for clients about the housing process, treatment options, services being provided and wrap around services available. We ensure that services provided are client-directed and respectful of individual rights and wants.
- Environment: Creating a safe and comfortable atmosphere to ensure client's physical and emotional well-

being.

Sea Mar-CSNW believes providing person-centered care goes hand in hand with the trauma-informed approach as we recognize validating our client's desires, values, family situations and social circumstances is critical and treating clients with respect and dignity is a top priority. Our staff receives in-depth training on evidence-based practices to ensure we provide the best tools to help our clients lead healthy lives. Our staff works diligently to serve individuals in a trauma-informed manner, while being transparent and providing choice. We practice cultural competency and provide appropriate accommodations for program participants across all demographic differences. Sea Mar-CSNW has worked to change signage; furniture and art work in our lobbies to make our agency more inclusive and culturally aware. Additionally, all forms given out by Sea Mar-CSNW, including the client/patient satisfaction survey and are available in different languages.

**21. What innovative strategies does your agency use to meet the unique needs of high need households assisted in the PSH program? Use specific examples.**

Sea Mar-CSNW has significant experience in supportive housing models and a strong relationship with local landlords which enable our staff to be successful in housing clients who may have significant barriers. As a behavioral health agency, Sea Mar- CSNW understands the importance of cultural diversity and the different approaches that may be needed for clients.

Ongoing support services will be delivered in a community based model in which our staff will meet individuals in an environment where the client feels safe and empowered.

Sea Mar- CSNW utilizes a housing first approach to all of its supported housing efforts. These efforts are focused on meeting the individual where they are, developing rapport, and engaging clients through client centered care. We work from the concept that everyone is "housing ready" and regardless of the barriers we work to get a client housed prior to addressing any mental health or substance use challenges. Our program history provides Sea Mar-CSNW with significant experience in housing first models and a history of building strong relationships with local landlords that enables our staff to be successful in housing clients who may have significant barriers such as poor credit, past evictions, or criminal history. Due to the long history of these programs, we have vast linkages with community organizations that are all working towards the same mission of reducing homelessness in Clark County. Sea Mar-CSNW staff are trained to use motivational interviewing techniques to achieve progressive engagement. We serve individuals in a trauma informed manner, providing openness and choice and clear expectations of our role. We are flexible and accommodating when possible and provide our clients with a calming atmosphere to ignite hope and change. Our agency strives to provide quality care that is sensitive to each client's unique cultural, ethnic and personal needs.

Our housing case managers are trained to streamline applications into housing and assist a client who may be overwhelmed and experiencing anxiety or uncertainty, which is common among people experiencing homelessness. The application process can be daunting so our staff provides support and guidance to make sure it is done fluently with the goal of reducing wait times and achieving positive results.

We find success in utilizing all available resources, including leveraging other systems of care to address client needs, that are crucial in retaining housing. A specific example of this can be making direct referrals to chemical dependency treatment, scheduling a MH assessment, helping the client get set up for a rent well class or finding ways to increase the household income. No matter what wrap around services a client is a part of, our agency will continue to provide intensive outpatient community based case management. We ensure that all clients are able to meet their basic needs and are receiving adequate benefits. We teach them how to be good tenants and neighbors, provide advocacy and teach problem solving and conflict resolution.

**22. How does the agency receive and incorporate feedback from persons with lived experience of homelessness. What has changed as a result of this feedback?**

Most of our housing/outreach programs incorporate peer support which has had significant positive impact on clients experiencing homelessness by building relationships on shared experience and the ability to empathize with situations. A peer is in a unique position to offer support by virtue of relevant experience: he or she has "been there, done that" and can relate to others who are now in a similar situation. Because of their personal experience, peer workers and/or peer supporters have expertise and real world knowledge that professional training cannot replicate. Because of the impact the peer support role has made, most community based programs at Sea Mar-CSNW have woven peer support into the services we provide.

**23. Describe how the applicant agency is an active member in the local CoC meetings?**

Our agency participates in COC meetings as well as many other coalitions and taskforces that support the Clark County Homeless Action Plan. Our Behavioral Health Director, Bunk Moren, is also a member of the COC Steering Committee and has helped the annual application process as well as many other local housing initiatives (City of Vancouver, Vancouver Housing Authority and Clark County) that seek the committee's feedback.

**24. How is the project applicant agency working to progress racial equity internally? Specifically what has the agency done to progress racial equity?**

Sea Mar currently has a committee of 8 members, including 2 executive-level employees, that work to advance equity initiatives throughout the organization (DEAR). Change efforts are focused on client, staff, and community member experiences of Sea Mar. The DEAR Committee aims to present a strategic plan for improving health equity to administration by March 2022, to include an organizational equity assessment and recommendations for improvement. Sea Mar staff members also complete annual cultural competency trainings, and multiple Sea Mar programs have

implemented Courageous Conversations, a lunch hour meeting to process and discuss matters of racial inequity. DEAR Committee members have also participated in a number of equity trainings and collaboratives across the state.

**25. How has the agency reviewed disaggregated data, what did it learn and what is the current plan to create more equitable programs?**

Sea Mar-CSNW has reviewed disaggregated client satisfaction data to measure client satisfaction as it relates to various identities, departments, etc. CSNW learned that we would likely benefit from specific training regarding Native American/Pacific Islander populations; some populations are underserved, specifically Asian populations and folks 65 years of age and older. Currently, Sea Mar as a whole does not review disaggregated data. The DEAR Committee intends to continue to collect and analyze patient and staff satisfaction data and disaggregate the data to provide region-specific recommendations to administration. Additionally, the DEAR Committee aims to complete an organizational equity assessment to highlight specific areas of improvement.

**28. I agree that the information herein is true and correct**

Yes