



April 26, 2016

The Division of Medicaid (DOM) is currently requesting quotes from vendors to assist with Mississippi's Bridge to Independence (B2I) Demonstration Project for a twelve month period beginning October 1, 2016. Bridge to Independence is Mississippi's Money Follows the Person (MFP) initiative for those wishing to transition from institutional settings to home and community-based settings. For more information about Bridge to Independence, please visit the DOM website @ www.medicaid.ms.gov.

Quotes should be submitted on letterhead by 5:00 p.m., (Insert a date). A sample template has been provided for your convenience.

Scope of work:

The Contractor agrees to perform the services described below for DOM. The Housing Locator will allow housing seekers and service agencies to find available rental housing that meets a very specific set of needs. The Housing Locator Service will include the following:

A. Website Core Functions

1. Listing a large variety of housing, from apartments to single-family and even supportive and senior housing and HUD Section 811/PRA Units.
2. Listings of properties with a range of accessible features such as ramped entry, lowered counters, roll-in showers and proximity to public transit, shopping, and medical facilities.
3. Listings can include photos and detailed information about neighborhood amenities, pet friendliness and eligibility requirements.
4. Basic, advanced and accessible searches help locate housing to meet very specific needs.
5. Printer-friendly results can be sorted by preferences like rent amount or location.
6. A proximity search helps find properties within a selected distance from desired locations like work, school, a family member's house or an agency providing regular services.
7. Users can search for Sign Language friendly properties, housing close to medical facilities, and more.
8. Multilingual website that is compliant with section 508, W3C, XHTML, and CSS.
9. Users call a toll-free call center for live, human assistance or access the service through *TDD/TTY*; support is also available by mail, fax, and email.
10. Landlords can view accessible feature definitions when listing units to ensure appropriate accommodations.
11. Information on important eligibility criteria is provided such as age, disability, and income.
12. Helpful resources such as a rent calculator and links to housing resources.
13. Free and anonymous searches.
14. Easy-to-use rent reasonableness tool for voucher programs.

B. Accessible Housing Search Fields

1. Entry and Door Options:
 - a) Show All No-step / Flat / Ramped Entry listings.
2. Return Only Listings with:
 - a) Accessible Parking Close to Unit
 - b) Flat or No-step Entry
 - c) Ramped Entry

- d) Doorways 32" or wider
 - e) Lever Style Door Handles
 - f) Automatic Entry Doors
 - g) Unit on First Floor
3. Kitchen Options: Return Only Listings with:
- a) Low Counter[s]
 - b) Min. 27" Knee Clearance
 - c) Non-digital Kitchen Appliances
 - d) Front Controls on Stove / Cook-top
4. Bathroom Options: Return Only Listings with:
- a) Low Vanity
 - b) Min. 27" Knee Clearance
 - c) Grab Bars
 - d) Reinforced for Grab Bar
 - e) Raised or Lowered Toilet
 - f) Roll-in Shower
 - g) 'T' Turn or 60" Turning Circle in Bathrooms
5. Miscellaneous Options: Return Only Listings with:
- a) Accessible Flooring
 - b) Accessible Laundry
 - c) Within Para-Transit Route
 - d) Sign Language Friendly

C. Call Center Services

The Contractor shall provide a toll-free call center, which supports both English and Spanish communications.

1. Landlord Service through Call Center shall

Receive inbound calls from landlords who want to do the following:

- a. Register to list properties
- b. Learn about the housing locator service
- c. Add new properties to the service
- d. Update existing listings
- e. Record actual rent-amount data for reasonableness comparisons
- f. Learn about Section 8 and other housing programs and services
- g. Learn how to use the service or new service feature
- h. Ask other questions relating to rental/homeownership, etc.

Place outbound calls/emails/faxes/letters to landlords to complete the following:

- a. Remind landlords of expiring leases and promote re-listing of units on the
- b. Service
- c. Change property status to "rented", "under repair", or "available" as needed
- d. Process/investigate complaints brought about by prospective tenants
- e. Train new property management staff on system use and property-update
- f. Procedures
- g. Conduct outreach calls to continually add new properties to the system

2. Tenant Service through Call Center shall

Handle inbound communications via phone, fax, email or mail from tenants regarding the following:

- a. How to use the service

- b. Requesting searches for available properties and providing listing information via phone, fax, email or mail.
- c. Reporting problems or complaints regarding listings (discrimination, misrepresentation, property already rented, etc.)
- d. Other services that may exist to help with rent, security deposits, legal aide, utility assistance and other possible aid
- e. Deeding emergency aid for victims fleeing domestic violence
- f. Searching for special-needs properties
- g. TDD calls from deaf tenants requiring assistance in locating properties
- h. Disaster victims in need of emergency, transitional and/or permanent housing including assistance in obtaining required FEMA locator IDs, etc. depending on the type and severity of the disaster

3. Outbound communications via phone, fax, email or mail to tenants

- a. To inform of available listings when in need of special-needs housing
- b. To address and resolve any complaint that may have been tendered regarding an existing listing

D. Support and Outreach to Landlords and Facility Managers for MFP Participants Transitioning from Institutional Settings to Home and Community-based Settings

The Contractor shall build relationships with landlords in areas where MFP participants are transitioning, to educate them about the program and flag their properties as owned by landlords interested in working with the program. These designations shall only be viewable by caseworkers enrolled in the Special Populations Housing Search Tool* for MFP housing location services. Outreach and education will consist of e-communications and phone calls.

E. Special Needs Housing Search Service

Each property provider who registers to list on the Housing Locator can opt in to be contacted by agencies working to house special populations. Through MFP specific outreach and education, landlords will be instructed about programs such as Money Follows the Person and pre-screened into a pool of property providers prepared to house transitioning clients and provide them with caring support and quality housing near the services they need. The contractor and landlord recruitment team shall educate the Mississippi housing and landlord community about MFP transitions and the great tenants that they can secure through this program, while serving an important need in the community. Transitions coordinators will attend training and be granted access to search for housing offered by interested landlords that meets their clients' unique needs.

F. Saving and Tracking DOM Client Searches

All MFP and DOM transition coordinators will have special login access to search for housing units matching their clients' needs. When logged in, they will be asked to save each client's housing search so that current and outstanding needs can be logged, and properties matching these needs can be recruited to the system.

G. Restricted Listing Service for HUD 811/PRA Units

HUD 811 and other targeted housing units can be listed in the restricted portal of the housing locator. Transition coordinators can gain password access to match populations such as DOM clients, veterans, people with disabilities, and individuals living unnecessarily in institutionalized settings with housing and supportive services.

Approved caseworkers and transition coordinators will receive thorough training and secured access to the portal to search for units that meet their clients' needs. Trainings will help ensure that property managers receive qualified tenant referrals and are not inundated with calls from the general public.

The portal will offer property managers a direct line of contact with the populations eligible for supportive units in their buildings. The portal will quickly fill those units and starts managers' experience with the program on a positive note, which can contribute to their continued and active participation.

Outreach to targeted properties will consist of communications with property managers and follow-up phone calls from the Contractor to offer assistance with listing units and recording amenities, accessibility features and photos. Phone calls and collaborative outreach will continue as new units are approved or constructed.

H. Keeping Data Up to Date

The Contractor's system shall notify the Call Center if a property may no longer be a valid offering. If a property provider has not logged into their account or contacted the Call Center to verify property availability at least one time within a 14-day period (variable from daily to twenty-eight (28) days depending on need of client or emergency situations), and up to 90-days for large multi-family properties that are in 'always available' status. The system flags their account and adds it to the Call Center log for a follow up. During the follow-up via email and/or phone call, the property provider will be required to review property information and verify that all listings are current. If the property provider cannot be reached after two attempts on the phone, their properties will be temporarily removed from the public search until the owner either logs on to their account or phones the Call Center to update their listing information.

To further protect the validity of system data, Property Review Queue (PRQ) will provide for individual data inspection of each property added/updated. When a landlord logs in and either updates an existing listing or creates a new available listing, the PRQ will generate a listing inspection record. Call Center Representatives (CCRs) will work through pending inspection records six days a week (although the Call Center is not open, CCRs are assigned to work the PRQ on Saturdays). When a CCR "checks out" a listing inspection record, they will verify the listing along with any other pending records generated by the same account so that they may be inspected as a whole, allowing personnel to notice duplicates and other issues.

I. Landlord Access to Services

The Contractor's services shall be available via the Internet 24/7. Property details, amenities, rent amounts and status can be updated with the click of a mouse. Properties can also be updated via email seven (7) days a week. Landlords who lack access or do not feel comfortable using the Internet can manage their property details by phone or by fax 8 a.m-7 p.m. Central Time, Monday - Friday.

J. Tenant Access to Services

The Contractor's housing locator services shall be user-friendly, and shall provide detailed housing searches which can be performed in a few simple clicks of a mouse. Listings include details about amenities, neighborhood information, pictures, maps, and much more. Tenants who prefer direct assistance can dial a toll-free number to learn about housing options by phone or have listing information emailed, mailed or faxed directly to them.

K. Resources Page

The Contractor shall provide a comprehensive housing resource that promotes a holistic and sustainable housing model. All web services shall include robust pages of resource links to a variety of local and statewide housing services. Resources shall span the region and offer assistance across the housing continuum. Linked agencies may also provide access to programs that support long-term housing, such as legal support services, healthcare resources and transportation services.

The Contractor shall provide guidance to partners in the creation of current and relevant resource pages and encourages regular additions and updates. Links shall be checked regularly by the Contractor to ensure that linked websites are active and listed programs are available. The Contractor's service shall allow for agencies on the useful links page the ability to provide reciprocal links back to the Housing Locator.

L. Site Design, Marketing Support and Outreach

The Contractor shall collaborate with representatives from the partnering agencies to design an attractive, easy-to-use website that facilitates quick access to thorough, up-to date housing information and is fully accessible. The Contractor shall maintain a fully staffed outreach department to provide extensive marketing and outreach support and ensure optimal site visibility and usage. The Contractor shall provide a variety of marketing materials (from e-communications to paper mailings) for all user groups and full customization of all items. A detailed marketing and outreach plan will be created specifically for this Contract, leveraging area resources and grassroots efforts for optimal execution and results.

Outreach activities:

1. Helping to identify housing events in the region and ensuring that marketing materials are stocked for said events.
2. Helping to engage area housing authorities and special-needs service agencies.
3. Identifying housing-related publications in the region and submitting newsletter pieces about the service.
4. Initiating outreach calls to area agencies that can assist with promoting the service and ensure that housing search services are available to all in need of better living situations.
5. Offering and scheduling free teleconference trainings to area housing agencies.
6. Keeping the Call Center up to date and engaged with news and current housing issues in the region.
7. Facilitating regular advisory board meetings with area partners.
8. Continually researching additional vehicles to reach landlords of special-needs, affordable and market-rate housing.
9. Continually enhancing marketing materials and outreach strategies for the most effective delivery of key information.

M. Reporting Services

DOM will have password-protected access to necessary statistics, which include the following:

1. Number of users
2. Search and listing numbers by county, city and ZIP Code
3. Numbers of landlords registered
4. Numbers of listings available, rented, by date

Contractor will build and email custom reports that include the following to DOM on a defined schedule:

1. Number of housing requests and search details
2. Saved search report
3. Number of calls in and out of the call center
4. Requests through the call center
5. First time and repeat users
6. "How did you hear about this service" survey results
7. Full report of all listings and associated data elements, including address
8. Names and contacts of registered landlords
9. Caseworker/Transition Coordinator user logs and audit logs

Should you have questions, you may contact me via email at charles.terry@medicaid.ms.gov or by telephone, 601-359-6022.

Sincerely,
Charles R. Terry, CPM, Project Director
Office of Community-Based Services
Office of the Governor, Division of Medicaid