

## **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT HOUSING PROGRAM**

### **D.1 Consistency with Three-Year Program and Expenditure Plan**

**In Item D.1 of your response, describe how the proposed supportive housing development is consistent with the sponsoring county mental health department's CSS planning process and approved Three-Year Program and Expenditure Plan. Provide specific information regarding how the development meets priorities and goals that were identified in the Plan.**

VOALA's Navy Village for Families is consistent with the CSS plan first and foremost in our approach and attitude towards recovery and wellness of individuals and families. Our approach is one of positive psychology and focuses on an individual's strengths, rather than weaknesses. In addition, we believe in the dignity of all beings, and will work to eliminate the stigma often associated with mental illness. This approach honors the differences in each one of us, and celebrates our commonalities.

A key priority of this project is safe and adequate housing for our homeless families. This is a key step to providing the necessary stability a family needs to return to a place of wellness. The 74 separate family units will provide this. The area is quiet and secluded, and provides opportunities for walking. There is little traffic and the homes are adjacent to a ten-acre butterfly preserve. There is a playground that is at the end of the property, which is remote and will likely be used only by residents of the Navy Village.

Activities and services provided by VOALA and our collaborators will help residents make meaningful use of their time and capabilities, and will include activities that facilitate meaningful employment, vocational training, education, and social and community activities. Specific services are included in D4, our supportive services plan. These activities, such as education, training, and life skills, are intended to meet CSS goals such as reduction in the number of incarcerated in jails and juvenile halls, reduction in involuntary services, reduction in institutionalization, and reduction in out-of-home placements. In addition, education about mental illness and mental health issues and their effects on individuals and families will be compassionately taught, with dialog circles creating necessary bridges to strengthen community support. Other goals of the CSS include timely access to help, which is provided by our on-call staffing 24/7 and daily services staff.

### **D.2 Description of Target Population to be Served**

**In Item D.2 of your response, describe the target population you will serve in your MHSA Housing Program supportive housing development, including the special needs and income level of the population.**

**The target population is homeless families with a family member diagnosed with serious mental illness. Generally these families will have experienced instability as measured by frequent moves and can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of the mental health condition. The special needs of these families tie to the mental health condition and likely include multiple barriers to employment. All of the families will be very low income, unable to obtain stable housing as a result of severe economic disadvantage.**

### **D.3 Tenant Selection Plan**

#### Background Information

Navy Village is a 74 unit, 14-building rehabilitation project located in San Pedro/Palos Verdes. Each unit is a two bedroom with attached garage. The site is former United States Navy housing, which has been deeded to Volunteers of America Los Angeles (VOALA) to be used exclusively for homeless housing and services. The site is uniquely located in an underserved area of the City of Los Angeles. It is secluded and quiet while enjoying smooth and easy access to amenities.

Once tax credits, MHSA and LAHD Trust Fund Permanent Supportive Housing funds are committed, rehabilitation work will begin. The existing units are unoccupied and, therefore, there will be no need for relocation activity. Additionally, VOALA will put forth it's best effort to obtain project-based Section 8 from the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA).

**Item D.3 of your application must present a detailed Tenant Selection Plan that is specific to the development for which funds are being requested and is jointly developed by the development partners, including the county mental health department, the primary service provider, the property manager, and the borrower. The plan must be in narrative form and must describe:**

- **How prospective tenants will be referred to and selected for your MHSA Housing Program housing development, including the tenancy application process, wait list procedure, and process for screening and evaluating tenants for participation;**

***Referral Sources:*** The Los Angeles County DMH will be a major source of referrals to the Navy Village. The project will also be listed on the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles web site and notice boards, VOALA's Drop-In Center and veteran's programs will also serve as referral agencies as well as those agencies listed in Section (3) above.

The 12 MHSA Supportive Housing units will be restricted by MHSA

regulations. Households that qualify will have to have at least one member who is homeless and has a serious mental illness and is MHSA eligible. Applicants applying for MHSA Supportive Housing units will be limited to annual incomes below 30% of AMI. 1 unit will be reserved as a manager's unit and 1 unit will be used for supportive services and counseling (these 2 units are not counted in the 74 units of housing above).

**Lease-Up:** Referrals will be taken from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) after they have been certified as MHSA-eligible. All units will be marketed through advertisements in local English and Spanish language newspapers. The advertisements will describe the purposes of the property, eligible family size and eligible income levels. The MHSA units will be marketed as MHSA programs run by VOALA and DMH. VOALA's programs continuously outreach and support homeless mentally ill persons within the City of Los Angeles, including many that are chronically homeless and veterans. VOALA's many programs will refer applicants to the onsite manager of the project. The project will also solicit referrals from other homeless service providers in the area who serve the mentally ill, including Skid Row Development Corporation, the Salvation Army, Catholic Social Services, and the Midnight Mission. Efforts will be made to communicate with community agencies before the initial rent-up period, and on a regular basis thereafter about the availability of units. VOALA will pay particular attention to notifying agencies and organizations that focus their activities on homeless and chronically homeless serious mentally ill persons.

**Application Process:**

- a. The project's affirmative fair housing marketing will be in compliance with HUD (24) CFR part 200.620 (a)-(c). Marketing will invite applicants to apply to the waiting list. The initial application will describe the units and the varied targeting requirements of the project. Applicants will mark those income, family size, and disability criteria that apply in their case. Qualified applicants will be added to the waiting list based on this initial self-screening. Current contact information will be requested. People without a current address will be asked to name a third party (friend, case manager, clergy, etc.) where they may be notified of a vacancy. The onsite property manager will offer to sit beside the applicant to help fill out the form. Referring agencies will be trained so that applicants can complete the task with people that they trust. Applications received before the initial rent up will be included in a lottery to be held to determine ordinal position on the initial waiting list of 100 applicants. Thereafter, qualified applicants will be added to the list based on the date of the delivery of their initial

application. (Applications that arrive simultaneously--as in the same day's mail-- will be randomly selected for date and time order). Applications will be submitted to the site manager at Navy Village. The waiting list will be closed after 100 names and reopened when the list gets below 50 names or when the list no longer has eligible candidates for any one of the target populations.

**b.** Property management staff will use e-mail, phone calls, and the postal service to actively work the waiting list, regularly notifying applicants of their position, communicating regularly with both applicants and third party contacts, to inform applicants and referring agencies of impending vacancies. Because an applicant's situation will likely change over time, all applicants will be notified of a vacancy regardless of position on the waiting list, or assumptions about a waiting list applicant's disability or income. The vacancy notification will list the unit's restrictions and state that the unit will go to the earliest waiting list applicant that meets the qualifications. Interested parties will be given two weeks to respond to the invitation. The notice will also state that, should no one on the waiting list qualify for that particular unit, property management will recruit applicants from among referring agencies and the general population. The waiting list (with names omitted) shall be made available to prospective tenants upon request.

Applicants will be removed from the waiting list if any of the following are true:

- an applicant asks to be removed
- an applicant fails three times to respond to requests for information or confirmation of interest
- the property management company or referring agency, after reasonable effort, can no longer locate the applicant.

**c.** Once an applicant has been identified as the first person on the waiting list to meet the targeting restrictions of the unit, a full application will be taken. This application will be processed in a supportive and open process. The task of property management is to judge the applicant's ability to (a) pay rent on time; and (b) live under the terms of the lease. Property management will do this by doing a credit and criminal background check to screen for violent behavior, reviewing information on the application form, checking with former landlords and meeting with the applicant and any support service staff the applicant may wish to bring for support. If property management has concerns about an applicant's ability to conform to (a) or (b), above, the project will make reasonable accommodation for any such problem areas and a signed agreement will be negotiated with the applicant to manage

such problems. The property management agent will work with the supportive service staff and any other identified support person as required to ensure timely processing of the application review.

d. The property management company will, after reviewing the application and checking references, in writing: (1) notify the applicant that they have been accepted; or (2) notify the applicant that they are accepted under certain conditions (e.g. money management by the support service agency); or (3) notify the tenant that their application has not been accepted for the stated reasons. In the third case, the applicant will be offered the opportunity to discuss the letter with property management and/or appeal the decision to the VOALA's asset manager. VOALA will use local Landlord/Tenant arbitration services for disputes between management and tenants. In some cases it may be useful to use the service for applicants who feel that they have been treated unfairly. The Mental Health Service Provider will be able to assist client with requesting for Reasonable Accommodation.

***Waiting List Procedure:*** A waiting list of eligible prospective tenants will be maintained at all times. As a unit becomes available, the next three persons on the list will be contacted and notified that a unit is available. These applicants will be asked to respond with current income verification and other eligibility requirements. If the first person does not respond or cannot be reached by VOALA or their case manager within two weeks, they will be moved to the bottom of the list and the next person will be interviewed for tenancy.

- **The criteria that will be used to determine a tenant's eligibility for participation in your development;**

***Tenant Screening:*** All applicants will be screened for:

- a. Verification that income is at or below 30% of AMI by using the Housing Authority, City of Los Angeles(HACLA) form, Los Angeles Housing Department Tenant Income Certification form. Third-party Income Verification will be attached to each verification.
- b. Verification of homelessness as defined by HUD. Using forms provided HACLA or equivalent document as provided/required by DMH.
- c. Verification that the applicant is a DMH client with a single fixed point of responsibility and is MHSA eligible.
- d. In addition to meeting the above requirements, MHSA supportive housing tenants must also meet the below criteria:

- Timely and substantially completed applications. (Property

management will work closely with applicants and support services to facilitate this.)

- Ordinal position on a waiting list.
- Income restrictions as per regulations.
- Ability to pay rent each month as determined by property management review of credit information, third-party income verifications, and conversations with support service providers. In addition, a signed affidavit and/or a tax return may be requested from applicant.
- A credit and criminal background check will be run on each applicant prior to processing the application. Bad credit must be explained and is not a reason for disqualification. Persons must satisfactorily prove income sufficient to pay the rent and have enough for basic expenses.
- Ability to get along with his/her neighbors and refrain from interfering with the right of quiet enjoyment of others in the community.
- An applicant will need to assure the property management firm that, with assistance from VOALA's support services, if necessary, they will:
  - (1) be capable of living under the terms of the lease;
  - (2) be able to pay rent on time.

Applications will be processed by the property management staff who will contact the applicant and/or supportive service staff working with the applicant (directly or through the third party contact) and, with the applicant's permission, the referring service provider to schedule an interview. The interview will take place in the Supportive Services unit and include a property management representative, the applicant, and any supportive persons the applicant may wish to attend the meeting, including case management representation).

- **How those criteria are consistent with both the county CSS Plan and MHSA Housing Program target populations;**

The VOALA Navy Village project will house homeless applicants exclusively. The criteria for determining tenant eligibility are inclusive of the MHSA Housing Program target population.

The tenant eligibility criteria are also consistent with the County CSS Plan which specifically targets homeless. VOALA's Navy Village tenant eligibility criteria are designed to facilitate the acceptance of homeless applicants.

The MHSA Plan identifies a priority need to serve the homeless population to "create more and better access to housing" through the development of "permanent supportive housing units with rental subsidy," which is the exact

focus of the proposed subsidized units in the Navy Village project. Through the application of permanent, subsidized housing with supportive services for this population, this project will directly address identified and desired outcomes of the Plan, including but not limited to: decreased days of homelessness and in emergency shelters/transitional housing; increased number of days of permanent housing; increased access to benefits, mental health and substance abuse treatment; increased physical health stability and increased access to vocational and educational opportunities for the identified target population of homeless persons with mental illness.

- **Your reasonable accommodation policies and protocols as they relate to targeting and tenant screening;**

Applicants judged by property management to be unable to meet the above standards will be notified in writing of the cause of the denial. Given the characteristics of potential tenants for the MHSA units, management will remain open to negotiating with tenant and supportive services staff in regards to reasonable accommodation due to their disability. Applicants eligible for the MHSA units will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and management will work closely with supportive services staff to determine reasonable accommodations for MHSA housing applicants. Examples of reasonable accommodation can include, but may not be limited to, credit history requirements. Should a tenant be denied for tenancy, their denial letter will include an attachment outlining the appeals process and the support service agencies and arbitrators that may assist the applicant in an appeal.

- **How fair housing and MHSA Housing Program target population requirements will be met;**

The project's affirmative fair housing marketing will be in compliance with HUD (24) CFR part 200.620 (a)-(c). VOALA will carry out an affirmative program to attract tenants, regardless of sex, handicap or familial status, of all minority and majority groups to the housing for initial rental. An affirmative marketing program shall be in effect at all times. This program will involve publicizing to minority persons through the type of media customarily utilized by the applicant, including minority publications or other minority outlets which are available in the housing market area. All advertising shall include the Equal Housing Opportunity logo or slogan.

VOALA shall instruct all employees and agents in writing and orally in the policy of nondiscrimination and fair housing. The Equal Housing Opportunity logo will be prominently displayed in a conspicuous position in the Supportive Services Center and Office.

A nondiscriminatory hiring policy will be maintained in recruiting from both minority and majority groups, including both sexes and the handicapped, for staff engaged in the rental of properties.

Since the entire Navy Village project is restricted by deed covenant to use for homeless housing, the MHSA Housing Program target population for the 12 MHSA units will be also served. In addition the tenants in the 12 MHSA units will be taken from referrals from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health after they have been certified as eligible for MHSA-eligible

- **Your appeals process for individuals who are denied tenancy in your development.**

If a tenant at Navy Village believes that management has acted so that their rights or status are adversely affected, or if they believe that management has not complied with the terms of the residential lease it entered into with them, then they are entitled to a hearing in accordance with the project's grievance and appeal procedure.

A tenant may request a hearing if they have a complaint about another tenant concerning their health and safety or others' health and safety or if the complaint in reference to the other tenant involves the maintenance and management of the project.

If a tenant applied for a unit and was rejected, they also have the right to request a hearing.

At the request of the tenant/applicant, supportive services staff may be present at the hearing.

The full appeal policy will be included in the management plan.

**Following the narrative Tenant Selection Plan, include a copy of the county mental health department's Tenant Referral and Certification Process that applies to your development. (see following)**

Attachment E, Additional Guidance for Counties on Tenant Referral and Certification, provides additional information to county mental health departments on developing a process for identifying, certifying and referring appropriate tenants to MHSA Housing Program developments.

## **SECTION D4: SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PLAN**

### **DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES**

- **Identify the primary service provider and discuss specific experience working with the target population providing supportive services.**

Volunteers of America has a long history of working with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. We are contracted to provide housing for individuals under the care of DMH and provide addiction treatment for individuals referred by DMH in our dual diagnosis treatment programs. We provide services to over 30,000 persons annually, including the homeless, veterans, those in recovery, the incarcerated, children, families, and youth. These services extend over the past 25 years and include:

- assistance with meal preparation
- employment training and referral
- health screening and clinics
- childcare services
- transportation
- personal and financial counseling
- emergency assistance for individuals/families
- life skills training
- medication monitoring
- recreation activities
- mental health services
- rehabilitation programs
- educational programs

VOALA is one of Los Angeles' oldest (since 1896), largest and best managed human services organizations. Over 88 cents of every dollar goes directly to services. Its current annual operating budget exceeds \$45 million and its net assets total about \$90 million, including substantial reserves and income producing property. With 1000 employees and many more volunteers, VOALA serves more than 30,000 people each year. This scope ensures sustainability of the organization's programs.

- **Description of the proposed services including age-appropriate services for specific age groups. Specify how the supportive services plan promotes wellness, recovery and resiliency.**

The supportive services target homeless families with a parent suffering from a serious mental illness and often dual diagnosis, mental health and substance abuse. All of these homeless families will have a head of household who is a DMH client. The proposed services will target the anticipated primary age group, young adults who are the parents of a young child or children. Young families in poverty is the primary service population of VOALA including 3000 Early Head Start and Head Start families.

The supportive services plan will promote wellness, recovery and resiliency based on a positive psychology emphasis, i.e., focusing on psychological strengths rather than weaknesses. The approach is integrated Wraparound

services which are community based and unconditional, centered on the strengths of the individual, culturally competent, and includes the delivery of coordinated, highly individualized services in key life domain areas. Wraparound is a service method that coordinates communication and activities among multiple providers where the emphasis is not to overlook any factor in the individual's life, no matter how inconsequential it may seem, because that oversight has the potential to undo all the benefits that are achieved as a result of other services and support.

**• Where will the services be delivered? Describe the frequency of contacts between supportive services staff and MHSA tenants.**

The services will be delivered at the housing site, 76 former Navy townhouses (hence the name, "Navy Village") located in San Pedro off Palos Verdes Drive North. The services will be both home based in the 12 units on the property serving homeless families with mental health problems and in the on site multi-services center. Other supportive services will be provided on site at other VOALA facilities and the facilities of partnering agencies cooperating organizations, described later. The anticipated frequency of contact will be on as needed basis. There is an office space at the site for staff.

**• Identify community linkages and how they will be accessed. Discuss the specific community services/linkages that will be available to the tenants to assist them in achieving independence, i.e. employment, budgeting and financial training, educational and employment opportunities, maintaining benefits.**

The primary linkage for supportive services is the extensive VOALA network of services. The following are the services available to the homeless families living at the San Pedro housing.

- Early Head Start and Head Start - Every child, prenatal to age five and their family is eligible to be enrolled in VOA's Early Head Start (ages 0-2) or Head Start (ages 3-5) program. VOA is the sole designated operator of these programs in the Harbor and South Bay area of Los Angeles, including low income target neighborhoods that surround the San Pedro housing in downtown San Pedro, Harbor City, Lomita and Wilmington. VOA currently provides more than 2000 Head Start and childcare slots in the City of Los Angeles and is expanding its classroom sites. History demonstrates that there is a geographic fit between these programs and the San Pedro housing: at all times from 1965 until the Navy base was closed, a number of enlisted Navy families who occupied these units were enrolled in VOA Early Head Start (then called Parent Child Center) and Head Start because they met income eligibility.

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Navy Village for Families in San Pedro

Depending on family circumstances and preference about half of the Early Head Start enrollees living in the San Pedro housing will receive home-based services with regular visits from a teacher and family advocate plus monthly socializations at the VOA Early Head Start facility located about a mile away at 1135 West 257<sup>th</sup> Street in Harbor City. The other half will participate in center-based activities in the VOA classroom complex at 1081 West 257<sup>th</sup> Street. The Head Start students will participate in center-based activities at VOA's classroom complex located across the street from the Early Head Start facility at 1121 Lomita Street. Determination of the mode of participation will be parent decision in conjunction with staff assessment of which mode is most advantageous for the child.

A primary Head Start focus is providing a comprehensive early childhood education and child development program for the children. This includes comprehensive health services provided by a staff nurse practitioner along with medical and dental provider/contractors. Another important focus is on nurturing the family. Among the services provided to the parents and older siblings are:

- ESL classes
- Child development and parenting classes
- Computer lab
- Women's health clinic
- Problem solving and money management classes
- Nutrition classes
- Tutoring in basic skills
- Mother/father Read training (child literacy)
- Prenatal classes
- Parent leadership classes
- Substance abuse education and prevention
- Individual and group family counseling
- Domestic violence and child abuse prevention.

- Positive Alternatives – This is a VOA drug and delinquency prevention program for elementary and middle school youngsters funded by the County of Los Angeles since 1978. Positive Alternatives will provide at the San Pedro housing site a wide range of after school educational and recreational activities which emphasize that every young person, regardless of circumstances, is innately healthy and competent, altogether capable of making positive life choices. A component of the program is family-to-family mentoring, initially funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, that matches stable families with those experiencing challenges. In this case the mentor families will be recruited from the Greater Harbor Area faith community of more than 150 congregations that has strongly supported the reuse of this Navy housing for homeless families.

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- Upward Bound and Talent Search – These VOA programs, funded by the Department of Education since 1971, will provide after school and weekend tutoring and other educational activities for seventh through twelfth graders at the San Pedro housing site. The goal is to facilitate the enrollment of these largely “first in their family to attend college” students into postsecondary education and support them through graduation.
- Family Reunification and Strengthening Program – A case manager will spend a portion of each week at the San Pedro housing site to work with families experiencing stress and conflict between the parent(s) and a teenage child to prevent runaway and family violence. This service is part of the VOA Basic Center and Street Outreach Programs and privately funded family support component at its Huntington Youth Shelter in Orange County.
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse Recovery – Individuals with unresolved substance abuse problems will be carefully assessed regarding suitability for occupancy in the San Pedro housing. In dual parent families the family may be accommodated in the housing with the other substance abusing parent invited into a short-term substance abuse recovery program. Every effort will be made to accommodate families where unresolved substance abuse is an issue. In any instance where a need for substance abuse services arises with respect to a current resident, such services will be immediately available. VOA has extensive experience with such services. Its screening and evaluation, detoxification and primary and secondary recovery services have been funded by the County of Los Angeles since 1970 and are located in Hollywood, Downtown and South Los Angeles. They are short- and long-term residential treatment programs which will be made available to the teen and adult residents of the San Pedro housing on a priority basis. As with all the VOALA supportive housing programs and facilities the focus is on providing reasonable accommodation based on tenant needs and individual circumstances.
- Veterans Affairs Per Diem Program – For homeless families headed by veterans VOA has a contract with the VA that pays \$26.95 per day for housing and provides counseling and other supportive services from on site staff. If the number of veteran-headed families in the San Pedro housing exceeds VOA’s current capacity the organization will apply for a separate Per Diem grant for San Pedro. Tenants who are not veterans will not be eligible for services from the Department of Veterans Affairs but equivalent services will be provided through VOALA’s internal service network and external network of service providers.
- Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) – Funded by the Department of Labor for the past three years VOA’s HVRP provides job training and placement for homeless veterans. A job developer will be

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assigned to the San Pedro housing. The job training services are off-site and transportation to the skills training center will be provided.

Note: in addition to these employment services for veterans a comprehensive job development and placement program will be provided for all adult residents. The entire job related services, whether for veterans or non-veterans, will be equivalent in terms of quality and variety of occupations.

- Grameen Micro-credit – VOA has operated a highly successful micro-credit program for its Early Head Start and Head Start parents for the past four years. The program boasts a 100% loan repayment rate. It will be expanded to the San Pedro housing site to assist the families in supplementing their income and ultimately achieving home ownership. The program is supported by a \$500,000 revolving loan fund provided by the VOA Board and Community Reinvestment Act grants from local banks.
- MIDAS TOUCH – This is an entrepreneurship training program for high school youth from poor families that VOA conceived about twenty years ago. It utilizes volunteers from the local corporations that fund the program to train and mentor youth in entrepreneurship, assisting them to start up real after school or weekend businesses.
- Salute to Working Kids – About eight times a year VOA hosts a celebrity or business leader at a luncheon for 500 high school youngsters from low income families who are not only staying in school but working a part-time job to help support their families and save for college. At the end of the luncheon there is a q&a session when the youngsters ask questions about how they can achieve success. Among these celebrities have been Tom Hanks, Denzel Washington, Quincy Jones, Dustin Hoffman, Titanic director James Cameron and Universal Pictures President Ron Meyer.
- Youth Ventures – In partnership with the Ashoka Foundation VOA will soon be starting up a social entrepreneurship program in Los Angeles for young people, ages 12-20, to provide seed grants to help them create and lead “ventures” – organizations, clubs or businesses that make a difference in their communities. The intent is to prove to others that young people can and do play a positive role as community leaders.
- Social Entrepreneur Program – This new VOA initiative recruits and screens people from inner city neighborhoods who have demonstrated a passion and talent for utilizing free market principles to make a difference in their community. It provides a living wage and ongoing training, education and coaching for one to two years in order to enable the entrepreneur to exclusively follow this passion while, at the same time, creating long-term self-sufficiency for the enterprise.

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Navy Village for Families in San Pedro

- UCLA Mentoring Program – For the past five years elementary school age youngsters living in VOA housing complexes have been matched with mentors who are students at UCLA. One month the students are transported to UCLA for a day of activities and exposure to campus life; the next month the UCLA students come to the housing site for educational and recreational activities.
- UCLA Unicamp – Each summer youngsters, ages eight to eighteen, from VOA housing complexes attend a one week camp staffed by UCLA student volunteers. Funding is provided by UCLA and the LA Times Campership Fund.
- Girls Inc. of Greater Los Angeles – Girls Inc., a program VOALA ‘rescued’ from going out of business in 2005, provides services that emphasize financial literacy and pregnancy prevention consistent with the mission of the young women becoming “strong, smart and bold.”
- Women Empowering Women – This program provides a supportive environment of connection and sisterhood to teach life skills in the areas of budgeting and financial management, preventing domestic violence, pregnancy services, recovery services, and parenting.
- Strive and Lite – These are large job training and placement programs funded by HUD that target the homeless countywide.
- Prison Re-entry Program – Funded by SAMHSA this new project provides pre- and post-release services for prison inmates, including the “Thinking for a Change curriculum, job training and placement, and matching with a former offender in a mentoring relationship as a success role model.

Services are provided on site by a variety of VOALA program staff, as above, tailored to the needs of each family. Because of their condition of homelessness it is anticipated that most of the families will be in Full Service Partnership Program (FSP) status. Service delivery will occur morning through early evening five days a week. In addition VOALA housing management staff lives on site and are available 24/7. Also, VOALA service staff from a number of the above programs is available on call for any immediate needs or emergency. It is anticipated that services will be delivered daily on site. The families are exceptionally challenged by mental illness and consistency of support is essential to help them maintain equilibrium and deal with the continuous stresses that threaten their stability. Each family’s supportive service needs will be carefully assessed in a framework of creating a Wraparound prescriptive program that is responsive to the variety of conditions and circumstances that might threaten wellbeing. Part of the assessment will be attending to family history and building in prevention activities for breakdowns that have occurred in the past and otherwise are likely to reoccur.

The unique scope and array of the above VOALA services will ensure comprehensive assistance in helping the families maintain their housing and achieving independence. The VOALA services encompass employment services, including job training, budgeting and financial literacy training, educational opportunities, and assistance in obtaining and maintaining benefits to which the families are entitled. VOALA services encompass a wide variety of support on behalf of children and youth, depending on their ages.

In terms of other cooperating organizations a primary relationship is with the Harbor Worksource Center located on Gaffey Street, less than a half mile from the housing. VOALA has an established linkage with the Center that facilitates referral and services. Residents can be seen on both on appointment and walk-in basis. Because the Center operates jointly with the State it draws on all of the services available through the Employment Development Department, including the Caljobs system.

VOALA's history of community collaboration and partnerships in the Harbor area spans more than 40 years since opening Early Head Start in Harbor City in 1965. Among the organizations with which VOALA has maintained long-term MOUs are the Los Angeles Unified School District for special education, Harbor Regional Center for disability services, Joint Efforts for assistance for single parent families with substance abuse, domestic violence and HIV issues, Support for Harbor Women's Lives (now a subsidiary of VOALA) for emergency and transitional housing, substance abuse treatment and family reunification for single parent women, Rainbow Services for comprehensive services for homeless women and their children, and Carolyn Kordich Center, providing comprehensive services for special needs children.

Most of these collaborating community service providers will deliver services off site at their Harbor Area facilities and transportation will be provided for the families as needed. VOALA has been operating extensive programs in the Harbor Area for more than 40 years and enjoys uniquely well developed collaborative relationships with literally dozens of local resources.

**• Identify when the supportive services will be available to the MHSA tenants.**

Supportive services will be available to the MHSA tenants five days a week between 8am and 8pm. Response to special needs and crisis intervention will be 24/7, backed up by the extensive VOALA network of skilled staff. Transportation services are available Monday through Friday and on an emergency basis 24/7.

**• Explain your approach to providing supportive services to the MHSA Housing Program target population addressing the specific needs and**

**issues associated with the target population while protecting tenant privacy.**

VOALA operates more than 2000 units of supportive housing for families and individuals experiencing a myriad of problems, including mental health and substance abuse. It has systems for providing individualized services within housing complexes that protect tenant privacy. On-line records are kept private through secure password systems and hard-copy records are locked. Tenants, including each family member, are assigned a individual case reference number which is then used in all written material. Its experience includes the privacy requirements stipulated by funders such as the Department of Veterans Affairs, HHS/SAMSA, and the County of Los Angeles Department of Mental Health. VOALA's philosophy of service delivery and service delivery models is absolutely respectful of the individual's dignity and innate resiliency. Following a health, rather than illness, philosophy VOALA is absolutely confident of all tenants' capacity to achieve, from the inside out, positive lasting change for themselves and their families. Psychologist Ann Masten sums it up:

What began as a quest to understand the extraordinary has revealed the power of the ordinary. Resilience, the ability to cope with adversity, does not come from rare and special qualities, but from the *everyday magic of ordinary human resources in the mind and body, in families and relationships.*

VOALA's continuous priority is protecting the personal dignity and capacity of each tenant and preventing any breach of privacy that might threaten that.

Tenant privacy is protected by maintaining a firewall between the VOALA housing management and supportive services staff. The functions are separate and are not blended in any way with the service functions that could result in a breakdown of the confidentiality mandated as part of the supportive services. The housing management and supportive services functions are in different VOALA departments and operated entirely separately.

Regardless of the department separation the only way the system works is that both VOALA departments do a great deal of pre-planning and anticipate all the potential problems, each understanding their respective roles and responsibilities in advance. This prevents any ambiguity regarding roles in the heat of a crisis. Each department function in serving the tenants is vital and each must clearly endorse the role of the other.

**• Describe how you will assess the supportive housing needs of the tenants.**

In the context of the Wraparound methodology the assessment for supportive housing needs is a partnership between the tenant and staff. VOALA has

learned to be very sensitive to the tendency in human services to prescribe what the staff person thinks the tenant needs rather than the process being driven by what the tenant wants. It is no surprise when staff develops a prescriptive program and the tenant responds less than enthusiastically. The traditional approach can be driven by a well meaning but destructive 'illness' model, i.e., a human services worker treating the tenant as though s/he is damaged and needs fixing. In this case, a health and resiliency assessment model, respecting the tenant's innate psychological health and competence and working in partnership with the tenant, facilitates the journey to full self-fulfillment. The assessment during the lease up phase is comprehensive and sensitive. Owing to VOALA's belief in every individual's innate health and resiliency, no matter what the current challenges and obstacles, the assessment process focuses less on apparent problems and weaknesses and more on opportunities and strengths.

## **SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE**

### **• Specify how the supportive services plan will assist tenants in working towards self-determination and independence**

VOALA brings the thinking embedded in John McKnight's Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) model to all its programs. Consistent with Positive Psychology it is a health model that shifts service providers' focus from needs, problems, and deficiencies to a perspective that people in any locale, including homeless, mentally ill, developmentally disabled, emancipated foster youth, etc. have the innate skills to build a community that draws from the gifts and talents of each member. Concurrently through asset mapping the community has the ability to rediscover and mobilize resources that are already present there. Every community, no matter how poor, has within itself a series of institutions that can support the individuals and relationships found there, including schools, churches, libraries, voluntary organizations, and businesses. VOALA staff will provide the tenants with orientation to and support of asset mapping activities which will identify what resources the tenants consider to be potentially relevant to them. Further, staff will facilitate interface between the tenants and these resources, including site visits, participation with members of the community, and other activities which optimize the benefits to the tenants and create new institutional and personal relationships.

All of the services are designed to combine, tailored to each family's needs, to support housing stability, as well as wellness, recovery and resiliency. As is discussed throughout VOALA embraces Positive Psychology, a relatively new approach in the field of psychology and human behavior that focuses on enhancing strengths and innate health rather than remedying weaknesses. No matter the population VOALA embraces an approach where the ambition is to realize lasting, positive change in individuals, families and neighborhoods through self-directed activities that build upon strengths and empower clients to

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Navy Village for Families in San Pedro

see themselves as psychologically healthy, competent and dynamic. This is achieved by:

- Developing services and support systems that are truly responsive in design and delivery to the needs and wants of the clients;
- Cultivating leadership among the clients so as to embed the capacity for self-reliance;
- Transforming the community, in this case the housing complex, in a way that advances the economic and social conditions needed to enable sustainable health and wellbeing of all.

Much of the orientation for the families to engage in activities facilitated by themselves and their peers is a resiliency training curriculum that exemplifies self-mastery principles such as:

- Conscious choice rather than habitual emotional response
- Taking responsibility instead of blaming others
- Acceptance instead of judgment
- Assertive communication rather than habitual passivity or hatred
- Forgiveness and empathy for oneself and others instead of anger or hatred
- Enhanced self-confidence as a foundation for abundance at every level.

Functionally the peer engagement and leadership operates according to the following practices;

- Earn the respect of others by really listening, communicating assertively, and taking the other's point of view into consideration;
- Promoting cooperation and connectedness through empathy and understanding rather than forced compliance and obedience;
- Identify their unique relationship style and acknowledge their peers' unique temperament;
- Recover their sense of self and inner integrity in order to create a more compassionate relationship with their peers.

All of this approach is designed to enhance tenant engagement and choice.

**• Describe any peer facilitated or self help programs that will be included in your plan - Please provide an explanation if this will not be part of your plan**

As above, the tenants will be encouraged to organize themselves after the ABCD model. Additionally a tenant council and self-help groups will be established among the tenants to deal with issues important to them with set policies and

procedures provided by the project sponsor to guide them, including recovery from mental illness and substance abuse. The approach is outlined in the previous section.

## **HOUSING STABILITY**

- **Identify specific services and efforts that you will employ to promote housing stability and housing retention.**

The ultimate goal of the San Pedro housing is to enable the families to stabilize themselves, taking whatever time necessary based on individual circumstances, and move into next level of permanent affordable housing in the community of their choice, preferably home ownership. VOALA's experience in promoting housing stability and retention is long-term, beginning in 1970 with its opening of the 475 unit North Hollywood Apartments for single parent families in poverty. During the past almost 40 years it has facilitated the transition of thousands of needy families into permanent affordable housing, often home ownership. VOALA staff are adept at assisting tenants in accessing home ownership opportunities for first time home buyers, including government assistance and special programs provided by lenders under Community Reinvestment Act guidelines. Certainly The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 will provide unique opportunities for first time home ownership at least during the next few years from lenders.

- **Explain how the services provided will assist tenants remain in their housing.**

Everything about the services will be directed to assisting the tenants remain in their housing. Consistent with the Wraparound model attention will be paid to any and all conditions, no matter how apparently innocuous, could threaten their housing stability. This includes inter-family stresses, substance abuse relapse, acting out as a result of chemical imbalance or failure to take medication, loss of employment, death of a loved one, etc. In the spirit of the Wraparound service approach each tenant is viewed and responded to as a unique individual with the knowledge that the apparently smallest circumstance or difficulty has the potential to be a major setback that could threaten the housing stability of that individual.

## **ENGAGING TENANTS**

- **Explain the strategies, you will employ to engage tenants in supportive services; to assist tenants in developing a sense of community within the housing project: and to assist tenants re-integrate back into the larger community.**

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Navy Village for Families in San Pedro

As above, developing a sense of community will be via the ABCD model supported by the Kellogg Foundation 'how to' publication titled "Discovering Community Power: A Guide to Mobilizing Local Assets and Individuals' Capacities." The fundamental strategy for engaging tenants in supportive services is to focus on what they say they need rather than what VOALA staff thinks they need. This invites the tenants into immediate ownership of the activities and services in which they choose to involve themselves. It is a process where staff does not relate to the tenants as ill in need of fixing but rather as innately healthy, despite facing significant obstacles, and altogether capable of regaining, in partnership with supportive services staff, dignity, hope and self-sufficiency.

In terms of additional motivation for participation in supportive services VOALA practice is developing and providing appropriate incentives to enhance tenant participation. This might be meals around individual or group counseling sessions or a modest stipend for participating in one activity or another. In each case the incentive is carefully developed and presented in such a way that it does not diminish the intrinsic motivation of the tenant to achieve personal and family stability and long-term success.

- **Describe the policies and procedures that will be in place to assure prompt communication between the service provider, project sponsor and the property management company to address concerns raised by the tenant or the service provider, project sponsor or property management company.**

VOALA embeds in each of its programs a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Committee consisting of staff and tenants. The CQI Committee establishes communication linkage with all aspects of the project to insure that all administrative and operational components associated with, in this case, the housing and supportive services, comply with project performance goals and overall success. The CQI Committee establishes a process to respectfully receive, analyze and respond to tenant input and is intended to continuously improve the services. The CQI Committee also insures that opportunities for improving services and operations are addressed in a timely and responsive manner.

Extensive pre-planning between the VOALA housing management department and the supportive services department insure prompt communication between the respective staff and prevent concerns raised by a tenant or anybody else from spinning out of control. The VOALA departments operate according to one of Deming's total quality management central principles, sensitive dependence on initial conditions, which states that anything left to assumption in any process will determine the outcome in ways that are unexpected and often negative. Staff will exercise excruciating care in understanding every aspect of the housing management and supportive services operations and anticipate any problems

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Navy Village for Families in San Pedro

that could arise from inattention or lack of timely communication. Tenants/families in the FSP Program will be made aware of the DMH grievance procedures

- **Specify the policies and procedures to address admission, eviction, conflict resolution issues and appeals process and how the property management company will work with the tenant, project sponsor, and/or service provider.**

VOALA has extensive experience in managing properties housing special needs tenants, including the mentally ill and substance abusers. The watchword of its approach is reasonable accommodation, doing everything in its power to admit tenants with special needs into housing and assist them to maintain that housing. VOALA's mission is to work with people who otherwise are considered 'difficult' or 'non-cooperative' and work with them in a respectful partnership to achieve permanent success in their lives. One example of this mission is the VOALA Downtown Drop-in Center which has accommodated 'guests' for years who have been labeled 'service resistant' by other providers and are not welcome at their program facilities. VOALA follows an Operations Manual created by the VOA National Housing Corporation, one of the nation's largest providers of subsidized housing. VOALA will also follow the County of Los Angeles Department of Mental Health guidelines for tenant referral and certification and eviction, conflict resolution and appeals process. VOALA is both the management company and the service provider. VOALA understands that the tenants are a special needs population likely burdened by a spotty housing history and poor credit. In general, as an experienced joint housing and supportive service provider for tenants that pose significant challenges the distinction between managing the property and providing the services is muted. Every staff on site has the same agenda, i.e., fostering self-sufficiency and independence for all the tenants and engaging in whatever level of problem solving is necessary for tenant short- and long-term success.

- **Specify the frequency of scheduled contacts/meetings among the collaborative partners and the purpose and objectives who should participate.**

Meetings among other VOALA programs engaged in providing supportive services, highlighted above, are for practical purposes a weekly occurrence. Meetings among outside collaborative partners, who will participate as members of the CQI Committee, above, will occur on a monthly basis. The purpose is to insure on a continuing basis the highest degree of success for the program.

- **Describe how service coordination will be accomplished with one and/or more service providers.**

Volunteers of America of Los Angeles  
Navy Village for Families in San Pedro

VOALA has an extensive record in working in and forming collaborative throughout the County of Los Angeles, including San Pedro and the Harbor area. VOALA understands that collaboration poses both an opportunity and challenge to get people and organizations to work together in new ways to the benefit of people in need. It strives to facilitate collaborations where organizations move from competing to consensus building, from working along to including others, from thinking mostly about activities, services and programs to thinking about the 'big picture', and from focusing on short-term accomplishments to achieving long-term results. All of this background, skill and commitment will come into play for this supportive housing program. A key area of collaboration for the San Pedro housing tenants who are mentally ill will be working with multiple mental health providers in the immediate service area, including clinics and contracted agencies. There will be no assumption that any single mental health provider can meet all of the needs of the tenants and staff will carefully assess the combination of mental health services that are appropriate and oversee the referral and follow-up processes to insure that comprehensive and appropriate support is being provided.

Volunteers of America of Los Angeles  
Navy Village for Families in San Pedro

#### **D.5 Supportive Services Chart**

**Attachment F, Supportive Services Chart, of this application package contains a Supportive Services Chart. This Supportive Services Chart must list all services that will be provided to tenants of the MHSA Housing Program units, including any in-kind services essential to the success of the Supportive Services Plan.**

**Please complete this chart and include it as Item D.5 in your response.**

Attachment F

**SUPPORTIVE SERVICES CHART**

List all services to be provided to tenants of the MHSA Housing Program units, including any in-kind services essential to the success of your Supportive Services Plan. Feel free to add additional lines to the Supportive Services Chart table as needed.

<b>Supportive Service</b>	<b>Target Population</b>	<b>Service Provider(s)</b>	<b>Service Location</b>
List each service separately (e.g., case management, mental health services, substance abuse services, etc.)	Name the target population(s) that will be receiving the Supportive Service listed.		Indicate where the service is to be provided – on-site or off-site. For off-site services, indicate the means by which residents will access the service.
Child Care, parenting classes, nutrition classes, etc.	Pregnant mothers, children 0-5	VOALA	On-site (home based child preschool education services) and off-site at local center. Facility is near bus stop or take personal car.
Drug & delinquency prevention	Elementary & middle school	VOALA	On-site & off-site (access by bus or car or VOA van)
College preparatory services	Middle & high school youth	VOALA	On-site & off-site (access by bus or car or VOA van)
Family strengthening – parenting, anger management, etc.	Families	VOALA	On-site & off-site (access by bus or car or VOA van)
Alcohol & drug recovery	Parents	VOALA	On-site & off-site (access by bus or car or VOA van)
Veterans Per Diem Program counseling & supportive services	Homeless veterans	VOALA	On-site & off-site (access by bus or car or VOA van)
Homeless veterans program	Homeless veterans	VOALA	Off-site (access by bus or car or VOA van)
Life skills (gender sensitive)	Girls & women; boys & men	VOALA	On-site & off-site (access by bus or car or VOA van)
Job training	Homeless adults	VOALA	On-site & off-site (access by bus or car or VOA van)
Housing placement	Homeless families	VOALA	On-site & off-site (access by bus or car or VOA van)

See D.4. for additional information on supportive services and community linkages