

Request for Proposals to Operate Bridgeview Employment and Education Resource Center

Current Opportunity

The community has an amazing asset with Bridgeview Employment and Education Resource Center (BEERC). There is ample office space as well as several classrooms that can serve multiple functions. There are also many local nonprofits that have a need for space and provide services related to employment and/or education within their communities. Many of these grassroots nonprofits have only recently gained access to funding opportunities.

Given the opportunity and need, VHA and Bridgeview have decided to issue a request for proposals (RFP) seeking a nonprofit or collaboration of nonprofits to lease (for well below market) and operate BEERC. These nonprofits would continue to follow the guidelines of the public funding that helped build BEERC, which is to keep the classrooms open to community nonprofits and to have programs at BEERC that focus on employment and education. Interested entities should **submit your answers to the application questions contained at the end of this document to grants@cfsww.org by the end of the day on March 31, 2025.**

Historical Background Information

The Vancouver Housing Authority (VHA) repurposed Bridgeview Housing (Bridgeview), an affiliated 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, from an affordable housing development entity to a service provider in the mid-2010's. VHA provided Bridgeview funding to provide services to VHA residents as well as the community-at-large. In 2017, VHA leased land in the Skyline Crest community to Bridgeview for the purpose of building the Bridgeview Employment and Education Resource Center (BEERC). BEERC, which received capital funding from Washington State, Clark County, the City of Vancouver, and private donations, is a dedicated space where community members can access services with a focus on employment and education. Services provided do not need to cover the full continuum of education and employment but focus on interconnected programming that aligns education with workforce needs, fostering knowledge, skills and experiences needed for economic prosperity and long-term success. Aligned programming will integrate academic, technical and workforce development initiatives to ensure programming holistically supports each stage of the educational journey from primary to postsecondary education and career readiness.

The original vision for Bridgeview and BEERC, shared by VHA staff and the Bridgeview Board of Directors, was to grow the nonprofit through diversified funding sources so that it could become financially independent from VHA. In this vision, Bridgeview would have grown into a connector nonprofit that both provided direct services, but also created complex partnerships of nonprofits to streamline services delivered at BEERC. For a variety of reasons this vision failed to materialize and VHA, in collaboration with the Bridgeview Board of Directors, decided instead on selecting a nonprofit or consortium of nonprofits to lease and operate BEERC.

Information for Interested Nonprofits

BEERC is an approximately 8,900 square foot building located at 505 Omaha Way in Vancouver. The building includes four classrooms (one of which includes a kitchen) that are equipped with audiovisual equipment and flexible space/seating for multiple class sizes and uses. Classroom A can comfortably fit about 10 people and can be combined with Classroom B that can separately accommodate 25 people. Classroom C can fit about 65 people and can be combined with Classroom D that can separately accommodate about 40 people. The building also contains a computer lab as well as private offices and cubicles. The utility costs at the building have been averaging about \$1,100 a month. The current maintenance and landscaping structure is to use VHA staff, which is costing about \$2,000 a month. There would be no requirement to continue to contract with VHA to provide maintenance or other services.

The successful applicant(s) would need to continue to operate BEERC consistent with the requirements of the public funders that helped fund the original construction. Washington State requires that the facility “be used to assist low-income adults find and sustain employment.” The City of Vancouver requires that the building continues to be used for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) eligible use, benefiting people below 80% area median income. Clark County requires the facility help low-income residents with “educational, self-sufficiency proficiency and life skill enhancement.” While no direct reporting is required to public funders, there will need to be some level of reporting to Bridgeview to demonstrate compliance with these requirements. The form of the reporting is negotiable. Additionally, the nonprofit(s) would continue to allow nonprofits and community groups to reserve the classroom spaces for programming aligned with education and employment.

Currently, Bridgeview (through VHA) spends about \$150,000 a year on operating costs that include janitorial, landscaping, IT infrastructure and utilities. It would likely be less expensive for the successful applicant(s) to contract for or provide those operating services directly. If the successful applicant is providing the operating services directly the lease with Bridgeview would be set at a nominal amount (such as \$1). If the successful applicant(s) would like Bridgeview/VHA to continue providing some of those services, the lease would be set to cover the cost of those services. While the term of the lease is negotiable, Bridgeview would prefer a multi-year lease. As part of the lease the successful applicant(s) will be required to have general liability insurance for at least \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 in aggregate.

VHA and Bridgeview will host a question-and-answer session at BEERC. This session is not required, but interested nonprofits are encouraged to attend as it will be an opportunity to tour the space, ask questions related to this RFP process and the opportunity and requirements. The session will be March 13th from 1:30pm to 3:30pm at BEERC. The point of contact for both the question-and-answer session and any other questions about this RFP will be Bunk Moren (bmoren@vhausa.com). Please let Bunk know if you need any accommodations for the question-and-answer session.

Application Process

VHA and Bridgeview have partnered with the Community Foundation for Southwest Washington’s Community Grants Committee to help administer this process. The Community Grants

Committee will review applications and make a recommendation to VHA and Bridgeview. VHA and Bridgeview staff would then enter into conversations with the recommended nonprofit(s) with the goal of signing a lease agreement between Bridgeview and the nonprofit(s). **Please submit your answers to the questions below through email to grants@cfsww.org by the end of the day on March 31, 2025.**

Application Questions

1. Applicant Organization Name(s)
 - a. If multiple organizations are applying together, please identify which organization is the lead entity that would sign legal documents on behalf of the partners.
2. Please provide a description of the current programs and services provided by the lead entity and any key partners. What program/services are provided? What populations are served? Where are services located (County/City)?
3. Please provide an overview of what you are proposing for BEERC. Please include how your approach will equitably address education/employment needs and reduce disparities, and a description of your service delivery model (e.g., culturally-specific/culturally-responsive, use of best practices, etc.) Please include a description of communities you are attempting to reach and your outreach and engagement strategies.
4. Will you have dedicated staff housed at BEERC? What will their roles be? Please describe any partnerships as part of this effort and if whether these are new partnerships or existing (if existing, please describe nature of previous work together).
5. Do you currently have the capacity necessary to operate BEERC? If yes, please describe how you have the staffing capacity and financial capacity necessary and skip question 6. If no, please answer the next question.
6. Please describe the technical assistance and/or capacity building you would need to operate BEERC. Provide as much detail as possible (e.g. types of technical assistance needed, amount of capacity building funding, whether you have already applied for funding, whether you have any committed, etc.)