

MEND | Meet Each Need with Dignity

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**Request for Proposal
Community & Business Needs Assessment
June 2019**

I. Statement of Purpose

MEND-Meet Each Need with Dignity, is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation based in Pacoima, CA. Under new executive leadership since July 2017, MEND is navigating significant transition, realignment, and recovery from financial instability from accumulated debt caused by many years of operating deficits.

In July 2018 the Board approved a 3-year strategic plan to guide the agency's work going forward. The agency is committed to thoughtful, careful planning informed by data and community input, as well as strong sustainability forecasting.

One key strategic plan deliverable is a comprehensive needs assessment that includes determination of unmet community needs, gap analysis, and program-focused recommendations. As an adjunct to the needs assessment, MEND also is seeking a business needs assessment and recommendations for a potential social enterprise that provides opportunities for client skills development and produces a reliable source of earned income.

II. Background Information

With dignity and respect, MEND's mission is to meet the immediate needs of individuals and families and increase their access to opportunities that strengthen their capacity to thrive.

Born as a volunteer-powered organization in a garage in 1971, MEND takes a holistic approach to relieve the effects of poverty by addressing basic human needs while giving individuals access to services and supports that foster self-reliance. People experiencing poverty are approached not as a problem in need of a solution, but as neighbors in need of a hand up. MEND's programs are housed in a 40,000 square foot building in Pacoima and currently include the Valley's largest food bank and food pantry; clothing distribution; intensive case management services; and free medical, dental and vision clinics.

In 2018 MEND serves 10,029 people in over 62,000 onsite encounters. Our food bank also partners with dozens of other community- and faith-based organizations, adding over 200,000 offsite service encounters. MEND's client base is 79 percent Latino; over half speak Spanish; 56 percent are unemployed; of those who are working, a majority earn well below the poverty line. Among adults served by MEND (age 18+), 45 percent do not have a high school diploma/GED and only 14 percent have any type of post-secondary education. Some are likely undocumented, or live in mixed status families. Program eligibility is not dependent on proof of citizenship.

At this time, MEND employs 28 staff whose work is supported by nearly 2,000 volunteers annually who contribute their time and talent to ensure responsiveness to the needs of the thousands who access MEND's services annually. Our annual operating budget is \$11.9 Million, of which \$9.1 Million is in-kind goods and services.

MEND is currently in a financial recovery and has sold its secondary building to pay off debt and invest in building the financial and programmatic capacity of the organization. Concurrent to the decision to sell, the Board decided to sunset the programs that were housed there. While well-intentioned, these programs were not producing meaningful measurable outcomes and as a result were chronically underfunded.

Our vision is that "all individuals and families served by MEND flourish for generations to come."

Our strategic planning process began to tackle the question of how to fulfill the agency's vision when so many of our clients and families have relied on MEND for years, decades, and even generations. MEND's longest-standing programs provide immediate (and temporary) relief but we have not historically provided the tools to increase self-sufficiency, self-advocacy, and self-determination in a meaningful way. In many respects, our services have fostered dependence.

In fall of 2018, MEND began its first-ever intensive case management program. Staffed by one LCSW and four volunteer MSW students, we enrolled 25 families who were among the most vulnerable and in crisis. A few families decided not to continue services at that time; 18 remained. Based on self-sufficiency assessments, the clients co-created with a targeted plan, and received supportive coaching, guidance, and referrals to resources to help them reach their goals. Within just 6 months all 18 families moved out of crisis and a couple families even reached a point of no longer needing MEND's services. We are very pleased with the early results of this program and believe this is a first step in redefining MEND's role in our community as a trusted anchor institution and convener of resources.

This is a critical turning point in our history to ensure that MEND remains relevant, responsive, and solvent. These needs assessments will complement our strategic plan and provide us with a roadmap for enhancing programs, expanding services, improving client outcomes, and stabilizing cash flow so that we can fulfill the promise of our mission and vision.

III. Scope of Work

This RFP is for the following deliverables. These are described in two phases below. However, proposers are welcome to suggest alternative approaches that lead to the same deliverables in the same timeframe. The successful bidder's proposal will describe the needs assessment methods employed and utilize a highly consultative process with ongoing interaction and communication with the MEND leadership team.

Phase I: Community Needs Assessment

The community needs assessment description should include a plan for gathering and reporting information, including but not limited to the following. The final report shall provide sufficient information for MEND Board and leadership to make strategic program decisions.

- A comprehensive review of primary and secondary data to identify community needs as they relate to MEND's mission and vision.
- Community asset analysis/mapping to identify currently available services relative to the identified needs.

- Service gaps that could be filled by MEND that are not duplicative of other services in the area.
- A final report with recommendations on program focus areas that MEND could pursue, noting any extraordinary start-up considerations (e.g., special equipment, space needs, staffing patterns, utilization of volunteers, etc.).

Target completion date: No later than November 29, 2019

Phase II: Business/Social Enterprise Needs Assessment

The business/social enterprise needs assessment description should include a plan for gathering and reporting information, including but not limited to the following. The final report shall include sufficient data to guide informed business planning.

- An inventory of possible income-generating businesses that would double as program opportunities.
 - For example, a café that helps build customer service, food preparation, and general employability skills for our clients and generates positive cash flow for the agency.
 - The proposed businesses can include services, products, contracting opportunities, etc.
- An analysis of target markets, geographic placement considerations, customer demand, competitive analysis, lead time, start-up costs, time to reach positive cash flow, etc.
- Recommendations based on results of the analysis conducted.

Target completion date: No later than January 31, 2019

IV. Proposal Contents

Please use the following format when preparing your response and limit your proposal narrative to five pages, excluding attachments.

Section 1: Proposer information

- Company name, primary contact, email, phone, etc.

Section 2: Scope of work/description and approach

- Detailed description of approach to completing the needs assessments including, but not limited to, the components listed in the scope of work
- Proposed format for final reports and recommendations
- Background and experience related to community and social enterprise needs assessment for nonprofits
- Proposed timeline with milestones and final reporting schedule

Section 3: Proposer qualifications

- Evidence of the proposer’s qualifications to provide the requested services
- Summary of previous similar work for nonprofit organizations
- Must demonstrate capability of completing primary data collection in both English and Spanish

Section 4: Attachments

- Cost Proposal: Proposed fee structure per project phase, key milestones and total project cost

- CVs: For key personnel listed in the scope of work
- Professional References: At least 2 references from comparable nonprofits for which the proposer did similar work; include key contact person, phone and email address
- Other: Proposers may include other items to demonstrate their capabilities to complete the work – not more than 3 additional pages

VII. Selection Process

Proposals will be reviewed by MEND's leadership team for completeness; proposer expertise; expressed understanding of MEND's service population, mission, strategic goals and objectives; experience with previous similar work; excellent references; and reasonableness of cost proposal. Interviews may be requested with select proposers.

VIII. Proposal Submission & Timeline

- Proposal Questions: Contact Janet Marinaccio, President & CEO, by email janet@mendpoverty.org or telephone 818-686-7321 by 12:00 pm PT on June 28, 2019
- Proposal Submission: Complete proposals are due by 5:00 pm PT on July 5, 2019; please submit by email to janet@mendpoverty.org
- Selected bidder will be notified in writing by July 25, 2019; work will begin at contract execution, but no later than August 1, 2019

IX. Attachment

MEND 2018-21 Strategic Plan