REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF SANTA CRUZ & SAN BENITO COUNTIES

2024-2025 initial contract, with extensions in 2025-26, 2026-27, & 2027-28

Procedural Guide & Application

Release Date: Feb 26, 2024

Final Date for Submission: 4 p.m. April 1, 2024
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### List of Attachments

1. Proposal Checklist
2. Proposal Coversheet
3. Statement of Project Requirements and Assurances
4. Assurance of Compliance with all Federal, State, and Local Contractual Requirements
5. Budget Forms
6. General Definitions and Requirements for Older Americans Act Programs
7. Ombudsman Program Scope of Work
8. Sample Service Provider Contract (available upon request)
PROPOSAL FOR FUNDING

2024-2025 (plus up to three annual extensions)

1. **BACKGROUND**

The Seniors Council serves as the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties. As such, it receives federal and state funds under the authority of the Older Americans Act and the Older Californians Act. The Seniors Council awards contracts to provide direct services to residents of Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties who are 60 years of age or older.

2. **MULTI-YEAR PROCESS**

Under federal law, the AAA must conduct an area-wide senior needs assessment and Request For Proposals (RFP) at least every four years. The California Department of Aging requires submittal of a four-year Area Plan on Aging, based on needs assessment results and describing services to be provided. Each AAA has the discretion to issue an RFP annually or at other increments within the four years. The Seniors Council has elected to conduct an RFP for Long Term Care Ombudsman services for the 2024-25 fiscal year (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025). The successful applicant will be considered for renewal of this contract for up to three more fiscal years (2025-26, 2026-27, & 2027-28), provided required conditions are met, focusing on the satisfactory deliverance of services and continued funding being available. Contract renewals are not guaranteed.

A. **Goal of RFP**

The goal of the RFP is to identify agencies that can most effectively provide services to the targeted population and address the unmet needs in the community, with the expressed purpose of entering into a contractual agreement with the selected agency/agencies for delivery of those services.

Applicant organizations selected for contracts and funds in this RFP process will receive contracts for fiscal year July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025, with the understanding that the general intent is to continue those contracts for another three fiscal years. It is to be understood that each annual contract is subject to change in scope of service, funding level and terms and conditions. A contractor may terminate the contract at any time, as provided in the contract terms. The Seniors Council Board of Directors retains the same right to terminate a contract, as also provided in the contract terms.
B. **Format of Proposal**

All applications shall be submitted as described throughout this document. Proposals shall be computer generated, using a minimum of a 12-point font. The Proposal Narrative (Section 3) can be of any length, however, *brevity is strongly encouraged*. All sections of the proposals shall be labeled with the same headings used in this RFP.

C. **Evaluation Criteria**

The Board of Directors of the Seniors Council of Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties shall appoint a Proposal Review Committee to assess the relative merits of the applications. The Committee will score each individual proposal and forward its funding recommendations to the AAA Advisory Council for comment prior to submitting the recommendations to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall be the final authority in awarding the contract.

The Proposal Review Committee shall use the following criteria in ranking the proposals:

1. Experience Delivering the Proposed Services: (20%)
2. Cost/Cost-Efficiency/Matching Funds: (25%)
3. Targeted Service Populations: (15%)
4. Service Delivery: (35%)
5. Miscellaneous: (5%)

3. **SUBMITTAL DATE**

The final date and time for 2024-25 service proposals to be received by the Seniors Council in order to be considered in this process is:

**March 28, 2024 by 4:00 P.M.**

The Seniors Council office is located at 234 Santa Cruz Ave., Aptos, CA.

Applicants will be required to submit by the deadline:

- 1 original proposal, with original signatures;
- 1 complete copy, including budgets, attachments and exhibits;
- 9 additional copies containing only proposal narrative & budgets
Double-sided copies are encouraged.

Additional materials or documentation may be requested by the Proposal Review Panel. In such case, a reasonable amount of time will be allowed for the applicant to provide such information, within parameters of the review, recommendation and allocation process.

4. AWARD PROCESS TIMETABLE

AREA AGENCY ON AGING
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TIMELINE

Feb 14-15  AAA Advisory Council & Seniors Council Board of Directors review & discuss Draft RFP, review draft timeline, recommend changes and direct staff actions

Feb 26  Availability of Funds and Timeline released. Potential applicants contacted and encouraged to apply. Staff issues Request for Proposals (RFP), containing approved proposal review timeline & proposal review criteria. Proposals distributed to interested applicants. (Tuesday)

March 2024

Mar 5  Bidders Conference held. (Tuesday, 1 p.m.) Pending CDA RFP Approval

Mar 20 & 21  AAA Advisory Council & Board of Directors appoint proposal review panel

April 1  Proposals due to Seniors Council Office by 4 p.m. (Monday)

April 1-4  Staff checks all materials included in proposals. Proposal Review Panel members receive proposals & prepare draft individual evaluations, using established criteria.

April 8-12  Proposal Review Panel conducts question-and-answer session with applicant agencies.
April 2024

April 8-12 Proposal Review Panel meets to discuss content of proposals and rate the applicants.  
*(closed session)*

April 15 Staff issues notice to all applicants regarding panel recommendations.

April 17 **AAA Advisory Council** certifies process to date & reviews recommendations. *(public meeting)*

April 18 **Board of Directors** reviews recommendations of Proposal Review Panel & Advisory Council.  
Board receives comments from the public.  
Board hears any inquiry, protest, objection or complaint about proposal review process.  
Board makes official decision regarding selection of applicant.  *
*(public meeting)*

April 22 Staff issues notice to all applicants regarding Board's preliminary decision & advises applicants of opportunity to appeal decisions.

April 30 Any appeal of Board decisions must be received in writing by 4 p.m.

May 2024

May 1-10 Appeals Review Panel meets to hear any appeals.

May 15 **AAA Advisory Council** reviews & approves results of appeals  
*(public meeting)*

May 16 **Board of Directors** makes final decision on any appeals, and directs staff to engage successful applicant in development of a contract for services starting July 1, 2024, including adjustments.
to contract amounts (assuming Area Plan Contracts and Allocations have been received from CDA). *(public meeting)*

**May 23**  
Staff issues notice to all applicants regarding Board’s final action.

**June 2022**

**June**  
Seniors Council staff issues initial year service contract for July 1, 2024- June 30, 2025 service

### 5. DISQUALIFICATION OF APPLICANTS FOR INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

Any agency’s application for service may be ruled ineligible by the Seniors Council Board of Directors as a result of conduct seen as inappropriate to the delivery of services to seniors. Special attention is drawn to the area of exerting undue influence on the RFP process. All applicants should review the following section and become familiar with it. If you have any questions regarding its interpretation, please contact the Seniors Council Executive Director (Clay Kempf) or the AAA Administrator (Patty Talbott), at (831) 688-0400.

**Undue Influence:**

The Seniors Council has established a process by which proposals are submitted requesting funding for services to meet identified senior needs. By the very act of submitting a proposal for funding, the applicant is hoping to influence the outcome of the proposal review and funding award process.

Proper attempts to influence the proposal review and funding award process will include those described in the Seniors Council's timeline and Request For Proposals. They will include, but not necessarily be limited to, attendance at a Bidders’ Conference; request from Seniors Council staff for information or appropriate technical assistance; preparation and submittal of a proposal for funding; solicitation of a limited number of references for inclusion in the written proposal; attendance at open meetings at which the process or individual proposals are discussed; participation in a public session conducted by the Proposal Review Panel for the purpose of acquiring additional information; and participation at Advisory Council and Board of Directors meetings, at the discretion of the chairs.

"Undue influence" shall be defined by the Seniors Council as meaning any improper attempt to influence the Request For Proposals process, the impartial review of
proposals, the recommendation of the Proposal Review Panel or the AAA Advisory Council, or the decision of the Seniors Council Board of Directors.

Undue influence is what any reasonable person would consider as an attempt to influence the recommendation or decision of an individual, based on some factor other than those set forth to be applied equitably to all applicants. It includes, but is not limited to, any constraint placed by an applicant or representative of an applicant organization upon a member of the Proposal Review Panel, the AAA Advisory Council, or the Seniors Council Board of Directors; any influence which deprives or attempts to deprive the individual influenced of his or her free agency; taking advantage of a person's weakness, infirmity or distress to change that person's actions or decisions; misuse of a position of confidence; threat; or action which would constitute or which is designed to create bias.

Applicants are admonished that there will be negative consequences in response to any attempt to tamper with the process.

**Disqualification of Applicants:**

Any attempt by an applicant or anyone acting on behalf of an applicant organization, outside the established process of a written application and public meetings, to influence unduly the recommendation of the Proposal Review Panel or the AAA Advisory Council or the decision of the Board of Directors will be considered by the Board of Directors at its next regular meeting, or at a special meeting called by the President, and may constitute grounds for disqualification of the application for any consideration.

In the event a member of the Proposal Review Panel, the AAA Advisory Council, or the Seniors Council Board of Directors reports an attempt to apply undue influence, the nature of the violation shall be defined and clarified, either by the individual making the report or by the agency Executive Director. The Board of Directors will make a determination as to whether the violation was sufficiently serious to warrant disqualification of the applicant from consideration for funding. A negative decision by the Board may be appealed to the agency's Appeals Review Panel, whose decision shall be final at the local level.

General parameters to be used in considering disqualification of an applicant are as follows:

1. That the attempt to influence the process was intentional on the part of the applicant organization or a representative thereof.
2. If the attempt was carried out by someone other than the applicant organization or its official representative, that the applicant instigated the attempt or was aware of the attempt and did not take action to stop or discourage the attempt.

3. That a collection of circumstances exists, none of which by itself would constitute undue influence, but which collectively appear to establish a pattern intended to influence the funding decision.

6. **AVAILABLE FUNDING**

Funding offered in this RFP is based on estimates at the time of its release. Final awards may be adjusted upwards or downwards depending on actual funds available at the time of contract execution.

No minimum local matching funding is required in order to receive Ombudsman Program Funding. However, all applicants are strongly encouraged to identify and list local funding sources that will be used to augment the proposed services.

A. **Funding by County:**

California's Planning and Service Area (PSA) #13 consists of San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties. In order to assure maximum efficiency in program operations, and in recognition of the limited amount of total funding available, proposals for service must cover both Santa Cruz & San Benito Counties.

B. **Basic Funding Categories And Definition Of Service Units:**

Federal and state funds are awarded to the Seniors Council in specific service categories, each with clear definitions of what qualifies as a legitimate unit of service. The funds available in this RFP are part of Title III-B Ombudsman, and Title VII A Elder Abuse Prevention. Other AAA service categories, such as Title IIB Supportive Services, Title IIIC Nutrition Services, or Title IIIE Family Caregiver Support Program, are not part of this RFP.

7. **APPEAL PROCESS**

An applicant agency wishing to challenge the decision based on procedural misconduct by the Seniors Council or its appointed committees must do so in writing by the dates listed on the enclosed RFP timeline. Contact Seniors Council staff for a copy of the Appeal Form. Appeals (if any) will be reviewed according to the RFP Timeline.

8. **REQUIREMENTS & ASSURANCES**
Included in the attachments is a list of Requirements and Assurances to be performed during the duration of the program operation. The signature of the Agency's Executive Director or Board President committing to these articles is required.

9. **FUNDING CONTINGENCY PLANS**

All funds are subject to change as related to funding changes in state and federal allocations to Older Americans Act Programs. Adjustments to these funding allocations shall be made on the following basis:

1) Initial awards will be based on the Seniors Council’s best estimate of available funds at the time the Proposal Review Panel meets;
2) Contracting agencies will be notified of increases or decreases to available funding as quickly as possible, and no later than two weeks after receipt of official notice received by the AAA.
3) Additional funding is sometimes available due to state or federal budget action, pandemic response funding, or other sources. Existing contractors will be made aware of any opportunities to apply for supplemental funding.

10. **CONTRACT PERIOD AND POTENTIAL RENEWAL**

Within the contract cycle of 2024-28, contracts will be awarded in one-year increments. Contracts for 2024-2025 are expected to be issued in June of 2024, pending the passage of California’s budget and the allocation of contract funds. They will become effective July 1, 2024 and – provided the contracting agency remains in good standing and meets the scope of work described in this proposal, may be renewed annually until June 30, 2028, at the discretion of the AAA.

The Seniors Council Board of Directors retains the right to terminate a contract mid-year for cause, or not to renew a contract at the end of the one-year period without cause. However, it is the goal of the Seniors Council -- barring a significant change in the amount of federal and state funds available to the Seniors Council, or barring a change in the needs of local seniors -- to renew for three additional one-year periods those contracts awarded in 2024-25, except where the contractor has failed to adhere to the terms of the contract.
11. PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Complete the following Proposal Narrative. The Seniors Council recognizes the great variety among potential applicant agencies, and acknowledges this organizational diversity by not restricting the length of your narrative response. However, the Seniors Council strongly encourages brevity, and far prefers clarity over verbosity and volume.

A. TYPE OF SERVICE:

1. Complete the Proposal Cover Sheet Form (included in the packet as Attachment 2)

2. Project Summary: Please provide a one-to-two page narrative summary of your proposal, briefly describing your agency and the services to be provided.

B. EXPERIENCE DELIVERING THE PROPOSED SERVICES: (20%)

1. Describe the geographic area in which the applicant has a history of providing Ombudsman services, and the number of years of experience:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th># of Years of Experience</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>____</td>
<td>Both San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties</td>
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<td>____</td>
<td>San Benito County</td>
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<tr>
<td>____</td>
<td>Santa Cruz County</td>
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<td>____</td>
<td>Monterey County</td>
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<td>Santa Clara County</td>
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<td>____</td>
<td>San Mateo County</td>
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<tr>
<td>____</td>
<td>Other Counties (list):</td>
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2. Does your agency, organization or business now provide other services for older adults and/or people with disabilities in San Benito and/or Santa Cruz County? If so, briefly state what those services are and how long it has provided services in the area.

3. What process have you used to identify the needs of seniors in the community to be served?

4. How will your program access legal advice and counsel to program staff and residents of long term care facilities?

5. How do you measure the effectiveness of your program in meeting specific needs?
C. COST / COST-EFFICIENCY/MATCHING FUNDS:  (25%)

Numbers provided in Section C must be consistent with the budget submitted. As with other sections of this RFP, if you have questions regarding the forms or the application, feel free to contact AAA staff.

1. **Cost per Service Unit**: Delineate the service categories proposed in this application, the service activities and specific proposed number of service units. For each service category, list the cost per unit of service to be delivered, delineating total cost per service unit, and amount per service unit that is funded by Seniors Council/AAA.

2. **Total Funds Requested**: Show the amount of Seniors Council/AAA funds requested, and the sources and amounts of other funding to be used in carrying out service delivery.

3. **Administration**: What percent of total funding will be allocated for administration and what percent for direct service provision? If that percentage differs from the rest of the agency, what is the agency-wide percentage? *Failure to list any administrative expenses will result in a negative score.*

4. **Matching Funds**: Describe how your organization will leverage other funding to meet the scope of work of this program. Clearly identify funding sources, amounts anticipated, and whether or not the funding is secured, expected, or still needs to be applied for.

5. **Project Budget**: Submit a complete program budget, using the forms in the Attachment 5 or a computer-generated facsimile.

D. **TARGETED SERVICE POPULATIONS**:  (15%)

Describe your agency’s outreach and targeting ability to reach facility populations typically disenfranchised from service. Include past performance, percentages to be served, and methods used to insure success. *Include efforts to reach each of the following categories:*

1. **Low-income seniors:**

2. **Ethnic minority seniors:**

3. **Seniors with limited-English Proficiency:**

4. **Frail elderly and individuals with disabilities:**

5. **Rural or otherwise isolated care facilities:**
6. **Persons with Alzheimer’s disease or related disorders (and their caregivers);**

7. **Gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and/or transgendered seniors;**

8. **HIV+ seniors;**

9. **Other specific groups your agency targets.**

**E. SERVICE DELIVERY: (35%)**

Use this section to describe the effectiveness of the services your agency provides. Answer each sub-category, addressing the issues listed and/or any others that are relevant to the topic.

1. **Outreach:** Describe how your staff & volunteers will reach individuals in long term care facilities, including outreach techniques and points of contact.

2. **Involvement of participants and the community:** Outline how service recipients and the community provide feedback into the operation of your program. Include the background of your Board of Directors and any relevant advisory councils or committees, participant feedback or evaluations forms, process for policy changes, or other involvements of participants in the program(s) operations.

3. **Participation in Community-based System of Care:** Describe the agency’s history and future plans regarding its participation in local community systems of care. List agency participation on local commissions or other committees or advisory bodies related to senior services, coalitions of senior care which you are a part of, and any organized advocacy efforts affecting seniors which your organization feels would enhance your ability to deliver services in your service area.

4. **Paid staff:** Describe the paid positions and hours of each involved in delivery of these services at the proposed levels. Provide summary resumes for key personnel in your agency, including their human service experience. Include an agency and/or program organizational chart.

5. **Staff Turnover:** How will your agency ensure continued operations if/when existing staff leave the organization?

6. **Use of volunteers:** Describe your agency’s use of volunteers, including number of volunteers, hours donated, duties performed, recruitment strategies, and training provided, etc.
7. **Program Infrastructure & Location:** Tell us where the central location is and from where services originate and are delivered. Describe any satellite offices or work from home strategies the program will employ.

8. **Board of Directors:** Provide a current Board of Directors roster and a brief description of their experience on the Board and with services to older adults.

F. **MISCELLANEOUS:** (5%)

Describe any other factors which especially qualify your organization to provide services to seniors under contract with the Seniors Council.

1. Provide information about any outstanding attributes of your organization in general, your structure, or your personnel.
2. Provide information about any outstanding elements of your organization's experience.
3. Describe anything else you think may help your application.