



BID

Response to Request for Proposal Former South Community Library City of La Crosse, WI

April 17, 2024

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Project Vision:

Renovate the closed South Side Library building into a Scenic Bluffs Community Health Center location offering integrated whole-person care including dental, primary medical and behavioral health services and supporting services no later than year-end 2024. As a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), Scenic Bluffs Community Health Centers brings unique resources to the Community to advance the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Qualifications of Buyer and Past Accomplishments:

Scenic Bluffs Community Health Centers has demonstrated success in efficiently repurposing space to meet community health needs. Our Cashton location was previously a bowling alley and Norwalk a former school.

Most recently, in 2023, Scenic Bluffs completed a \$900,000 improvement to its Norwalk clinic. The project was completed on time and under budget, increasing the number of patients served by 43% in just one year. In 2015, Scenic Bluffs completed a \$2.25 million renovation to its Cashton clinic, expanding the facilities to include 14 dental operatories. Further, Scenic Bluffs has a decades-long track record of sustainable operational practices.

Scenic Bluffs, like most Community Health Centers, is seen as a community asset not just for our dental, primary medical and behavioral health services but also for our community collaboratives with neighbors, municipalities, and other agencies. This directly aligns with both the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Climate Action Plan.

Scenic Bluffs' mission is to deliver accessible, patient-centered primary care, supporting healthier people and communities. Its vision statement reads "Scenic Bluffs Community Health Centers is the provider of choice with a nationally recognized reputation for excellence in individual primary care and building healthy communities."

A key component of our short Mission and Vision statements is supporting and building healthy communities. Our 30-year history of community-based care is full of examples of close collaborations with our neighbors to meet community needs, some of which are outlined below.

- Conducted multiple e-recycling events diverting over 182,000 pounds of electronic waste from our landfills.
- Provide space in our facility for another non-profit to offer a culturally sensitive food pantry.
- Provide space for a community run concession stand operated by neighboring residents using the adjacent ballpark.
- Host community group meetings including senior exercise classes, CPR classes, Regional Community Health Workers meetings, Legal Aid etc.
- Co-locate services with other social service agencies to address social drivers of health.
- Co-host health fairs and clinics with county health departments and other local social service groups.

In alignment with La Crosse’s Climate Action Plan priority, “Improve community adaptation capacity through strengthened social support network”, Scenic Bluffs will designate meeting space for use by community groups, including outside meetings as well as community education (e.g., health fairs and outreach events) and share our parking lot with the adjacent church when we are not open on the weekends. Scenic Bluffs’ clinics in Cashton and Norwalk both include spaces used in this way, as needed by nonprofit groups in the community.

Another strategy identified in the Climate Action Plan states, “Support existing community networks and connections led by and/or geared towards populations vulnerable to extreme weather events, including people who are elderly, homebound, disabled, isolated, or those likely to need financial assistance.” During the flooding that impacted the Coulee Region, we spearheaded coordination of disaster relief efforts in both Cashton and Norwalk providing leadership, staff support and space. We would work with the City and the neighborhood as part of similar emergency response coordination, as needed or requested.

Further, the Climate Action Plan calls for increased access to local food, particularly serving low-income and food insecure individuals. As part of our public health mission, our support team provides nutrition education and healthy food options within the community. As we do at other sites, we would collaborate to identify and support solutions in the La Crosse neighborhood; in Cashton, our team is planning a coordinated CSA (community supported agriculture) drop-off at our clinic.

Barriers Exist to Achieving Public Health and Equity in the City’s Comprehensive Plan:

Scenic Bluffs is a unique resource that is underutilized as a partner in the solution.

Scenic Bluffs Community Health Center (SBCHC) is a FQHC that primarily serves Monroe, La Crosse, Vernon, and Crawford counties, with HRSA-designated health professional shortage areas for medical, dental, and/or mental health¹. All counties report barriers to accessing healthcare², especially for low-income and those insured by Medicaid or Medicare. High deductibles, cost of services and transportation are also reported as barriers. Much of the service area reports a higher poverty rate than the state average³, paired with uninsured rates at or above the state average⁴.

¹ [HRSA HPSA Find](#)

² [Vernon County CHIP 2022-2025; Crawford County CHIP 2022-2024; Monroe County CHIP 2023-2026; La Crosse County CHIP 2022-2024](#)

³ [2021 ALICE Report](#)

⁴ [Compare Counties | County Health Rankings & Roadmaps](#)

Oral Health Barriers to Community Health

- Wisconsin, along with the entire United States, faces a dental professional shortage. While Wisconsin's dental professional ratio is about the same as the national average, locally, Scenic Bluffs' service area and neighboring counties are experiencing more severe shortages than the state and national averages. In 2020, DHS analysis found that 30% of WI dental providers would leave within 5 years and that over half of the dental providers accepting Medicaid would leave within 10 years.
- The shortage in our area is exacerbated by the fact that the one training program is several hours away. Marquette University in Milwaukee is the only dental school in the state, and unfortunately the nearest Wisconsin training program for dental hygienists – which is a 2-year associate degree – is over 90 miles away.
- As one of few clinics in the region that accepts Medicaid for dental services, the need is profound: even with a staff of full-time dentists that has grown from 1 to 8 in the past 2 years, we receive more than 800 new requests each month from individuals seeking dental services (not counting appointments with returning patients).
- The lack of access to dental care created by dental health professional shortages is most acute for special populations – especially uninsured or covered by Medicaid. In 2019, only 29% of WI dental providers served patients covered by Medicaid at all, and many of those were not accepting new patients, and it is likely these numbers are worse now, post pandemic. By far, the most common reason cited for not accepting Medicaid patients is low compensation. Populations with other special health care needs are accepted by more dentists than the Medicaid population, but less than the general population.
- La Crosse Compass research showed only 15% of Medicaid-covered individuals had an appointment with a dentist last year.
- The La Crosse School District identifies that 48% of their students are identified as economically disadvantaged and qualify for both free and reduced lunch and Badgercare making them likely to be challenged to find access to dental care.
- Last year, of the 1200 La Crosse County residents served by Scenic Bluffs, over 30% were children and 10% were Seniors.
- Our delivery model emphasizes integrated care to take care of the whole person, further reducing barriers to care by providing “one stop”, coordinated care, and delivering proactive primary care services that help prevent acute illness, promote wellness, keep people employed, and alleviate strains on emergency departments and hospitals.

Proposed Use of Property:

Establish a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) location offering integrated whole-person care including dental, primary medical and behavioral health and supporting services.

Our proposal allows us to scale growth to increase capacity over five years to the following:

Provider	Year 1	Year 3	Year 5
Dental	4	6	6
Behavioral Health	2	3	3
Medical	1.6	1.6	1.6
Total Staff	19.8 FTEs	25.3 FTEs	25.3 FTEs
Incremental Wages and Benefits	\$ 2,135,000	\$2,978,898	\$ 3,134,196

Approximately 20 incremental jobs are anticipated in Year 1 and another 5 by Year 5. These are better than living wage jobs with benefits. Volume projections in Year 1 anticipate 67 patients per clinic day and 104 in Year 5.

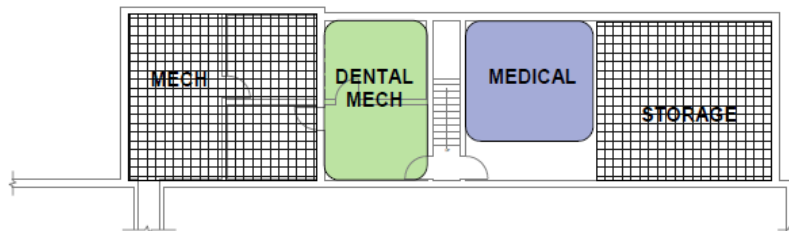
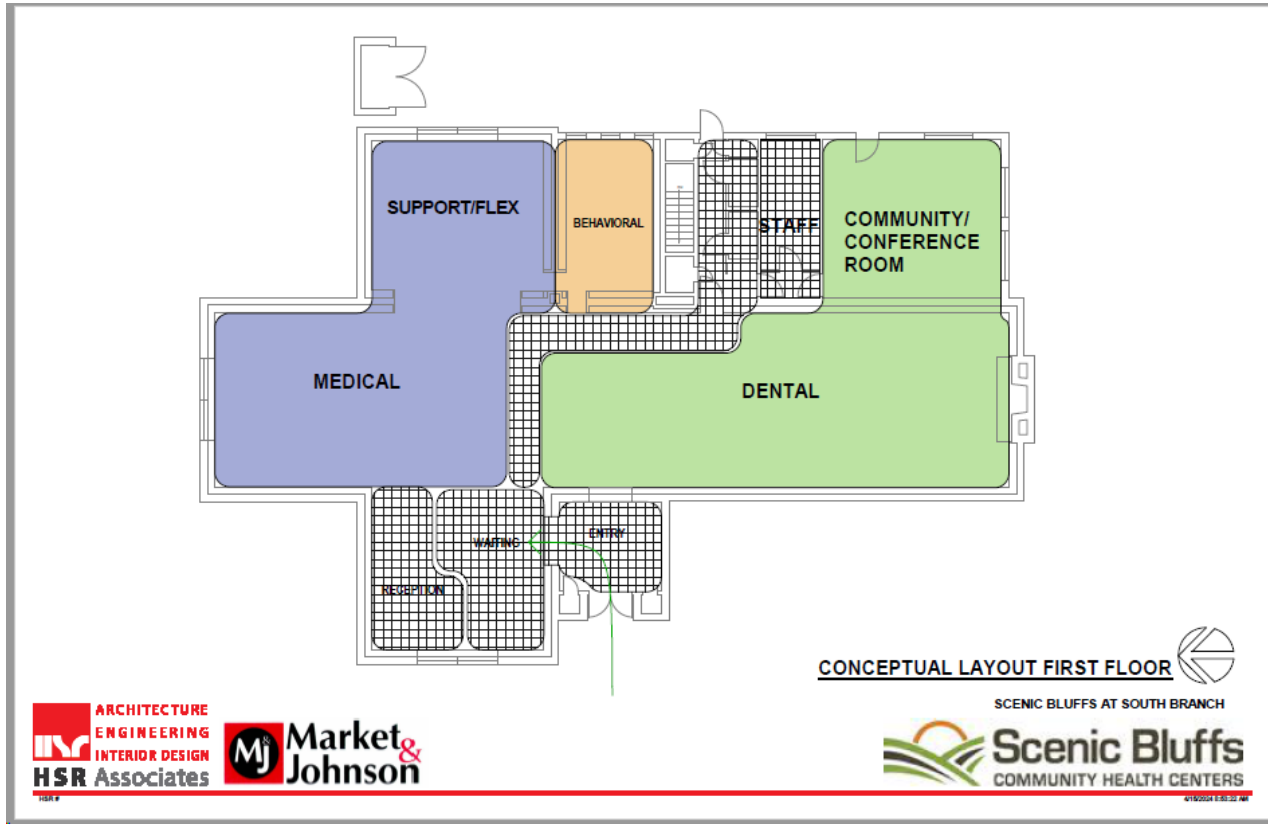
While dental is the greatest gap in access to care in the community, we know that many without access to dental services also lack a medical home. Integrated behavioral health and supportive services by our patient access coordinators (called our “help team”) that address Social Drivers of Health will also be offered.

As in all our locations, a space in the building will be designated as shared community use space.

Preliminary discussions with the neighbors indicate that there is preference for the following:

- Preservation of the building -not demolition.
- Desire for a collaborative owner who allows community groups to share space in the building.
- Preliminary support for dental services presence, and interest in better understanding more about Scenic Bluffs Community Health Centers - we have been invited to an upcoming neighborhood meeting to review our submission.

Floor Plan:



Proposed Budget:

Estimated Project Budget: \$348,000 for Building Purchase (BID)
 \$915,500 for Equipment
 \$1,656,000 for Renovations (contractor estimate)
\$2,919,500 Total Estimated Project Investment

Economic Impact of Project:

Beyond the impact of public health improvement, this project also brings significant Economic Output to the City of La Crosse.

Health Centers positively impact the economies in which they operate by employing workers and supporting additional jobs and economic activity in the area.

A 2023 analysis by Matrix Global Advisors (MGA) quantified the direct and indirect economic impact of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). In 2021, Wisconsin Community Health Centers in aggregate, supported more than 5,950 jobs just over \$1 billion dollars in economic output, and more than \$432 million in labor income.

Extrapolating the ratios and methods used in this report allows us to provide a reasonable basis for the following estimates of Economic Output of this project. Over 5 years, this project would support just over 55 jobs with over \$68 million in Economic Output, and more than \$28 million in labor income.

	Employment			Economic Output			Labor Income		
	Direct Jobs	Supported Jobs	Total Jobs	Direct	Supported	Total	Direct	Supported	Total
Year 1	20	24	44	\$3,593,720	\$7,162,950	\$10,756,670	\$2,134,600	\$2,278,471	\$4,413,071
Year 2	21	25	46	\$3,895,750	\$7,764,952	\$11,660,702	\$2,314,000	\$2,469,963	\$4,783,963
Year 3	25	30	55	\$5,015,315	\$9,996,453	\$15,011,768	\$2,979,000	\$3,179,783	\$6,158,783
Year 4	25	30	55	\$5,146,632	\$10,258,193	\$15,404,825	\$3,057,000	\$3,263,041	\$6,320,041
Year 5	25	30	55	\$5,276,266	\$10,516,577	\$15,792,843	\$3,134,000	\$3,345,230	\$6,479,230
			Total of Years 1-5	\$22,927,681	\$45,699,126	\$68,626,807	\$13,618,600	\$14,536,488	\$28,155,088

Projected Tax Base:

Scenic Bluffs Community Health Centers is a benevolent, non-profit 501c3 organization. In addition to the job creation and Economic Output, as a community partner, we value our municipal service partners and would agree to make fixed Payments In Lieu Of Taxes. For the first 5 years after purchase of the property, this payment would be based on the current assessed value of the property of \$348,000 and would be no greater than \$6,343. After year 5, payments would be negotiated.

Funding Sources:

Based on long standing, substantiated community need for a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) presence, Scenic Bluffs has been in the planning stages for a facility location allowing whole person integrated care in the City of La Crosse for some time. Funding for this project will come from multiple sources including strategic cash reserves, donations, grant funding, and loans.

Estimated Project Timeline:

Scenic Bluffs is poised to move quickly to meet the acute dental needs of the community. Our vendors have stated they can move as soon as we are able to get the appropriate zoning and permits to begin project construction.

A *conservative* draft timeline follows:

Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish
Scenic Bluffs	154 days	Fri 4/12/24	Wed 11/13/24
Procurement	1 mon	Fri 4/12/24	Thu 5/9/24
Design	2.5 mons	Fri 5/10/24	Thu 7/18/24
Permitting	4 wks	Fri 7/19/24	Thu 8/15/24
Construction	3 mons	Fri 8/16/24	Thu 11/7/24
Final Inspections	3 days	Fri 11/8/24	Tue 11/12/24
Occupancy	1 day	Wed 11/13/24	Wed 11/13/24

Contingencies:

Zoning

To avoid any miscommunication about the intended long-term use of the property, Scenic Bluffs Community Health Center has prepared a list of our services that may be made available in the building over time. Initially, not all of these services are intended to be offered. Prior to final purchase of the property, it must be zoned for at least the following to assure long term clarity of use:

Professional Office Services including and in support of the following:

- Dental services
- Primary medical care services including preventive, diagnostic care and treatment (e.g., chronic condition management, immunizations, screenings, blood tests, x-rays, health education, etc.) for all age groups, and for a wide range of health-related issues.
- Behavioral health services
- Prescription-only pharmacy services exclusively for Scenic Bluffs Community Health Center patients only; may exclude the dispensing of opioids.
- Health and community education and resources
- Language interpreting
- Patient access coordination
- Health insurance navigation
- Chiropractic, acupuncture, massage therapy
- Social services - services intended to address social drivers of health including but not limited to housing, financial, legal, employment, educational, health, and other areas of individual and community wellbeing.
- Benefits and identification documentation enrollment
- Parking

Scenic Bluffs Community Health Center commits the following services are not currently provided in its scope of service at any of its locations nor will they be provided in the future at this location: Methadone clinic, needle exchange program, inpatient services including drug detoxification.

Key Contacts:

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Steve Huntzicker, COO, shuntzicker@scenicbluffs.org 608-654-5100 Ext 272



ABOUT US

Scenic Bluffs Community Health Centers is a non-profit, community-based healthcare provider in western Wisconsin. As a Community Health Center, we not only provide healthcare within our doors, but also focus on reducing health barriers throughout the communities we serve.

Scenic Bluffs provides a comprehensive range of services, including primary medical, dental, behavioral health and pharmacy services, in addition to complementary therapies such as chiropractic, acupuncture and massage therapy. With strong partnerships in area school districts, Scenic Bluffs provides school nursing, oral health and behavioral health services to students in schools across the region. Scenic Bluffs has health centers in Cashton, Norwalk and La Crosse.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER?

Scenic Bluffs is part of a network of more than 1,400 FQHCs nationwide. Community Health Centers play a crucial role in increasing access to primary care by reducing barriers such as cost, lack of insurance, distance and language for patients, among others. Health centers are community-based and patient-directed organizations that deliver comprehensive, culturally competent, high-quality primary health care services to individuals and families. Health centers integrate access to primary health services in areas where economic, geographic, or cultural barriers limit access to affordable healthcare.

OUR HISTORY

Since 1994, Scenic Bluffs has provided affordable, accessible healthcare to people in western Wisconsin.



In the early 1990's, Scenic Bluffs began as an idea from

community members who recognized the need for more accessible healthcare in the region. In 1992, the wheels were set in motion with "Project WATCH", a 37-foot-long bus that was converted into a mobile rural health clinic. It became apparent quickly that the region would benefit from full-time care being offered.



Driven by the determination of local community members, a grant proposal

was crafted to establish a Community Health Center in Cashton, also known as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). In 1993, the grant was approved, with Scenic Bluffs officially opening its doors in 1994.



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www.scenicbluffs.org