



# The Bridge

MENTAL HEALTH AND  
HOUSING SOLUTIONS

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December 24, 2012

New York State Public Service Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
Three Empire State Plaza  
Albany, NY 12223  
Attn: Jeffrey C. Cohen, Acting Secretary

RE: Tilden Gardens  
2513 Tilden Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11226

Dear Mr. Cohen,

The Bridge, a New York City-based nonprofit housing and mental health agency, is developing a 60-unit affordable housing apartment building at the above address. We are applying for a waiver to allow master metering of the building. The electrical utility is Consolidated Edison.

The facility will consist of two wings with a common lobby/reception area with approximately 44,200 square feet and 60 studio apartments. The front, street-facing wing consists of six stories with 45 units and the back wing consists of four stories with 15 units serving chronically homeless single adults with serious mental illness and young adults with mental health conditions who are aging out of residential foster care. The common areas of the building include staff offices, library/computer rooms, laundry facilities, a small lounge area on each residential floor for socialization, community rooms, exercise rooms, and tenant storage. Each residential unit will be self-contained including living/dining space, full bathroom and kitchen. The purpose of this facility is to provide housing with support services that will assist the tenants to live as independently as possible in the community. Support services and rent subsidies will be funded through a contract with the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH).

This project has been designed in accordance with standards that will increase energy efficiency. The Bridge is participating in the NYSERDA Multi-family Performance Program (MPP) and the design team is working closely with Community Environmental Center (CEC) as its partner. The facility will include Energy Star lighting, windows, and appliances throughout. In addition, the facility will include a storm water retention system to reuse storm water for irrigation in the outdoor planting areas and high efficiency gas boilers.

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Operating funds will be provided through a contract with OMH in accordance with the current CR-SRO rate of \$21,102 per person per year. This amount covers the support services and property costs. Tenants do not pay their own utility costs. Attached is the OMH commitment letter for Tilden Gardens. (See attachment A.)

The Bridge will operate this facility pursuant to a 40-year agreement with OMH. We will conform to all applicable requirements.

The Bridge will both manage the building and provide the support services to the 60 tenants. It will pay all utility bills with funds received from OMH. The Bridge would prefer to receive and pay one monthly bill rather than 60 monthly bills. We respectfully request a waiver to the Public Service Tariff requiring residential apartments to be individually metered. Each floor will have a meter closet whereby we will be able to monitor utility usage for each apartment as required by NYSERDA. This will enable staff to teach tenants how to conserve electric consumption.

The Bridge's development team for Tilden Gardens includes architects and engineers with many years of experience. Plans for the building were designed based on past experience and were approved by the New York City Department of Buildings prior to construction which began nine months ago on March 2, 2012. The building consists of 60 studio apartments on one master meter and the electric room is not large enough to accommodate individual meters. Because part of the funding is through low income housing tax credits, which has a very strict construction deadline, we cannot reconfigure the meter room at this stage. Additionally this would present a serious financial hardship for the project.

The Bridge hereby submits this petition for Public Service Commission approval to be granted a waiver from the requirement of separate electric utility meters for the 60 studio units in the above-described facility, based on the following reasons:

1. The use of the facility is for the housing and services for chronically homeless adults and young adults with serious mental health conditions.
2. None of the 60 tenants will be responsible for paying utility bills; one bill will be paid by the management.
3. Providing one larger commercial service will result in lower overall utility charges than 60 individual utility services. This is due to the elimination of multiple meter charges by Con Edison, lower consumption rates, and a more evenly proportioned demand charge.
4. The Bridge will have reduced administrative costs since it will only pay one utility bill rather than 60 individual bills; this would be an administrative hardship for the staff.
5. The reconfiguration of space to accommodate 60 individual meters in the one electric room would be a financial hardship and result in increasing the construction time.

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The Bridge is a highly respected and experienced nonprofit agency providing housing with services to close to 2,000 individuals each year. The Bridge has contracts with the OMH, NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Its housing has been funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, OMH, NYS Homeless Housing and Assistance Corporation, and the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York. More recently we have been successful in securing low income housing tax credits to support our housing programs. Attached please find The Bridge's Certificate of Incorporation, By-Laws, and IRS Determination Letter for your review. (See attachments B, C, D.)

Thank you very much for your consideration and please feel free to contact us should you have any questions. I can be reached at 212-663-3000 ext. 378 or email [cgordon@thebridgeny.org](mailto:cgordon@thebridgeny.org).

Sincerely,



Carole Gordon

Senior Vice President for Housing Development

attachments