



Request for Proposals Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspection Services

INTRODUCTION

Through this Request for Proposals (“RFP”), Rhode Island Housing seeks proposals from qualified firms to provide Housing Quality Standards (“HQS”) inspection services in accordance with the guidelines established by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) for the Housing Choice Voucher Program (“HCV Program” or “HCVP”)

INSTRUCTIONS

One (1) original and three (3) copies of your proposal must be submitted to Rhode Island Housing, 44 Washington Street, Providence, RI 02903-1721, Attn: Vanessa Galarza. Please also direct an electronic copy to: vgalarza@rhodeislandhousing.org. Proposals must be concise and include all attachments and work samples. Proposals should be presented on business letterhead.

Proposals must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on July 18, 2014.

Respondents are advised that all submissions (including those not selected for engagement) may be made available to the public on request upon completion of the process and award of a contract(s). Accordingly, any information included in the proposal that the respondent believes to be proprietary or confidential should be clearly identified as such.

SCOPE OF WORK

Please see Attachment A.

ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED WITH YOUR PROPOSAL

A. General Firm Information

1. Provide a brief description of your firm, including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Name of the principal(s) of the firm
 - b. Name, telephone number and email address of a representative of the firm authorized to discuss your proposal.
 - c. Address of all offices of the firm.
 - d. Number of employees of the firm.

B. Experience and Resources

1. Describe your firm and its capabilities. In particular, support your capacity to perform the Scope of Work.
2. Indicate which principals and associates from your firm would be involved in providing services to Rhode Island Housing. Provide appropriate background information for each such person and identify his or her responsibilities.
3. Provide a detailed list of references including a contact name and telephone number for organizations or businesses for whom you have performed similar work.
4. Identify any conflict of interest that may arise as a result of business activities or ventures by your firm and associates of your firm, employees, or subcontractors as a result of any individual's status as a member of the board of directors of any organization likely to interact with Rhode Island Housing.
5. Identify any material litigation, administrative proceedings or investigations in which your firm is currently involved. Identify any material litigation, administrative proceedings or investigations, to which your firm or any of its principals, partners, associates, subcontractors or support staff was a party, that has been settled within the past two (2) years.
6. Describe how your firm will handle actual and or potential conflicts of interest.
7. Identify individuals in your firm with multi-lingual skills, who are available to assist with communication in languages other than English. Please identify the language(s).

C. Fee Structure

The cost of services is one of the factors that will be considered in awarding this contract. The information requested in this section is required to support the reasonableness of your fees.

1. Please provide a detailed cost proposal for performing the Scope of Work (Attachment A). It is recommended that you provide your cost proposal on a per inspection basis, but Rhode Island Housing will consider flat/per year or other alternative billing arrangements. Rhode Island Housing anticipates a two-year initial engagement, with an option to extend for an additional year.
2. Provide an itemized breakdown of billing rates and hourly costs, list of key personnel and their hourly rates, reimbursable expenses, etc. for any services that may be requested in addition to the services previously described.

3. Please provide any other fee information applicable to the engagement that has not been previously covered that you wish to bring to the attention of Rhode Island Housing.

D. Miscellaneous

1. Rhode Island Housing encourages the participation of persons of color, women, persons with disabilities and members of other federally and State-protected classes. Describe your firm's affirmative action program and activities. Include the number and percentage of members of federally and State-protected classes who are either principals or senior managers in your firm, the number and percentage of members of federally and State-protected classes in your firm who will work on Rhode Island Housing's engagement and, if applicable, a copy of your Minority- or Women-Owned Business Enterprise state certification.
2. Discuss any topics not covered in this Request for Proposals that you would like to bring to Rhode Island Housing's attention.

E. Certifications

1. Rhode Island Housing insists upon full compliance with Chapter 27 of Title 17 of the Rhode Island General Laws, Reporting of Political Contributions by State Vendors. This law requires State Vendors entering into contracts to provide services to an agency such as Rhode Island Housing, for the aggregate sum of \$5,000 or more, to file an affidavit with the State Board of Elections concerning reportable political contributions. The affidavit must state whether the State Vendor (and any related parties as defined in the law) has, within 24 months preceding the date of the contract, contributed an aggregate amount in excess of \$250 within a calendar year to any general officer, any candidate for general office, or any political party.
2. Does any Rhode Island "Major State Decision-maker," as defined below, or the spouse or dependent child of such person, hold (i) a ten percent or greater equity interest, or (ii) a Five Thousand Dollar or greater cash interest in this business?

For purposes of this question, "Major State Decision-maker" means:

- (i) All general officers; and all executive or administrative head or heads of any state executive agency enumerated in § 42-6-1 as well as the executive or administrative head or heads of state quasi-public corporations, whether appointed or serving as an employee. The phrase "executive or administrative head or heads" shall include anyone serving in the positions of director, executive director, deputy director, assistant director, executive counsel or chief of staff;

(ii) All members of the general assembly and the executive or administrative head or heads of a state legislative agency, whether appointed or serving as an employee. The phrase “executive or administrative head or heads” shall include anyone serving in the positions of director, executive director, deputy director, assistant director, executive counsel or chief of staff;

(iii) All members of the state judiciary and all state magistrates and the executive or administrative head or heads of a state judicial agency, whether appointed or serving as an employee. The phrase “executive or administrative head or heads” shall include anyone serving in the positions of director, executive director, deputy director, assistant director, executive counsel, chief of staff or state court administrator.

If your answer is “Yes,” please identify the Major State Decision-maker, specify the nature of their ownership interest, and provide a copy of the annual financial disclosure required to be filed with the Rhode Island Ethics Commission pursuant to R.I.G.L. §§36-14-16, 17 and 18.

3. Please include a letter from your president, chairman or CEO certifying that (i) no member of your firm has made inquiries or contacts with respect to this Request for Proposals other than in an email or written communication to Vanessa Galarza at vgalarza@rhodeislandhousing.org seeking clarification on the Scope of Work set forth in this proposal, from the date of this RFP through the date of your proposal, (ii) no member of your firm will make any such inquiry or contact until after July 11, 2014, (iii) all information in your proposal is true and correct to the best of her/his knowledge, (iv) no member of your firm gave anything of monetary value or promise of future employment to a Rhode Island Housing employee or Commissioner, or a relative of the same, based on any understanding that such person’s action or judgment will be influenced and (v) your firm is in full compliance with Chapter 27 of Title 17 of the Rhode Island General Laws, Reporting of Political Contributions by State Vendors.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

A selection committee consisting of Rhode Island Housing employees (the “Committee”) will review all proposals and make a determination based on the following factors:

- Professional capacity to undertake the Scope of Work
- Proposed fee structure
- Ability to perform within time and budget constraints
- Evaluation of potential work plans

- Previous work experience and performance with Rhode Island Housing and/or similar organizations
- Recommendations by references
- Firm minority status and affirmative action program or activities
- Foreign language capabilities of the firm
- Other pertinent information submitted.

Rhode Island Housing may invite one or more finalists to make presentations.

In its sole discretion, Rhode Island Housing may negotiate with one or more firms who have submitted qualifications to submit more detailed proposals on specific projects as they arise.

By this Request for Proposals, Rhode Island Housing has not committed itself to undertake the work set forth. Rhode Island Housing reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to rebid the original or amended scope of services and to enter into negotiations with one or more respondents. Rhode Island Housing reserves the right to make those decisions after receipt of responses. Rhode Island Housing's decision on these matters is final.

For additional information, contact: Vanessa Galarza, Housing Choice Voucher Program Supervisor, at vgalarza@rhodeislandhousing.org.

Together with its partners, Rhode Island Housing works to ensure that all people who live and work in Rhode Island can afford a healthy, attractive home that meets their needs. Rhode Island Housing uses all of its resources to provide low-interest loans, grants, education and assistance to help Rhode Islanders find, rent, buy, build and keep a good home. Created by the General Assembly in 1973, Rhode Island Housing is a privately funded public purpose corporation

Attachment A

Scope of Work

Rhode Island Housing seeks to engage qualified vendors to perform Housing Quality Standards (“HQS”) inspection services in accordance with the guidelines established by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) for the Housing Choice Voucher Program (“HCV Program” or “HCVP”).

The HCV Program is a federal program through which Rhode Island Housing provides assistance to qualifying individuals and families renting privately-owned housing units in certain Rhode Island communities. Under the regulations established by HUD, a housing unit must be maintained in decent, safe and sanitary condition in order to be eligible for a subsidy.

Rhode Island Housing has entered an Annual Contributions Contract (“ACC”) with HUD for 1,840 vouchers. This includes both tenant-based and project-based forms of HCV Program assistance. Units are located in the following communities (collectively, the “Service Area”):

- Barrington
- Central Falls
- Charlestown
- Cranston
- Exeter
- Foster
- Gloucester
- Hopkinton
- Jamestown
- Johnston
- Lincoln
- Little Compton
- Middletown
- Narragansett
- New Shoreham (Block Island)
- Newport
- North Kingstown
- North Smithfield
- Pawtucket
- Portsmouth
- Providence

- Richmond
- Scituate
- Tiverton
- Warwick
- West Greenwich

The successful respondent (hereinafter, the “HQS Contractor”) will maintain a staff level and managerial resources adequate to handle the volume of HQS inspection activity associated with Rhode Island Housing’s ACC, which is estimated to be 2,700 initial, annual/biennial and special inspections and reinspections annually. Inspections will take place throughout the Service Area. The HQS Contractor and inspectors performing services for the HQS Contractor must maintain the necessary skill and judgment to perform all the duties and responsibilities customarily associated with performing HQS inspections and documenting such inspections. All inspectors must have Housing Quality Standards certifications, a valid driver’s license and the use of an automobile for work purposes.

The HQS Contractor and all inspectors performing services on behalf of the HQS Contractor must be generally knowledgeable with respect to the HUD rules, regulations, manuals, handbooks, PIH notices, and other published guidance governing HQS inspections, which may be amended and supplemented by HUD from time to time, including the following (collectively, the “Rules and Regulations”):

- Title 24, Part 982, Subpart I of the Code of Federal Regulations
- Housing Inspection Manual: Section 8 Existing Housing Program (available at: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=hqs_inspect_manual.pdf)
- Chapter 10, Housing Choice Voucher Guidebook (7420.10G) (available at: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=DOC_35620.pdf)
- Notice PIH 2010-10 (HA) (March 31, 2010) (available at: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=DOC_9010.pdf)
- Form HUD-52580 (available at: <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=52580.pdf>)
- Form HUD-52580A (available at: <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=52580-a.pdf>)
- Other applicable HUD guidance, notices and forms

Links, where provided, are intended for convenience only. The HQS Contractor is responsible for maintaining up-to-date versions of the Rules and Regulations, possessing thorough knowledge and understanding of the Rules and Regulations, and providing sufficient training to inspectors with respect to the Rules and Regulations. All inspections must conform to the specifications identified by HUD in the Rules and Regulations, including the obligation to record the results on the forms published by HUD within the required timeframes.

Upon Rhode Island Housing's request, HQS Contractor shall schedule, provide all relevant required notices of, and perform an initial, annual, or biennial inspection, special inspection or reinspection of a requested unit. Under the Rules and Regulations, initial inspections must take place within fifteen (15) calendar days of the receipt by Rhode Island Housing of a Request for Tenancy Approval; as a result, the HQS Contractor must work diligently with Rhode Island Housing to meet this timeframe. Annual or biennial inspections must take place within twenty (20) working days of the request by Rhode Island Housing. Special inspections must take place within three (3) to five (5) working days of the request by Rhode Island Housing (except where an emergency condition exists, in which case the inspection must take place within 24 hours). Inspectors must arrive within the appointed time, or else make their best efforts to make contact with the owner and/or client when an inspection cannot take place within the appointed time. Inspectors must wait for at least fifteen (15) minutes at an appointment before leaving, if an owner or client is not present at the appointed time. Inspectors must diligently complete inspections in accordance with the Rules and Regulations, fully documenting their findings on the appropriate HUD forms, and promptly providing copies to Rhode Island Housing, the client and owner. Rhode Island Housing may require inspectors to supplement inspection reports with digital photographs.