



# Rhode Island Housing

## **Request for Proposals Software to Support Management of Federal Housing Programs**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Through this Request for Proposals (“RFP”), Rhode Island Housing seeks proposals from qualified firms to provide a comprehensive electronic system for administering various aspects of federal rental assistance programs including, at a minimum, the Section 811 Project Rental Assistance Program, the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the Project Based Voucher Program, and the Family Self Sufficiency Program. These programs are funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) and administered through Rhode Island Housing’s Division of Leased Housing and Rental Services.

This system will help Rhode Island Housing to manage a broad range of functions associated with administering these programs, such as HUD reporting, tenant certifications, waiting list maintenance, accounting, unit inspections, calculating tenant rent, and other necessary components of program administration as further described below.

The successful firm must demonstrate direct experience providing software, expertise, and technical assistance with respect to the Section 811 Project Rental Assistance Program and the Housing Choice Voucher Program and/or other federal housing programs.

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

Proposals should be no longer than fifteen (15) pages, single-spaced, using normal 1 inch margins and a 12 inch font. Please note that the Fee Structure (described below) is not included in this page limitation.

One (1) original and three (3) copies of the proposal should be submitted to Rhode Island Housing, 44 Washington Street, Providence, RI 02903-1721, Attn: Maryrose Mensah, with an electronic courtesy copy to [mmensah@rhodeislandhousing.org](mailto:mmensah@rhodeislandhousing.org). Proposals must be concise and include all attachments and work samples. Proposals must be presented on business letterhead.

Proposals must be postmarked and received no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, July 25, 2016.

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).

### **SCOPE OF WORK**

Please see the Scope of Work provided at Attachment A.

### **ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED WITH YOUR PROPOSAL**

#### A. General Firm Information

Provide a brief description of your firm, including but not limited to the following:

1. Name of the principal(s) of the firm;
2. Name, telephone number and email address of a representative of the firm authorized to discuss your proposal;
3. Address of all offices of the firm; and
4. 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. Along with the submitted proposal, the qualified firm must provide an implementation schedule that discusses the firm's estimated timeframe for planning, development, and utilization of the software.
3. Please include any experience your firm has with providing electronic systems for creating and maintaining tenant wait lists, managing occupancy, inspections, and calculating tenant rent for HUD rental programs. Please also include a description of the firm's ability to support compliance with HUD reporting requirements as well as generate customized reports.
4. Explain your experience working with specialized programs such as the Section 811 and Family Self Sufficiency Programs.
5. Describe any experience with PIC and SEMAP reporting. Discuss your experience with accounting functions of the Housing Choice Voucher Program including tracking voucher issuance and utilization, occupancy and lease up rates, voucher management, and tenant certifications.

6. 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.
7. Provide a detailed list of references including a contact name and telephone number for organizations or businesses for whom you have performed similar work.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. Describe how your firm will handle actual and or potential conflicts of interest.
11. 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 cost proposal for providing the Scope of Work at Attachment A. Include costs for maintenance and upgrades.
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 Maryrose Mensah at [mmensah@rhodeislandhousing.org](mailto:mmensah@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 August, 1, 2016, (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: Maryrose Mensah at [mmensah@rhodeislandhousing.org](mailto:mmensah@rhodeislandhousing.org).**

## Attachment A

### **Scope of Work**

Rhode Island Housing seeks to engage proposals from qualified firms to provide a comprehensive computerized system that will enable Rhode Island Housing to carry out the full range of its administrative functions with respect to several federal rental assistance programs, which include the Section 811 Project Rental Assistance Program, the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the Project Based Voucher Program, and the Family Self Sufficiency Program (collectively, the “Programs”). Each of the Programs is an initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”), and must be administered in a manner consistent with HUD regulations, handbooks, and other requirements.

Rhode Island Housing’s Annual Contributions Contract (“ACC”) with HUD currently supports 1,835 Housing Choice Vouchers throughout Rhode Island, of which 330 are Project Based Vouchers, 150 are Family Self Sufficiency (“FSS”) program vouchers, and 16 are Housing Choice Homeownership vouchers. Rhode Island Housing also administers 55 Moderate Rehabilitation units. As the second largest housing authority in the state, Rhode Island Housing administers 21 different waiting lists for federal housing vouchers, representing 6,800 applicants and over 13,700 active applications. During the last year, Rhode Island Housing handled over 50,000 online and telephone waiting list inquiries, 4,500 unit inspections, 500 moves, 325 new admissions, 1,300 interim recertifications and 1,900 annual recertifications. The Section 811 Program is new to Rhode Island Housing, and will provide rental assistance for up to 150 disabled individuals. The software system to be provided by the successful respondent will support the full range of Rhode Island Housing’s administrative functions with respect to the Programs.

The software system must be compatible with Rhode Island Housing’s general ledger system, which is MITAS. In addition to the software itself, the selected respondent must facilitate the migration of data from Rhode Island Housing’s current program administration system, HAPPY; provide ongoing support for the software application(s); integrate with Rhode Island Housing’s other business systems, namely Docushare; provide system customization, to the extent necessary, on an ongoing basis; and offer training in order to orient program staff to operation of the new system. Support may generally be provided on-line and by phone, but may be required to be provided on-site from time to time. The selected vendor will be responsible for providing ongoing maintenance of the software applications, including upgrades and “bug” fixes. The system must be maintained in such a way as to ensure Rhode Island Housing’s compliance with applicable HUD reporting regulations, tenant eligibility requirements, accounting requirements, and other requirements governing the administration of the Programs. The system must be updated on a timely basis to effectuate HUD regulatory changes.

Rhode Island Housing anticipates a joint opening of waiting list(s) with one or more other housing authorities that will involve an initial application collection using the selected software, selection by lottery of a certain number of applications, and export of the resulting applicant information into the software systems used by other participating public housing authorities and/or partners, which systems may vary. Ultimately, Rhode Island Housing anticipates using the selected system to support broader statewide application intake and wait list management.

Specific Requirements: The software must support the following minimum functions:

1. Accepting online applications from prospective tenants interested in participating in the Programs;
2. Verifying/calculating housing assistance payments; determining tenant eligibility in accordance with the Programs;
3. Creating/sorting/maintaining multiple applicant waiting lists (including waitlists for approximately 25 Project Based Voucher sites) according to specific preferences and other criteria; creating/sorting/maintaining waiting lists on behalf of other potential partners (owners/agents and other public housing authorities); generation of annual interest letters and purge notices;
4. Creating/maintaining statistics on applicants' demographic information;
5. Providing an electronic method of submitting required reports, certifications, and other documentation to HUD; providing an electronic platform for managing budgeting, requisitioning, subsidy reconciliation, annual subsidy estimation, and year-end settlement functions of the Programs; provide an electronic system capable of tracking ACCs and balances, ACC amendments, and producing program utilization and Voucher Management System reports;
6. Maintaining an online data file of housing developments by unit, which includes tenant-level eligibility data captured from HUD Forms 50058 and 50059 or the HUD Requirement Form;
7. For Section 811: program management; waitlist management; linking tenants with units based on preferences; supporting accounting functions, including generating electronic payments to property owners/managers; quarterly tracking of tenant and program information as required by HUD;
8. Approving/tracking third party verifications and tenant/applicant notices in compliance with HUD regulations;
9. Conducting and tracking rent reasonableness analyses, and processing and tracking rent increases and changes to utility allowances;
10. Interfacing with Rhode Island Housing's financial accounting systems, which is MITAS, in order to approve monthly subsidy amounts, process monthly checks to landlords/vendors/tenants, provide a summary of subsidy payments to Rhode Island Housing's financial accounting systems with printed and/or electronic copy, access year to date receipts and disbursements of subsidy through print/display for specific programs, processing IRS Form 1099s, printing trial balances and automatic check requests capability;

11. Facilitating ACH direct deposit for payments to owners; providing owners with an online portal for searching and viewing payment history;
12. Auditing income and expenses on a monthly basis to support corporate and HUD reporting requirements;
13. Supporting the scheduling of inspections, including generating notices to tenants and owners; providing easy, user-friendly methods to (i) conduct Housing Quality Standards (“HQS”) inspections and biennial inspections, (ii) track housing assistance payment abatements, termination of contracts, and supervisory/quality control HQS inspections. The system should allow for Rhode Island Housing’s third-party inspection vendor to schedule inspections, generate and process inspection reports (initial, interim, annual/biennial), and produce tenant/owner inspection notices;
14. Producing and printing statistical reports on tenants’ demographic information, subsidy payments, income and expenses, and other metrics;
15. Calculating administration fees;
16. Tracking balances/repayments according to repayment agreements and portability billings;
17. Generating, processing, and tracking portability billing forms;
18. Providing a mechanism for staff to enter case notes/tenant file updates (free text with an auto-date feature);
19. For FSS: program management, creating contracts, generating and tracking a Training and Service Plan, entering case notes, and tracking e-logic goals as required by HUD contract;
20. Providing a SEMAP reporting: system that supports the tracking of all indicators required by HUD, as well as PIC submission functionality and the ability to submit certification corrections;
21. Creating/maintaining custom letters and forms using Rhode Island Housing logos and letterhead, as required to meet Rhode Island Housing style guidelines;
22. Creating custom reports;
23. Quality control and audit trail functions for users;
24. Tracking moves, abatements, units, owners, rent reasonableness;
25. Allowing online access, including allowing status check for tenants, owners, and applicants;
26. Voice response phone system for application status and applicant position numbers.

In addition to providing the software platform and related customization work, the successful firm will be expected to provide general system support, expertise, and technical assistance with respect to using the system for the purposes of administering the Programs. In the course of providing the software system and related services, the successful respondent is expected to receive or have access to a significant volume of confidential personal information specific to Rhode Island Housing customers, such as, names and addresses, dates of birth, social security numbers, immigration status information, driver’s license and identification card numbers, photographic likenesses, account numbers, tax returns, income information and other financial data, and other confidential personal information. The selected respondent must agree and have the capacity to take reasonable measures to ensure the security and confidentiality of this information, and protect it against

any anticipated threats, hazards, unauthorized access, use, modification, destruction or disclosure. The selected respondent must have a regular practice of undergoing SSAE 16 (SOC 1) audits, and will be required to produce a copy of its most recent such audit prior to engagement.