

**Request for Proposal**  
**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**  
**Housing Opportunity Program Development Services**

**RFP Issued:** July 6th, 2016  
**Proposal Deadline:** July 26th, 2016 at 12:00 PM

**Purpose of Request for Proposal**

The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is seeking a proposal from qualified firms for assistance in developing a **housing opportunity program** that will assist Housing Choice Voucher clients residing in high poverty areas to relocate to housing in areas offering more economic opportunity and a better quality of life.

**Overview of the Department of Community Affairs**

The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is a State agency created to provide administrative guidance, financial support and technical assistance to local governments, community development organizations, businesses and individuals to improve the quality of life in New Jersey. DCA offers a wide range of programs and services that respond to issues of public concern including fire and building safety, housing production, community planning and development, and local government management and finance. DCA also serves as a housing authority for the entire state of New Jersey and administers approximately 20,000 tenant-based Housing Choice Vouchers to clients throughout the state.

**Overview of the Housing Opportunity Program**

In its 2015-2019 Analysis of Impediments (AI), the State identified a concentration of subsidized housing in certain neighborhoods with relatively high levels of poverty. DCA intends to expand upon its current efforts to improve access to housing opportunities outside areas of concentrated poverty by establishing intensive counseling and incentive components to its Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program to more strongly encourage and make it easier for voucher holders to locate affordable housing in communities that better reflect the racial and economic diversity of the State.

Tenant-based Housing Choice Vouchers give recipients the freedom to choose the types of housing and the locations that best meet their needs. DCA intends to pilot a program to assist 100 Housing Choice Vouchers holders per year to relocate to rental units in the areas of higher opportunity that best meet the needs of the family, including nearby schools, public transportation, employment opportunities, healthcare facilities and other community amenities.

The pilot program will offer a range of counseling services that will increase the likelihood of a successful transition to a new community. By way of example, those services might include financial literacy and household budgeting, job readiness and development, and nutrition.

DCA intends to develop and implement this pilot housing counseling component to the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program promptly, with implementation of the pilot in **late Fall 2016**. The Department is requesting proposals from organizations experienced in delivering such programs to develop an effective program uniquely tailored to the needs of the State.

### **Bidder Qualifications**

The Department seeks a consultant team with at least ten years of demonstrated expertise in tenant education, mobility counseling, or housing search assistance. Bidders that propose the use of subcontractors must present the same eligibility information about the proposed subcontractors as for bidders.

### **Bidder Questions**

Interested bidders may submit questions regarding this RFP to the Department by e-mail directed to the Policy Office (Donald.Palombi@dca.nj.gov). To be considered, questions regarding this RFP must be received by the Policy Office no later than 5:00 PM eastern standard time on July 22, 2016. The early submission of questions is encouraged. It is solely the bidder's responsibility to ensure and verify the Department's receipt of questions. The Department will respond only to those questions that meet the stated due date and time and criteria listed herein. Answers to questions posed by any single bidder will be forwarded to all other known bidders.

### **Bidder Evaluation**

It is the Department of Community Affairs' intent to conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of proposals received in response to this RFP. Only proposals found to be responsive to this RFP will be evaluated and scored by a four-person review committee. A responsive proposal must comply with all instructions listed in this RFP.

### **Bidder Notification of Award**

The Department will notify all bidders of any award issued by it as a result of this RFP. A final decision on the winning bidder will be made no longer than one month following the proposal submittal deadline.

### **Reservation of Rights**

Upon determination that its best interests would be served, the Department of Community Affairs shall have the right to do the following:

- 1) **Cancellation** - Cancel this procurement at any time before the contract award.
- 2) **Amendment of procurement** - Amend this procurement at any time before contract award.
- 3) **Refusal to accept** - Refuse to accept or return accepted proposals that do not comply with procurement requirements.

- 4) **Rejection of incomplete proposal** - Reject any proposal in which any part of the proposal is incomplete or in which there are significant inconsistencies or inaccuracies (the State reserves the right to reject all proposals).
- 5) **Prior contract default** - Reject the proposal of any bidder in default of any prior contract or for the misrepresentation of material presented.
- 6) **Receipt of proposals after stated due date and time** - Reject or refuse to evaluate any proposal that is received after the stated due date and time.
- 7) **Written clarification** - Require bidders, at their own expense, to submit written clarification of proposals in a manner or format that the Department of Community Affairs may require.
- 8) **Oral clarification** - Require bidders, at their own expense, to make oral presentations at a time selected and in a place provided by the Department of Community Affairs, if requested by the Department.
- 9) **Allowance of proposal changes** - Except as may be authorized by the Department of Community Affairs, allow no additions or changes to the original proposal after the stated due date and time.
- 10) **Property of the State** - Own all proposals submitted in response to this procurement upon receipt by the Department of Community Affairs.
- 11) **Separate service negotiation** - Negotiate separately any services in any manner needed to serve the best interest of the State.
- 12) **All or any portion** - Contract for all or any portion of the Scope of Services or tasks contained in this RFP.
- 13) **One or more bidders** - Contract with one or more bidders.
- 14) **Proposal most advantageous** - Consider cost and all factors in determining the most advantageous proposal for the Department of Community Affairs when awarding a bidder the right to negotiate a contract with the Department of Community Affairs (while cost is a factor in determining the bidder to be awarded the right to negotiate a contract with the Department of Community Affairs, price alone shall not determine the successful bidders).
- 15) **Technical defects** - Waive technical defects, irregularities, and omissions, if in its judgment the best interest of the Department of Community Affairs and the State of New Jersey will be served.
- 16) **Privileged and confidential information** - Share the contents of any proposal with any of its designees for purpose of evaluating proposals to make an award (the contents of all meetings including the first, second, and any subsequent meetings and all communications in the course of negotiating and arriving at the resultant contract periods shall be privileged and confidential).

**17) Best and Final Offers** - Seek Best and Final Offers (BFO) on price from bidders upon review of the scored criteria.

**18) Unacceptable proposals** - Reopen the bidding process if advantageous to the Department of Community Affairs.

## **Proposal Preparation Expenses**

The State of New Jersey and the Department of Community Affairs assume no liability for payment of expenses incurred by bidders in preparing and submitting proposals in response to this procurement.

## **Bidder Assurances**

**1) Independent price determination** - By submission of a proposal and through assurances given in its Transmittal Letter, the bidder certifies that in connection with this procurement the following requirements have been met:

- a. **Costs** - The costs proposed have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement, for restricting competition, as to any matter relating to such process with any other organization or with any competitor.
- b. **Disclosure** - Unless otherwise required by law, the costs quoted have not been knowingly disclosed by the bidder on a prior basis directly or indirectly to any other organization or to any competitor.
- c. **Competition** - No attempt has been made or will be made by the bidder to induce any person or firm to submit or not submit a proposal for restricting competition.
- d. **Prior knowledge** - The bidder has no prior knowledge of RFP contents before actual receipt of this RFP and had no part in RFP development.
- e. **Offer of gratuities** - The bidder certifies that no elected or appointed official or employee of the State of New Jersey has or will benefit financially or materially from this procurement. Any resultant contracts may be terminated by the State if it is determined that gratuities of any kind were either offered to or received by any of the aforementioned officials or employees from the resultant contractor, the resultant contractor's agent, or the resultant contractor's employees.

**2) Valid and binding offer** - The proposal represents a valid and binding offer to provide services in accordance with the terms and provisions described in this RFP and any amendments or attachments hereto.

**3) Press releases** - The bidder agrees to obtain prior written consent and approval of the Department of Community Affairs for press releases that relate in any manner to this RFP or any resultant contracts.

**4) Restrictions on communications with Department of Community Affairs staff** - The bidder agrees that from the RFP posting/release date until the Department of Community Affairs

makes an award that it shall not communicate with the Department of Community Affairs staff on matters relating to this RFP except as provided herein through the Policy Office. Any other communication concerning this RFP with any of the Department of Community Affairs' staff may, at the decision of the Department of Community Affairs, result in disqualification of that bidder's proposal.

## **Scope of Work**

The consultant shall assist with the design of the **housing opportunity program** including recommendation of viable case management practices on referrals to social service agencies, access to supportive services, and the merit of on-going counseling.

The consultant shall also provide research, analysis, and strategic guidance on the following areas:

- 1) Validating target and opportunity neighborhood selection** - evaluating DCA's target and opportunity neighborhood analysis against the realities of running a successful housing opportunity counseling program. Offering suggestions for amendments or improvements.
- 2) Tenant selection and education** – advertising; outreach activities; information sessions; demographic targeting; criteria for participation; tenant education activities on high-opportunity neighborhoods; and incentives and supports. Formulating appropriate tenant selection and education practices for a new state program.
- 3) Metrics and outcome measurement** – development of an evaluation component that provides reasonable and effective indicators of success. Conducting a study of metrics used by other programs to measure progress and successes.
- 4) Counseling content and management** – content and frequency of counseling sessions; counselor qualifications and accountability; and reasonable counseling contractor performance metrics. Developing formal recommendations for counseling program design and contractor evaluation and selection. Assistance in developing a Request for Proposal for a counseling program consultant.
- 5) Landlord participation** – identification; outreach; and incentives. Developing recommended practices for encouraging and sustaining landlord participation, engagement, and satisfaction.
- 6) Best practices from other similar programs** – lessons learned; practical tips; and common pitfalls. Review of similar programs that have been successfully implemented in other jurisdictions to determine whether any of these models could be replicated in or adapted for New Jersey.

The consultant will be expected to be available on an as-needed basis at DCA offices at 101 South Broad Street, Trenton, NJ and to work closely with Policy Office staff on this project. The consultant must also be prepared to work in a collaborative setting that will include multiple actors from across many Department divisions. The consultant will be responsible for providing all transportation, supplies, and materials associated with the contract.

The consultant will be expected to start work no later than Tuesday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

## **Proposal Methodology**

The proposal should include methodology for completion of this scope of work, including the following:

- 1) **Understanding of the Scope of Work:** A description of your understanding of the scope of work, and indicate awareness of implementation challenges and issues.
- 2) **Technical Approach and Preliminary Work Plan:** A description of your technical approach for completing the scope of work, including any alternate suggestions for implementation. Include a detailed description of all tasks and activities, significant milestones and anticipated deliverables.
- 3) **Statement of Qualifications:** Please provide a description of your organization's past experience that is most relevant to this scope of work. Please include the following information:
  - a. Business name and type (corporation, 501(c)(3), etc.), including location
  - b. Number of years in business and number of years providing relevant services
  - c. For all contracts completed during the last two years provide:
    - Year
    - Type of services
    - Dollar amount of services provided
    - Description of population services provided for
    - Contracting agency and phone number
    - Details of any failure to complete a contract or any litigation
- 4) **Work Examples:** Samples of completed work product or reports, examples of content material to illustrate writing style, a writing sample, and other promotional material relevant to this request.
- 5) **Staffing Plan:** A description of all key personnel that will work on this project, along with a proposed staffing ratio. Include resumes of all key proposed staff and a detailed organizational chart.
- 6) **Plan for Subcontracting and/or Joint Proposal:** Bidders are welcome to propose a joint venture, consortium, or a subcontracting relationship with other entities. If the Consultant is proposing a joint venture, consortium, or a subcontracting relationship with other entities, please provide the following information:

Submit a statement regarding intent to subcontract. If sub-contractors are to be used, list each subcontract and identify responsibilities, tasks, schedule, and costs, resumes of key personnel, and contractual relations. All sub-contractors must be approved by DCA prior to utilization of the sub-contractor. The Consultant is fully responsible for any sub-contractor.

Two or more Consultants may submit a joint proposal. All Consultants in a joint proposal must provide all the information and documentation specified in this RFP. The lead Consultant must be identified. The lead Consultant will be held accountable for the ultimate fiscal responsibility of the program. The lead Consultant must maintain all program and financial records for at least two years.

- Describe organizational structure of the lead Consultant with the other partners in the collaborative.
- Provide specific, detailed information on how the Consultants will work together and how assignments will be made.
- Summarize the key responsibilities of each partner that will be detailed in a memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the lead Consultants and each of the collaborating partners if awarded this contract.

**7) References:** Please provide the names and contact information for at least three references familiar with your work.

**8) Fee Proposal:** To better understand various pricing alternatives and to provide similar information for comparison purposes between consultants, DCA requests that the following pricing information be provided in the written proposal:

- a. Provide a detailed budget. Travel costs should be separately estimated and listed.
- b. Provide a detailed *fixed* fee proposal by task and estimated number of billable hours, based on your Preliminary Work Plan detailed in above.
- c. Provide a proposal for monthly billing based on a performance-based contract (i.e, per service provided, etc.).

**9) Division of Purchase and Property Forms:** All bidders must fully complete and include within the proposal the *Consolidated DPA Forms Packet* available at the following web address:

[http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/purchase/forms/DPA\\_Packet.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/purchase/forms/DPA_Packet.pdf)

## **Insurance**

The Consultant(s) selected for award shall maintain professional liability insurance in amounts/limits that DCA dictates are reasonable and adequate to protect DCA from acts, omissions, and negligence on the part of the firm, its partners, attorneys and/or employees.

The Consultant shall furnish DCA original certificates of insurance naming DCA as an additional insured and evidencing such coverage dictated by the DCA on the effective date of the contract resulting from this RFP.

### **Other Required Information**

If selected as the consultant for this RFP, the following **must** be provided:

- A valid NJ Business Registration certificate.
- A current NJ Certificate of Employee Information Report/Affirmative Action Certificate (or: provide the State of NJ Employee Information Report and a \$150 check to the NJ Dept. of Treasury to attain a new certificate).

### **Proposal Submittal**

Proposals with all supporting material should arrive by **12:00 pm on Tuesday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016** to:

Donald Palombi, Director of Policy  
NJ Department of Community Affairs  
101 South Broad Street, Trenton, NJ 08608  
Donald.Palombi@dca.nj.gov

If using USPS:

New Jersey Department of Community Affairs  
Office of the Commissioner  
P.O. Box 800  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0051  
**Attention: Housing Opportunity Program Development Services**

### **Proposal Due Date and Time**

The Department must receive proposals no later than the due date and time specified in this Request for Proposals. The Department will not consider a postmark date as the basis for meeting the submission due date and time. Bidders must not interpret or otherwise construe receipt of a proposal after the stated due date and time as acceptance of the proposal, since the actual receipt of the document is a clerical function. The Department of Community Affairs suggests the bidder use certified or registered mail to deliver the proposal when the bidder is not able to deliver the proposal by courier or in person. Bidders that are hand-delivering proposals should allow extra time for security procedures. Bidders must address all RFP communications to the Policy Office.

If you anticipate submitting your proposal electronically, we cannot accept attachments of more than 10 MB in size.