

**REQUEST FOR ACTION  
BY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**Approval of Pre-Qualification of Rental Assistance Support Service Vendors for  
RentReliefRI**

**1. Summary of Request**

This Request for Action (“RFA”) is for approval to establish a roster of pre-qualified partners to support the RentReliefRI Program, an emergency rental assistance program funded by the U.S. Department of the Treasury (“Treasury”). Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) has been designated by the State of Rhode Island (the “State”) to administer approximately \$200 million in federal emergency housing assistance under this new Treasury program to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the possibility of additional state and federal resources, RIHousing expects an ongoing need for vendors to assist with the rollout of this assistance and other emergency housing programs as they arise. RIHousing may accept bids from and engage such firms on an as-needed basis to provide (i) outreach services, (ii) application assistance, (iii) application processing, and (iv) legal services.

In order to effectively run RentReliefRI, and other emergency housing programs, RIHousing will need to engage a diverse set of partners to ensure outreach and assistance is provided across a range of populations, language groups and cultural communities. The program will rely on community partners to assist with applications and outreach within their communities. This approach will allow RIHousing to eliminate barriers such as lack of transportation, language limitations, internet and technology limits, and transportation issues to streamline a rather complicated application process.

RIHousing issued a request for proposals in February 2021 soliciting proposals for rental assistance support services, including application assistance, outreach, legal services for tenants and landlords, and application processing (the “RFP”). The RFP notice was posted on the RIHousing website and the website maintained by the State of Rhode Island Department of Administration. In addition, the RFP was sent by email to more than 200+ community partners and contacts. RIHousing explicitly encouraged traditional and non-traditional partners to apply including: for and non-profits, social service entities, neighborhood organizations, cultural entities representing a variety of populations, places of worship, community groups and organizations who serve as trusted resources of information. RIHousing received proposals from twenty-six (26) unique partners, with some applying for multiple categories of support.

A selection committee comprised of RIHousing staff (the “Review Committee”) reviewed the responses in accordance with the criteria set forth in the RFP and determined whether respondents were qualified to perform the required services. Based on the review, staff proposes to include the following sixteen (16) firms on its roster for Rental Assistance Support

Service Vendors (please note, some organizations appear under more than one category):

**Application Assistance**

Blackstone Valley Community Action Program  
Comprehensive Community Action Program  
Center for Southeast Asians  
Central Falls Housing Authority  
Crossroads RI  
East Bay Community Action Program  
Family Service of RI  
ONE Neighborhood Builders  
Sojourner House  
Tri-County Community Action Agency  
Witt O'Brien's

**Outreach**

Advocacy Solutions, LLC  
Comprehensive Community Action Program  
Center for Southeast Asians  
Central Falls Housing Authority  
East Bay Community Action Program  
Family Service of RI  
Housing Network of RI  
ONE Neighborhood Builders  
Sojourner House  
Tri-County Community Action Agency  
Witt O'Brien's

**Legal Support Services**

Center for Justice  
Law Offices of Michael D. Crane, LLC  
Rhode Island Legal Services

**Application Processing**

Blackstone Valley Community Action Program  
Comprehensive Community Action Program  
Center for Southeast Asians  
Central Falls Housing Authority  
Crossroads RI  
East Bay Community Action Program  
Family Service of RI  
Housing Network of RI  
Tri-County Community Action Agency  
Witt O'Brien's

The selected firms will appear on RIHousing's roster of pre-qualified list for a period of three

years, which period may be extended if determined by staff to be in the best interests of the corporation. Staff will engage firms from this list on an as-needed basis or solicit bids for particular projects consistent with RIHousing's Purchasing Policies. There is no guarantee of any level of spending activity to a vendor selected for this roster.

**2. Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Board of Commissioners approve the attached resolution authorizing the creation of a roster of pre-qualified vendors for application assistance, outreach, legal services and application processing.

**3. Attachments**

- A. Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of RIHousing
- B. Scoring Matrix

**Attachment A**

**Resolution of the Board of  
Commissioners of  
Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation**

**WHEREAS:** the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) enabling act provides it with all of the power to make and execute contracts for the exercise of the powers and functions provided to it under the act (R.I. Gen. Laws §42-55-5(6)); and

**WHEREAS:** RIHousing has been selected by the State of Rhode Island to administer approximately \$200 million in federal grant funds under the Emergency Rental Assistance (“ERA”) program of the U.S. Department of the Treasury; and

**WHEREAS:** in service of this role, RIHousing has established RentReliefRI to deliver ERA housing assistance to applicants statewide, and expects to deploy other state and federal emergency housing programs as they arise; and

**WHEREAS:** RIHousing requires a diverse set of partners to ensure outreach for assistance is provided across a range of populations, language groups and cultural communities; that application support is widely accessible; and that community-based legal assistance is available for landlords and tenants; and

**WHEREAS:** in February 2021, RIHousing solicited proposals from vendors to provide the above described rental assistance support services; and

**WHEREAS:** a selection committee comprised of RIHousing staff reviewed the proposals and evaluated them in accordance with the criteria set forth in the solicitation.

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY:**

**RESOLVED:** that RIHousing be, and hereby is, authorized to establish the following roster of pre-qualified vendors to support emergency housing programs, including the RentReliefRI Program, to provide (i) application assistance, (ii) outreach, (iii) legal services, (iv) application processing, as the Executive Director or her designee deems advisable or necessary:

**Application Assistance**

Blackstone Valley Community Action Program  
Comprehensive Community Action Program  
Center for Southeast Asians  
Central Falls Housing Authority

Crossroads RI  
East Bay Community Action Program  
Family Service of RI  
ONE Neighborhood Builders  
Sojourner House  
Tri-County Community Action Agency  
Witt O'Brien's

**Outreach**

Advocacy Solutions, LLC  
Comprehensive Community Action Program  
Center for Southeast Asians  
Central Falls Housing Authority  
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**Legal Services**

Center for Justice  
Law Offices of Michael D. Crane, LLC  
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**Application Processing**

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Crossroads RI  
East Bay Community Action Program  
Family Service of RI  
Housing Network of RI  
Tri-County Community Action Agency  
Witt O'Brien's

**RESOLVED:** that RIHousing be, and hereby is authorized, to engage the above-listed firms on an as-needed basis and/or solicit bids or proposals from such firms for specific projects consistent with RIHousing's Purchasing Policies; and

**RESOLVED:** that the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, the Director of Leased Housing and Rental Services and the Assistant Deputy Director of Policy and Research, each acting singly, be, and hereby is, authorized and

empowered to take any and all actions necessary or desirable to carry out the foregoing resolutions, including without limitation the authority to negotiate such terms of the engagements as she or he may determine are in the best interests of RIHousing, and to execute any and all agreements or documents as she or he deems necessary to carry out the foregoing.