



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Online Affordable Housing Search System

Posting Date:

Response Submission Deadline: 3:00 EST p.m. on Friday, November 18, 2022.

NEW Response Submission Deadline: 3:00 p.m. EST on Wednesday, November 23, 2022.

NOTE TO RESPONDENTS:

Please be advised that **all** submissions (including those not selected for engagement) may be made available to the public on request pursuant to the Rhode Island Access to Public Records Act, Chapter 2 of Title 38 of the Rhode Island General Laws (the “APRA”) upon award of a contract(s). As a result, respondents are advised not to include information that they deem proprietary or confidential or that constitutes a trade secret.

INTRODUCTION

Through this Request for Proposals (“RFP”), the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) seeks proposals from qualified firms to provide an online affordable housing search system that allows renters to search for affordable developments in Rhode Island that meet their needs and access information on how to apply to those developments, including rental applications where possible.

INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals must be submitted via email to: **Amy Rainone, Director of Government Relations and Policy at arainone@rihousing.com** no later than the response submission deadline set forth above.

Proposals that are not received by the response submission deadline or that do not adhere to the submission instructions described herein shall not be accepted or considered by RIHousing.

Proposals should be concise and adhere to the word count applicable to each section of this Request for Proposals (“RFP”). Proposals should be presented on business letterhead and include all attachments, certifications (including the Submissions Certification at [Attachment A](#)), and work samples (as applicable). Please note that failure to provide any information, certification, or document requested in this RFP may cause your submission not to be reviewed or considered by RIHousing.

RIHousing may invite one or more finalists to make presentations, including customized demonstrations of requested products.



RFP/RFQ Title: _____
Respondent Name: _____

SCOPE OF WORK

Please see the Scope of Work as provided on Attachment B.

ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED WITH YOUR PROPOSAL

Section A: General Firm Information (Total word limit: 500 words)

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, business telephone number and business email address of a representative of the firm authorized to discuss your proposal.
 - c. Locations of all offices of the firm.
 - d. Number of employees of the firm.

RIHousing requests that the contact information provided in response to this subsection (1) be strictly limited to business addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses to protect any personal information from being made available to the public pursuant to APRA.

SUBMISSION CHECK LIST

Section B: Experience and Resources (Total word limit: 3500 words)

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Describe your firm and its capabilities. In particular, support your capacity to perform the Scope of Work. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Indicate which principals and associates from your firm would be involved in providing services to RIHousing. Provide appropriate background information for each such person and identify their responsibilities. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. If applicable, please indicate the name of any subcontractors that would be involved in providing services to your firm and to RIHousing. Provide appropriate background information for each person or entity, identify the person's responsibilities and outline their capabilities. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Provide a detailed list of at least three references, including a contact name and business telephone number for organizations or businesses for whom you have performed similar work. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. 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). |



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- 6. Describe the accessibility features of the software including, but not limited to, those relating to the public-facing portal. Include in your response whether the software meets the highest success level (AAA) of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1, as may be amended from time to time.

Section C: Fee Structure (Total word limit: 500 words)

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 B including ongoing maintenance, upfront implementation and any other relevant fees and/or services. RIHousing anticipates a multi-year agreement, with an initial 2-year agreement, with an option to renew for an additional two years. Please provide pricing broken out for year one through year four.
- 2. 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 RIHousing.

Section D: Affirmative Action Plan and Minority Owned Business/Women Owned Business

- 1. RIHousing 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 RIHousing’s engagement and, if applicable, a copy of your Minority- or Women-Owned Business Enterprise state certification.

Section E: Miscellaneous (Total word limit: 1000 words)

- 1. Discuss any topics not covered in this RFP that you would like to bring to RIHousing’s attention.

Section F. Certifications

- All applicants must respond to and provide documentation as outlined in the Request for Proposals Submission Certifications at Attachment A.



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EVALUATION AND SELECTION

A selection committee consisting of RIHousing employees will review all proposals that meet the requirements set forth in the “Instructions” section of this RFP and make a selection based on the following factors:

- Professional capacity to undertake the Scope of Work (as evaluated by reference in Section B: Experience and Resources);
- Proposed fee structure (as evaluated by reference in Section C: Fee Structure);
- Ability to perform within time and budget constraints (as evaluated by reference in Section B);
- Evaluation of proposed project approach (as contained in the Attachment B: Scope of Work. Section B);
- Previous work experience and performance with RIHousing and/or similar organizations (as provided in Section B: Experience and Resources, subsection 3);
- Recommendations by references (as provided in Section B: Experience and Resources, subsection 3);
- Firm minority status and affirmative action program or activities (as requested in Section D: Affirmative Action Plan and Minority Owned Business/Women Owned Business)
- Foreign language capabilities of the firm (as provided in Section B: Experience and Resources, subsection 5);
- Other pertinent information submitted.

By this RFP, RIHousing has not committed itself to undertake the work set forth herein. RIHousing 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. RIHousing reserves the right to make those decisions after its receipt of responses. RIHousing’s decision on these matters is final.

For additional information contact: arainone@rihousing.com. Any questions received will be answered on RIHousing.com/rfps-rfqs.



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Attachment A

This form must be completed and signed by your firm’s president, chairman or chief executive officer. Please respond to **all** items below, include additional information as necessary, and ensure that any attachments refer to the appropriate item by name (i.e., “Conflict of Interest” etc.).

Total word limit: 500 words

Section A: Conflicts of Interest

1. Identify any conflict of interest that could arise during your firm’s performance of the Scope of Work set forth at Attachment B. **If none, check below.**

None

2. Identify any conflict of interest that may arise as a result of any of your firm’s employees, associates, or subcontractor’s status as a member of the board of directors of any organization likely to interact with RIHousing. **If none, check below.**

None

3. Describe how your firm will handle actual and or potential conflicts of interest (*respond below or attach a document with this information*).

Section B: Litigation, Proceedings, Investigations

1. Identify any material litigation, administrative proceedings, or investigations in which your firm is currently involved. **If none, check below.**

None

2. 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 finally adjudicated or settled within the past two (2) years. **If none, check below.**

None

Section C: Certifications

The undersigned certifies, under the pains and penalties of perjury, as follows:

1. No member of my firm has made inquiries or contacts with respect to this RFP other than in an email or written communication to Amy Rainone at arainone@rihousing.com seeking clarification on the Scope of Work set forth in this proposal, from the date of this RFP through the date of our



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proposal, and that no member of my firm will make any such inquiry or contact until after November 23, 2022.

2. To the best of my knowledge, all information provided in my firm's proposal is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.
3. My firm did not consult with RI Housing in connection with the development of this RFP.
4. No member of my firm gave anything of monetary value or promise of future employment to a RI Housing employee or Commissioner, or a relative of the same, based on any understanding that such person's action or judgment will be influenced.

President, Chairman or CEO (*print*): _____

Signature: _____

Firm Name: _____



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Respondent Name: _____

Attachment B

Scope of Work

I. Services to be Provided

RIHousing seeks to engage a firm to provide and/or develop an online affordable housing search platform that allows renters to search for affordable developments in Rhode Island that meet their needs and access information on how to apply to those developments, including rental applications where possible.

Legislation passed by the Rhode Island General Assembly this year requires RIHousing to maintain an on-line database of affordable developments that includes:

- 1) Current, updated information on the existing inventory of low-income rental units in the state;
- 2) The contact person or entity and contact information pertaining to individual developments;
- 3) To the extent the information is available, a copy of the application to apply for housing at individual developments; and
- 4) Information pertaining to any special populations, including, but not limited to, elderly, disabled, homeless individuals and victims of domestic violence, served by individual developments.

RIHousing currently maintains a Rental Resource Guide “the Guide” available in English and Spanish in PDF format on our [website](#), which provides similar information. The Guide includes listings of affordable housing developments across the state, with contact information for each. In its current configuration, the Guide is limited in that it does not include “real time” information, is only updated twice annually and is not searchable.

Through this solicitation, RIHousing seeks to engage a firm that will make this information available through an online, interactive, searchable database that can help renters find and apply for affordable housing.

For the first phase of this project, the online system must, at a minimum, be capable of providing the statutorily required information noted above. Specifically, the system should include the following information for each affordable development:

- Development Name
- Development Address
- Name of municipality where development is located
- Populations served (elderly, disabled, homeless, family/individual, domestic violence survivors, receiving services)
- Incomes served (if available)
- Contact information, including phone number and email (if available)
- Link to rental application (if available)



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The system should be capable of allowing users to search by key fields including location, name of development, property owner/manager name, as well as populations and incomes served.

The system must, at a minimum, be accessible in both English and Spanish.

In future phases, the system should be capable of expanding over time to provide additional features such as:

- Providing a universal fillable rental application that could be tailored to reflect the information required for each of the developments the renter is interested in applying to.
- Linking to a map to show where the development is located
- Showing proximity of development to services or transit
- Ability to notify users when new developments are added

II. Project Schedule

Phase one should be up and running within two months of the firm receiving all information from RIHousing on the developments to be included in the database. By statute, the online database must be functional no later than July 1, 2023.

III. Project Approach

RIHousing will provide the selected firm with all of the information available on the developments to be included in the database, including links to or pdf copies of applications where that information is available. Once launched, RIHousing staff should have the ability to directly update development information or add new developments as they come on-line. To facilitate ease of updates and use, the online search portal should also provide various levels of access for RIHousing staff (ie. Administrator, Owner, User, Viewer/Read Only, etc).

RIHousing staff should also be able to access analytic information on the site's use such as the number of site visitors and searches.

Firms must identify all partners that will be brought on to implement and update the system, including individuals and their roles.