

**Request for Action  
By  
Board of Commissioners**

**Approval of EMPHASYS COMPUTER SOLUTIONS, INC. for  
Online Affordable Housing Search System**

**A. SUMMARY OF REQUEST**

This Request for Action (“RFA”) is for the approval of the engagement of a software vendor, namely EMPHASYS COMPUTER SOLUTIONS, INC. (EMPHASYS), to provide an online affordable housing search system.

**B. DISCUSSION**

Legislation was passed by the Rhode Island General Assembly in 2022 requiring RIHousing to maintain an online searchable database of affordable developments. On November 16, 2022 RIHousing issued a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) seeking proposals from qualified firms to support the creation of an online affordable housing search system that will allow renters to search for affordable developments in Rhode Island and access application. The RFP was posted on RIHousing’s website and the website for the State of Rhode Island’s Division of Purchases. It was also distributed to RIHousing’s RFP email distribution list and sent directly to vendors who provide these types of services. Five vendors submitted responses to the RFP. The responses were reviewed and scored by a committee of staff members, with two vendors being invited to conduct demos. Of these two, EMPHASYS was recommended as the vendor.

EMPHASYS is RIHousing’s current vendor for HousingSearchRI.com, an online housing search tool that is not limited to affordable developments. A significant number of affordable developments are already in that system, so we anticipate that the process for developing and populating a searchable database that meets the requirements of the law will be relatively quick and efficient. The vendor also has a call center that will conduct outreach to owners to collect more detailed information. EMPHASYS operates similar housing search sites in 30 states, many hosted by State Housing Finance Agencies. The cost of the project is \$29,340 for year one and \$10,627 for year two. The EMPHASYS proposal was the most affordable of those submitted.

**C. RECOMMENDATION**

The attached resolution authorizing RIHousing to engage EMPHASYS is recommended for approval.

**D. ATTACHMENTS**

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

## Attachment A

### Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of RIHousing and Mortgage Finance Corporation

- Whereas:** Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation's ("RIHousing's") enabling act provides it with all the power and authority to make and execute contracts necessary to exercise the powers and functions provided to it under the act (R.I. Gen. Laws §42-55-5(6)); and
- Whereas:** RIHousing has identified a need for an online affordable housing search system vendor; and
- Whereas:** RIHousing has solicited proposals pursuant to an open competitive process for vendors to create an online affordable housing search system and who are able to substantially meet the requirements associated with this set of functions; and
- Whereas:** A selection committee comprised of RIHousing staff reviewed the proposals for these services, evaluated them pursuant to the criteria set forth in the Request for Proposals and determined that EMPHASYS had submitted the highest-scoring proposal to RIHousing.

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

- Resolved:** that RIHousing be, and hereby is, authorized to enter into a contract with EMPHASYS to create an online affordable housing search system as set forth in the Request for Proposals and the proposal submitted in response thereto;
- Resolved:** that such engagement shall be for a two (2) year term, with an option exercisable by staff to renew the engagement for an additional two (2) years; and
- Resolved:** that the Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, and Director of Leased Housing and Rental Services, each acting singly, be and hereby are 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 the terms and fees of the engagement as he or she may determine are in the best interests of RIHousing, and to execute any and all agreements or documents as he or she deems necessary to carry out the foregoing and to take such further actions as he or she deems necessary to carry out the foregoing resolutions.

**Attachment B  
Scoring Matrix**

<i>Evaluation and Selection Criteria</i>	<b>3Di</b>	<b>Autocene</b>	<b>Daston</b>	<b>Emphasys</b>	<b>People10</b>
Professional Capacity to undertake the Scope of Work – 20pts	<b>12</b>	5	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>
Proposed project approach – 10pts	5	3	<b>5</b>	9	<b>3</b>
Proposed fee structure – 10pts	5	7	<b>5</b>	10	<b>4</b>
Project schedule timeframe – 10pts	8	5	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
Previous experience – RIHousing/similar org – 10pts	3	5	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
Firm minority status/affirmative action – 5pts	2	2	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
Foreign language capabilities – 5pts	5	5	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>TOTAL SCORE (70 max)</b>	40	32	39	67	22