



Request for Proposals Race, Equity, Access, Diversity and Inclusion Consultant

INTRODUCTION

Through this Request for Proposals (“RFP”), the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) seeks proposals in its capacity as the Collaborative Applicant on behalf of the Rhode Island Continuum of Care (“RiCoC”) from qualified firms to **provide consulting services to evaluate the impact of race, equity, access, diversity and inclusion (READI) within the continuum of care.**

INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals should be submitted via email to: **Elizabeth Bioteau** at **ebioteau@rihousing.com**. Proposals should be concise and include all attachments and work samples. Proposals should be presented on business letterhead.

Proposals must be received no later than 3:00 EST p.m. on Wednesday, October 20, 2021. Responses received after this date and time shall not be accepted. Note: For proposals which require hard copy submissions, the official time clock shall be the time display on the computer at the main reception desk in the Lobby Area.

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

Please note that failure to provide any information, certification, or document requested in this RFP may cause your submission not to be scored.

A. General Firm Information

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, telephone number and email address of a representative of the firm authorized to discuss your proposal.

Submission
Check List



- c. Address of all offices of the firm.
- d. 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. 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 his or her responsibilities.

3. Please provide a detailed list of references, including a contact name and telephone number for organizations or businesses for whom you have performed similar work.

4. 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 RIHousing. **If none, please provide a statement to such effect.**

5. Describe how your firm will handle actual and or potential conflicts of interest.

6. 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 finally adjudicated or settled within the past two (2) years. **If none, please provide a statement to such effect.**

7. 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.

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 RIHousing.

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.

E. Miscellaneous
1. Discuss any topics not covered in this Request for Proposals that you would like to bring to RIHousing's attention.

F. Certifications
1. RIHousing 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 RIHousing, 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. Please acknowledge your understanding of this in your RFP response.

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. If your answer is “No,” please provide a statement to such effect.

3. In the course of providing goods or services to RIHousing, the selected respondent may receive certain personal information specific to RIHousing customer(s) including, without limitation, customer names and addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, dates of birth, loan numbers, account numbers, social security numbers, driver’s license or identification card numbers, employment and income information, photographic likenesses, tax returns, or other personal or financial information (hereinafter collectively referred to as the “Personal Information”). The maintenance of the Personal Information in strict confidence and the confinement of its use to RIHousing are of vital importance to RIHousing. **Please include a letter from your president, chairperson or CEO certifying that, in the event your firm is selected:**

(i) any Personal Information disclosed to your firm by RIHousing or which your firm acquires as a result of its services hereunder will be regarded by your firm as confidential, and shall not be copied or disclosed to any third party, unless RIHousing has given its prior written consent thereto; and

(ii) your firm agrees to take all reasonable measures to (a) ensure the security and confidentiality of the Personal Information, (b) protect against any anticipated threats or hazards to the security or integrity of the Personal Information, and (c) maintain reasonable security procedures and practices appropriate to your firm's size, the nature of the Personal Information, and the purpose for which the Personal Information was collected in order to protect the Personal Information from unauthorized access, use, modification, destruction or disclosure; and

(iii) when discarding the Personal Information, destroying it in a commercially reasonable manner such that no third party can view or recreate the information, electronically or otherwise.

These provisions, which implement the requirements of the Rhode Island Identity Theft Protection Act, R.I.G.L. § 11-49.2 et seq., will also be incorporated into the final contract with the selected respondent(s). In addition, if selected, your firm may be requested to provide a copy of its information security plan.



4. Please include a letter from your president, chairperson 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 **Elizabeth Bioteau** 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 **Wednesday October 6, 2021**, (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 RIHousing 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 members of the RICoC (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 RIHousing 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.

RIHousing may invite one or more finalists to make presentations.

By this Request for Proposals, RIHousing has not committed itself to undertake the work set forth. 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 receipt of responses. RIHousing’s decision on these matters is final.

For additional information contact: Elizabeth Bioteau at ebioteau@rihousing.com.

Revised: February 2021



Attachment A

Scope of Work

RIHousing seeks to engage a **consulting firm** to analyze and develop a baseline assessment report of current practices and related to Race, Equity, Access, Diversity and Inclusion (“READI”) awareness and competency, as well as design and implement strategies to support a continuum-wide commitment to READI activities.

Background

The McKinney-Vento Act, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires communities to establish one or more continua of care to guide local programs and policies, as well as administer federal and state funds to address and end homelessness. More specifically, HUD established the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program to:

- 1) Promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness;
- 2) Provide funding for efforts to quickly re-house individuals and families who are homeless, which minimizes the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness;
- 3) Promote access to and effective use of mainstream programs; and
- 4) Optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

In Rhode Island we have one single continuum of care, the Rhode Island Continuum of Care (RiCoC), which promotes the aforementioned HUD goals.

Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) is requesting proposals from qualified Race Equity, Access, Diversity, and Inclusion (“READI”) consultants in furtherance of its obligations as the collaborative applicant on behalf of the RiCoC.

The RiCoC is committed to recognizing the rich diversity of its constituents and members. This includes prioritizing its understanding and practice of equity based on race, ethnicity, lived experience with homelessness, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity. As such the RiCoC has established a standing Equity Committee that will:

- Build equity as a non-negotiable element of the RiCoC’s work by determining equity matrices and assuring these metrics are included in RiCoC and homeless

- system's strategic planning and system performance criteria
- Develop, recommend for Board approval, and oversee an Equity Toolkit, which will include resources, policies, and procedures for advancing the RICOC, its programs, and its recipient agencies towards identified equity benchmarks
 - Make recommendations to other Standing Committees and to the Board of Directors and Membership for action and decisions relevant to advancing racial equity within the RICOC and its programs.

Assumptions:

- Systemic racism and the inequities and disparities that result exist in our system and organizations;
- We all have individual work to do to identify and actively dismantle individual, organizational, and systemic racism;
- The RICoC and its stakeholders are all interested in working toward racial equity
- There are dimensions of differences the RICoC intends this equity work to include, some examples of these dimensions are LGBTQ+, agism, classism, adultism, ableism.

Phase 1: Activities and Deliverables

- Conduct an analysis and develop a baseline assessment report of current practices and level of READI awareness and competency in order to fully appreciate the contribution of all stakeholders and to identify priorities to further strengthen READI capacity to best accomplish RICoC's mission.
- Provide insight and knowledge on READI best practices in the field.
- Using the glossary of shared language, develop a framework for the RICoC, including a public statement of principle regarding READI that enhances the organization's ability to execute its mission and strategic direction.
- Develop recommendations on initial strategies to invest in to achieve deliverables outlined in this scope of work, including but not limited to, prioritized recommendations for year one of RICoC's READI journey. Recommendations should include timelines for the deliverables.
- A combination of in-person and remote consultation is preferred.

Phase 2: Activities and Deliverables

- Support development of an organization-wide commitment and infrastructure to support and sustain RICoC's READI strategy.
- Develop and deliver a training strategy to increase RICoC staff, board, and member READI competencies, skills, and capacity that reflect RICoC's READI public statement and goals.

- Develop a strategy and associated roadmap (an overarching READI Plan) that is designed to be embedded within the Opening Doors RI plan to end homelessness and the Comprehensive Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness and will ensure that barriers to access and inclusion continue to decrease, while internal awareness, knowledge, and skills continue to increase. This strategy/roadmap should include methods of long-term monitoring and evaluation that consider several areas, including but not limited to: vendor requirements, internal staffing practices, governance, policies and procedures, community partnership and engagement, and ongoing professional development.
- Design and implement the developed training strategies so that all RICoC staff, board, membership, and vendors/funded entities participate within the one-year consulting timeframe in training and development given by the consultant or consulting team.
- Ensure that the Board has the capacity to hold itself and the RICoC accountable for defining and propagating racial equity throughout the organization and to live our racial and social equity values internally and externally. This accountability should include development of, and implementation support for, appropriate metrics to track progress. It could also involve the creation of new processes, policies, structures, and practices to ensure and facilitate intersectional equity conversations and practices between and among representatives of the board, staff, membership, and vendors.
- A combination of in-person and remote consultation is preferred.