



## Request for Proposals Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Consultant

### INTRODUCTION

Through this Request for Proposals (“RFP”), the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) seeks proposals from qualified firms to conduct a full organizational assessment of agency practices and internal climate around diversity, equity and inclusion (“DEI”), and to simultaneously provide education and trainings for staff. Additionally, the firm would create a short and long term roadmap for making concrete improvements in the areas DEI.

### INSTRUCTIONS

One original and four copies of the proposal should be submitted to RIHousing, 44 Washington Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1721, Attn: Stacy Wasserman, Project Manager. Please also direct a courtesy copy by email to: [swasserman@rihousing.com](mailto:swasserman@rihousing.com). Proposals should be concise and include all attachments and work samples. Proposals should be presented on business letterhead. Proposals sent via email should be contained in one attachment only.

**Proposals must be received no later than 3:00 EST p.m. on November 20, 2019.**

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.

Submission  
Check List



- b. Name, telephone number and email address of a representative of the firm authorized to discuss your proposal.
  - c. Address of all offices of the firm.
  - d. Number of employees of the firm.
- B. Provide a detailed work plan for completing the Scope of Work. Include a timeline.
- C. 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, identify his or her responsibilities, and provide examples of previous work in their areas of responsibility.
  3. Provide three examples of DEI assessments and plans your firm has developed, and three examples of education and/or trainings your firm has provided on DEI topics.
  4. Provide a detailed list of at least three references, including a contact name and telephone number for organizations or businesses for whom you have completed similar work.
  5. 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.**
  6. Describe how your firm will handle actual and or potential conflicts of interest.
  7. 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 settled within the past two (2) years. **If none, please provide a statement to such effect.**

8. 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).

D. 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.

E. Miscellaneous

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.

2. 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, chairman or CEO certifying that, in the event your firm is selected:**

(i) any Personal Information RIHousing discloses to your firm or which your firm acquires because 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, chairman 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 Stacy



Wasserman (swasserman@rihousing.com) 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 November 20, 2019, (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 RIHousing employees (the "Committee") will review all proposals and decide based on the following factors:

- Professional capacity to undertake the Scope of Work
- Evaluation of work plan for completing the Scope of Work
- Proposed fee structure
- Ability to perform within time and budget constraints
- Previous work experience and performance with similar organizations
- Recommendations by references
- Firm minority status and affirmative action program or activities
- Other pertinent information submitted.

RIHousing may invite one or more finalists to make presentations.

In its sole discretion, RIHousing may negotiate with one or more firms who have submitted qualifications to submit more detailed proposals on specific projects as they arise.

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:** Stacy Wasserman, [swasserman@rihousing.com](mailto:swasserman@rihousing.com).

*Revised: January 2019*



## Attachment A

### **Scope of Work**

RIHousing seeks to engage a qualified firm to a) conduct an organizational assessment of agency practices and internal climate around diversity, equity and inclusion (“DEI”), b) create a DEI plan which would provide the organizational assessment’s findings and a short and long-term roadmap for making concrete improvements in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion and c) provide education and trainings for staff.

The firm must have a proven track record in this type of work and demonstrate that it understands the best practices in the DEI realm. All workmanship and deliverables must be of professional quality.

The contract period to complete all work will be no longer than two years.

RIHousing is a quasi-public corporation that provides loans, grants, education and assistance to help Rhode Islanders find, rent, buy, build and keep a good home. Services include mortgage origination, homebuyer counseling, homeowner and rental assistance, lead hazard remediation, development financing and the preservation of affordable housing. The corporation does not receive any funds from the state.

In 2018, RIHousing:

- Provided \$445 million in mortgages for 2,121 homebuyers
- Administered \$183 million in HUD funding for rental assistance
- Provided \$139 million in financing to develop or preserve 773 apartments
- Had an overall investment of \$780 million across the state

With 235 employees in one location, RIHousing has many employees engaged in different lines of work. With five divisions, employees are typically focused in their area of work with minimal interaction with those in other divisions.

Below is an outline of what will be required of the selected firm.

- 1) Create strategy for participation and communication
  - Create a strategy to ensure full staff participation. The plan should include a strategy to engage senior leadership to fully buy into this process.
  - Develop a strategy to keep staff informed of progress.

## 2) Agency Assessment and Deliverables

- An assessment of the Corporation's current DEI practices and procedures, including, but not limited to, hiring, internal and external communications, overall agency culture, professional development opportunities, etc. This assessment should include organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for improvement, and threats.
- This assessment should, at a minimum:
  - quantify DEI experiences across staff, generating an organizational baseline for ongoing measurement. Staff from all levels should be included in this assessment.
  - Identify educational and training opportunities to provide staff with an understanding and awareness of DEI.
  - Identify Corporation processes and procedures that are serving as a barrier to an inclusive and equitable workplace.
- While RIHousing expects that there will be several forms of assessment including surveys, focus groups, group interviews, the Corporation is looking for a proposed assessment structure in the proposal.
- Assess communication and outreach efforts in RIHousing's lines of business, including, without limitation, mortgage origination, financing the development and preservation of affordable houses and engaging minority owned businesses, to determine how well they convey a DEI commitment. This assessment may be completed by reviewing agency marketing materials including newsletters, announcements, website material, through speaking with agency partners and key stakeholders that RIHousing could identify. We also expect the consultant to propose best practices for this type of assessment.
- The final assessment should include a short and long-term roadmap for the agency to create a more inclusive culture, both internally for staff, and externally through our lines of business. These roadmaps should include targeted goals and benchmarks. The short-term plan should cover goals and benchmarks the corporation can achieve in increments of 6 months and 1 year. The long-term roadmap should cover a 5-year period at the most. Both roadmaps should go beyond surface level changes and should include methods of long-term monitoring and evaluation for success.



- The road map should include targeted goals and an action plan which will identify whom shall have primary oversight responsibility for each action, estimated time frame to accomplish action, and resources needed in terms of staff and associated costs.
- The final assessment and roadmap is to be of professional level quality and will consist of, at a minimum, a written report and presentation.
- The total assessment phase should take no longer than nine months, with the assessment and roadmap finalized within a year of the contract start date. This will leave one year for staff education and training.

### 3) Education and Trainings

- Based on the findings from the assessment, the consultant should map out a year's worth of education and trainings to provide staff. The topics to be covered in these trainings should stem from the organizational assessment and be included in the short-term roadmap.
- It is expected that the consultant will provide or coordinate these trainings.
- Education and training should be for staff at all levels and directly correspond with the goals and benchmarks laid out in the roadmap.
- Education and trainings should occur in a range or mix of formats and incorporate proven best practices. Trainings may take a variety of formats including, in person, small groups, lectures, webinars, etc.