



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Rhode Island Statewide Coordinated Entry System Evaluation

Posting Date: January 26, 2023

Response Submission Deadline: 3:00 EST p.m. on February 24, 2023.

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 carry out an independent evaluation of the Rhode Island Statewide Coordinated Entry System on behalf of the Rhode Island CoC (“RiCoC”).

INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals must be submitted via email to: Elizabeth Bioteau, RiCoC Planner at ebioteau@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 demonstrations of requested products, if applicable.



SCOPE OF WORK

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

ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED WITH YOUR PROPOSAL

**SUBMISSION
CHECK LIST**

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.

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

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 their responsibilities.

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.

4. Provide a detailed list of references, including a contact name and business telephone number for organizations or businesses for whom you have performed similar work.

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).



- 6. Describe your firm’s information security systems and the steps that your firm takes to safeguard client communication, confidential information, and client data. Include in your response whether your firm performs penetration testing, your firm’s encryption methods, and whether client data is stored onshore or offshore.

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.
- 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.

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.



EVALUATION AND SELECTION

A selection committee consisting of RIHousing employees and RICoC Stakeholders 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: Elizabeth Bioteau, ebioteau@rihousing.com .



Attachment A

Requests for Proposals Submission Certifications

Please respond to **all** items below and include it in your response to this RFP. Be sure to include any additional information in the space provided or as an attachment as needed. Please ensure that any attachments refer to the appropriate item by name (i.e., “Conflict of Interest,” “Major State Decision Maker,” etc.)

Total word limit for Sections A and B: 500 words

Section A: Conflicts of Interest

1. 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, check below.**

None

2. Describe how your firm will handle actual and or potential conflicts of interest (*please include in your proposal or attach a sheet 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

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 below.**

I have read and understand the requirements of Chapter 27 of Title 17 of the Rhode Island General Laws, Reporting of Political Contributions by State Vendors.

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.

Please indicate your response below.

Yes

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.

No



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 certify below 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.

I certify that in the event our firm is selected, we will comply with the Personal Information and Security guidelines noted above.

4. Your firm’s president, chairman or CEO must certify below that (i) no member of your firm has made inquiries or contacts with respect to this RFP other than in an email or written communication to **Elizabeth Bioteau ebioteau@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 February 24, 2023, (iii) all information in the proposal is true and correct to the best of your knowledge, (iv) no member of your firm gave anything of monetary value or promise of future



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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.

I certify that no member of our firm has made or will make any such inquiries or contacts; all information supplied is true and correct; no member of our firm has provided anything of value to influence RIHousing; and our firm is in compliance with applicable political contribution reporting.

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

Signature: _____

Firm Name: _____



Attachment B

Scope of Work

I. Services to be Provided

RIHousing serves as the collaborative applicant on behalf of the Rhode Island Continuum of Care (“RiCoC”). RIHousing seeks to engage a professional consulting firm to carry out an independent evaluation of the Rhode Island Statewide Coordinated Entry System on behalf of the Rhode Island CoC (“RiCoC”) (as more particularly defined herein, “CES Evaluation.”) The successful firm will provide a third-party independent CES evaluation to help support ongoing program implementation and performance. The evaluation will also report on HUD compliance with CES standards, and national best practices in program development and implementation.

II. Project Schedule

The selected firm will be prepared to commence the CES Evaluation during April 2023 and complete the scope of work including the issuance of the final evaluation report within approximately four months’ time.

III. Project Approach

The Coordinated Entry System is a state-wide initiative to match households experiencing homelessness with an intervention that will most effectively end their homelessness as quickly as possible. The [Rhode Island Continuum of Care](#), the Rhode Island Department of Housing (“DOH”), Crossroads Rhode Island (“CRI”), and the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless (“RICEH”) currently work in partnership to design and implement the most effective system possible. The RiCoC and the DOH fund CES activities; CRI and RICEH are the agencies with contracts to implement Housing Problem Solving (“HPS”) and CES across the RiCoC.

CRI manages the "front porch" of the CES, serving as the HPS Lead. As the HPS Lead, CRI works to facilitate collaboration and uniform practices across Homeless Prevention, Diversion, and Rapid Resolution activities.

The RICEH manages the “front door” of the CES and serves as the CES Lead overseeing the entire CES. This includes the Coordinated Entry Call Center, the training of staff conducting CES activities, including but not limited to, shelter and housing assessments, CES data and system-level reporting and accountability, and the prioritization and referral process into shelter and housing programs.

The RiCoC designed the Statewide CES to coordinate and strengthen access to HPS and CES activities, including the finite shelter and housing resources available to households who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness throughout Rhode Island. The CES



institutes consistent and uniform assessment and referral processes to determine and secure the most appropriate response to each household's immediate and long-term housing needs. The [CES Policies and Procedures Manual](#) details the purpose, operations, and evaluation of the RICoC's CES.

The CES is designed to:

1. Allow anyone who needs assistance to know where and how to access assistance, to be assessed in a standard and consistent way, and to connect with available shelter and housing that best meets their needs;
2. Ensure clarity, transparency, consistency, and accountability for households experiencing homelessness, referral sources, and homeless service providers throughout the assessment and referral process;
3. Facilitate exits from homelessness to stable housing in the most rapid manner possible given available resources;
4. Ensure that households gain access as effectively as possible to the type of intervention most appropriate to their immediate and long-term housing needs;
5. Ensure that HPS program activities, shelter and housing services are easily accessed by households seeking housing or services;
6. Ensure that people who have been homeless the longest and/or are the most vulnerable have priority access to permanent housing.

To achieve these objectives, CES includes:

1. Collaboration between the RICoC and each Emergency Solutions Grant ("ESG")/RICoC/Consolidated Homeless Fund ("CHF") recipient operating in the state to ensure the process allows for coordinated screening, assessment, and referrals for ESG/RICoC/CHF projects consistent with written standards for administering CoC and ESG assistance;
2. Statewide access to RICoC, CHF and ESG-funded HPS program activities, shelter, and housing services for families and individuals who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness throughout RI;
3. A uniform and standard assessment process to be used for all those seeking homeless assistance and procedures for determining the appropriate next level of assistance to resolve the homelessness of those admitted to shelter or other temporary housing accommodations;
4. Establishment of uniform guidelines among housing components of homeless assistance (i.e., Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing) regarding: eligibility for services, priority populations to be served, expected outcomes and targets for length of stay;
5. Agreed upon prioritization for access to shelter and housing assistance;
6. Referral policies and procedures between the CES and homeless services providers to facilitate access to services

The successful firm will provide a third-party independent CES evaluation to help support ongoing program implementation and performance. The evaluation will also report on HUD compliance with CES standards, and national best practices in program development and implementation.

Areas of focus will help inform strategies to address particular ongoing challenges in the RI CES that include but are not limited to:



- Access and implementation in geographical outlying areas of the state and strategies to better implement CES to best serve geographically outlying areas
- Evaluation of the current HPS workflow and implementation throughout the system
- Recommendations to strategically coordinate HPS assistance into institutional discharge planning protocol to reduce system inflow
- Recommendations to streamline the paperwork required for households to enter housing – specifically, what paperwork can be done later?
 - Includes evaluation of how the RICoC currently collects verification of homelessness information
- Evaluation of efficacy of the RICoC’s prioritization for shelter and housing and case conferencing practices; this includes evaluation of the RICoC’s Crisis and Housing Assessments (also known as our system’s current “universal assessments”)
- Evaluation of the current accessibility, assessment and prioritization process, including how to account for the different needs, vulnerabilities, and risk factors for DV survivors, and other sub-populations
- Evaluation of barriers to accessing shelter for high acuity, long-time unsheltered households as reported by individuals with lived experience and Street Outreach providers
- Evaluation of the accessibility of all available and appropriate housing options/ supportive services for DV survivors in the system
- Evaluation of the RICoC’s [Rhode Island Statewide CES Policies and Procedures Manual](#)
- Evaluation of recidivism within the homeless system to inform areas that need additional support/rethinking/retraining
- Evaluating racial, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity disparities within the CES and reporting on opportunities to advance equity. Specifically, are there differences between the populations on the shelter/housing queue, those matched to shelter/housing, and those getting into shelter/housing?
- Evaluation of data quality related to the CES, with specific attention paid to the following:
 - Shelter Queue
 - Housing Queue
 - Shelter and Housing program utilization
 - Shelter and Housing program denials and reasons for denial
- Evaluation of accountability within the CES system – make recommendations on how to strengthen, if needed, the current governing and implementation structures overseeing CES. This includes evaluation of CES and HPS reporting, including as it pertains to the RICoC’s ability to monitor its system performance strategies.

Interested firms are encouraged to use their expertise and experience to develop a scope of services and project timeline that is responsive to the need for an independent evaluator of the CES. The evaluation should consider each step of the CES process and provide recommendations on how to improve the system’s effectiveness and efficiency.



Coordination with RICEH and CRI staff and use of data in the Homeless Management Information System (“HMIS”) and de-identified data reported from the comparable database for domestic violence (“DV”) service providers is required. Interested firms should have experience with CoC, ESG, HMIS, and CES programs in communities with a similar scope and scale as Rhode Island, experience with national best practices/emerging strategies around CES, and have experience evaluating CES’s that prioritize for shelter as well as housing.

It is anticipated that the following tasks will be performed; interested firms should include any other tasks that they believe would result in a thorough independent evaluation of the CES:

1. Solicit community input and feedback on the current experience of the CES process including evaluation of the homeless system’s overall accessibility.
2. Evaluate the universal assessments, known locally as the crisis and housing assessment tools. Evaluation methodology should include recommendations from staff currently providing the assessments, staff from agencies receiving referrals, persons experiencing homelessness, the RICoC, and other appropriate sources including national best practices identified in the area of assessment.
3. Review referrals to determine their appropriateness and to recommendations for changes to the process, if needed.
4. Evaluate the management of the by name list, known locally as the crisis and housing queues. Evaluation methodology should include collecting recommendations from staff currently providing referrals, staff from agencies receiving referrals, persons experiencing homelessness, and other appropriate sources including national best practices identified in the area of coordinated assessment.
5. Conduct a time analysis of the steps in the assessment process including evaluation of time spent conducting staff duties related to the prioritization lists and referral processes, the length of time to referral to shelter and housing, and to placement in housing.
6. Analyze the outcomes for clients who were diverted from the homeless system with prevention and diversion resources to determine the effectiveness of those diversions and to recommend changes to the HPS process as needed.
7. Analyze the housing stability outcomes of each provider agency to determine the effectiveness of referrals and recommend changes related to the CES assessment process or tool.
8. Conduct analysis of the housing and service needs of families and individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness as determined through the assessment process in order to make recommendations on process changes or refinements to result in a more effective homeless crisis response system. A critical part of analysis will be the identification of gaps in the process/system which create barriers to housing stability for families and individuals.
9. Review the CES assessment process for consistency with the RICoC’s Housing First principles and national best practices and identify policies or practices that are not in alignment and opportunity for improvement.
10. Evaluate compliance with the applicable HUD Coordinated Entry Notices; CoC Program Interim Rule; ESG Interim Rule; and HUD’s Equal Access and Gender Identity rules.



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Provide recommendations on policies and procedures to ensure full compliance with all relevant HUD requirements.