



Technical Support for Housing Ready Program Request for Proposals

Housing North seeks to contract with an individual, organization, or company to provide services to our communities through our Housing Ready Program in NW Michigan. The primary objective of these services is to unlock market-driven solutions that help promote year-round housing affordability and encourage the development of housing projects in our region. The individual(s), organization, and/or company selected will be responsible for coordinating and collaborating with diverse partners on different projects. The contractor is expected to be a catalyst within the community, helping guide the information, tools, and resources for initiatives that effectively address affordable housing shortages.

Housing North is a non-profit governed by a 10-member Board of Directors representing business, philanthropy, local government, and more. It works to build awareness, influence policy, and expand capacity so communities can create housing solutions that meet their unique needs. It covers the 10-county region of Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford counties. Housing North works through close partnerships with local and county-level communities and representatives.

The shortage of affordable housing in our region is well studied and documented through different surveys conducted by Housing North and analyses conducted by Networks Northwest, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, the Home Builders Association of Michigan, the City of Traverse City, United Ways of Michigan, and others. Housing shortages affect area residents at all income levels but are particularly acute for middle- to low- income employees of schools, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and local governments in the NW Michigan area. Housing shortages are also among the most significant constraints to hiring and retaining employees. In addition, the growing number of 1- and 2-person households as young people begin their careers and older people retire here has changed the types of housing desired by many in our communities.

The barriers to constructing more affordable housing units are numerous and complex. There are many housing groups that represent a cross-section of our housing "community." These groups meet monthly to bring together key members of this community to identify ways to address these barriers so we can, collectively, make considerable progress on this issue.

The chosen contractor will work with these partners and organizations to help remove barriers to housing, help meet the goals of the regional housing plan related to the communities they work in. The Scope of work will involve developing a housing action plan, housing opportunity map and specific recommendations and activities that focus on strengthening connections with developers and builders, removing barriers to housing projects, and bridging the financial gap for affordable housing projects.

Services to be Provided:

Housing North seeks to contract with an individual, organization, or company to provide the services described below. Funding commitments for these services have been secured for at least one year, with extension beyond that time based on funding availability. The funding currently available would allow for 20-30 hours of service weekly, on average. This level of effort has the potential to be expanded if and as additional resources are obtained. For more details about the budget for this program, please email us directly.

A contract to provide the services described in this Request for Proposals will be drawn up by Housing North, but the work will primarily be within Grand Traverse County.

Finance and Project Support

- Work with Housing North to coordinate projects and development teams for attainable housing projects in NW Michigan focusing on Leelanau County and Benzie County.
- Coordinate with the active network of developers, builders, nonprofits, government agencies (e.g., County Land Bank and Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities), and others to identify potential projects, to understand the constraints they face, and identify ways the communities could support their efforts.
- Develop a database of key development sites and potential incentives.
- Provide technical support to communities, developers, and development partners, including public officials, lenders, investors, and nonprofits, in planning, funding, and advocating for housing development that meets local goals with activities including:
 - Identify funding needed to complement developer and other financing to achieve affordability goals for target households.
 - Identify potential funding sources (including federal, State, regional and local) to meet these needs and work with project partners and others to develop funding proposals.
 - Conduct third-party site plan reviews and/or financial reviews of major development proposals to identify development support in the form of tax abatement, infrastructure investments, or related opportunities for public-private partnerships.
 - Work with partners to create and support new local and/or regional affordable housing financing vehicles.

Leadership and Representation

- Represent and/or work closely with Housing North as a spokesperson for efforts to increase affordable housing in the Grand Traverse County including Traverse City and the surrounding Townships.
- Develop and maintain strong working relationships with local government officials, developers, lenders, investors, businesses, and nonprofit organizations in the counties.
- Liaise with Housing North and other local and regional affordable housing groups to identify opportunities to collaborate, bring relevant experiences and ideas being considered elsewhere in the region, and tap regional resources that could support and benefit the housing activities in the region.
- Collaborate with local, regional, and statewide nonprofits seeking to build, finance, and market affordable housing within Grand Traverse County.

Qualifications

The individual(s) selected to provide these services is expected to have the following qualifications:

- At least two years of experience working on housing projects and in a public policy environment to influencing land use decisions, planning, housing policies, finance, economic development, and/or real estate or community development.

- A strong commitment and track record of collaboration with diverse partners and “leading from behind,” strong finance and communications skills, and the ability to work in a complex system with undefined parameters.
- A bachelor’s degree in urban planning, public administration, or nonprofit administration is preferred.

Submission of Proposals

Individuals, organizations, or companies interested in providing the services described above should submit a written proposal to Yarrow Brown, Housing North Executive Director, no later than 12/1/2023. It is expected that a contract for these services will be executed by 1/1/2024. Proposals should include (1) a brief narrative outlining the way in which the services will be provided, (2) resume(s) of all individuals proposed to provide these services, (3) a cost proposal for the services to be provided, and, if the proposer is an organization or company, (4) its background and experience related to the services to be provided and the institutional support it will provide to the individual(s) performing the direct services under the contract.

Inquiries are welcome and should be addressed to Yarrow Brown @ yarrow@housingnorth.org.