



Request for Proposals to Provide Housing Quality Standards (HQS), NSPIRE, and Lead Visual Inspection Services

Introduction

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is seeking proposals from qualified firms/agencies or individuals to provide Housing Quality Standards (HQS), NSPIRE, and Lead Visual inspection services throughout North Carolina for Housing Collaborative, a Charlotte-based nonprofit that helps people with rental subsidies to find housing. The HQS, NSPIRE, and Lead Visual Inspections must be conducted and documented in accordance with the guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for its rental subsidy programs.

Instructions

Your proposal must be submitted to lsantos@housingcollab.org no later than 5:00p.m. on Friday, January 10th, 2025.

Proposals should be concise and must include resume or statement of qualifications for each member of the firm that will be involved in the delivery of the requested services. Respondents are advised that all submissions (including those not selected) may be made available to the public upon request after completion of the process, selection of the successful proposal, and signing of a contract for the requested services. Accordingly, any information included in the proposal that the respondent believes to be proprietary or confidential should be clearly identified as such.

Scope of Work

Housing Collaborative seeks to engage qualified vendors to perform HQS, NSPIRE, and Lead Visual Inspection services in accordance with the guidelines established by HUD for its rental subsidy programs for people experiencing homelessness.



Housing Collaborative assists individuals and households that have been paired with rental subsidies to find safe and affordable housing that meets their needs and the requirements of the subsidy programs and coordinates the required housing inspections among other processes that lead to housing placement and retention. These housing units include single family homes, multifamily rental units, and mobile homes throughout North Carolina. Some housing providers offering these rental homes are accustomed to working with subsidy programs and complying with inspections; others are new to working with tenants with a subsidy.

Under the regulations established by HUD, a housing unit must be maintained in decent, safe, and sanitary condition to be eligible for a rental subsidy. As a best practice to ensure unbiased inspection outcomes, Housing Collaborative prefers to have a third-party inspect all units where a household will use a subsidy it administers. In addition, Housing Collaborative coordinates housing inspections of units where other organizations administer rental subsidies.

Housing Collaborative currently administers rental subsidies for 154 households in Mecklenburg County and expects to administer rental subsidies for at least 900 households throughout North Carolina over the next 2 years. In addition, Housing Collaborative coordinates approximately 100 housing inspections per month of units on behalf of other subsidy-administering agencies throughout North Carolina. All units will receive initial and annual HQS inspections including re-inspections as needed; a small subset receive “special” Quality Assurance or Emergency inspections. Units built prior to 1978 and with a pregnant person and/or child(ren) under age 6 residing in the household will also receive initial and annual lead visual inspections. In the future, at HUD’s direction, HQS inspections may be replaced by NSPIRE inspections.

The successful respondent (hereinafter, the Inspection Contractor) will maintain a staff level adequate to handle the volume of inspection activity associated with the Housing Collaborative initiatives described above; will provide proof of current SAM.gov business registration and HQS, NSPIRE, and Lead Visual Inspection certifications; proof of any updates to certifications; proof of valid driver’s licenses for all inspectors including inspectors added after an agreement with Housing Collaborative is in place; will be able to conduct all inspections within one to three business days of request and promptly communicate scheduled inspection times and dates; and will provide inspection reports within one business day of completed inspections.



The HQS Contractor shall procure and maintain for the duration of the contract, insurance against claims for injuries to persons or damages to property which may arise from or in connection with the performance of the contracted work. If respondent is selected, proof of insurance with coverage of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence will be required prior to any engagement for inspection services.

The HQS Contactor and all inspectors performing services on behalf of the HQS Contractor must be generally knowledgeable with response to the HUD rules, regulations, manuals, handbooks, PIH Notices, and other published guidance governing HQS inspections, which may be amended and supplemented by HUD from time to time, including but not limited to the following (collectively, the Rules and Regulations):

- Title 24, Part 982, Subpart I of the Code of Federal Regulations
- Housing Inspection Manual: Section 8 Existing Housing Program
- Chapter 10, Housing Choice Voucher Guidebook
- Notice PIH 2010-10 (HA)
- Form HUD-52580
- Form HUD-52580A

The HQS Contractor is responsible for maintaining up-to-date versions of the Rules and Regulations, possessing thorough knowledge, and understanding of the Rules and Regulations, and providing sufficient training to inspectors with response to the Rules and Regulations. All inspections must conform to the specifications identified by HUD in the Rules and Regulations, including the obligation to record the results on the forms published by HUD within the required timeframes.

Inspectors must arrive within the appointed time or else make their best efforts to contact Housing Collaborative, the owner, and/or the tenant when an inspection cannot take place within the appointed time. Inspectors must wait for at least fifteen (15) minutes at an appointment before leaving if an owner or tenant is not present at the appointed time.

Inspectors must diligently complete inspections in accordance with the Rules and Regulations, fully documenting their findings on the appropriate HUD forms, and promptly providing copies to Housing Collaborative. Housing Collaborative requires digital photos for failed inspection reports and may ask inspectors to update or supplement reports with additional details.

Items to be Included with Your Proposal

General Firm Information (One-person firms are welcomed to apply)

1. Provide a brief description of your firm, including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Name of the principals of the firm
 - 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
 - e. The firm's Employer ID number (EIN) and proof of incorporation in North Carolina

2. Experience and Resources
 - a. Describe your firm and its capabilities. In particular, support your capacity to perform the Scope of Work.
 - b. Specify your coverage area – in which North Carolina Counties can your firm provide HQS, NSPIRE, and lead visual inspections?
 - c. Indicate which principals and associates from your firm that would be involved in providing services to Housing Collaborative. Provide appropriate background information for each such person and identify their responsibilities.
 - d. Provide at least three references including a contact name and telephone number for organizations or businesses for whom you have performed similar work.
 - e. Identify any potential 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 or employee of any organization likely to interact with Housing Collaborative.
 - f. Identify any material litigation, administrative proceedings, or investigations, in 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.
 - g. 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).
One-person firms are welcomed to apply.

3. 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.

- a. Provide a detailed cost proposal for performing the Scope of Work on a per inspection basis, including the cost of re-inspections. Housing Collaborative anticipates a one-year initial engagement, with an option to extend annually.
- b. Provide any other fee information applicable to the engagement that has not been previously covered that you wish to share with Housing Collaborative.

4. Miscellaneous

- a. Housing Collaborative encourages the participation of persons of color, women, persons with disabilities and members of other federally and state protected classes. Include the number and percentage of members of federally and state protected classes who are either principals or senior managers in your firm, and the number and percentage of members of federally and state protected classes in your firm who will work on Housing Collaborative engagement.

5. Certifications

- a. Include a letter from the head of your firm certifying 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 Leslie Santos at lsantos@housingcollab.org 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 January 10, 2025, (iii) all information in your proposal is true and correct to the best of their knowledge, (iv) no member of your firm gave anything of monetary value or promise of future employment to a Housing Collaborative employee or commissioner, or a relative of the same, based on any understanding that such persons action or judgement will be influence.

Evaluation and Selection

A selection committee consisting of Housing Collaborative employees (the Committee) will review all proposals and decide based on the following factors:

- Professional capacity to undertake the Scope of Work
- Proposed fee structures
- Ability to perform within time and budget constraints
- Previous work experience and performance with Housing Collaborative and/or similar organizations
- Presence of Persons of Color, Women, and/or People with Disabilities among ownership and/or leadership of firm
- Recommendations by references
- Foreign language capabilities of the firm
- Inclusion of valid SAM.gov registration and HQS, NSPIRE, and lead visual inspection certifications

Housing Collaborative may invite one or more finalists to make a presentation. In its sole discretion, Housing Collaborative may negotiate with one or more firms who have submitted qualifications to submit more detailed proposals on specific projects as they arise.

By this RFP, Housing Collaborative has not committed itself to undertake the work set forth. Housing Collaborative reserves the right to reject any, and all, proposals, to rebid the original or amended scope of services and to enter negotiations with one or more respondents. Housing Collaborative reserves the right to make those decisions after receipt of responses. Housing Collaborative's decision on these matters is final.

For additional information, contact Leslie Santos, Director of Compliance, at lsantos@housingcollab.org.

