

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Administration of Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program Housing Authority of the Town of Portland

CLOSING DATE: March 1, 2024
CLOSING TIME: 3:00 PM. EST

Dear Proposer:

Enclosed is a solicitation for the administration and operation of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program for the Housing Authority of the Town of Portland (PHA), Portland, Connecticut. PHA has authority to administer 89 vouchers and the current budget authority is allowing for approximately 15 vouchers to be leased.

Proposals submitted in response to this solicitation will be evaluated and the successful Proposer will be selected in accordance with the PHA's policies.

The current schedule for the solicitation is as follows:

Release of the RFP	February 1, 2024
Due Date of the RFP	March 1, 2024
March PHA Board Meeting	March 18, 2024
Notice to Proceed Issued	April 1, 2024

Identified below are certain important items and their location in the RFP:

1. The Statement of Work is in Section I.
2. The Contract Period is outlined in Section II.
3. Instructions and conditions concerning proposal preparation and submission are in Section III.
4. Factors for the Award are found in Section IV.
5. Required forms and certifications are found in Section V.
6. The due date for proposals is: 3:00 p.m., March 1, 2024. Later proposals will not be considered.
7. The contact person for additional information is:
Allen Harrison., Executive Director
Portland Housing Authority
9 Chatham Court
Portland, Connecticut 06480
8. (860) 342-1688 or FAX (860) 342-3961.
9. Questions will be accepted through the close of business on February 15, 2024, and an Addendum responding to all questions will be issued, if necessary, by no later than February 20, 2024. Responses to all inquiries or requests for clarification will be provided by facsimile to those who provide a fax number or by USPS first class mail.

SECTION I—STATEMENT OF WORK

A. INTRODUCTION

The Housing Authority of the Town of Portland (PHA) is currently authorized to operate a Housing Choice Voucher Program of approximately 89 units. Of the 89 units approximately 74 are under lease. The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program waiting list has 32 applicants and is currently closed. The Housing Authority has never scored below a standard performance for SEMAP. Current budget utilization exceeds 98%.

At the current time the Section 8 HCV Program is managed in house. The PHA currently does not have an FSS Program.

PHA's MIS main software system is PHA Web Services. The PHA also uses Microsoft Office products.

B. SCOPE

The Contractor shall administer the specified Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program of the PHA in accordance with an approved Work Plan and Schedule, the specific requirements of the contract, Administrative Plan, and the current and future program requirements of Federal statute, program regulations, directives, and guidance applicable to the specified Section 8 program(s). The latter requirements are not stated in their entirety in this Statement of Work but are incorporated by reference. Rather, the statement of work identifies core functions. The Contractor's accomplishment of these functions shall be measured by agreed upon performance standards.

The PHA will consider proposals that use its office space (for a negotiated cost) and other related administrative systems OR proposals that have the major administrative activities based at another location. Proposers will have to identify which business model that they intend to use and explain in detail how program participants, landlords, applicants, and members of the public will be able to access the program. Proposals for off-site administration will have to explain how program integrity, confidentiality, record-keeping, and audit trail obligations will be met.

C. PREPARATORY AND TRANSITIONAL ACTIVITIES (Months 1 -- 3)

The Contractor will have no more than 30 days from Notice to Proceed/effective date of the Contract to undertake organizational activities prior to assuming full responsibility for all operations. During the first 90 days of the performance period of the Contract, the Contractor will implement any new or revised procedural systems pertaining to program operations that make possible the operation of the programs according to the performance standards established in this Contract and described below in Section I, Subsection E and F.

Within 30 days of the effective date of the contract, the Contractor shall complete the following preparatory activities and take all other actions necessary to fully assume all contracted activities on the 31st day at the minimum baseline of performance.

a. Work Plan

Within 7 days of the Notice to Proceed/Contract Effective Date, the Contractor shall attend an orientation and planning session at the offices of the PHA.

Within 21 days of the Contract Effective Date, the Contractor shall submit a Final Work Plan specified in Section III together with a schedule, describing how the Contractor plans to perform all services and set milestones for measuring progress.

b. Financial Management

The Contractor must be prepared to assume responsibility for timely payments to landlords and other key financial management and reporting functions from the beginning of the Transitional Period. The PHA's Controller will prepare all financial reports, such as VMS and budgets with consultation of the Contractor for the duration of the engagement.

The Contractor will prepare the monthly and any required interim check files including HAP payments to landlords and utility reimbursements to tenants. The Contractor will submit a request for wire transfer with all supporting documents and will then print and sign the checks in the most efficient and economical manner which the Contractor will mail. PHA will rely upon the Contractor to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of the check amounts paid.

c. Review Information from Current Files and PHA Staff Needed for Ongoing Operation of the Program

As part of the Work Plan development phase, the Contractor shall review current files and interview the PHA's leasing coordinator as needed, to baseline record-keeping systems for a smooth transition, maintaining program operations for existing families and housing units. The Contractor is to use the current tenant files and inspection records of PHA. The Contractor is not responsible to correct past deficiencies reflected in these files, only to ensure orderly and complete files going forward.

d. Review and Assume Maintenance for the PHA's Section 8 Administrative Plan

Within 90 days of the contract award, the Contractor shall review the existing PHA Administrative Plan, identify if any "significant" changes (requiring a public hearing) are required, and recommend the amending language required for those changes to the PHA for action. The Contractor shall regularly review, revise as needed, and maintain a current Administrative Plan considering all applicable Federal policy and regulations and the performance standards and measures established under this contract.

e. Rent Reasonableness

The Contractor will be expected to use, maintain, and document the use of a rent reasonableness program acceptable to PHA during the duration of the contract.

f. Utility Allowances

The Contractor will be expected to use, maintain, and document the use and rationale for the values of this schedule.

g. Review the PHA's current utilization and recommend actions to manage utilization

The waiting list contains 32 applicants. If it is found that the number of families on the waiting list is insufficient to achieve and maintain the appropriate level of lease-up for the current operating environment, the Contractor shall immediately initiate outreach and marketing efforts to increase the waiting list and design and implement a lease-up program. The Contractor will also closely monitor current federal actions regarding available budget authority and will provide an estimate of how many and when households may be taken from the list and put into housing search.

h. Improve Relationships with Participating Landlords and Increasing Housing Opportunities by Recruiting New Owners as Program Participants

The Contractor shall establish a plan to inform and educate participating landlords about the program and in particular PHA's efforts to improve the timeliness and reliability of HQS inspections. The Plan shall also include multiple ways to encourage families to make a broad search for housing, including neighborhoods low in poverty.

i. Establish an Inspection Schedule and Ensure HQS Enforcement.

The Contractor will review the inspection schedule that the PHA is following to ensure that all HQS Inspections that were required have been completed on time and that all inspection findings and follow-up inspections are completed. The Contractor must state the manner all inspections from contract date forward will be completed, stating that adequate scheduling systems are in place to inspect all new units placed under HAP contract meet HQS requirements prior to execution of the HAP contract. Units which fail to meet HQS shall have rents abated in accordance with HUD regulations and PHA policies. The Contractor must have adequate HQS certified inspectors (certified by a nationally known institute or organization) to meet all inspections (annual, HQS quality control, request for tenancy approval, and re-inspection of failed units) as required. *The contract must state clearly whether the inspectors are employees or subcontractors.*

j. Design and Implement Tracking and Reporting Procedures

The Contractor shall establish procedures and ensure staff capacity needed for electronic reporting of household level data, adding families as they are certified or re-certified and making such reports. This also includes establishing other systems needed for unit/landlord processing, HAP payment processing, rent reasonableness, waiting list management, and making reports required under HUD regulations and handbooks.

If the PHA determines to upgrade its own software, the Contractor will be expected to help in evaluating the Section 8 and waiting list functionality of any new or updated software products.

D. ONGOING ACTIVITIES AND FUNCTIONS (Months 4 –24)

The operation of the Section 8 Program requires the performance of certain core functions in conformance with program regulations, PHA's Administrative Plan, guidance and directives contained in Handbooks, Notices, and other policy documents. The key functions for which the Contractor will be held responsible are:

1. **Tenant Functions** – applications, waiting list, selection of families, verification of income and family composition, and calculation of tenant rent and HAP payments. Conduct applicant screening in accordance with HUD requirements and the Administrative Plan.
2. **Unit Functions** – Initial and periodic inspection of units to enforce HQS. Evaluation of requested rents in comparison with unassisted rents in the market area. Periodic review and revision of allowances for tenant-paid utilities as required by regulations.
3. **Owner Outreach and Housing Opportunity Counseling** – Activities performed by the Contractor to expand the participants' range of location choices and reduce concentration of assisted families in areas with high concentration of low-income families and minorities.
4. **Ensuring Timely and Accurate HAP payments to Owners and Utility Reimbursement to Tenants** – The Contractor shall prepare the list of monthly and interim HAP checks and utility reimbursements to be made and submit to the PHA Controller in time for the Contractor to request and receive a wire transfer of funds to pay for the issuance of checks by the Contractor. The Contractor shall ensure the accuracy of the amounts being paid and collecting portability payments from other programs.
5. **Management Information Services/Administrative Services** – Providing the necessary administrative support to maintain an office, conduct program activities, and prepare and transmit reports required by HUD.
6. **Family Self Sufficiency** – If the PHA participates in a FSS program, the Contractor shall administer the escrow accounts and perform all administrative functions required in terms of reporting and tracking. Case management in terms of individual service plans will be performed by the Contractor.
7. **Quality Control** – The Contractor shall develop and implement quality control systems designed to ensure the integrity, accountability, and efficiency of program functions to meet all federal audit standards.
8. **Utility Schedule** – The Contractor shall periodically review and determine allowances and recommend a utility schedule in

accordance with 24 CFR 982.517.

E. PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS DURING TRANSITION PERIOD

- 1 Beginning in the first month of the Transition Period, ensure timely completion of re-examination of all current HCV participants and re-inspection of units.
- 2 Implement owner outreach in accordance with the approved Work Plan and Schedule.
- 3 Beginning in the first month of the Transition period, the Contractor will take required actions to ensure that HAP payments are made no later than the first of the month for which they are payable and will add new contracts to the payment register within 30 days of HAP payment execution.
- 4 Beginning in the first month of the Transition Period, the Contractor will report monthly to PHA on the status of activities covered in the Work Plan, and Schedule in a format to be proposed by the Contractor and approved by PHA.
- 5 The Contractor will be required to implement a system for **quality control** to ensure that no later than March 31, 2025, the following performance standards are met:
 - a. 98% budget utilization or 98% of all voucher units under ACC are leased.
 - b. 95% of all re-examinations are completed not more than 12 months after the last re-examination. (Re-examination shall include determination of eligibility for continuing assistance, recalculation of tenant payment, inspection, and approval (or termination) of assisted unit, and review of owner request for rent increase.)
 - c. HUD 50058 for each re-examined family is submitted monthly as required.
 - d. 95% of HAP payments are paid in advance by the first day of the month.
 - e. 95% of new owners are paid within 30 days of the HAP contract execution.
 - f. All required financial and program reports are submitted to HUD as required by program regulations.
 - g. Within 90 days of the effective date of the contract, begin issuance of vouchers at a rate determined to be adequate to lease current vacancies, new additions to the program inventory, and anticipated turnover based upon the agreed-upon leasing schedule.

F. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS DURING ONGOING PERIOD

Beginning not later than **March 31, 2025**, the Contractor shall ensure that:

1. 98% of families selected for participation are selected in accordance with the Administrative Plan.
2. Income verification is complete for 100% of certified/re-certified families. The contractor shall use all Federal and State electronic means of income verification available.
3. Third party verifications of reported family income, assets over \$5000, and expense deductions appear in the tenant file or are documented as to why 3rd. party verification was unobtainable.
4. No more than 3% errors in calculation of tenant contribution.
5. No more than 10% of units re-inspected within 1 month of Contractor's inspection and approval have HQS violations that appear to have existed at the time of the previous inspection.
6. Documentation of rent reasonableness is in the file for 100%.
7. The correct utility schedule is used in at least 100% of files sampled.
8. For 100% of files sampled, life threatening HQS deficiencies were corrected within 24 hours and, for 98% of cases sampled, all other HQS violations were corrected within 30 calendar days or the term of an approved extension or if not corrected that HAP payments were abated in accordance with PHA Policy.
9. Fewer than 5% of all PHA re-examinations are more than 2 months overdue.
10. MTCS data indicates that 2 percent or fewer of PHA tenant rent and family's share of the rent to owner calculations are incorrect.
11. MTCS data indicates that 98 to 100 percent of newly leased units passed HQS inspection before the beginning date of the lease.
12. Fewer than 5 percent of annual HQS inspections of units under contract are more than 2 months overdue.
13. Percent of units leased during the last completed PHA fiscal year was 98 percent or more, as determined by taking unit months budgeted as shown in PHA's latest approved year-end operating statement divided by 12 and dividing the number of units budgeted as shown on the PHA's approved budget for the same fiscal year, or a lower percent based upon mutual agreement between the PHA and the Contractor in response to funding levels provided by HUD.
14. Within 6 months following the initiation of the Preparatory/ Transitional Period, the PHA achieves a "standard performer" rating under SEMAP.

SECTION II—CONTRACT PERIOD

The Contract period shall be for 36 months with the option to extend, upon the sole option of PHA and based upon the Contractor's satisfactory performance and willingness to extend, in increments not to exceed twelve months, up to a maximum term of five years. Upon notice from PHA to the Contractor that PHA does not intend to extend the contract, the Contractor will develop and implement a 120-day exit plan designed to ensure that the program continues without interruption or decline in the level of SEMAP performance.

SECTION III – PROPOSAL STRUCTURE

Number of Copies. Proposers should submit one original and 2 copies of their proposal.

Proposers are free to utilize any format and approach deemed appropriate to communicate expertise and experience in the requested areas of service. The information below can serve as a general guideline for proposal development:

Technical Proposal

Letter of Interest

A cover letter introducing the firm and expressing interest in providing services to the Authority should be included. The letter should indicate the authority of the signer to commit the firm or agency to the proposal and state that the cost proposal is valid for at least 120 days from the due date.

Qualifications

The proposer should submit firm and individual qualifications to demonstrate their ability to provide all services to the PHA necessary to administer a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. Specific discussion of education, certifications from any industry nationally recognized institute, and experience should be included for the PHA to evaluate the overall abilities of the assigned personnel.

References

The proposer is encouraged to submit relevant and concise information regarding its experience in providing services like those requested. A minimum of three (3) recent (last three years) references must be provided stating contact name, number scope of work performed and associated SEMAP scores. If the proposer is a Team and uses references from a subcontractor to indicate qualifications in an area that the prime contractor is not the lead expert, the proposal should disclose which Team Member's reference is being used.

Service Approach and Initial Work Plan

For each of the requested service areas (Section 1, Part D), the respondent shall provide a brief overview of the approach and a detailed Work Plan that elaborates how the administrative functions are to be performed. This Initial Work Plan will provide the base plan that will be refined during the Preparatory Period (first 30 days of the engagement).

Proof of Insurance

The firm shall submit proof of general liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 or more, and proof of Workers' Compensation Insurance in the amount required by law. Failure to submit the required Proof of Insurance will result in the automatic rejection of the proposal.

Fidelity Bond Coverage.

Within 10 days of the date of the Contract, Contractor shall provide evidence of \$300,000 fidelity bond coverage or the proposer can describe alternate approaches to protect the PHA from financial losses due to malfeasance or a failure to protect the programs resources. This issue will be part of a proposal evaluation and interview process so each proposer should discuss in detail how the Contractor will manage the risk of financial losses and indemnify the PHA should an auditor identify inappropriate expenditures that result in a requirement to recapture funds.

Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest.

The Proposer shall identify in the proposal any possible conflicts of interest.

Required Forms and Certifications

The firm must include a Non-Collusive Affidavit, a statement of Equal Opportunity, and a Certification of Non-Debarment in all copies of the proposal. The original copy should include signed originals (and notarized); however, the other copies may include copies of the original affidavits.

See Section V, for list of required forms and certifications.

Proposers are required to disclose the SEMAP scores and results of the annual audits performed for the Section 8 programs they administer during the past 3 years, as attachment A to their proposal.

Other Items

The firm is encouraged to include additional items that demonstrate their ability to provide services in accordance with the needs of the PHA.

Proposers are encouraged to organize their proposals in a logical manner and present information in a way that is easy to identify. Any restrictions related to the distribution of the proposal, in whole or in part, must be specifically stated and the PHA will make reasonable effort to protect confidential information.

Proposers are advised to indicate proprietary information not to be disclosed.

Cost Proposal

Ongoing costs must be affordable to PHA within the administrative fee structure of the Housing Choice Voucher Program. The cost proposal shall be submitted as a separate section differentiated from the Technical Proposal.

Each proposer will present their cost proposal as a percentage of the current monthly administrative fee. broken out for three main phases of the engagement – the Preparatory/Transitional Period (first 90 days), Months 4 through 12, and Months 12 through 24. Additionally, the fee should be broken out to identify the amount for performing HQS inspections and the amount for administration.

The fee structure will be contingent on the scoring and performance of the Contractor. PHA anticipates the Admin Fee will be adjusted periodically and is subject to congressional appropriations and HUD's proration.

The current monthly administrative fee available is **\$ 104.71**.

Contractors will be reimbursed based on the number of households under lease on the last day of each month times the contract rate. Payment of invoices will be 30 days after the month covered by the invoice subject to confirmation of units under lease.

SECTION IV -FACTORS FOR AWARD

Proposals will be ranked based on the following factors:

1. Demonstrated understanding of the scope of work and the challenges of turning around a troubled program, including the Proposer's understanding of the Section 8 HCV program, SEMAP, and the program's financial structure. (15 points)
2. Soundness of approach as demonstrated in the coherence and feasibility of the Work Plan. (15 points)
3. Coherence and feasibility of the proposed Schedule of the work. (15 points)
4. Quality and experience of the proposed team members and qualifications of agency or firm to complete the work including documented, *recent successful* experience of team members and the agency/firm in dealing with smaller PHAs in general and Section 8 programs in specific. (30 points)
5. Cost. (25 points)

Total possible points 100

SECTION V-REQUIRED FORMS AND CERTIFICATIONS

1. Representations, Certifications and Other Statements of Bidders (HUD 5369-A)
2. Non-Collusive Affidavit
3. Instructions to Proposers (HUD 5369-B)
4. Certifications and Representations of Proposers (HUD 5369-C)
5. General Contract Conditions (HUD 5370-C)
6. Certification Regarding Debarment and Suspension (HUD 2992)
7. HUD Table 5.1
8. Equal Opportunity Certification (HUD 92010)