

MAILING ADDRESS:

Cambridge Housing Authority  
675 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, Ma. 02139

ATTENTION: Purchasing Department  
David Desrosiers

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
Inspectional Services for  
Leased Housing voucher Program

BID OPENING:

January 20, 2012  
3:00 P.M.

**CAMBRIDGE HOUSING AUTHORITY  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:**

**REGULAR HQS INSPECTIONS**

**Background on Cambridge Housing Authority**

The Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) is the largest provider of affordable housing programs in the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts. In addition to owning and managing over 2,500 units of state and federally subsidized low-income housing, CHA operates a "Local Leased Housing Program" consisting of more than 2,800 state and federally subsidized mobile and project based housing vouchers used to rent private units in the Greater Boston Metro area.

Federal funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and state funding from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) supports the Local Leased Housing Program. The federal leased housing program is funded primarily under CHA's Moving to Work (MTW) block grant, the Mainstream voucher, the enhanced voucher, the Project Based voucher and the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) programs. The state leased housing program is funded primarily under the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) and the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP).

MTW is a national demonstration program which provides CHA with considerable regulatory flexibility that is generally not available to other Public Housing Authorities. For example, under MTW, CHA created and maintains its own rent, income and deduction determination policies ("Rent Simplification") for federal public housing that is significantly different than the standard, HUD mandated methodology. Similarly, using its MTW authority, CHA has implemented many significant reforms to its federally supported leased housing program in addition to creating several small, demonstration voucher programs designed to assist specific population types.

**Description of Need**

CHA is requesting proposals from qualified consultants with relevant experience to perform what CHA refers to as regular Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections in accordance with CHA's inspection protocol (Attached as Appendix 11) for units leased under the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program and required annual inspections for the state leased housing program. Yearly inspection requirements are as follows:

- Approximately 750 regular HQS inspections for the tenant based component of the HCV Program are scheduled yearly in accordance with the participant's anniversary date. The CHA inspects all units in this category biennially. These units are located both inside and outside of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts, generally within the Greater Boston Metropolitan area as noted on the attached report labeled Appendix 2).
- Approximately 65 regular inspections for the project based component of the HCV Program that are all located within the City of Cambridge. These inspections do not correspond to an anniversary date. This is a sampling that is selected and made

## HQS Inspection Services

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available on or before March 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. Inspections for this component, including any additional sampling required due to failed units, must be completed on or before June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year.

- Approximately 300 annual Inspections for the state leased housing programs that are scheduled monthly in accordance with the participant's anniversary date. The CHA inspects all state units on an annual basis and a small number of these are located outside of the City of Cambridge.

The term of the contract will be one year, with one two-year option to renew. CHA estimates that approximately 1,400 inspections will be performed on a yearly basis which also includes anticipated re-inspections and no shows.

Basic services shall include:

- Scheduling and conducting regular HQS inspections in accordance with CHA's inspection protocol (attached) for units under the HCV program, generally within the Greater Boston Metropolitan area, rarely outside of the Interstate 495 belt as noted on the attached report.
- Scheduling and conducting required annual inspections for units under the state leased housing program.
- Notifying CHA, landlords and clients of inspection related issues.
- Completing follow up re-inspections, if necessary.
- Certifying rent reasonableness using CHA supplied data.

### **Scope of Services**

CHA is seeking proposals from one or more highly qualified and insured firms, to provide inspection services for CHA's local leased housing program to assure that all units meet the minimum standards as set forth in the Massachusetts State Sanitary Code and the Federal Housing Quality Standards (HQS). Only regular HQS inspections will be conducted by the selected contractor.

The selected firm shall furnish sufficient organization, personnel and management staff with the necessary skill and judgment to perform all the duties and responsibilities normally associated with the Inspection function (including scheduling, notification, inspections, quality control, reporting). The scope of services shall include the following:

#### 1. Standard Operating Procedures

- Develop and submit to the CHA for approval, within fourteen (14) calendar days of contract execution, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for inspection processes. SOP must demonstrate to CHA's satisfaction the contractor's ability to provide all services as requested. The contractor will use the HUD inspection form and/or other forms and letters provided by CHA. The SOP must be consistent with the requirements of this RFP as described below.

## 2. Scheduling of Inspections

- The selected firm will be responsible for scheduling all inspections assigned by CHA in accordance with industry best practices and the agreed upon SOP. The selected firm will be responsible for the costs of scheduling the inspections (forms, telephone costs, stamps, etc.) and associated notifications.

## 3. Inspections

- For tenant based units: The firm will receive a list of names and addresses on a monthly basis from CHA at least 90 days prior to the tenant's anniversary date. The firm will notify the landlord and tenant by US Postal Service 1<sup>st</sup> class mail, of a scheduled inspection within one week from receipt of the list from CHA. The firm will complete the first inspection attempt within forty-five (45) days of receipt of the list from CHA.
- For project based units: CHA will select the sample, prepare a list of names and addresses and provide it to the firm on or before March 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. The firm will notify the landlord and tenant by US Postal Service 1<sup>st</sup> class mail, of a scheduled inspection with the understanding that all project based inspections for that year, including penalty inspections must be completed by June 30<sup>st</sup>.
- If the firm is unable to conduct the inspection after two documented unsuccessful attempts, the firm will contact CHA and the CHA will move to terminate the unit from the program.
- The selected firm will be responsible for all costs associated with performing the inspection and any required re-inspections including, but not limited to, labor, transportation and equipment costs. All costs associated with the contract shall be included in respondents cost proposal. No additional costs will be entertained or allowed under the contract.
- Inspections and associated re-inspections must be scheduled with the tenant by US Postal Service 1<sup>st</sup> class mail. The tenant must be provided with at least thirty (30) days written notice of all inspections. Inspections or re-inspections scheduled by US Postal Service 1<sup>st</sup> class mail may be confirmed or renegotiated to less than thirty (30) days with the tenant by phone, but in no instance may an inspection or re-inspection be scheduled or conducted when not first scheduled with the tenant by US Postal Service 1<sup>st</sup> class mail. Inspection or re-inspection may not be scheduled by leaving messages on voice mail.
- Copies of inspection or re-inspection letters to tenants will also be sent to the owner. Tenants may give permission to schedule Inspections or re-inspections with the owner.
- If the inspection result is "fail", the firm will notify CHA, owner and tenant by sending a report showing the deficiencies and will determine the date when repairs must be completed. CHA may inspect failed units prior to re-inspection.
- If the tenant is not at the property at the scheduled time, the inspector will wait 15 minutes before leaving the property. This will constitute one scheduled

attempt in a two scheduled attempt maximum inspection criteria.

- The firm will complete all re-inspections within 3 business days of notification by the owner that the unit is ready for re-inspection. The firm will be responsible to return a completed inspection form within 2 business days (excluding CHA observed holidays) from completion of a "pass" inspection.

### 3. Notifications

- All notifications, from the firm to the owner and/or tenants must be in accordance with the agreed upon SOP and pre-approved by CHA. Generally, notices must include:
  1. Date notification was printed
  2. Name and complete mailing address of owner/agent
  3. Name and complete mailing address of tenant
  4. Type of Inspection/Re-inspection
  5. Date of Inspection/Re-inspection
  6. Scheduling Timeframe of Inspection/Re-inspection
  7. Inspection result where appropriate. If the result is "fail", provide a complete detailed listing of all deficiencies identified during the inspection.
  8. Name of inspector
  9. Contact telephone number

### 4. Re-inspections

- Complete all re-inspections within 3 business days (excluding the CHA observed holidays) of notification by the owner the unit is ready for re-inspection.

### 5. Other Requirements

- All physical inspections of Housing Choice Voucher units will be conducted in accordance with federal Housing Quality Standards (HQS), the Lead Safe Housing Regulations and CHA's Administrative Plan with the understanding that the MA State Sanitary Code can, and often does preempt HQS when it is the stricter of the two.
- All physical inspections of state leased housing units will be conducted in accordance with the MA State Sanitary Code and the Lead Safe Housing Regulations.
- The contractor will be expected to use CHA paper inspection forms but may spell out in their proposal the alternative use of handheld/computer data collection devices but these are subject to approval by the CHA.
- Schedule all inspections, regardless of type, with an inspection appointment window time of no more than 3 hours. No inspection shall be performed outside of the scheduled appointment window. Any inspection attempt outside the designated 3-hour time frame will be done at contractor's own risk.

- Send all notifications and related follow-up correspondence, to owner and tenant by US Postal Service 1st class mail, including pass or fail notifications, reschedule notifications and no-show notifications. Forward similar copies electronically to the email addresses, if provided, of both owner and tenant. Include re-inspection dates and times in all inspection results correspondence.
- Upon completion of inspection, print and deliver to the CHA, a complete package of all documents for each inspection within 2 business days (excluding weekends, and the CHA observed holidays) from completion of a "pass" inspection. This package will include the following information attached chronologically by date:
  1. A properly completed HUD Inspection Form 52580 or CHA supplied form
  2. Copies of any deficiency reports and letters
  3. Copies of telephone log reflecting all communication with owner
  4. Copy of any letters sent to contact tenant and/or owner
  5. Copies of "no show" inspection notices
  6. Rent Reasonableness forms
  7. Other documents to be identified in the SOP
- Upon completion of the inspection, collect and report Rent Reasonableness information using CHA's forms.
- Submit Inspection Performance Summary Reports on a monthly basis in format agreed to by the CHA. Please provide copies of the reporting that you would suggest.
- If applicable, perform daily electronic "back-up" of all inspection data from the beginning of contract performance period to "present" to prevent loss of data.
- Participate in monthly meetings or conference calls with the CHA to ensure contract compliance.
- The CHA shall assign a contract administer that will act as the direct contact person for the contractor and will also be responsible for CHA's quality control monitoring of the contract.

### **Proposal Submission Requirements & Deadline**

The Contractor must be prepared to begin providing inspection services to CHA within one month of the date of contract award.

Proposers must submit one (1) original and five (5) copies of their proposals to CHA's Central Office no later than 3:00 PM on January 20, 2012 Lengthy narrative is discouraged; presentations should be brief and concise. Proposals should follow the outline presented below. All proposals that are not received by the deadline will be considered late and will be returned to the proposer unopened.

CHA strongly encourages minority-owned and women-owned businesses, socially and economically disadvantaged businesses and small businesses to respond to this RFP or to participate in subcontracting capacity on CHA contracts.

CHA is particularly interested in proposals that, if awarded, would further our Section 3 goals by providing CHA residents and voucher holders substantive work experience or related vocational/educational opportunities. The highest scored proposals will include a narrative indicating how these goals would be furthered through the implementation of a training and employment plan for CHA residents and voucher holders.

CHA reserves the right to waive, as an informality, any irregularities in submittals, and/or reject any and all submittals.

CHA reserves the right to request a change in the firm representative responsible for performing work if at CHA's discretion the assigned representative is not adequately meeting the needs of CHA.

Proposals should follow the outline presented below.

1. Transmittal Letter/Introduction which must, at a minimum, contain the following:

- Identification of the offering firm(s), including name, mailing address, e-mail address and telephone number of each firm;
- Proposed working relationship among the offering firms (e.g., prime-contractor), if applicable;
- A statement to the effect that the proposal shall remain valid for a period of not less than one hundred-twenty (120) days from the due date for proposals; and
- Signature of a person authorized to bind the offering firm to the terms of the proposal.

2. Statement of Qualifications, Project Staffing and References

- Provide summary information about your firm and qualifications including descriptions of comparable projects performed for other clients. Disclose any conditions (e.g., bankruptcy, pending litigation, etc.) that may affect the proposer's ability to perform contractually. Certify that the firm is not debarred, suspended or otherwise declared ineligible to contract by any federal, state or local public agency;
- Identify the key personnel from your firm that would be assigned to the CHA project. Include a brief description of their qualifications, job functions and prior work experience;
- Describe the specific training in HQS standards and/or the MA State Sanitary Code held by the personnel proposed for this project. Identify completed course work and/or certifications;

Describe the specific experience the personnel proposed for this project has with enforcing HQS standards and/or the MA State Sanitary Code;

The following are minimum required inspector qualifications:

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1. All HQS inspectors are required to have HQS Certifications;
  2. Valid driver's license;
  3. Use of an automobile during work hours;
  4. CHA will perform criminal background check on each inspector;
  5. The ability to work with CHA staff; and
  6. An identification badge must be worn at all times on premises and visible before entering a dwelling unit.
- Provide at least three references where inspections have been performed as per federal Housing Quality Standards. Reference information should include:
    1. Name of PHA or entity;
    2. Contact person name, title, and telephone number (email optional);
    3. Beginning/ending dates of contracts;
    4. Number of HQS inspections; and
    5. Date of inspections.

### Work Plan/Technical Approach

- Describe your firm's understanding of CHA's objectives and requirements, demonstrate the proposer's ability to meet those requirements, and outline clearly and concisely the plan for accomplishing the specified work. Include a detailed work plan with a schedule for tasks, subtasks and deliverables along with the anticipated level of effort over the course of a year; and
3. • State any exceptions to or deviations from the requirements of this

### RFP. Fee Proposal

- Provide the fee proposal in a separate, sealed envelope.
- The fee proposal for regular and annual inspections must be on a per unit basis (not per inspection), must be clear and without expense contingencies.

Submit proposals to:

David Desrosiers  
Senior Purchasing Agent  
Cambridge Housing Authority  
675 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

**Evaluation and Selection Criteria**

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|--|------------|
| Demonstrated ability of the proposed staff and sub-consultants to provide the services described in this Request for Proposals.  | 20 Points  |
| Clarity and completeness of the proposal. Ability of the firm to present their qualifications and expertise in a concise and understandable manner. Demonstrated ability of the proposer to provide the resources necessary for the timely and efficient implementation of the required scope of services. | 20 Points  |
| Quality of references.   | 10 points  |
| Proposal includes a narrative describing opportunities for Section 3 eligible residents and/or voucher holders to attain substantive professional skills, experience and/or training.  | 5 Points   |
| Proposed Fee   | 45 Points  |
|  | 100 Points |

**Selection Process**

An Evaluation Panel consisting of CHA staff will review, analyze and evaluate the proposals received using the selection criteria noted above to identify the highest ranked proposals. At that point, the Panel may conduct interviews and/or conduct contract negotiations with the highest rated proposer(s). The Evaluation Panel will make recommendations to the Executive Director and Board of Commissioners regarding contractor selection.

The selected contractor must have the expertise to carry out such work, and have experience working on similar projects. CHA requires that the successful bidder demonstrate that it has the requisite skills to complete this endeavor.

The Proposer agrees to indemnify and hold harmless CHA against all losses and liabilities arising out of or resulting from all injuries or death or damage to property, including theft, on account of performance of work or services by the proposer or proposer's employees or subcontractors pursuant to this Agreement. Proposers shall maintain liability insurance sufficient to fulfill its obligations under this paragraph, in amounts acceptable to the CHA and shall provide proof of such insurance to CHA upon request. Proposer may not change such insurance during the term of this agreement without providing written notice to the CHA.

CHA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals submitted in response to this RFP and/or to terminate this solicitation at any time.

**Contract and Term**

The selected contractor will enter into a Contract with the Cambridge Housing Authority in a form proscribed by CHA. The term of the contract will be for one year with one, two year option to renew.

**Questions**

All questions must be submitted in writing by e-mail, no later than 2:00 PM on January 12, 2012. At CHA's option, an Addendum responding to submitted questions may be obtained through the CHA website ([www.cambridge-housing.org](http://www.cambridge-housing.org)). Questions are to be submitted to [mjohnston@cambridge-housing.org](mailto:mjohnston@cambridge-housing.org).

**Appendix 1**

Board Resolution Available:

Date Adopted by Board:

October 27, 2010

Yes

**Housing Choice Voucher Inspection Protocols** (Revised 10/27/2010)

| Unit Type     | Initial Inspection | Frequency   | On Tenant Request |
|---------------|--------------------|---|-------------------|
| Project Based | CHA or *City       | Annually 10% Randomly Selected<br>Additional 20% Selected if Any Unit Fails<br><br>If Additional Failures at Director's Discretion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction of Rent Adjustment Factor (1yr) for All Units in Same Property</li> <li>• No Rent Increase for all Units in Same Property as Failed Unit (1 yr)</li> <li>• Switch to 2yr Probationary Status, All Units Inspected Biennially</li> </ul> No HAP Paid for Any Unit in Failed Status for thirty (30) or more days | CHA               |
| Tenant Based  | CHA or *City       | Biennial<br>At least once in a 24 month period<br>No HAP Paid for Any Unit in Failed Status for thirty (30) or more days  | CHA               |

For the Project Based units, the Director of Leased Housing or his/her designee shall select a sampling for the following fiscal year no later than March 31st of each year.  
 The sampling will be made in such a way to assure that no unit is sampled two years in a row.

Inspections for this group shall take priority over all but initial inspections and the Leased Housing Department shall make every effort to complete all inspections in this group, including penalty inspections, no later than May 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.  
 The penalty for additional failures within the 20% sampling are at the sole discretion of the Director of Leased Housing or his/her designee.