



Request for Proposals
Ohio Housing Locator

Issuance Date: March 1, 2019

Proposals must be submitted no later than 5:00 pm (EST)
March 29, 2019

Submit to:
Holly Swisher
OHLRFP@ohiohome.org
614-728-3900

57 E. Main Street | Columbus, OH 43215

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Section 1 – Guidelines for Request for Proposals

1.1 Introduction

The Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) is issuing this Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to solicit competitive proposals for the replacement of the Ohio Housing Locator website, a website for prospective tenants to find housing options. The selected contractor will design, host, operate, maintain and provide on-going customer service.

A complete list of components being requested is located in Section 2: Scope of Services.

The contract period for the implementation will be July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020.

1.2 Schedule of Events

OHFA has established the following schedule for selection of the contractor:

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
RFP issuance date	March 1, 2019
Written questions from respondents	March 15, 2019
Responses to respondents' questions	March 22, 2019
Proposals due from respondents	March 29, 2019, 5:00 pm (EST)
Internal evaluation of proposals completed	April 19, 2019
OHFA Board Presentation for approval	May 15, 2019
Agreement for Services executed	June 15, 2019
Start date of services	July 1, 2019

1.3 Submission of Written Questions

It is the policy of OHFA to accept questions from all potential respondents. All questions and inquiries shall be in writing; no verbal inquiries will be honored. Potential respondents may submit their questions or inquiries via e-mail to OHLRFP@ohiohome.org (Subject: Ohio Housing Locator RFP).

All written questions or inquiries are due by 5:00 pm (EST) on Friday, March 15, 2019. OHFA expects to respond to all questions and inquiries by 5:00 pm (EST) on Friday, March 22, 2019.

OHFA reserves the right to decline to respond to any question or inquiry that will cause an undue burden or expense for OHFA or which OHFA deems unnecessary for purposes of responding to this RFP. OHFA will post all questions or inquiries with answers on its website at <http://ohiohome.org/news/rfp.aspx>.

1.4 Verbal Communication regarding RFP is prohibited

Verbal communication from any potential respondent regarding this RFP to OHFA staff and/or OHFA Board members is prohibited throughout the RFP process until the engagement is approved by the OHFA Board.

1.5 Submission of Proposals

One e-mailed copy of the proposal must be received by 5:00 pm (EST) on Friday, March 29, 2019. Proposals shall be emailed to OHLRFP@ohiohome.org (Subject: Ohio Housing Locator RFP). Additionally five (5) printed copies must be received by 5PM on Friday, March 29, 2019. Mail or deliver to:

Holly Swisher
OHLRFP
57 East Main Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Proposals received after the specified date and time will not be eligible for consideration. Any respondent who wishes to confirm receipt of their proposal may contact OHFA by e-mail at OHLRFP@ohiohome.org. OHFA will respond by e-mail to confirm the receipt of the proposal.

1.6 Right to Request Additional Information

OHFA reserves the right to request any additional information to assist in the review process, including requiring oral presentations to OHFA staff members, OHFA Evaluation Team, and/or Board.

1.7 Right to Reject Proposals and Cancel RFP

OHFA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals at any time. OHFA reserves the right to cancel, withdraw, modify or reissue this RFP at any time for any reason.

In connection with this RFP, OHFA reserves the right to waive any technicalities and make any award(s) that is determined to be in the Agency's best interests.

1.8 Award of RFP

The RFP will be awarded to the contractor that OHFA determines has the best combination of qualifications, experience, and capacity; understanding of the affordable housing industry as it relates to the services needed; and reasonableness of timeline and fee proposal relative to proposed work and is the most advantageous to work with. OHFA will post on its website the contractor selected to be awarded the contract after formal Board approval on or about Wednesday, May 15, 2019.

1.9 Agreement for Services

The contractor selected to provide the services described in this RFP would be expected to execute an agreed upon Agreement for Services covering the Scope and Terms of this RFP. The Agreement for Services will begin on July 1, 2019 and expire June 30, 2020, unless extended.

Section 2 – Scope of Services

2.1 Overview of Services Requested

The Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) is seeking proposals from qualified contractors to design, host, and operate a web-based affordable rental housing listing and apartment locator search, including ongoing customer support.

The current Ohio Housing Locator (OHL) provides a free registry for property owners and management companies, who can enter, access and update information on their rental properties in Ohio. There is no limitation to whether the listing must be for affordable housing or not although the focus is on affordable housing. From the home page, prospective residents/tenants can use the OHL to search for housing by zip code, city or county, cost and unit size with further filtering for vacancies, accessibility features, elderly, lead safe, smoke free, name of the property and name of the management company.

The goal of replacing the system is to have an easy to use website, with an approval process to make listings active, near-real time help options for prospective residents and property managers with use of the OHL, and a reminder system to maintain updated listings for owners or management companies.

Currently, there are approximately 2,300 active properties in the OHL. The proposal must allow for future growth in terms of volume of properties available, registered users, and number of daily searches.

If is expected that the selected vendor will provide 100% of technical and customer service support in a variety of methods to the Agency, prospective tenants, and property managers. This support shall not be sub-contracted.

All work must be completed in the United States.

2.2 Mandatory Components

The new Ohio Housing Locator is required to have all of these components.

Housing Search Website

Design and ongoing operation of web-based affordable housing locator

- User registration and accounts at the property manager level (should not be seen by the prospective tenant)
 - Ability to create and maintain an account free of charge for property managers and management companies,
 - Registered property manager/management company accounts must be able to have multiple locations under a user
- Availability
 - Website available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Webpage navigation

- Easy to use on both desktop and mobile
- Ability for prospective tenants to “love” a property and a record of their view history maintained and visible to them until cache is cleared
- Ability to email property directly from listing
- Search options and functionality
 - Basic search functions
 - Location
 - State
 - City
 - Zip code
 - County
 - Property name
 - Advanced search functions
 - Hazards
 - Smoke free
 - Lead safe
 - Accessible
 - Mobility
 - Sensory
 - Others
 - Age restrictions
 - Family complex
 - Vacancies
 - Current
 - Within 30 days
 - Within 60 days
 - No vacancies
 - Subsidized
 - Income restrictions
 - Market Rate
 - Pet friendly
 - Cats
 - Dogs
 - Exotic
 - Ability to filter all results by multiple criteria
- Property Listing
 - List- and map-based viewing of properties at the prospective tenant level
 - Property owners- ability to list multiple units and properties under one account
 - Property owners- ability to denote rental assistance as well as income qualifications by property and unit
 - Property owners – ability to denote accessibility by unit and the unit's availability
 - Ability to list property as ADA compliant site
 - Selection of accessibility features
 - Ability to upload a photo
 - Required fields when property is loaded
 - Address

- Phone number
 - Website link
- Properties may be automatically posted with certain exceptions
 - If a property has had a photo uploaded, must queue for review before posting
 - If a freeform text field was used, must queue for review before posting
- Ability to remove a property from the locator
- Ability to modify user and property information
- Resource page
 - Dedicated location for tenant resources that will include links to external sites and contact information, including but not limited to information on:
 - Landlord/tenant laws
 - Accessibility
 - Fair housing
 - Rental assistance
 - Rent calculator

Support

Ongoing assistance to OHFA, general public, property owners, and property managers

- General:
 - Online instructions for website utilization
 - Availability of phone, chat and email support
 - Commitment to prompt response times
 - Minimum availability phone, chat, and email availability (propose hours and resolution commitments within response) Monday through Friday
 - Access to bilingual staff if needed. Use of a language line to offer a variety of languages is acceptable
- Property Owners/managers:
 - Technical assistance with registering, listing, and updating properties
 - Frequent, scheduled outreach to update property listings
 - Via email
 - Via phone
 - Via other vendor proposed channels, if desired. Examples include mailers, website alerts, etc.
- Agency Users
 - Availability of phone, chat, and email support
 - Training and technical assistance, as needed

Data Access/Reporting Services

Agency access to website data and a variety of reports not limited to:

- User access
 - last login
 - last update of property
- Counts of viewed properties

- Location spread (where are prospective tenants searching from?)
- Clicks on other resources

Technical Requirements

Hosting, maintenance, and other technical requirements

- Application must be hosted by the vendor or an on-premises configuration available
- Application must be maintained by the vendor
- Technical issues reported by end users and agency administrative users to be resolved by vendor support staff
- Agency personnel shall have the ability to connect data from site to reporting tools and platforms that the agency uses
- A data dictionary describing the fields and the structure of the database should be available, upon request, to aid Agency personnel with connecting the data to existing reporting tools
- Agency must have the ability to download all of the data within the locator for back up purposes
- The agency will be the sole owner of the data
- Website must be optimized to support both mobile and desktop devices
- Desirable to have the ability to perform batch uploads and updates of property data to the locator

2.3 Additional Components

Provide recommendations on other features/services that your firm believes would be advantageous to offering housing location resources to Ohioans.

2.4 Key Deadlines

Propose a project timeframe for each of the steps below and include any additional steps that your firm believes are warranted. Include a guaranteed will-not-surpass date for implementation.

- Discovery
- Scope writing and approval
- Test website
- Agency training
- Fully functional website
- Customer support
- Reporting capability

Section 3 – Required Information to be provided in Response to Proposal

3.1 Qualifications and Experience of Firm

Please describe your firm's experience in designing and hosting a public website as well as offering customer service/support services in general, and specifically with regards to state level housing agencies. The description of your firm should include, but is not limited to, the following:

- a) Location and size (include both location of headquarters and location of Ohio office, if applicable)
- b) Number of years of operation
- c) Organizational structure
- d) Number of years' experience providing website design and support to public and private agencies
- e) List of current clients and length of service
- f) Provide examples of other public facing websites that your firm designed

3.2 Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel

Designate the individual(s) who will be assigned to OHFA for this work. Provide a brief description of their relevant experience, expertise, and office location.

3.3 References

Provide the names and contact person(s) for at least three local or state level agencies for which your firm has provided design services, hosting, and/or operation of a web-based housing locator.

3.4 Litigation, Administrative Proceedings, Investigations

Please describe any pending or resolved material litigation, administrative proceedings or investigations in which your institution has been involved in the previous five-year period.

3.5 Methodology and Approach

Describe in detail the efforts your firm will undertake to satisfy each of the requirements of Section 2, Scope of Services. Indicate if any additional tasks are necessary and/or advisable.

3.6 Cost Proposal

Outline the fee schedule for both set up/implementation of the website and ongoing maintenance and service. Ongoing maintenance and service fees must specify if charged monthly, quarterly, or annually. They should also specify all services included and clearly state any services that are an additional cost. If additional features are being proposed (as described in the proposed scope of services), those items should be broken out as separate line items.

OHFA anticipates entering into a service period post implementation with the selected vendor. At OHFA's discretion, the Agency may take over all or part of the maintenance and service components with appropriate notification to the vendor.

3.7 Other Qualifications

Provide any other qualifications that should be considered.

Section 4 – Evaluation Process

4.1 Minimum Evaluation Requirements

An OHFA Internal Evaluation Committee will evaluate the responses to this RFP. Each proposal will be evaluated to ensure that the applicant has complied with each section of this RFP and followed the formatting, organizational and submission requirements as described in this RFP.

If the respondent chosen by the evaluation team, based on all other criteria other than cost, has a higher cost proposal than what OHFA determines as a reasonable cost, that respondent will be asked if it can provide the services for an amount OHFA determines to be reasonable. In considering which firm to select, OHFA has the right to negotiate the fee of any respondent that it believes will provide the best services at the most reasonable price that is in the best interests of and the most advantageous to the Agency. However, OHFA is not obligated to select the respondent with the lowest cost proposal.

Section 5 – Preparing and Submitting the Proposal

5.1 Proposal Organization and Format

OHFA requires the respondent to follow the formatting described below when submitting their proposal:

- a) Proposals must be limited to 20 pages; please do not submit brochures, annual reports, and other like material not specifically requested.
- b) Proposals will be typed on standard 8.5x11 inch paper, single-spaced with one-inch margins and a 12-point font.
- c) Responses to each question should be presented in order and include the section heading and numbers as assigned in the RFP.
- d) Each response to this RFP should include as the cover page a Letter of Transmittal.
- e) Each response to this RFP should include as the second page a Table of Contents.
- f) Each response to this RFP will include as the third page a completed copy of the Standard Affirmation and Disclosure Form for Contracts (Exhibit A).

5.2 Submitting the Proposal

See Section 1.5 for instructions regarding proposal submission. By submitting a proposal, the respondent agrees to the following:

- a) All materials submitted become the property of OHFA and shall be public information unless a statutory exception exists which would thereby determine that such information cannot be released to the public. If you have information in your proposal that you believe is exempt from the public records laws you must identify each and every occurrence of the information in the proposal on a separate page titled "Exemptions to the Public Records Law". OHFA reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted and to use any ideas in a proposal regardless of whether that proposal is selected.
- b) Respondents are expected to respond to all requirements in this RFP and comply with any terms and conditions outlined in the RFP. Failure to do so may result in disqualification of the proposal.
- c) All costs incurred in preparation of a proposal shall be borne by the respondent. Proposal preparation costs are not recoverable under the agreement for services and/or engagement letter. OHFA shall not contribute in any way to recovering the cost of proposal preparation.
- d) If during the evaluation process it becomes necessary to make further distinctions between certain respondents, OHFA may request certain respondents make oral presentations of proposals to OHFA staff members, an OHFA Evaluation Team and/or Board.
- e) Proposals received after the deadline will not be reviewed. Respondents are advised that there will be no opportunity to correct mistakes or deficiencies in their proposal after the submission deadline. Proposals that are missing required forms and/or information may not be evaluated. It is the sole responsibility of the respondent to ensure its proposal is complete, accurate, responsive to the requirements, and received on time. Proposals not complying with the requirements of the RFP may not be reviewed.
- f) Proposals received prior to the due date shall not be reviewed until the posted date.

Exhibit A

STANDARD AFFIRMATION AND DISCLOSURE FORM

MARCH 2019

Governing the Expenditure of Public Funds on Offshore Services

AFFIRMATION AND DISCLOSURE:

By the signature affixed below, the Bidder/Offeror/Contractor affirms and understands that if awarded a contract from the Ohio Housing Finance Agency, and the Bidder/Offeror becomes the Contractor of the Ohio Housing Finance Agency, it shall affirm that both the Contractor and any of its subcontractors shall perform no services requested under this Contract outside of the United States.

The Bidder/Offeror/Contractor shall provide all the name(s) and location(s) where services under this Contract will be performed in the spaces provided below or by attachment. Failure to provide this information as part of the response will deem the Bidder/Offeror not responsive and no further consideration will be given to the response. Bidder/Offeror's offering will not be considered. If the Bidder/Offeror will not be using subcontractors, indicate "Not Applicable" in the appropriate spaces.

1. Principal location of business of Contractor:

(Address)

(City, State, Zip)

Name/Principal location of business of subcontractor(s):

(Name)

(Address, City, State, Zip)

(Name)

(Address, City, State, Zip)

2. Location where services will be performed by Contractor:

(Address)

(City, State, Zip)

Name/Location where services will be performed by subcontractor(s):

(Name)

(Address, City, State, Zip)

(Name)

(Address, City, State, Zip)

3. Location where state data will be stored, accessed, tested, maintained or backed-up, by Contractor:

(Address)

(Address, City, State, Zip)

Name/Location(s) where state data will be stored, accessed, tested, maintained or backed-up by subcontractor(s):

(Name)

(Address, City, State, Zip)

(Name)

(Address, City, State, Zip)

(Name)

(Address, City, State, Zip)

4. Location where services to be performed will be changed or shifted by Contractor:

(Address)

(Address, City, State, Zip)

Name/Location(s) where services will be changed or shifted to be performed by subcontractor(s):

(Name)

(Address, City, State, Zip)

(Name)

(Address, City, State, Zip)

(Name)

(Address, City, State, Zip)

Bidder/Offeror/Contractor:

Entity Name

By: _____

Authorized Representative

Printed Name

Date: _____