



Syracuse Housing Trust Fund Request for Proposals for Consulting Services

Blueprint 15, Inc. is seeking Proposals from qualified Respondents to help plan and design a local Housing Trust Fund (HTF) that could generate new resources to invest in promoting housing stability and opportunity for people at the highest risk of displacement locally (the “Project”).

Professional services are needed to conduct a needs assessment to inform the potential activities and target populations to be served by an HTF; a revenue study to assess and recommend the best potential sources to sustainably and adequately fund an HTF; research and analysis to develop a formal HTF Proposal with recommendations for effective programs, governance, and administration of a local HTF; and community and stakeholder engagement to inform HTF planning and development.

Blueprint 15 seeks to retain a Consultant or Consultant Team with experience in helping communities plan, design and/or establish local housing and/or community development financial programs, particularly in mid-size cities with similar economic and housing challenges to Syracuse and with knowledge of the legal and financial opportunities and constraints for local revenue generation in New York State.

BACKGROUND

Syracuse is in many ways a traditional rustbelt, post-industrial city, with a history of systemic disinvestment along with racist public policy and concentrated poverty among people of color, particularly African Americans. The city ranks as number one in the nation for [concentrated poverty among Blacks and Latinos](#), and Onondaga County is the ninth most segregated county in America. Over 70% of the residents in the East Adams Neighborhood, Blueprint 15's service area, are African American, and over 1,000 units of public housing within the footprint and are slated for redevelopment over the next 5-7 years as part of a [Purpose Built Communities](#) approach.

Syracuse was selected to participate in a year-long [Anti-Displacement Learning Network](#) (ADLN) facilitated by Enterprise Community Partners throughout 2020. Our focus is to prevent displacement within and throughout the East Adams Neighborhood. Through this process, the ADLN Team identified a lack of capital available for the renovation and development of affordable housing options for families who are likely to face some form of displacement as a result of the anticipated housing redevelopment along with the anticipated removal of the I-81 viaduct and community grid replacement. The ADLN Team proposed the establishment of a Housing Trust Fund to be piloted in this neighborhood to facilitate a long-term, sustainable source of funding to support the production and preservation of affordable housing going forward both within this Neighborhood and throughout the city of Syracuse overall. Additionally, four other New York cities in the ADLN are pursuing the establishment of Housing Trust Funds, providing opportunities to share information and advocacy efforts at the statewide level throughout this engagement.



For additional information and resources about housing conditions in the city of Syracuse, please see:

- [City of Syracuse 2020-24 Consolidated Plan](#)
- [Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement](#) for the city of Syracuse Lead Ordinance
- Housing and Homeless Coalition of Central New York [Gaps and Needs Reports](#)
- [City of Syracuse Affordable Housing Report](#) (2016)

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Blueprint 15 is seeking a Consultant or team of Consultants to provide a series of professional services associated with the process of planning and designing a Housing Trust Fund (HTF). Blueprint 15, in partnership with the city of Syracuse and other local stakeholders, intends to use the analysis and recommendations of this Project to help establish a Housing Trust Fund and begin implementing activities in 2022.

Services

Respondent shall address each of the following areas of work, with detailed proposals of how best to perform it, including recommended data, methods, tasks, activities, detailed budgets, and timelines for each.

1. **Needs Assessment** to inform HTF design. This should include, at a minimum:
 - a. Data analysis to identify populations most at-risk of displacement in Syracuse and why they are at-risk;
 - b. Inventory of local organizations and services that support housing stability and the populations they serve;
 - c. Identification of gaps in the current housing services ecosystem specific to supporting housing stability for populations most at-risk of displacement; and
 - d. Analysis with ideas of how to address identified gaps along with an estimation of the resources needed to close them (e.g., cost, organizational capacity, etc.).

The Needs Assessment should serve as a basis for developing recommendations for eligible activities, programs, and target populations to be served by an HTF, and also inform analysis of potential governance and administration. All data and information already gathered by the Syracuse Anti-Displacement Learning Network (ADLN) team will be shared with selected Consultant(s), including a list of potential activities based on input gathered thus far. Related housing studies and plans prepared by the city of Syracuse, the Housing and Homeless Coalition of CNY, Onondaga County Departments of Health and Social Services - Economic Security, and/or other relevant organizations should also be used to inform the Needs Assessment.

At a minimum, deliverables must include a draft and final Needs Assessment, as well as any data generated or analyzed to develop it.



2. **Revenue Study** to assess and recommend the best potential local funding mechanisms available to sustainably and adequately capitalize an HTF. This analysis may look to revenue generation strategies used by HTFs around the country, but should gauge the effectiveness of particular revenue sources relative to the market conditions of the city of Syracuse and/or Onondaga County, as well as to any legal constraints or requirements in New York State law that could impact the feasibility of potential sources.

A range of options should be presented of what sources to pursue and how, along with estimates of what they could yield, and recommendations for any particular revenue sources to prioritize. Analysis of any important trade-offs related to particular sources should also be highlighted (e.g., the feasibility of approving a particular source vs. its revenue generating potential, the equity impacts of a particular source vs. the benefits that could result from the HTF dollars raised and program impacts they support).

At a minimum, deliverables must include a draft and final Revenue Study document or memo.

3. **Final HTF Proposal.** Using any findings or recommendations from the Needs Assessment and Revenue Study, a final HTF Proposal should be developed that includes recommendations about:
 - a. Revenue source(s) to pursue and how;
 - b. Populations the HTF should target;
 - c. Activities or programs that would be most effective to serve target populations given the estimated revenue generation from the recommended source(s); and
 - d. Recommended governance and administration model for Syracuse's HTF, given an analysis of City and/or local agency capacity and fit with proposed HTF target populations/activities/programs.

The HTF Proposal will be used by the ADLN team and community partners to help build the case for establishing an HTF and approving a revenue source or sources to fund it. It will also serve as the guidance document to help formally incorporate an HTF, as well as to set up its various governing and advisory structures and initial staffing and administration/ operations. The HTF Proposal should draw on knowledge of how other local HTFs around the country have been structured, but should reflect significant local information gathering and input about what governance model will work best in Syracuse and what local organization is best positioned to host an HTF for long-term sustainability. At a minimum, deliverables must include draft and final HTF Proposals.

4. **Community and stakeholder engagement.** Community and stakeholder engagement is an essential part of HTF planning and development. Respondents should offer a proposed approach for when, who, and what type of engagement should be planned across different phases of the Project. At a minimum, we anticipate a set of public forums that anyone could join, as well as more targeted stakeholder meetings, focus groups, and/or individual



information gathering interviews. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, we anticipate that most or all community and stakeholder engagement will take place virtually, so Respondents should provide information about their virtual meeting capacity, experience, and recommended approach.

At a minimum, deliverables must include a Summary Report with information about the range of people and organizations engaged and the input received to inform various phases of HTF planning and development.

Respondents are encouraged to offer more specific ideas, methods, and data sources for how to address the work areas above in their Proposals. If, based on their experience, Respondents believe there are additional or alternate services, areas of work, or deliverables needed to help the city and Syracuse ADLN Team to effectively plan and design a local HTF, they are encouraged to describe them in their Proposals.

Term

It is anticipated that the selected Consultant work will begin in early April 2021, with a contract term of five (5) months within which certain elements of the project, such as the Needs Assessment and Revenue Study would be conducted first and completed within three (3) months.

TIMELINE

1. RFP release | March 1, 2021
2. Pre-Proposal Virtual Conference | March 8, 2021 from 1-2PM Eastern
3. Proposals Due | March 19, 2021 by 5:00PM Eastern
4. Respondent finalist interviews (if necessary) | March 22 and 23 from 9A - 4P Eastern
5. Respondent notified of Selection | March 25, 2021
6. Professional Services Agreement start date | April 5, 2021

CONTACT

Please contact Stephanie Pasquale, Interim CEO of Blueprint 15, Inc. at spasquale@allynfoundation.org with any questions and/or requests for clarification.

PRE-PROPOSAL VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

To provide Respondents with an opportunity to ask questions and/or clarify the RFP, a pre-proposal virtual Zoom conference will be held on Monday, March 8 from 1-2PM Eastern. To join the session, please use the Zoom link (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2891661677>) with the meeting ID (289 166 1677) or join via phone at (646) 558-8656.

There is no requirement to attend the pre-proposal conference and no obligation by Blueprint 15 to provide information from the conference to parties who fail to attend.



PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

Proposals must be received by Blueprint 15 via email no later than 5:00PM Eastern on Friday, March 19, 2021. Email submittals are to be directed to: Stephanie Pasquale, Interim CEO, Blueprint 15, Inc., spasquale@allynfoundation.org.

This RFP is designed to facilitate the evaluation and selection of a Consultant or team of Consultants that is best able to achieve the Project's objectives. The Proposal shall contain a table of contents. All pages shall be numbered and major sections and all attachments shall be referenced in the table of contents. In order to enable Blueprint 15 to effectively review the information contained, Proposals shall reference the numbered and lettered sections of the RFP. The response to each section shall be clearly indicated and addressed or an explanation provided for why the Respondent is not submitting a Proposal for a specific section or requirement of the RFP.

Each Proposal shall be signed by an individual authorized to enter into and execute contracts on the Respondent's behalf. Unless otherwise specified in its Proposal, the Respondent represents that it is capable of meeting or exceeding all requirements specified in this RFP.

Submission of a Proposal shall be deemed authorization for the City to contact the Respondent's references. Evaluation of Proposals will be conducted by Blueprint 15 based on information provided in the Respondent's Proposals and on such other available information that Blueprint 15 determines to be relevant. The evaluation of Proposals may include an interview..

The Consultant selected by Blueprint 15 will be required to enter into a Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with the organization. The establishment of a PSA is contingent upon approval by Blueprint 15's Board of Directors in excess of \$5,000 and upon the availability of funds for such an agreement.

Respondents shall provide sufficient information in their written Proposals to enable the Blueprint 15 review team to make a recommendation to the Board. Blueprint 15 reserves the right to invite any or all Respondents to an interview to discuss their Proposal. Any expenses resulting from such an interview will be the sole responsibility of the Respondent. Blueprint 15 is under no obligation to select any of the responding Respondents or to conduct the Project described herein.

PROPOSAL CONTENT

The Proposal should include the following information in the order specified:

- A. Table of Contents – All pages shall be numbered, and major sections and all attachments shall be referenced in the table of contents.
- B. Respondent Contact and Interview Availability – A page that includes the name, title, contact information, and signature of an individual authorized to enter into and execute contracts on



Respondent's behalf. This page shall also include any times between March 22-23, 2021 from 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. EST that the proposed Project team is available to participate in an interview, should the City decide to invite Respondent for an interview.

- C. Project Understanding – Summary of the Respondent's understanding of the City's affordable housing needs and the unique value the Respondent brings to the Project.
- D. Proposed Approach – Narrative that lays out Respondent's detailed proposal of how best to perform the work requested in the Scope of Services section above, including recommended tasks, activities, data, methods, timelines, and deliverables for each work area. Any additions or alterations from the work areas identified in the Scope of Services section above should be explained and justified.
- E. Qualifications and References – Summary information about the Respondent's specific qualifications for this Project. This should include a brief description of prior experience helping communities plan, design, and/or implement Housing Trust Funds (HTFs) and/or performing related work described in the Scope of Services section above. It should also include any information about the Respondent's experience working in mid-size cities with similar economic and housing challenges to Syracuse or knowledge about the particular legal and financial opportunities and constraints for local revenue generation in New York State that are relevant to this Project. Lastly, Respondents should list three references for successfully completed projects that are relevant to this Project. Reference information shall include the reference's name, title, organization, phone, and email; the name of the project that Respondent performed for the reference; and the name(s) and role(s) of any of the Respondent's proposed Project team staff for this Project who worked on the reference's project. If subcontractors are included on the Respondent's proposed Project team, relevant references should be listed for them as well.
- F. Project Budget – An itemized budget including staff names, Project roles, hours, and billing rates for all proposed project personnel, summarized by major tasks or work areas identified in the Scope of Services, including any sub-contractors, if included on the proposed Project team.
- G. Project Personnel – List the names and resumes of all staff who will be involved in this Project, including staff for any proposed subcontractors. The Project role, total number of Project hours and billing rate for each staff should be clearly listed in addition to their resume, and any relevant experience that each staff has on prior work that is similar to this Project should be noted. The Respondent's lead person for the Project should be clearly identified.
- H. Syracuse Presence – Provide the Respondent's office address, as well as the office addresses of any subcontractors proposed to be utilized for the Project. Summarize any information about the Respondent's or proposed subcontractors' experience work in Syracuse that is relevant to this Project.



- I. M/WBE and Workforce Diversity – Provide documentation or information about the following:
 - a. Is the Respondent a NYS certified M/WBE firm?
 - b. Are any of the proposed subcontractors NYS certified M/WBE firms?
 - c. State the total cost and total full-time equivalent labor hours in the proposed budget and summarize the number and percent of each that would be performed by NYS certified M/WBE firms (listed by individual firms).
 - d. List of the Respondent’s proposed workforce, including the workforce of any proposed subcontractors. Show the number and percent of total proposed staff hours needed to complete the Project that will be worked by Minority workers and by Women workers.

OTHER

Blueprint 15 will be requesting an acknowledgement of Prime Agreement (Blueprint 15) and Subcontract Agreement (the awarded consultant/consultant team) per the conditions of our funder, Enterprise Community Solutions. The consultant subcontractor will acknowledge that the executed award Agreement will constitute the assignment of rights and responsibilities granted under contract ("Prime Agreement") between Enterprise ("Sponsor") and Grantee (Blueprint 15). All of our subcontractors will be required to agree to abide by all applicable provisions of the standard Prime Agreement. If there are questions or concerns regarding the content of the Prime Agreement, which includes “Additional Provisions for Third Parties”, please feel free to request a copy from Stephanie Pasquale at spasquale@allynfoundation.org for more information.