

**Housing Trust Fund Corporation**

**Questions and Answers**

**RFP for Assistance with FEMA-PA and HMGP Project Review  
NYS's Storm Recovery Program (RFP#020131025)**

<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>ANSWERS</b>
<p>I am just writing to inquire if an archaeological assessment or assessments will be needed for the above program.</p>	<p>This project does not involve archaeological assessments.</p>
<p>The cover of the RFP and page 16 show the Proposal submission deadline as November 18, 3PM EST. Page 3 of the RFP states 3 P.M. EST, Friday, November 15. Please confirm the accurate Proposal submission deadline. Is there an option for an extension on the due date of the proposal response?</p>	<p>The deadline for proposal submission has been extended to Wednesday, November 20, 2013 at 3PM (EST) via e-mail submission.</p>
<p>Section 5-D Budget of the RFP states that "Bidders shall propose a separate hourly rate and title for each proposed staff member that will provide services"; and Paragraph D. Budget (25 points) on page 16 also states that "points will be allocated based on lowest cost using a predetermined formula." However, the Government has not established set labor categories to be priced or a set number of required labor categories, therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please confirm that only the hourly rates are requested for this proposal.</li><li>• Since the bidders will have varying labor categories (and number of labor categories) an objective scoring will not be possible based on the formula provided, please clarify how an objective scoring based on low cost will be developed?</li></ul>	<p>HTFC is issuing an amendment to the RFP providing additional clarity regarding the format of the budget in Section 5D as well as forms in Appendix D. The amendments will be posted on HCRs Procurement page: <a href="http://www.nyshcr.org/AboutUs/Procurement/DHCRindex.htm">http://www.nyshcr.org/AboutUs/Procurement/DHCRindex.htm</a>.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please confirm that Section D: Budget is excluded from page limitations.</li><li>• Please confirm that Section D: Budget should be submitted as a separate document.</li><li>• Please confirm if it is acceptable to include</li></ul>	<p>No. The budget section, including the budget format provide as Appendix D in the RFP amendment, should be included within the 20 pages. Only the attachments are excluded. Labor Categories as</p>

<p>labor categories for each individual in our budget.</p>	<p>described in the RFP and Amendment 2 are based on function. Individual staff/titles are to be organized within these categories as outlined in the forms provided in RFP Amendments posted on HCRs Procurement page:  <a href="http://www.nyshcr.org/AboutUs/Procurement/DHCRindex.htm">http://www.nyshcr.org/AboutUs/Procurement/DHCRindex.htm</a>.</p>
<p>On page 9, Section 3-B, first bullet, you state "prepare eligibility determinations and work related documents and records as needed." Can you clarify your intent in terms of a contractor determining ultimate eligibility? It would seem that a contractor could assess eligibility within the guidelines, policies, and procedures created, but that ultimate eligibility would be determined/verified by NYS and/or HUD as the grantee/grantor.</p>	<p>Ultimate eligibility will be determined by HTFC and HUD. The selected contractor will follow the guidelines, policies and procedures to assess eligibility. As outlined in the RFP, the successful respondent will have demonstrated a thorough understanding of basic CDBG rules and regulations regarding the use of HUD funds.</p>
<p>Paragraph D. Budget on page 13 states that bidders "will provide all office space, office equipment, telecommunications, software, filing systems, management and oversight and other resource necessary for its staff to carry out the work and the proposed Hourly Rates should include these costs." As noted under Paragraph 4. Contract Terms on page 10, "HTFC expects to select a Respondent that will agree to clearly defined service level agreements and metrics tied to the successful reimbursement of funds to the State", each with a specific work assignment and agreed upon Statement of Work (SOW).</p> <p>Because there is no clearly defined Statement of Work, it is impossible for respondents to determine the nature of any local office expense requirements. It is our understanding that rates proposed should be developed with the assumption that staffing can be maintained within the contractor's existing facilities (contractor-site), and documents for review/determination will be made available via online access. Please confirm that our assumption is correct or clarify the nature of required supporting facilities to be provided.</p>	<p>Rates may be developed with the assumption that staff can be maintained within the contractor's existing facilities. However, HTFC will not be responsible for travel costs necessary to carry out the work.</p>
<p>Page 10, Section 4. Contract Terms states "The SOW will provide specific guidance to the vendor about the current portion of work, including, but not</p>	<p>Only one contract award will be made as a result of this RFP. However, multiple SOWs may be established under the</p>

limited to, the quantity of PWs to review and the specific targets to be achieved." Please confirm that only one respondent will be awarded the contract.	contract.
Page 12, Section B. Staff Qualifications and Experience states "Summarize the total number of positions the respondent intends to devote to each section of the scope of services." Are the respondents to assume they are going to review ~3,000 PWs (page 9)?	Yes. All of the PWs will need to be analyzed. HTFC will work with the contractor to prioritize the order of the PWs reviewed, consistent with the State's goals and objectives.
Does working on the NYRCR program as a contracted planning firm preclude the firm from responding to this RFP?	No.
Would being selected as the implementation contractor for FEMA-PA and HMGP project review preclude the contractor from working on projects that may be submitted for funding consideration?	Yes.
What is the largest size file that your e-mail server will accept for an individual message? This information will facilitate dividing our submission into the optimal number of files for delivery.	File size limitations may vary, so it is the respondent's responsibility to confirm receipt. In general, files should not exceed 50 MBs. HTFC is not responsible for transmission errors or any other difficulties encountered in submitting a proposal, regardless of reason, and all submissions must be received by HTFC in .pdf format submitted via e-mail no later than 3PM (EST) on November 20, 2013. Please note that the receipt of each e-mail will be confirmed by replying to the sender of each e-mail. HTFC retains the sole right to determine if a submission was timely.
Where would the contractor site be best located – Albany or NYC?	HTFC does not have any preference regarding the location of bidders. However, the selected contractor's project staff may be required to meet in person with State staff in New York City. No reimbursement for travel will be provided.
It is our understanding that any approved travel will be reimbursed at cost. Please confirm that our assumption is correct or clarify.	Travel costs will not be reimbursed separately and are the sole responsibility of the contractor.
Page 8 mentions, "Maintain a tracking system for	Yes.

<p>PWs from Statewide applicants. All PW's that FEMA classifies as county = statewide must be analyzed..." Should this read as, "Maintain a tracking system for PWs from Statewide applicants. All PW's that FEMA classifies as Statewide must be analyzed..."?</p>	
<p>Will PA and HMGP projects have completed environmental compliance as per FEMA, State, and local requirements? Will the selected contractor conduct or oversee the environmental review of selected projects? Will the contractor be required to review all projects for environmental compliance only for any special requirements arising from the CDBG-DR program?</p>	<p>Bidders should assume that the FEMA reviews are complete. Environmental review is not part of this scope of services. The selected contractor will work with HTFC to ensure that environmental review elements are maintained but will not be required to conduct the reviews for these projects.</p>
<p>Will the contractor be required to monitor PA, HMGP and other projects for compliance with all FEMA and CDBG requirements?</p>	<p>The contractor will recommend projects for match funding but will not be required to monitor these components. The selected contractor will work with HTFC to ensure that the monitoring and compliance components are maintained.</p>
<p>If not, will the contractor solely monitor for compliance with CDBG-DR requirements?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>Is HTFC expecting the contractor to determine the eligibility of projects for the PA and HMGP programs?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>If not, will the contractor review projects solely for their eligibility for match under CDBG-DR program?</p>	<p>DHSES performs the FEMA PA and HMGP functions - the contractor's role is to determine eligibility for CDBG DR funds.</p>
<p>Page 5 mentions program guidelines that the State has developed to "initially select and prioritize projects." We understand that these guidelines will be provided to the successful bidder; however, in order to develop an appropriate project approach, it would be helpful to understand the relationship between these existing guidelines and the policies and procedures to be developed by the contractor. Please clarify how the guidelines will interact with the policies and procedures that the contractor develops.</p>	<p>HTFC will provide guidelines and direction to the contractor that prioritizes the order that PWs will be reviewed. This will include breaking down the Non Federal share projects (workload) into groupings, such as applicant types (local, county and state government, schools, etc.), types of federal funding source that needs non-federal share payments, and/or geographic location of the applicant. The contractor, as part of its responsibilities, will need to develop work processes and procedures to analyze the projects in the</p>

	provided grouping to meet contract deliverables.
For each of the funding resources for which CDBG-DR is a potential source of match(FEMA-PA, FEMA HMPG, FHWA, EPA, FTA), please provide detailed information on the format that information on projects is available (e.g., paper files only, spreadsheets, on-line data base, etc.) and the method by which the contractor will be given access to these information resources.	Information will be available electronically via online databases. There may be unique instances when “paper only” files exist but these would be rare instances.
What management information system(s) are currently being used to track grant requests for various FEMA, DOT, EPA, etc. projects?	Several Federal and state databases exist.
Will the contractor have access to the systems?	Yes.
If no, in what format will the contractor receive applications for assistance and project files?	N/A.
Is the respondent expected to rely only on information provided in the project worksheets (or similar documentation for other funding sources)?	Only on information provided in the project worksheet or other federal applications.
Is the respondent expected to contact the funding recipients if additional follow-up is necessary, or will State personnel make any such contacts?	No. HTFC will communicate with applicants but will work collaboratively with the contractor to determine who needs to be contacted.
Is it correct to assume that the respondent will independently generate and analyze the service areas and corresponding data based on information provided in the project worksheets (or similar documentation for other funding sources)? Or merely validate data submitted by the applicant?	Yes, the contractor will analyze the service area. They will also have access to state and federal data in addition to information contained in the PW to make this determination. Contractors will be required to demonstrate that they have the information technology and staffing ability to make this determination.
If the project, as developed and submitted to the funding source does not appear to be eligible for Match, is the contractor expected to recommend how changes in the application might result in a project that is eligible to receive the match?	No, not initially. Due to the volume of work to be performed, the contractor will need to develop procedures and processes for how to document and report these ineligible projects, and recommend potential changes where appropriate. However, making modifications to the applications is not part of the scope of services at present.

<p>Has the State determined the service areas of each of the projects funded by FEMA-PA, FHWA, etc., or will State personnel be assigned/available to do so, or should the respondent be prepared to do so?</p>	<p>HTFC has not determined the service areas, but knows the location of the projects and has access to databases that can assist with the analysis. The contractor, as part of its duties, will have access to these systems and will make recommendations on how to conduct this analysis efficiently.</p>
<p>How does HTFC plan to facilitate contractor access to necessary records and supporting document to fulfill contract responsibilities?</p>	<p>The contractor will be provided access to all necessary state and federal databases to conduct its work.</p>
<p>What percentage or amount will be considered a “sufficient amount of PWs” to be reviewed by Feb. 28, 2014? Is this amount pre-defined or negotiable as part of contract agreements?</p>	<p>The number of PWs to be completed will be determined according to State guidelines and must be sufficient enough to achieve the target of reimbursing \$60 million to the State within the current State fiscal year ending on March 31, 2014. This will be negotiated in the contract agreement, after the contractor has been awarded and had a chance to analyze the database. Due to the current volume of PWs and FEMA PA dollars that are eligible and have been paid to date, we are reasonably confident that the contractor should be able to meet this threshold.</p>
<p>Has there been any preliminary reviews of the applications and the evidence provided to understand how many applications are in fact ready to be reviewed?</p>	<p>Yes, the state has conducted an initial review of the databases and confirmed there are applications ready for review.</p>
<p>Has the process of gathering all of the required evidence already been performed so that the review of 3,000 applications can occur?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Are any or all source files for each PW available to the contractor electronically from DHSES or FEMA at the outset of the contract period?</p>	<p>HTFC will make the necessary files available to the contractor. These are primarily in electronic format.</p>
<p>Per Page 7 of the RFP, can you please clarify if the 30-day designation is calendar days or business days?</p>	<p>The designation is 30 calendar days.</p>
<p>Under section 4. Contract Terms – it is stated that HTFC will withhold 10% of billings of all services provided under each SOW unless or until the project-specific targets are met. We are inquiring if this contract term is negotiable.</p>	<p>This term is not negotiable and bidders should submit proposals that assume the 10% withholding of billings as defined in Section 4 of the RFP.</p>