

Hartford Land Bank, Inc.

Consultant Request for Proposals

August 15, 2018

Introduction:

The Hartford Land Bank, Inc. (the “Land Bank”), a Connecticut nonprofit organization established to be a land bank, seeks a proposal for consultant(s) to provide initial start-up assistance, operationalizing support and organizational development services to the newly-established land bank entity working in Hartford, Connecticut (the “Proposal”). The HLB is modeled after land banks in other states but is the first to operate in Connecticut, and it will work closely with the City of Hartford Blight Remediation team to develop and execute a strategy to eliminate blight and build strong, vibrant, sustainable neighborhoods in Hartford.

Scope of Work:

For the Land Bank to develop the critical operations and execution policies and procedures it needs to start its critical work in Hartford, it seeks a consultant to undertake “set-up” duties and responsibilities, including transitional staffing and additional essential deliverables to assure the Land Bank utilizes best practices at the very start. These duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Assist the Board of the Land Bank in developing mission, vision, branding, and explicit measurable goals and objectives, both short-term and long-term, for its operations in the first five years (a preliminary strategic plan);
- Prepare preliminary drafts of essential policies and procedures regarding the identification, prioritization, acquisition, and disposition of blighted properties, and work closely with the Board and funders in refining and adopting these policies;
- Assist in developing the organizational structure and other operational policies and procedures, including procurement policies and recommended staffing, budgets, management, and other elements of the start-up operations;
- Establish grants management and fiscal management procedures and systems with appropriate support to assure funders that all Land Bank funds will be safely and transparently managed;
- Assist in developing a fundraising strategy, including an anchor-institution strategy;
- Provide specific technical assistance to the Board in best practices for land banks as a tool to address blighted properties throughout Hartford;
- Assist in developing a relationship-building strategy, including (i) a community-engagement strategy that will inform all work of the Land Bank, and (ii) guidance regarding establishing and maintaining relationships with corporate, legislative, and community constituencies on an ongoing basis.

The work of the consultant(s) will also include: direct staffing of the start-up HLB, including potential hiring of staff, and executing the set-up of operations; interviews, facilitation of group discussions, and convening meetings of various potential partners in blight remediation, neighborhood representatives, and funding sources; review and analysis of inventories of blighted properties developed by various partners, and potential preparation of a comprehensive inventory from which HLB prioritization decisions can be made. The consultant(s) will produce monthly written reports to the Board of HLB that provides updates on progress towards specific deliverables.

Project Timetable: November 1, 2018 – April 30, 2019

Proposal:

Proposals should articulate how the qualifications of the consultant(s) can assure the successful establishment of a fully operational land bank, including all of the elements listed in the Scope of Work, providing specific deliverables, a detailed budget, and a time frame for completing each deliverable. Proposals should also include three references.

Qualifications:

Consultants should be able to demonstrate the following:

- Knowledge and experience with start-up non-profit land bank organizations.
- Experience with land bank programs nationally and how they operate legally, financially, and otherwise.
- Knowledge of best practices for targeting and remediating vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties (or “property blight”).
- Experience with fund development and grants management.
- Knowledge of the Hartford environment and of working with local, state, federal, and private funding sources committed to land banks and blight remediation.
- Experience with program assessment in the field of community development.
- Ability to work effectively with a broad range of interested and affected constituencies, including excellent communication and facilitation skills.
- Knowledge and experience in organizational management

The Land Bank recognizes there may be a need to assemble a team to address the qualifications listed above.

Evaluation and Selection Criteria:

The Land Bank Board of Directors will evaluate responses based upon experience and qualifications, references, expertise in land bank operations and in start-up nonprofit organizations, budget and the structure of compensation, and availability of the consultant(s) to meet the Land Bank’s ambitious timeframe and lean budget. The Land Bank assumes that compensation for this project will be commensurate with the qualifications and experience of the successful consultant(s). The Land Bank recognizes that the most effective way to accomplish the initial start-up may be through an interim staffing approach, which Land Bank recognizes may require significant hours.

The successful consultant(s) will be required to execute a contract with the Land Bank, as a private nonprofit, but the contract will comply with procurement and contractual requirements that may be imposed by the State of Connecticut Department of Housing and other potential funding sources. The Land Bank reserves the right to reject all responses and not to enter into a contract with any respondent.

Interested consultants should respond with a complete written Proposal, including references, by September 15, 2018, including a statement of relevant experience and qualifications, a description of how the consultant(s) would be best to accomplish the project facing the HLB, and a budget to:

Laura Settlemyer
Chairperson, Hartford Land Bank, Inc.
c/o City of Hartford Department of Development Services
250 Constitution Plaza, 4th Floor
Hartford, CT 06103

For more information, including a copy of a proposed Action Plan prepared for the Land Bank by the Center for Community Progress, please contact Laura Settlemyer (Laura.Settlemyer@hartford.gov or (860) 757-9072).

It is the policy of Hartford Land Bank, Inc. to ensure nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for all applicants and contractors and will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, intellectual disability, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, and the Land Bank shall comply with all applicable state and federal equal opportunity and nondiscrimination laws and regulations, including regulations adopted by the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.