Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) is seeking digital consultant services to develop an urban digital inclusion portfolio to close the broadband availability, affordability, and digital skills gaps in underserved urban markets. The consultant will be working with 3-5 LISC urban market offices to define these opportunities. The work is expected to take place over the next 3-5 months.

BACKGROUND

LISC’s comprehensive approach deploys strategies that empower people, transform places, support enterprises, and drive systems innovation. We are the country’s largest community development intermediary—not a mere bureaucratic middleman but a connector and force multiplier for shifting capital and power to long-disinvested places and economically marginalized people. We help these local actors design impactful programs, and also support them with technical and management assistance, peer learning, capacity-building resources, and systems for accountability.

LISC is unique among community development intermediaries in two key ways. First, our approach is comprehensive. We invest in all the areas that a community needs to thrive, including affordable housing; community infrastructure, facilities, and green space; mental and physical health; childhood education and adult training; community safety and justice before the law; jobs and small businesses; and arts-and-culture projects that help communities surface their distinctive identities and histories. Second, we have a national-local structure. LISC has a robust national staff capable of spotting big-picture needs, designing comprehensive programs, creating and managing complex financial and data systems, and convening national and regional actors. We also have 39 local offices across the country and a rural program serving 45 states and Puerto Rico. This comprehensive, national-local structure allows LISC to set a country wide agenda to advance racial and economic equity and to operationalize this agenda in ways that respond to unique local dynamics.

LISC and its affiliates have invested approximately $20 billion in businesses, affordable housing, health, educational facilities, mobility, community and recreational facilities, public safety, employment and other projects that help to revitalize and stabilize communities. Headquartered in New York City, LISC’s reach spans the country in 39 markets with offices extending from Rhode Island to Los Angeles. Visit us at www.lisc.org or www.rilisc.org.

NEED

LISC seeks to close gaps in digital equity which increase disparities in health, education, economic, social, and other long-term outcomes because these inequities disproportionately affect marginalized and underserved populations, including communities of color, rural areas, and low-income neighborhoods. Broadband internet access is identified as a “super” determinant of health and has become a significant new program area of focus for LISC. We see opportunity to connect communities to broadband access and the digital skills, make an impact as a lender and strategist in the design and deployment of “affordability networks,” and influence the design of public policy in the digital inclusion arena. LISC anticipates implementing this new program area in 3 - 5 LISC urban markets.
PROJECT SCOPE OF WORK

LISC will enter into a “performance-based” contract with the selected consultant, meaning that the consultant will be paid a flat fee upon satisfactory completion of the deliverables. LISC is requesting price proposals to provide an Urban Digital Inclusion Portfolio which will contain the following deliverables:

- Articulate a digital inclusion strategic direction for LISC given the once-in-a-generation federal funding, state funding, and related policy environment to respond at scale. This strategy will influence how LISC engages stakeholders to build capacity and provide technical assistance to nonprofit organizations and local and state governments;

- Craft three concrete, scalable solutions that align with LISC’s work to close the broadband availability, affordability, and digital skills gaps in underserved urban markets, working with 3-5 LISC urban market offices to define these opportunities;

- Identify opportunities for relationship building at the federal level into which we would bring a detailed policy agenda; and

- Identify opportunities for relationship building at the state level to scale programmatic or policy initiatives.

To achieve the deliverables, the consultant will perform the following over a 3-5 month period:

- Facilitate vision-casting sessions that include all relevant departments and leadership at LISC that result in a collaborative statement of principles;

- Evaluate current urban digital inclusion activities across the LISC network and develop a comprehensive urban digital inclusion strategy;

- Work with LISC to charter next steps with key markets and players, facilitating introductions and developing clear action items, draft timelines, and possible funding sources (for 3-5 urban markets); and

- Ensure the development of an urban broadband strategy recognizes, reinforces and helps leverage (where appropriate) existing and planned Rural LISC broadband programming which is already underway.

CONTACT INFORMATION, PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE, CONSULTANT SELECTION

Please submit proposals by November 19th, 2021, 5:00 pm, to Brianna (Tene) Harris, Btharris@lisc.org

LISC anticipates conducting interviews immediately following and selecting a consultant. LISC anticipates notifying the successful applicant by December 17, 2021.
SELECTION CRITERIA

LISC will evaluate proposals based on clarity of proposal and work plan, timeline, budget and costs, relevant experience with urban digital inclusion portfolios for similar organizations, knowledge of closing digital skill and broadband access gaps in low to moderate income communities, and familiarity with LISC’s work and alignment with our mission.

Proposals should be no longer than eight (8 pages) – excluding resumes – and will be evaluated using the following information:

- **Anticipated Scope of Work and Timeframe** – Describe your plan for accomplishing the work - the activities, format, and timeframe required to complete the project. Provide a detailed timeline based on the three categories listed below. Include a description of expected time commitments of LISC staff.
  - Foster LISC wide collaboration through vision-casting sessions; Conduct internal and external interviews; and gather information on digital inclusion activities across local offices and national programs.
  - Analyze data gathered and produce summary memo; Develop themes and draft principles; and, present on potential scalable solutions for the LISC network to undertake.
  - Draft and present final urban digital inclusion for LISC markets execution; Present and draft final urban digital inclusion strategy and shared principles.

- **Resumes of Personnel** – Provide resumes of each consultant who will work on the project, and respective responsibilities for this project. Include a summary of relevant experiences of each of the consultants in working on similar projects with similar agencies.

- **Budget and Cost** – Provide number of hours and hourly rates for each of the consultants assigned, and specify their respective duties. Include the cost for each phase, as well as the maximum fee for this project. Identify personnel and non-personnel items separately within the total budget.

- **Previous Clients/References** – Briefly describe your experience completing a similar scope of work, the year completed and a contact name and phone number for each one.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Any reports or other deliverables produced pursuant to a scope of work or contract will be the sole property of LISC.

LISC is committed to working with SBEs, MBEs, and WBEs, and encourages proposals from SBEs, MBEs, and WBEs.