

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

TOWN OF MANCHESTER

ADMINISTRATION OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



ISSUED BY:

TOWN OF MANCHESTER

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

PROPOSALS DUE: October 13, 2023 by 4:30 P.M.

Summary

This Request for Proposals is being issued by the Town of Manchester Planning & Economic Development Department (Department). The Department is responsible for coordinating the solicitation of professional services for the administration of a residential building assistance program (program). The Department is seeking applications from community agencies that currently operate programs and that could provide services as described in the subsequent sections.

The Town of Manchester was awarded Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF), a part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), to support the response to and recovery from the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) provide resources for governments to meet the public health and economic needs of those impacted by the pandemic in their communities, as well as address longstanding health and economic disparities, which amplified the impact of the pandemic in disproportionately impacted communities, resulting in more severe pandemic impacts.

The Town of Manchester Board of Directors appropriated \$750,000 of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)/ Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) funds to *“develop and implement a Residential Building Assistance Program to assist with private renovation or general improvements to residential buildings. Such program shall include, but need not be limited to, assistance for homeowners who are seeking sustainability-related improvements to home utility systems, infrastructure, or landscaping”*.

Background

Manchester is home to 59,461 persons residing in 25,314 housing units (2022). Its location, a mixture of suburban and urban living at the crossroads of several major interstates and proximity to Hartford, makes it a convenient location to work, live, and play.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic disparately impacted certain communities and exacerbated preexisting societal problems associated with housing insecurity. The pandemic forced some residents to work and learn from home, which caused some employers and educational institutions to limit or prohibit in-person work and learning. These changes caused residents to establish home offices and learning spaces, which increased home energy use. The pandemic also caused detrimental economic effects by inflating the cost of living, increasing property values and subsequent local tax liability, and limiting the availability and price of construction materials, supplies, and other necessities.

Manchester’s housing stock is older than surrounding communities with over 77% of the town’s owner-occupied housing stock and 64% of its rental stock constructed before 1980. Additionally, the town's opportunities for

substantial amounts of new housing construction are limited by high construction costs and a lack of available land. Older housing stock impacts housing needs in several ways, specifically:

- Older stock is more likely to be costly to maintain and therefore negatively impact affordability.
- Older stock is less likely to be energy efficient and therefore more costly to occupy.
- Older stock is more likely to have environmental hazards such as asbestos and lead-based paint.
- Older stock is less likely to be accessible.

Therefore, it is necessary to stabilize and improve aging housing units in Manchester to address these negative impacts. Completing energy efficiency upgrades in the home, such as weatherization or upgrading home energy systems, can increase the energy efficiency of a home and make it more affordable to occupy. Currently, there are multiple programs available to Connecticut residents of varied income levels to access energy efficiency upgrades at low or no cost. However, these programs and their contractors cannot perform the associated work if certain health, safety, or structural barriers exist.

Connecticut Utilities data indicates that the presence of these barriers prevented 165,000 eligible homes from accessing Federally subsidized energy-efficiency upgrades in 2020. Currently, more programs assist with residential energy efficiency improvements than remediating the barriers in Connecticut.

This is an issue that disproportionately impacts low-income households. Naturally occurring affordable housing tends to exist in older structures, where real estate prices are generally lower. These buildings are also more likely in need of repairs and less likely to be energy efficient. In Manchester, census tracts that have a higher median structure age, also tend to have lower median household income. Low- or moderate- income households are presumed to have been impacted by the pandemic and therefore identified as eligible recipients of programs/ services funded by SLFRF.

For these reasons, the Planning & Economic Development Department seeks to fund residential improvements that remediate barriers to energy efficiency and reduce the cost of living for low-income households in Manchester.

Responsibilities of Contracted Organization(s)

The services required relate to the administration of a residential building assistance program for Manchester residents to complete residential improvements that remediate health, safety, and structural barriers and enable access to energy efficiency upgrades.

Coordinate Residential Building Assistance

Identify eligible improvements, gather estimates, and procure contractors. Coordinate all activities on the project site. Below is a list of eligible improvement categories.

- Remediation or removal of
 - Asbestos or asbestos-like material
 - Mold
 - vermiculite insulation
- Moisture control
- Repair or installation of exhaust/ventilation
- Energy-related electrical projects
- Energy-related roof repairs
- Installation of smoke or carbon monoxide detectors
- Grading: Minor re-grading of perimeter grounds to correct improper drainage
- Repair or installation of gutters/downspouts
- Repair or procurement and installation of a sump pump
- Removal of pests
- Reduction of radon levels
- Remediation of air exchange issues, filtration, and indoor air quality (IAQ) issues
- Combustion testing: Includes Clean Tune and Test (CTT), repair of fuel leaks, CAZ testing, and distribution systems including ambient air
- Any of the above related to work-at-home needs

Application Processing & Review

Review and process program applications based on income eligibility defined by the household/family size and the size of the housing structure defined by the number of units. Provide technical assistance during the application process to ensure that eligible property owners have a fair and equitable opportunity to apply for funding. This could include assistance in navigating the application process, filling out portions of the application, explaining necessary criteria, etc.

The program will be open to owners of single- and multi-family residences, up to four units whose tenants and/or owner-occupants are income-eligible. An owner-occupant gross household income, including rental income, shall be at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines for the size of the household. Similarly, a tenant's gross annual household income shall be at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines for the size of the household. Income limits are based on the 2023 Federal Poverty Guidelines.

300% of the 2023 Federal Poverty Guidelines		
Household/ Family Size	Per Year	Per Month
1	\$43,740	\$3,645
2	\$59,160	\$4,930
3	\$74,580	\$6,215
4	\$90,000	\$7,500
5	\$105,420	\$8,785
6	\$120,840	\$10,070
7	\$136,260	\$11,355
8	\$151,680	\$12,640
9	\$167,100	\$13,925
10	\$182,520	\$15,210
11	\$197,940	\$16,495
12	\$213,360	\$17,780
13	\$228,780	\$19,065
14	\$244,200	\$20,350

Source: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines>

Eligible properties should be prioritized based on factors that include the presence of barriers to energy efficiency upgrades, the age of the property, household income as a percentage of Federal Poverty Guidelines, and the extent of the need for residential improvements.

Income-eligible property owners must also adhere to several additional requirements.

- The property owner must be current in mortgage payments, if any, on the property and provide proof of current hazard insurance coverage.
- The owner must also be current on all local taxes, fees, and assessments.
- The owner-occupant of a single-family dwelling must continue to occupy the property as their primary residence during the term specified in a rehabilitation contract and Agreement between the owner and the Town.
- The owner-occupant or investor-owner of rental property, whether single-family or a multi-family unit, must rent to income-eligible tenants at the current fair market rents determined by HUD during the term specified in a rehabilitation contract between the owner and the Town.

Monitor Project Cost

The following are the maximum levels of assistance available. Selected agency/ agencies should prioritize the timeliness of project completion but are encouraged to leverage funds from other energy-efficiency or residential building assistance programs if available and applicable.

- \$30,000 for an eligible single-family dwelling.
- \$25,000 per unit for an eligible multi-unit dwelling, up to four units.

Any project that is anticipated to exceed the maximum grant amount will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine a course of action. Possible outcomes would include scope reduction or leveraging funds from other sources. Program beneficiaries are not expected to financially contribute to projects. Due to funding limitations, eligible projects, once prioritized, will be financed on a first-come, first-served basis.

Program Reporting

During the program period, the community agency will communicate with the Department regularly to ensure the timely progress of program administration.

- Attend regular monthly and special meetings with the Department, as requested.
- Provide a quarterly report to the Department containing but not limited to the following categories:
 - Progression of Program Goals
 - Summary of Expenditures Charged to the Grant
 - Update on Monitoring Plans
 - Budgets, and Future Forecast Needs
 - Update on Beneficiaries and Contractors

Awarded projects will provide a final project report within 90 days of the conclusion of the period of performance. Awarded projects will also be expected to participate in public-facing communications highlighting community impacts.

Contract Term

The contract term shall be from December 1, 2023, up to and including September 30, 2026. The contractor shall not transfer, sublet, or assign the contract by Power of Attorney or otherwise to any person, firm, or corporation, or in any way vary the terms of the contract without written permission from the Town. The Town has the right to terminate with a ninety (90) day written notice to the contractor. The Town reserves the right to terminate the contract at any time during the contract period. Such termination shall be effective immediately after giving written notice to the contractor that the Town is terminating the contract.

Proposals Sought

Projects will be considered within the scope of the Town of Manchester's resolution passed on October 4, 2022, as previously described. Proposals may address all or part of the requested services.

Proposed budget will be accepted for total amounts up to \$600,000. The total funding available is estimated to be \$750,000. The Town reserves the right to award varying levels of funds to multiple applicants. The final award amounts are subject to change based on the number and type of applicants received, and the total funds available at the time of the award.

Allowable expenses include direct personnel and non-personnel costs associated with project implementation as well as indirect or overhead costs not to exceed 25% of direct costs. Pre-award costs are not eligible for coverage under this award.

Specifically, each proposal must provide:

- Organizational description and structure, with the names of its officers, and officer titleholder(s).
- Discussion of the expertise and experience in delivering similar programs to the ones proposed.
- Discussion of the expertise and experience in grants management.
- Inclusion of annual report and most recent financial audit (if applicable).
- General description of services offered, in relation to this Request for Proposals.
- Purpose and scope of the program or project the funding is requested for.
- Relationship to pandemic recovery and/or prevention of inequitable impacts for future pandemics.
- Description of target beneficiaries, and metrics for impact measurement
- Outline of support desired from the Town of Manchester to ensure successful program implementation.
- Detailed budget and budget narrative.
- Other funding sources to be utilized, if available.

Applicants should refer to the [final rule published by the U.S. Department of the Treasury for the eligible uses of SLFRF funds](#) to ensure that compliance and reporting requirements associated with the use of SLFRF funds are met. The awardee(s) will be considered a pass-through entity for a sub-award of the SLFRF and will coordinate with the Department to meet compliance requirements.

The Town reserves the right to award the contract to the contractor deemed to be in the best interests of the Town for the Project after a review of the submissions received, not based solely on cost or any other specific factors.

Evaluation

The Town will evaluate all proposals deemed responsive to this request by a committee selected by the Town of Manchester. Proposals will be evaluated by the Town based on the following criteria:

- Qualifications
- Experience in Managing Similar Programs
- References

- Cost Reasonableness
- Ability to Oversee Project Timeline & Process

If deemed necessary by the committee, the Town of Manchester reserves the right to shortlist the proposals received and arrange for interviews/ oral presentations to the committee as part of the selection process. Discussions, requests for additional information, and negotiations may take place with the shortlisted vendors to ensure clarification and to obtain a system that meets the requirements of this RFP.

The Town of Manchester shall select the responsible and responsive Proposal that is determined by the Town to be the best suited, most advantageous, and provides the greatest overall benefit to the Town based on the criteria and evaluation factors included in this Request for Proposal. Cost shall be only one factor in the award decision. The Town expressly reserves the right to negotiate with the selected vendor prior to an award of any contract pursuant to this Request for Proposal.

Timeline

The following timeline is subject to change based on the number of proposals received and the time needed for award processing.

- RFP Release Date - August 29, 2023
- Deadline for Respondents to Submit Questions – September 29, 2023
- RFP Close Date - October 13, 2023
- Anticipated Award Announcement Date – November 1, 2023
- Anticipated Program Target Start Date – December 1, 2023

If you have questions about this request for proposals, please email planningdept@manchesterct.gov.

Submission Instructions

Responses should be marked “RFP Response - Administration of Residential Building Assistance Program” and must be received no later than October 13, 2023, by 4:30 P.M. Responses may be emailed to planningdept@manchesterct.gov or postmarked or delivered to the address below.

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