

City of Cleveland
Justin M. Bibb, Mayor
Department of Community Development
Alyssa Hernandez, Director



Request for Proposals

Professional Services for Financial Empowerment Consultant

- **Financial Empowerment Assessment and Recommendations**
- **Community Outreach**
- **Drafting and Delivering Report**

May 1, 2023

Introduction

The City of Cleveland’s Department of Community Development (“CD”) is issuing this Request for Proposals (hereinafter “RFP”) and invites interested consultants to submit their proposal for Financial Empowerment Research:

- Provide professional services including a statistically significant survey of Black residents in the City of Cleveland
- Community Outreach – organize and facilitate a series of focus group sessions with a diverse group of city residents
- Drafting and Delivering Report

Definitions

The following definitions are used throughout the RFP:

- **Client or City** means City of Cleveland, Ohio.
- **Vendor or Proposer** means a firm, company or organization submitting a proposal in response to this RFP.

General Background and Information

The City of Cleveland has been awarded a grant through The Cities for Financial Empowerment (hereafter “CFE”) to help the City create a municipal blueprint to address racial wealth inequity. The final blueprint will include short-term and longer-term policies and programs the City can pursue, with a focus on banking access, financial education, asset ownership, and consumer financial protection. With management oversight from the City, the consultant will complete a robust and resident-centered data collection process which will include conducting focus groups, resident surveys, and engaging with our community partners in the region, in addition to leveraging existing data. The final blueprint will be informed by the needs and solutions identified by residents and the synergies possible through the City’s ecosystem of community and funding partners.

Anticipated Timeline

Listed below are specific and estimated dates and times of actions related to this Request for Proposal (“RFP”). The actions with specific dates must be completed as indicated unless otherwise changed by the City of Cleveland (“City”). In the event that the City finds it necessary to change any of the specific dates and times in the calendar of events listed below, it will do so by issuing an addendum to this RFP. There may or may not be a formal notification issued for changes in the estimated dates and times.

Milestone	Timeframe
RFP Solicitation	May 12 th through June 12 th , 2023
Deadline for Questions to mwackers@clevelandohio.gov	June 2 nd , 2023

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City distribution of responses for Vendor RFP Clarifications	June 7 th , 2023
Vendor Proposals Due	Close of Business on June 12 th , 2023
Finalize Learning Agenda and Research Questions	July 31 st , 2023
Conduct Resident Engagement and Focus Groups	August – October 2023
Results and Report Due	December 2023

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Scope of Work

The overall objective of this work is to engage Black and Hispanic residents to understand their experiences. Along with City oversight, prioritize possible policy solutions related to financial empowerment in Cleveland. The City is seeking firms that can support some or all of these tasks.

1. Financial Empowerment Assessment & Recommendations

The City seeks a vendor that can perform data collection and assessment of relevant information to inform and develop a plan for financial empowerment. The vendor should also be capable of making recommendations based on that assessment. Any recommendation must be action oriented and scaled in sufficient capacity to address the scope of the problems identified in the assessment. Financial Empowerment areas of interest or concern include but not limited to:

- Poverty
- Living Wages
- Quality employment opportunities
- Debt
- Single-Parent Households
- Education Attainment
- Unbanked and Underbanked
- Wealth
- Individual Development Accounts (IDA) or similar programs
- Household Emergency/Liquid Assets
- Housing Costs
- Homeownership
- Benefits Cliffs
- Identify, define and measure the financial indicators that highlight gender and racial inequities

2. Community Outreach

The City seeks a vendor that can implement a community engagement framework that utilizes:

- Digital Survey - design, disseminate, and/or report out a statistically significant survey of residents in Cleveland. The survey should include questions on a variety of challenges faced by residents.
- Stakeholder Input
 - Banks
 - Non-Profits
 - Philanthropic Foundations
 - City
 - County
- Resident Focus groups/ Public Meetings – ensuring safe and inviting forums for residents to share their stories, delve deep in understanding perspectives and root causes of barriers and solicit resident recommendations on city action and policies.

Outreach should be spread across city neighborhoods, specifically those that have been historically underinvested:

Census Tracts

Greater Downtown

107101, 108201, 108400, 108301, 108701, 109301, 980100, 107701

Opportunity Corridor-Central-Hough

111202, 111500, 111600, 111700, 111902, 111800, 112100, 112200, 118602, 112301, 112400, 112500, 112600, 112800, 118900, 113101, 196500, 113500, 113600, 113801, 114100, 114700, 114300, 114501, 114600, 119300

Glenville-Collinwood

117700, 117600, 117800, 117201, 117202, 117101, 117102, 117400, 117300, 117500, 117900, 126100, 116900, 116700, 116800, 116300, 116600, 118400, 118200, 118101, 116500, 116400, 111401, 116100, 116200, 116300

Buckeye-Woodhill-Shaker Square

118500, 118301, 118700, 118800, 119100, 119202, 119401, 119402, 119502, 119501, 120200, 119600, 119702, 119701, 119800, 119900

Broadway-Slavic Village-Southeast

110901, 110801, 114900, 115200, 115100, 115400, 115700, 115800, 115900, 115300, 127501, 123100, 120400, 120500, 120600, 121100, 121401, 121403, 120701, 120702, 121200, 120802, 120801, 121500, 121700, 121800, 121900, 122100, 122200, 122300

Clark-Fulton – Cudell

102900, 102800, 102700, 103800 104600, 104900, 105300, 104800, 104600, 101800, 101700, 101901, 102402, 101603, 101501, 101400, 103400

Old Brooklyn

105100, 105300, 105400, 105500, 105802, 106100, 106300, 105700, 106200, 106400, 106800, 106500, 106600, 105900, 106900, 107000

Organizing all aspects of focus group logistics, including providing incentives. Summarize findings from each focus group through comprehensive notes, which include raw notes of discussion such as participant quotes, summaries, and key policy recommendations. Minimal formatting or design would be required to complete this task.

3. Drafting and Delivering Report

- Using the Financial Empowerment Assessment, develop Recommendations and Community Outreach the vendor should draft and deliver a final report that accomplishes the requirements under the grant award by the CFE.

- With City oversight, draft an actionable blueprint that identifies leading obstacles communities of color face in regards to their overall financial prosperity and outlines steps the City and community partners can take in order to help overcome those challenges and improve the financial health of underserved residents based on findings in the report.

Required Documentation Submission

Each Proposal must contain the following:

1. On letterhead, a description of the organization, including credentials and background of all key staff members, and a description of its history and relevant experience with;
2. On letterhead, three current references;
3. A description of how you will complete the request above and meet deliverables.
4. Completed Office of Equal Opportunity Vendor Forms
<http://www.city.cleveland.oh.us/CityofCleveland/Home/Government/CityAgencies/Finance/PurchasesSupplies/VendorInformation>
5. Provide a “lump-sum” amount due for services.

Submission and Selection Process:

The **Due Date for proposals is Close of Business on June 12th, 2023.**

Proposals must be submitted in emailed to: akinney@clevelandohio.gov
or hard copy by delivery to:

**Department of Community Development
ATTN: Aaron Kinney, Banking Relations
Room #320, City Hall
601 Lakeside Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44114-1070**

Submissions shall be reviewed for completeness, pricing and experience. Staff will evaluate and rank the proposals.

The Director of the Department of Community Development, at the Director’s sole discretion, may require any Proposer to augment or supplement its proposal or to meet with the City’s designated representatives for interview or presentation to further describe the Proposer’s qualifications and capabilities.

The City reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any proposal that is incomplete or unresponsive to the requests or requirements of this RFP. The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive and accept any informality or discrepancy in the proposal or the process as may be in the City’s best interest.

The Director of the Department of Community Development, at her sole discretion, may require any Proposer to augment or supplement its proposal or to meet with the City’s

designated representatives for interview or presentation to further describe the Proposer's qualifications and capabilities.

The City reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any proposal that is incomplete or unresponsive to the requests or requirements of this RFP. The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive and accept any informality or discrepancy in the proposal or the process as may be in the City's best interest.

Checklist for Complete Submission

____ On letterhead, a description of the Consultant's organization, including credentials and background of all key staff members, and a description of its history and experience with performing appraisers and in particular experience performing in Cleveland;

____ On letterhead, three current references;

____ Lump-Sum Amount for services in scope of work

Certification

I hereby certify that the above information and attached information is correct.

Print or Type Name & Title

Signature

Date

Vendor Proposal Guidelines

Intent

It is the intent of the City through this RFP to establish to the greatest possible extent complete clarity regarding the requirements of both parties to the agreement resulting from the RFP.

Before submitting a proposal, the Vendor shall be thoroughly familiar with all conditions referred to in this document and any addenda issued before the proposal submission date. Such addenda shall form a part of the RFP and shall be made a part of the contract. It shall be the Vendor's responsibility to ascertain that the proposal includes all addenda issued prior to the proposal submission date.

The Vendor shall determine by personal examination and by such other means as may be preferred the actual conditions and requirements under which the agreement must be performed.

Basis for Award, Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The City is not obligated to accept any proposal if deemed not in the best interest of the City to do so. The City shall make award to the qualified proposal responder based on fees submitted and response to this RFP.

Failure to include in the proposal all information outlined herein may be cause for rejection of the proposal.

The City reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, in whole or in part, that is deemed to be in the best interest of the City at its sole discretion.

The City reserves the right to waive any informalities or irregularities in proposals.

The City reserves the right to negotiate separately the terms and conditions or all or any part of the proposals as deemed to be in the City's best interest at its sole discretion.

Information and/or factors gathered during interviews, negotiations and any reference checks, and any other information or factors deemed relevant by the City, shall be used in the final award. The final award of a contract is subject to approval by the City of Cleveland, Board of Control.

The City assumes no liability for any costs incurred in preparing or submitting any proposals.

Award of Contract

Award of contract will be made to one or more Vendor(s) whose proposal provides the most favorable solution to the City. The Vendor shall be deemed as having been awarded a contract when the formal notice of acceptance of his proposal has been duly served upon the intended awardee by an authorized agent of the City.

RFP Clarifications

If any person contemplating submitting a proposal is in doubt as to the true meaning of any part of this RFP, the individual may submit to the City a written request for an interpretation thereof. The person submitting the request will be responsible for its prompt delivery. Any interpretation will be made only by an addendum. Failure on the part of the proposal responder to receive a written interpretation before the submission deadline will not be grounds for withdrawal of proposal. Vendor will acknowledge receipt of each addendum issued by stating so in its proposal. No oral explanation or instruction of any kind or nature whatsoever given before the award of a contract to a Vendor shall be binding.

All inquiries regarding this proposal must be written and should be emailed to:

Department of Community Development

Attention: Aaron Kinney

Email: akinney@clevelandohio.gov cc: mwackers@clevelandohio.gov

Inquiries regarding this RFP will be accepted **no later than 5 p.m. EST on June 2nd, 2023.**

Vendors should monitor the City's website for addenda to the RFP prior to the closing and include signed addenda with their RFP response.

Advice of Omission or Misstatement

In the event it is evident to a Vendor responding to this RFP that the City has omitted or misstated a material requirement to this RFP and/or the services required by this RFP, the responding Vendor shall advise the Contact identified in the "RFP Clarifications" section above of such omission or misstatement.

Confidential Information

Information contained in the Vendor's proposal that is company confidential must be clearly identified in the proposal itself. The City will be free to use all information in the Vendor's proposal for the City's purposes. The Vendor understands that any material supplied to the City may be subject to public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

Confidentiality Statement

Any information, including materials, drawings, designs, documentation, and other property or data, disclosed to the proposal responder shall not be used, reproduced, appropriated, or otherwise disseminated to anyone other than the City.

Tax Exempt Status

The City is exempt from Ohio State sales and use taxes on materials and equipment to be incorporated in the work. Tax Payer Id No. 34-6000646. Said taxes shall not be included in the RFP.

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Reserved Rights

The City reserves the right to waive any irregularities; accept the whole, part of, or reject any or all quotations; and to select the firm which, in the sole opinion of the City, best meets the City's needs. The City also reserves the right to negotiate with potential Vendors so that the City's best interests are served.

Advertising

Vendor shall not advertise or publish the fact that the City has placed this order without prior written consent from the City, except as may be necessary to comply with a proper request for information from an authorized representative of a governmental unit or agency.

Trademarks

The City warrants that all trademarks the City requests the Vendor to affix to articles purchased are those owned by the City and it is understood that the Vendor shall not acquire or claim any rights, title, or interest therein, or use any of such trademarks on any articles produced for itself or anyone other than the City.

Right to Request Additional Information

The City reserves the right to request any additional information that might be deemed necessary after the completion of this document.

Right of Refusal

The City reserves the right to refuse any or all proposals in their entirety, or to select certain professional services, equipment or software products from various Vendor proposals, based on the best interests of the City.

Proposal Preparation Costs

The Vendor is responsible for any and all costs incurred by the Vendor or his/her subcontractors in responding to this RFP.

Pricing Eligibility Period

All Vendor proposals are required to be offered for a term not less than **180** calendar days in duration. A proposal may not be modified, withdrawn or cancelled by Vendor during the 180-day time period following the time and date designated for the receipt of proposals.

Additional Charges

No additional charges, other than those listed on the Price Form, shall be made.

Rights to Pertinent Materials

All responses, inquires, and correspondence relating to this RFP and all reports, charts, displays, schedules, exhibits and other documentation produced by the Vendors that are

submitted as part of the proposal shall become the property of the City upon receipt, a part of a public record upon opening, and will not be returned.

The City reserves the right to accept any bid, to reject any or all bids, to waive any irregularities in the bidding and to accept any bid in the best interest of the City.

Proposal Pricing and fees

1. The City requests Firm Fixed Prices (FFP) in the format shown on the Price Form in Exhibits A through Exhibit G.
2. The total price given in the Price Form shall include all cost (including, but not limited to, insurance, travel, telephone and other direct costs) to provide services and deliverables identified in the Statement of Work and to complete the Deliverables sections of this RFP.

Compliance with the Cleveland Area Business Code

The City of Cleveland is committed to providing opportunities for minority-owned businesses, female-owned businesses, and Cleveland-area small businesses to participate in City contracting. The City intends to contract with a Vendor that shares that commitment.

The standard subcontracting goal for professional services contracts is 10% Cleveland Area Small Business (“CSB”) subcontractor participation. Please review any attached documents to review the goal for this contract. Proposers are required to make a good faith effort to subcontract with certified Minority Business Enterprise (“MBE”), Female Business Enterprise (“FBE”) and CSB firms in line with the applicable subcontracting goals included in this request for proposal.

To document its good faith effort to use certified MBE, FBE and CSB sub-consultants each proposer must complete Schedules 1 through 4 found in the Cleveland Area Business Code Notice to Bidders and Schedules. These schedules document the use of MBE, FBE and CSB subcontractors on the project, as well as the good faith effort of the Vendor in seeking the participation of certified sub-consultants on the proposed work. The completed forms will be forwarded to the City for evaluation. Failure to submit complete schedules may result in the rejection of your proposal.

Proposers can obtain information on CSBs, MBEs and FBEs that are certified by the City by checking the City’s website at <http://www.city.cleveland.oh.us>. From the home page, select Office of Equal Opportunity from the drop down box of City Departments. On the Office of Equal Opportunity page, you will find a selection in the left hand column for the CSB/MBE/FBE Registry.

Proposers are responsible for obtaining the most current list and for contacting potential CSB/MBE/FBE sub-consultants. The City assumes no responsibility for matching prime consultants with qualified MBE, FBE, and/or CSB sub-consultants.

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The participation of MBE, FBE, and/or CSB sub-consultants will be monitored by the Community Development throughout the duration of the project. The successful Vendor will be responsible for providing Community Development with any and all information necessary to facilitate this monitoring.

The *Cleveland Area Business Code*, Chapter 187 of the Codified Ordinances Cleveland, Ohio, 1976, any *Regulations* promulgated under the *Code*, and the *CD Notice to Bidders & Schedules* are incorporated in and made part of this solicitation and any resulting contract, by this reference, as fully as if attached.

Equal Opportunity Clause. No Proposer shall discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, ethnic group or Vietnam-era or disabled veteran status. Contractors shall take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed and that employees are treated during employment without regard to race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, Disability, ethnic group or Vietnam-era or disabled veteran status. As used in this chapter, "treated" means and includes without limitation the following: recruited whether by advertising or other means; compensated, whether in the form of rates of pay or other forms of compensation; selected for training, including apprenticeship, promoted, upgraded, demoted, transferred, laid off and terminated. Contractors shall post in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment, notices to be provided by the hiring representative of contractors setting forth the provisions of this nondiscrimination clause.

Proposal Submission and Format

To facilitate the analysis of responses to this RFP, the Vendor is required to prepare their proposals in accordance with the instructions outlined in this section.

Proposals shall be prepared as simply as possible and provide a straightforward, concise description of the Vendor's capabilities to satisfy the requirements of the RFP. *EMPHASIS SHOULD BE CONCENTRATED ON ACCURACY, COMPLETENESS, AND CLARITY OF CONTENT.* All parts, pages, figures, and tables should be numbered and labeled clearly.

LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED OR REVIEWED.

Proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted. Proposals may not be delivered via facsimile or e-mail.

Do not contact any other City officials while responding to this RFP. Failure to adhere to this process may result in rejection of the RFP response by the City selection team.

Requirements for Signing Proposal

1. Each Vendor, by making a proposal, represents that this document has been read

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and is fully understood.

2. The proposal must be signed in ink by an individual authorized to legally bind the person, partnership, company, or corporation submitting the proposal.

Proposal Submission

Proposal Due Date: **June 12th, 2023 no later than Close of Business (5pm EST)**

Submitting Proposals: Proposals must be submitted in emailed to:
akinney@clevelandohio.gov

Or hard copy by delivery to:
**Department of Community Development
ATTN: Aaron Kinney, Bank Relations
Room #320, City Hall
601 Lakeside Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44114-1070**

Other Required Forms and Attachments

Please include all other required forms in this section including:

- Office of Equal Opportunity Forms (Notice to Bidders)
 - NOTE: City forms are available only in PDF format. Forms may be obtained through the City's Web site at:
<http://www.city.cleveland.oh.us/CityofCleveland/Home/Government/CityAgencies/Finance/PurchasesSupplies/VendorInformation>