



Housing Partnership Network (HPN), along with its member Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH), seeks a consultant to support the design and implementation of a cohort of mission-driven affordable housing practitioners. The cohort's mission is to accelerate the adoption of person-centered, trauma-informed practices in the design and delivery of affordable rental housing.

## Introduction

The cohort will leverage POAH's expertise in trauma-informed housing practices and HPN's collaborative model and track record. We will test implementation of people-centered, trauma-informed practices among an early adopter cohort of 10 to 15 affordable rental housing owners in diverse markets and communities across the U.S. The cohort will build on POAH's learnings and experiences to date and field test strategies, evaluate feasibility, and develop additional resources and tools to scale implementation and profoundly influence housing policy and practice. The ultimate goal is to develop a more equitable housing system, one that improves resident outcomes while contributing to property stability and organizational sustainability.

To achieve these outcomes, we are proposing a 24-month effort to design and implement a cohort of early adopters to test person-centered, trauma-informed approaches. The effort will consist of two Phases:

- Phase 1: A six-month planning phase
- Phase 2: A roughly 18-month implementation phase.

This RFP is primarily concerned with selecting a consultant for Phase 1, but interested applicants should consider their ability to also deliver on Phase 2 objectives.

To ensure learnings are broadly applicable in the sector, the cohort will be comprised of 10 to 15 affordable housing owners/operators, primarily HPN non-profit members, as well as a small number of public housing authorities and for-profit providers.

Participating organizations will be required to demonstrate executive level buy-in and will commit to testing approaches across multiple business functions (including building design, real estate development, property operations, resident services, and human resources). The cohort will include a combination of training/knowledge sharing, practitioner testing, peer exchange, and identification and development of tools and resources. The cohort will engage content experts and industry professionals, with expertise in property and asset management, and real estate development.

The cohort will produce case studies of promising strategies, challenges encountered and addressed, and resources targeted to a wide audience of owner/operators.

Alongside the cohort, HPN and POAH will also develop a highly scalable training curriculum to help other owner/operators kick-start their adoption of trauma-informed practices. We believe these experiences across a diverse cohort and this set of tools will provide the necessary roadmap for expansion of person-centered, trauma-informed



housing across the sector. The long-term impact of the roadmap will be increasingly safe, stable housing communities and improved resident economic mobility and satisfaction.

## Background

In 2020, Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) undertook an ambitious effort to apply trauma-informed principles to the development and operation of affordable housing as a winner of the Breakthrough Challenge, sponsored by Enterprise Community Partners and Wells Fargo. Through staff and community engagement, they developed a [Trauma-Informed Housing Toolkit](#) sharing their approach to trauma informed housing, guides for organizations seeking to undertake these efforts, and case studies. On their journey to becoming a trauma-informed housing organization, POAH examined their practices in housing design and development, property operations (including property management and resident services) and human resources, and in partnership with residents and staff, developed resident-centered solutions and practices that considered trauma at multiple scales—including personal, environmental and systemic.

Over the past year, POAH has shared its toolkit and experience with HPN members through in-person and virtual peer exchanges. Members have expressed enthusiasm for adopting these practices, as well as a need for more support in adapting them to their own organizations. HPN has experience working with members and sector partners to develop innovative, practitioner-informed solutions to challenges in the sector, such as its development of an Insurance Captive for its multifamily affordable housing providers, as well as a collaborative of Community Development Financial Institutions that have co-developed a new mortgage product to support borrowers with low wealth achieve homeownership. HPN is well positioned to work in partnership with POAH to build on their trauma-informed work and utilize its platform to advance adoption across the affordable housing sector.

## Scope of Work

HPN and POAH are currently seeking consultant support for Phase 1, with consideration for someone that has the skills necessary to support the implementation of Phase 2.

The selected consultant will be responsible for the following Phase 1 tasks:



### **Assessment & Phase Design:**

- Conduct a thorough assessment of HPN's and POAH's needs and objectives.
- Engage with key stakeholders to identify critical issues, goals, and expectations.
- Support HPN and POAH in articulating the use case for the cohort in context of affordable rental housing, including strategy, intended outcomes, intended impact.

### **Cohort Design:**

- Support HPN and POAH to develop a detailed design for the cohort, including structure, objectives, and participant criteria.
- Design a framework for cohort activities, meetings, and collaborative efforts.
- Identify needed external support for cohort participants, including identification of TA consultants
- Provide Project Management support to HPN and POAH on all Phase 1 activities
- Create a comprehensive implementation plan that outlines key milestones, timelines, and resource requirements.
- Provide guidance on recruitment strategies and participant engagement.

### **Fundraising Support:**

- Support HPN and POAH to build the case for funders, primarily through written communication. Note: consultant will not be responsible for raising funds for the cohort, but for supporting HPN and POAH in their efforts to fundraise.

### **Key Dates:**

- Overall consultant engagement expected to start November 2024 and end February 2025, with optional extension.
- Consultant will be expected to travel to Austin, TX for HPN's Member Meeting, December 4-6, 2024.

HPN and POAH may prioritize proposals that also meet the needs of the following Phase 2 tasks. A separate RFP for Phase 2 may be issued at a later date:

Facilitation and Coordination of Technical Assistance:

- Facilitate initial cohort meetings and activities.
- Offer ongoing support and adjustments based on feedback and emerging needs.
- Support HPN and POAH to identify technical assistance needs for cohort participants and help identify potential TA consultants (possible areas of



expertise include: design, property operations, community engagement, mental and behavioral health, etc.)

- Manage pass through funding for participants.

### **Evaluation and Reporting:**

- Support HPN and POAH to develop metrics and methods for evaluating the cohort's effectiveness.
- Provide regular progress reports and a final evaluation report with recommendations.

### **Qualifications**

The ideal consultant will have:

- Expertise in the affordable housing sector or related fields, including a personal network of practitioners on which to draw for technical assistance.
- Proven experience in designing and implementing similar cohort or collaborative initiatives.
- Strong facilitation and project management skills.
- Excellent oral and written communication and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders.

### **Proposal Requirements**

Interested consultants should submit a proposal that includes:

- Overview of Approach: Description of the methodology and approach for fulfilling the scope of work.
- Project Plan: Detailed project plan including timelines, key milestones, and deliverables.
- Budget: Detailed budget including consultant fees and any additional costs.
- Attachments:
  - References: Contact information for at least three professional references.
  - Experience and Qualifications: Information on relevant experience, including case studies or examples of similar projects.
  - Resumes of key personnel involved.
  - Information on commitment to DEI initiatives, such as your organization's DEI pledge/commitment



Proposals should be no more than 5 pages in length (not including attachments).

## Submission Instructions

Please submit your proposal electronically to Simone Pope at [pope@housingpartnership.net](mailto:pope@housingpartnership.net) by September 25, 2024. For any inquiries or clarifications, contact Meaghan McCarthy at [mccarthy@housingpartnership.net](mailto:mccarthy@housingpartnership.net).

## Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Understanding of the project and approach
- Relevant experience and qualifications
- Feasibility and clarity of the project plan
- Cost-effectiveness and budget justification
- Feedback from references.

## ABOUT HPN

Proving that strong, independent organizations can do more together than alone, the Housing Partnership Network (HPN) is a national collaborative of 100+ leading housing and community development nonprofits as well as an Aerie-rated CDFI and HUD-approved housing counseling intermediary. HPN members include affordable housing developers and owners, housing counseling agencies, CDFIs, and public housing authorities. Members include affordable housing developers and owners, and CDFIs. They work across the nation, in metro areas and rural communities collectively providing almost 1.5 million of currently available affordable homes in the U.S., housing approximately 6 million people.

Through practitioner-driven peer exchange, policy, and innovation, HPN's mission is to leverage the individual strengths and mobilize the collective power of member organizations. Our vision is that all people live in vibrant, inclusive, healthy communities, where access to safe, affordable, and sustainable homes creates opportunity, wealth building, and economic mobility. A multifaceted 2024-2026 Strategic Framework articulates pathways to transform America's affordable housing system.

HPN programs/services advance policies, practice, and social enterprises that improve housing affordability and stability and create opportunities for residents to build assets to confront the racial wealth gap, which is estimated to realize an \$8 trillion gain in U.S. GDP if closed by 2050.



## **ABOUT POAH**

Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) is a nonprofit developer, owner and operator of nearly 13,000 affordable homes in eleven states and the District of

Columbia. POAH's primary mission is to preserve, create and sustain affordable, healthy homes that support economic security, racial equity, and access to opportunity for all.

POAH specializes in the preservation of existing affordable housing that is at risk of being lost due to market pressures or physical deterioration. POAH has expertise in new construction and neighborhood-scale mixed-income development and mixed-use redevelopments. POAH's communities serve a broad range of households, including families, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

In 2020, POAH was one of six organizations awarded a grant from the inaugural Housing Affordability Breakthrough Challenge for its project "Designing Trauma-Resilient Communities." Due to this project, POAH produced a toolkit and framework for Trauma-Informed Housing. The goal of Trauma-Informed Housing is a more effective and equitable model for affordable housing that increases staff wellbeing and retention and improves resident experience, all while improving property performance