



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS –NARRATIVE CHANGE

Housing Partnership Network (HPN) seeks a consultant to support in developing, articulating and promoting a positive narrative for the affordable housing sector to support our systems change work. The consultant will work with HPN’s CEO and Policy and Communications Teams. Through the narrative change process, we hope to:

- Understand the current narrative around affordable housing and mission-driven housing organizations
- Identify the narrative shift that would be required to build a case for our vision of a new housing system, support the reputation of the nonprofit housing sector, and clearly define how the sector is an integral part of the solution to the affordable housing crisis.
- Promote a positive narrative for the affordable housing sector that clarifies and emphasizes the sector’s important role in addressing the housing crisis in the U.S., supporting community development, and driving economic mobility and racial equity.

Introduction

Housing Partnership Network is a national nonprofit that supports affordable housing efforts throughout America. HPN is an award-winning business collaborative of 100+ of the nation’s leading housing and community development organizations. Though we are a member driven network at our core, HPN is not a typical trade organization. We’re inventors, doers, and social entrepreneurs.

HPN facilitates peer-to-peer learning and promotes policy and practice that is based on the proven experience of some of the nation’s most successful nonprofits. Through our unique networked approach, organizations and leaders accelerate and scale innovation to more rapidly respond to changing market challenges and opportunities. Together, we have created and operate a family of social enterprises that strengthen the business performance and social impact of our members.

HPN works across multiple areas to support our members and their communities, including lending, peer exchange, policy, social enterprises and programs.

Through collaborative work across its divisions, HPN has a high impact network:

- 1.3 million families counseled in homeownership and financial literacy
- 356,000 rental units owned by HPN members
- 22,800 people employed by HPN Members
- 179 billion+ value of housing and community facilities developed and financed

- 110 Member Organizations

Current State: The Urgency is Now

We know that where someone lives is the foundation for economic stability, wealth building, job security, and so many other aspects of wellbeing and self-sufficiency. However, for too many people, a stable and affordable home is out of reach. HPN members work to meet the housing and economic needs in their communities--but they are often fighting an uphill battle of scarce resources, increasing costs, and a lack of urgency to address the problem.

In recent years, HPN members have been operating in an increasingly difficult environment with rising operating costs, persistent challenges with rent arrears, and the pressures to help address societal issues such as homelessness and racial inequity. The mission of HPN members is to house people and to create equitable thriving communities; yet, as owner/operators they are sometimes lumped together with profit-motivated landlords and framed as in conflict with the interests of residents.

HPN's ambitious [2024-2026 Strategic Framework](#) aims to address the urgency of now while setting the stage for transformative systems change. This strategic framework defines HPN's key areas of focus over the next three years, to (i) Strengthen Member Impact & Capacity; (ii) Advance Housing Justice & Racial Equity; (iii) Sustain & Expand the Supply of Affordable Homes; (iv) Catalyze Systems Change; and (v) Drive Operational and Financial Excellence.

Under "Catalyze Systems Change" are two overarching objectives:

- Articulate and promote a positive narrative for the affordable housing sector that clarifies and emphasizes the sector's important role in addressing the housing crisis in the U.S., supporting community development, and driving economic mobility and racial equity
- Develop and advance a national housing strategy vision that proposes equitable, just, forward-thinking solutions to remove barriers and constraints, expand and increase funding and resources, and streamline processes to modernize the nation's current housing delivery systems

Communication Goals

We are seeking to better understand the narrative around affordable housing and mission-driven housing organizations to set the stage for communication efforts that highlight the importance of affordable housing to all communities, and the critical role HPN members play in achieving it.



HPN is simultaneously working on a vision for a national housing strategy and will use this initial narrative work as the basis of an eventual campaign to promote that strategy with partners, policymakers and the public. HPN is looking to identify the narrative shift that would be required to build a case for our vision of a new housing system, support the reputation of the nonprofit housing sector, and clearly define how the sector is an integral part of the solution to the affordable housing crisis.

We are seeking professional services from one or more consultants to execute on our systems change objectives over the next 6-18 months. Respondents are asked to bid on Phase One and Phase Two with Phase Three to be defined and negotiated after completion of Phase One and Two. This work will be the first step of ongoing investments in systems change to transform America's affordable housing system:

Phase one:

- Complete an analysis of the existing narrative(s) around affordable housing, specifically how the severity of the challenge is perceived and communicated and the role of nonprofit and mission-focused affordable housing organizations in addressing existing challenges.
- Using this report, determine the opportunities to add to ongoing conversations and areas of challenge where we may need to shift the existing narrative.

Phase two:

- Create a set of communication tools for HPN to use to shift the narrative. That work may include:
 - Identifying target audiences
 - Creation of key messaging points and position statement(s)
 - Creation of dissemination plan/strategy (including goals, mechanisms, partners, communications ladder, etc.)

Phase three:

- Implementation of the plan to shift the narrative.

Timing and Scope of Services & Deliverables



Respondents to this RFP should propose a set of tasks and deliverables that will achieve the aims articulated above in the required timeframe. HPN expects this work to involve engagement with stakeholders and include meetings, activities and documents. HPN is fully committed to doing what it takes to meet the ambitious demands of this venture.

Project Schedule

HPN seeks to initiate this narrative change work in Fall 2024. We expect the initial engagement (Phases one and two) to last six to twelve months. We anticipate that this work can all be done virtually, however in the event an in-person meeting is required appropriate compensation for time and travel will be provided.

Interested? Please send us a proposal!

We appreciate the time and effort it takes to prepare a proposal. If you are interested in working with HPN on this project, please provide the following no later than August 30, 2024:

- Organization name, website, telephone, and contact information of an individual who will serve as the primary communicator
- Description of your organization and your history of working with non-profit organizations (particularly in the affordable housing space) and CDFIs, your communications experience including any work on narrative change
- A detailed explanation of your approach to our narrative change work (we invite creativity and innovative approaches)
- Short biographies/backgrounds of key staff, including information about diversity of staff and leadership
- Commitment to DEI initiatives, such as DEI pledge/commitment
- Examples of past work relevant to HPN's aims. Related examples to the following are preferred:
 - Affordable Housing, CDFIs and Non-profits
 - Underserved Communities
 - Social Impact Organizations and Campaigns
- Estimated costs and anticipated expenses
- A schedule and timeline

HPN reviews proposals, hires consultants, and employs staff with a deep commitment to diversity, equity and providing opportunity for those of us from communities that have been underserved on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, gender, national origin, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, marital or familial status, ancestry, or status as a veteran. Businesses owned and run by people of those communities are strongly encouraged to apply.



Please email your proposal to: communication@housingpartnership.net

For any questions about this RFP, please contact communication@housingpartnership.net

All Applications are Due by August 30, 2024.