

Richland County Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan

Richland County Regional Planning Commission (RCRPC) is requesting proposals from experienced individuals or firms to provide consulting services for a **Richland County Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan**. We seek qualified firms who have experience working with small cities, villages, and townships on housing.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) document may be obtained at www.rcrpc.org or by contacting Jotika Shetty, Executive Director, at jshetty@rcrpc.org (Phone 419-774-6202).

Any questions regarding the RFP can be directed in writing to Jotika Shetty at jshetty@rcrpc.org or at the Richland County Regional Planning Commission address listed. Written answers, including any amendments to the RFP if necessary will be posted on RCRPC's website.

Consultants interested in being considered must submit a **PDF format copy of their proposal via email to jshetty@rcrpc.org** with subject line **Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan**. Respondents should expect an email reply upon submission. Proposals will be received by RCRPC **until 4.30pm (ET), December 17, 2021**.

Richland County Regional Planning Commission in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the related nondiscrimination statutes, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, all bidders including disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, disability, in consideration for an award.

Neither RCRPC nor any member agency of the committee shall be liable for any costs incurred by the consultant in response to this RFP, or any costs incurred in connection with any discussions, correspondence, or attendance at interviews or negotiation sessions.

All materials submitted in response to this RFP shall become the property of RCRPC and may be returned only at RCRPC's option.

All materials received shall be considered public information and shall be open to public inspection.

Richland County, Ohio

A. Introduction and Background

Richland County, Ohio (2020 census pop. 124,936) and its cities and villages are on a path of revitalization in recent years thanks to leadership, creative partnerships, and new investment. The County was one of the few rural counties in Ohio to experience a modest growth in population in the 2020 Census, and now finds itself at a place of needing to develop and incentivize new housing at all levels in the market.

The County housing market was impacted by the foreclosure crisis of 2008. The impact was mostly felt in the urban areas with County seat, Mansfield hit the hardest. Neighborhoods saw property deterioration and housing instability with the market changing from home ownership to rental and widespread vacancy and foreclosures. The most critical driving force behind the blight created as a result of the foreclosure and abandonment crisis were employment and labor force trends when the area saw a decline in their manufacturing base as a result of automation and the relocation of their operations overseas.

The County since then has utilized the CDBG and HOME funds, more recently the Neighborhood Initiative Program funds to try to re-energize the slumping housing market and help stabilize the neighborhoods affected. The county has an active Land Bank since 2013, which has acquired, demolished and returned eye sore properties to productive use.

Mansfield, a city of 47,625 is the central hub of business and life in Richland County. The city is highly accessible being located off Interstate 71 (I-71) and US Route 30 (US 30), halfway between Cleveland and Columbus, making it within a day's drive of half of the United States and Canadian populations. World class industries like The Gorman-Rupp Company have discovered the strategic advantages of starting their business in, or moving to, Richland County. The workforce is supported by ten different educational institutions, such as the Mansfield campus of The Ohio State University and North Central State College. These institutions offer everything from industry certifications to associates degrees to doctorate programs.

As conditions improve, there is a need for the communities to be strategic rather than transactional and allow these efforts to lead to a successful return to a robust and flourishing housing market that meets the needs of the community and attracts new workforce. Several organizations are invested in improving access to housing and seeking to develop a shared vision and strategy.

B. Scope of Services

Richland County is seeking a qualified consultant (Consultant") to develop a comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan ("Plan") to identify a range of implementation tools and strategies to further the overall goal of providing a variety of housing opportunities for all residents of Richland County and its communities. A component of the Plan will be to identify and implement proactive programs and policies that advance the goal of developing, preserving, and expanding housing opportunities for persons and households with low incomes (HUD Qualified). The consultant will for all tasks in the Plan include this component in their data collection and recommendations. Consultant shall bill separately for all services directly related to this component and shall separately maintain documentation supporting this billing for federal grant eligibility and audit purposes.

The purpose of the Plan is to analyze the housing stock and housing market in Richland County, inventory existing housing resources, identify gaps in the local housing market, identify trends that may affect the housing market over time, increase home ownership, and develop strategies to address the current and future needs of the community, with the overall goal of ensuring that housing opportunities are provided for households of all types, ages, and income levels.

The Plan will help Richland County agencies, housing providers, housing developers, nonprofit organizations, and decision makers develop a better understanding of the existing housing market and update intervention strategies including land use and zoning decisions, and encourage housing development projects that meet both market demand and community priorities. The Plan should help guide decisions related to the allocation of public funds and other resources.

RCRPC believes that while independent, separate housing needs assessment and action plans could be completed for each of the municipality within Richland County, taking a comprehensive approach with a county-wide project would not only result in a better and more actionable end product, but would also more accurately take into account the dynamics of how the communities are interrelated, from commuting patterns to employment crossover. For this approach, the consultant using data and professional opinion will help identify upto six (6) municipalities or geographic areas in the county that will serve as '**nodes**' for this project.

The following is not intended to be a comprehensive itemization of tasks or activities needed to complete this Plan, but rather a guide. RCRPC will rely on its consultant's professional expertise to ensure that all pertinent factors are analyzed, and is open to additional or alternative approaches to achieve the overall goal of analyzing housing needs.

The Plan will address the following issues for Richland County and each node:

- Population demographic projections
- Existing and future need for housing type and housing choices, including: starter homes, low-moderate income homes, single family homes, luxury homes, and high density homes
- Housing choices for special populations, including veterans, elderly, low income, young professionals, working class, affluent, persons with disabilities or other special housing needs
- Rental Housing Market
- Homelessness, housing instability/insecurity, supportive housing, and affordable housing
- Impacts from COVID-19 (e.g., delayed evictions and foreclosures)
- Aging housing stock
- Infill housing
- Market potential to attract new housing development as the needs assessment dictates
- Coordination of housing with land use, schools, services and transportation infrastructure
- Zoning, permitting, development standards, design quality

TASK 1: Housing Initiatives

The consultant will:

1. Inventory and review existing documentation and plans, studies, efforts, organizations, and programs relevant to the housing market.
2. Identify sources of funding for technical assistance for housing and other related programs included in the current housing initiatives.
3. Review programs to identify redundancy, coordination, and collaboration across multiple agency efforts.

4. Meet and interview major stakeholders as necessary to discuss the county's housing needs and existing efforts.
5. Synthesize the baseline inventory of current services, capacity and programs of private, nonprofit, and public operators, and providers.
6. The consultant will recommend municipalities and geographic area that will serve as nodes for the Plan.

Deliverable: The consultant will provide a Baseline Housing Initiatives Report containing the information gathered in Task 1.

TASK 2: Demographic, Geographic and Housing Inventory Data

For the county and identified nodes the consultant will:

1. Gather socioeconomic and housing related data including but not limited to demographics, age, households, and employment.
2. Conduct population forecasting.
3. Examine income, housing cost-burden, poverty, homelessness, sensitive populations; the elderly, disabled, etc. and identify any geographic concentrated areas of poverty.
4. Provide a rental and owner occupied housing inventory and provide specific metrics for ownership, type of dwelling, age and condition of units, historical status, neighborhood character, access to utilities, transportation, employment, etc.
5. Provide an inventory of existing subsidized housing, including availability, new or future subsidized housing, and other dwellings which serve as transitional and emergency housing.
6. The consultant will research proposed housing units, planned developments, and housing trends across each node and the county as a whole.

Deliverable: The consultant will provide a Technical Memorandum or other document of summary containing the information gathered in Task 2.

TASK 3: Market Analysis

For the County and identified nodes the consultant will:

1. Study residential real estate trends of all types of housing including an analysis of sales prices, length of time on the market, and other relevant real estate indicators. Interview realtors and lenders.
2. Study market rate for rental units and availability of rental units. Units shall be distinguished by type, number of bedrooms, size, and location in the analysis. Interview rental property managers and owners.
3. Analyze home and rental affordability to inform housing and rental assistance programs.
4. Analyze available and future housing for community services and schools.
5. Analyze the impact of COVID on the housing market including evictions and foreclosures.
6. Include information on new residential development, types of housing being built, per node and trends across the county.
7. Identify impediments to housing development, including but not limited to zoning and permitting. Interview developers to better understand impediments to housing development.
8. Quantify the impact of market forces such as cost and availability of developable land, utilities costs, and any other market forces the consultant believes are pertinent.
9. Included in this report should be a summary of trends, historical data, and future projections of the housing market. Historical data of ten years shall be included, and a period of ten years for futuristic projections.

Deliverable: The consultant will provide a Market Analysis Report containing the information gathered in Task 4.

TASK 4: Housing Needs Assessment

The results of the demographic study, housing inventory and market analysis conducted above shall be synthesized and presented to determine what deficiencies and surpluses of housing units exist for owner and renter households of various sizes, incomes, and types. This gap analysis will help identify housing needs in the communities and aid efforts to develop and prioritize an action plan to address these needs. The goal is to provide an estimate of the number of housing units needed (both rental and for sale) to meet the existing and future needs of the communities based on unit type, number of bedrooms, price point, and location in relation to income levels and age categories.

Deliverable: The consultant will provide a Needs Assessment Report containing the information gathered in Task 4

TASK 5: Develop Recommendations and Implementation Strategies

The consultant will develop recommendations for meeting current and future housing needs in each node and for Richland County:

- a. Develop strategies to increase housing attainability and housing choices identified in the Plan.
- b. Develop strategies and programs to develop, preserve, and expand housing opportunities for persons and households with low incomes (HUD qualified).
- c. Develop strategies to meet the workforce housing needs of the existing and desired residents (knowledge workers, service workers, entrepreneurs, etc.).
- d. Identify sources of funding (federal, state, local and private resources) for assistance for housing development and other related programs.
- e. Develop strategies to combat deterioration and encourage preservation of the older housing stock.
- f. Provide recommendations to overcome identified structural impediments to housing development and housing attainability in the county.
- g. Identify policies and tools including incentives that have successfully been used to spur different kinds of housing development.
- h. Recommend projects that have potential for funding and development.
- i. Identify strategic options for promoting or attracting market rate developers.
- j. Provide recommendations for long term capacity building and improved collaboration among entities to implement recommendations.
- k. Include action steps specific to each entity or entities that would implement the proposed strategies
- l. Include metrics for individual communities and the county as a whole to judge the performance of the housing market in meeting the needs of our residents.

Deliverable: The consultant will provide the above along with an implementation framework identifying actions, indicators, timelines, and responsible organizations from information gathered in previous Tasks.

Consultant will prepare a final draft of the study and a separate Executive Summary for presentation to the Steering Committee and incorporate changes requested by the Steering Committee.

TASK 6: Final Document and Presentation

Deliverable: The Consultant shall provide one (1) original, six (6) paper copies, and one (1) electronic copy of a visually appealing Final Report of the Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan and an Executive Summary, one (1) paper copy and one (1) electronic copy of the PowerPoint presentation summarizing the report's findings and recommendations, one (1) electronic copy of all GIS shape files and maps, and other supplementary data.

C. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND STEERING COMMITTEE

The consultant will undertake a meaningful, inclusive public participation program that engages stakeholders and community members in effective, meaningful ways. To understand the perspectives, preferences, and perceptions of area residents, a public engagement strategy should be planned. Careful attention should be given to soliciting response and participation from low-income residents and those who serve them. Upon completion of the Housing Needs Assessment Report, consultants shall introduce various stakeholders to the specific housing challenges facing Richland County and solicit feedback and comments on how to best prioritize an action plan. We anticipate meetings with stakeholders to include public officials and the general public. We are open to alternative, or additional, methods of soliciting feedback which could include online engagement.

A Housing Development Steering Committee made of diverse representation of the county including residents, community leaders and staff has been established. The committee will review the proposals, assist with selecting the teams/consultants, and work with the consultant to develop the final strategy.

D. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Commission staff and the Housing Development Steering Committee commits to timely responses and a collaborative working relationship with the selected firm and will provide the following:

- a. Available GIS information and data as requested
- b. Community plans
- c. Zoning and subdivision codes and maps
- d. Identifying and communicating with stakeholders as needed

E. Procurement Schedule

The schedule for the RFP is given below. Dates are tentative and may be modified by RCRPC as necessary.

Task	Date
Proposals requested	November 18, 2021
Proposal submission deadline	December 17, 2021 @ 4.30pm to RCRPC
Proposals opened	December 20, 2021 , 9.00 am at RCRPC office
Interview scheduled	January 17-21, 2022

Contract awarded	February 23, 2022
Project Begin	March 01, 2022
Project Completion	October 31, 2022

F. PROPOSALS:

Proposals shall include the following information:

1. *Title Page*

List the RFP subject, the name of the firm, address, telephone number, name of contact person and the date.

2. *Letter of Transmittal*

Make a positive commitment to perform the required work within the time period. Also give the name(s) of the person(s) who will be authorized to represent the firm, their title, and telephone number.

3. *Project Statement*

A project narrative that describes the respondent's understanding of small urban and rural housing needs and markets, as well as the value the respondent will bring to the creation of the Plan.

4. *Qualifications*

- 1) Name, address and telephone number of the firm's owners, and full information about the corporate structure of the submitting firm.
- 2) Names, qualifications, and experience of personnel relative to project requirements, who are to be assigned to the project.
- 3) Description of similar project experience and the names, addresses, and telephone number of owners for all projects described (references will be checked).
- 4) Project team availability and capacity
- 5) If subcontracts are utilized, the position in the project team and identity of the sub-contractor shall be stated.

5. *Project Approach*

- 1) A summary of the project approach and work plan the respondent will use to perform the services required and creation of the Plan as outlined in this RFP. The proposal should address the tasks described in Section B. and Section C. In addition, please explain any aspect of your method that is unique or innovative.
- 2) Also, administrative information, such as the consultant's status reporting procedures and the consultant's approach to effective communication with RCRPC personnel, shall be included.

6. *Project History and References*

- 1) Provide complete project history for minimum three (3) projects from the consultant which meets the minimum qualification requirements. These projects will be considered in evaluating the qualifications. The information must include:
- 2) Project name and location
- 3) Name, address and telephone number for project contact person.
- 4) Description of the project including:
 - 4.1. Type of project
 - 4.2. Initial and completion project budget and schedule
 - 4.3. Name, title and role of personnel used to perform services
 - 4.4. Project design and delivery method used

7. *Budget proposal*

Proposed contract fees specifying a fixed fee shall be submitted containing a schedule of the estimated hours required and are to be broken down by type of personnel to be used for the proposed services. The expected budget for this project is \$100,000.

- 1) Breakdowns are to be shown separately for each Task listed under "Scope of Work". Overhead factors and other multipliers shall be identified. Upon the award of this contract, profit (either percent or actual cost) must be identified and negotiated as a separate element of the price for any contract.
- 2) Due to the funding sources being used for the Plan, the consultant should identify the cost involved in developing the affordable housing component of the Plan to expand housing opportunities for persons and households with low incomes (HUD Qualified).
- 3) The consultant shall be responsible for all required resources to include but not limited to computers, surveys, outside consultants, etc.
- 4) While cost will not be the sole determining factor, cost will be considered.

8. *Project Schedule*

Included as part of the proposal, the proposer shall provide a schedule to ensure that the project can be completed by October 31, 2022. If the consultant believes this will adversely affect the quality of the project, the consultant should explain why.

9. Any proposed modifications to the project scope, including additions to or deletions from the scope in this RFP. If scope modifications are proposed, please provide reasoning or rationale. It is recommended that the proposal address the scope of services and budget included with this RFP in addition to the alternative scope and budget.
10. Any additional information that will allow the commission to accurately evaluate the firm's capability.

G. EVALUATION PROCEDURE:

All proposals will be evaluated to determine if they meet the requirements of the Request for Proposals. RCRPC may, as it deems necessary, conduct discussions with the consultants it deems

reasonably suspected of being selected for award, for the purpose of clarification and responsiveness to requirements.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. General Quality & Adequacy of Response - 10%
 - i. Completeness and thoroughness
 - ii. Responsiveness to terms and conditions
 - iii. Overall impression
2. Personnel, Experience & Project Management – 30%
 - i. Qualifications and experience of proposed personnel, including project manager
 - ii. Demonstrated capacity to do the work
 - iii. Plan area understanding and experience
3. Technical Approach, Work Plan & Budget – 60%
 - i. Clarity and organization in concept development
 - ii. Approach to scope of work, including the ability to derive creative solutions
 - iii. Addresses expected outcomes
 - iv. Relevant knowledge, skills & experience with the project
 - v. Proposed budget based on proposed scope
 - vi. Proposal is in the best interest of Richland County

H. PROPOSAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

The scope of work contained in this document is predicated upon the following provisions, assumptions, and conditions that should be part of any proposal and budget submitted by a consultant.

1. Evaluation of Proposal Compliance with Specifications

Understanding that no consultant may completely meet all requirements of the specifications, RCRPC reserves the sole right to determine whether a proposal substantially complies with the specifications; accept, negotiate modifications to, or reject the terms of any proposal; and waive the right to accept a part, or parts, of a proposal, unless otherwise restricted in the proposal.

RCRPC reserves the right to reject any or all responses and to waive any informality in the process when to do so would be to the advantage of the Commission.

RCRPC, in its sole discretion, may choose not to award a contract at any time because of unforeseen circumstances or if it is determined to be in the best interest of the commission not to do so.

2. Proposer Qualifications

RCRPC may require all proposers to submit evidence of qualifications, and may consider any evidence of the financial, technical, and other qualifications and abilities. RCRPC will not award a contract to a proposer who, in its opinion, is not fully qualified on the basis of financial resources

and responsibility, possession of adequate equipment, personnel, experience, and past record of performance to perform the obligation to be undertaken competently and without delay.

3. Confidentiality

All information, not in the public domain, disclosed to the consultant for project completion purposes or information that comes to the attention of the consultant during the course of performing such work is to be kept strictly confidential.

4. Award of Contract:

Each consultant acknowledges that RCRPC will use its discretion and judgment in making the final decision and further acknowledges that no claim by the consultant will arise in any way relating to the exercise of that judgment by RCRPC. RCRPC's Executive Director is the only individual who may legally commit RCRPC to the expenditure of public funds. No cost chargeable to the proposed contract may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed contract or a specific, written authorization to proceed.

5. Ownership of Products

RCRPC will retain the copyright for all data, materials, information, processes, studies, reports, surveys, proposals, plans, codes, scientific information, technological information, regulations, maps, equipment, charts, schedules, photographs, exhibits, software, software source code, documentation, and other materials and property that are prepared, developed or created under or in connection with this project. Therefore the submitter should anticipate that all products of this work effort will become the property of RCRPC who will make them available to other government agencies and their contractors.

I. CONTRACTING REQUIREMENTS

The following are not part of the proposal requirements but will be requirements in the contract in addition to other contractual requirements.

1. Compensation

A not-to-exceed contract amount based on satisfactory work performed and services delivered will be entered into after negotiations between RCRPC and the selected firm.

Alternative compensation models may be considered.

2. Cancellation

RCRPC reserves the right to cancel any contract for failure or refusal of performance, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, collusion, or any other misconduct on the part of the consultant.

3. Unresolved Finding for Recovery

The selected consultant affirmatively represents and warrants to RCRPC that it is not subject to a finding for recovery under ORC 9.24 or that it has taken appropriate remedial steps required under ORC 9.24 or otherwise qualifies under that section. The consultant agrees that if this representation or warranty is deemed to be false, the agreement shall be void ab initio as between the parties to this agreement, and any funds paid by RCRPC to the consultant hereunder shall be repaid to RCRPC immediately, or an action for recovery may be commenced immediately by RCRPC for recovery of said funds.

4. Covenants of Consultant

The consultant will be required to covenant and warrant the following:

1. Consultant is not debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in any contract, supported in whole or in part by the funding sources for this project;
2. Consultant has not within a three (3) year period had one or more public transactions terminated for cause or default;
3. Consultant will comply with the provisions of Section 1352, Title 31 of the U.S. Code, which prohibits the use of federal funds to lobby any official or employee of any federal agency, or member or employee of Congress; and to disclose any lobbying activities in connection with federal funds.
4. Consultant must carry insurance policies which protect RCRPC, commission members, and employees from any claims, suits, etc. of the consultant's employees or equipment used for the project on those items listed in the Scope of Work. In addition, liability insurance coverage must be provided to protect itself from claims under workers compensation acts; claims for damages because of bodily injury including personal injury, sickness or disease, or death of any of its employees or of any person other than its employees; and from destruction of tangible property including loss of use resulting therefrom; and from claims arising out of the performance of professional services caused by any errors, omission, or negligent acts for which they are legally liable.