



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)  
FOR  
INNOVATIVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING FINANCING  
AND LAND USE STRATEGIES

Issued by:

City of Charlotte  
Housing & Neighborhood Services  
600 East Trade Street  
Charlotte, NC 28202

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

The City of Charlotte is seeking Statements of Qualifications (SOQ) from experienced consulting firms with expertise in financial, legal, and land use strategies for affordable housing. The selected firm will assist the city in developing and implementing innovative strategies to leverage diverse funding sources, optimize land use, and enhance housing affordability. This effort will be supported by the city's collaborative relationships with Mecklenburg County and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System (CMS), ensuring alignment and coordination across public entities to maximize impact and resource efficiency.

Charlotte faces increasing challenges in providing affordable housing, requiring collaborative and innovative approaches to financing and land use planning. Key areas of focus include:

**Financial Innovation:** Developing loan products and blending public, private, and philanthropic funding sources, with an emphasis on incentives for mixed-income developments. The City is particularly interested in strategies that encourage the inclusion of 60-80% AMI units, addressing market-rate developers' concerns regarding Extremely Low-Income (ELI) households and leveraging the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) framework to align incentives with housing goals.

**Optimized Land Use:** Evaluating city, county, and school-owned parcels for affordable housing development while incorporating tools to analyze these opportunities systematically. Drawing from best practices, the city seeks actionable frameworks to assess and prioritize site utilization.

**Co-Located Developments:** Exploring opportunities to integrate housing with municipal facilities, such as libraries, schools, and public safety infrastructure, ensuring efficient land use and alignment with community needs.

To achieve these objectives, the city has allocated a maximum fee of \$95,000 for this work.

## 1.2 OBJECTIVES

The city seeks first to identify what of the following objectives will be most impactful to pursue given time and budget constraints, and then achieve the identified objectives by the end of this engagement:

- **Incentivize Mixed-Income Developments:** Develop financial tools and strategies to encourage market-rate developers to include units for households earning 60-80% AMI, leveraging lessons from UDO discussions and addressing potential barriers to participation.
- **Create Sustainable and Flexible Loan Product Models:** Use federal, state, and local funding sources, including Section 108 loans, and leverage private investment.

- **Develop Analytical Tools:** Create models and frameworks to evaluate development opportunities systematically, building on best practices such as Forsythe’s Rhode Island model for public development.
- **Mitigate Insurance Costs:** Identify and evaluate innovative solutions to reduce insurance costs for affordable housing developers, drawing inspiration from concepts like the CBCI model.
- **Optimize Land Use:** Evaluate and recommend approaches for developing affordable housing on city, county, and school district-owned parcels.
- **Innovate Co-Located Housing Models:** Propose models for co-locating affordable housing with municipal facilities such as libraries, schools, and public safety buildings.
- **Establish Public-Private Partnerships (P3s):** Develop frameworks that accelerate affordable housing development through collaboration with private and nonprofit sectors.
- **Ensure Equity and Compliance:** Align strategies with equity principles to address the needs of historically underserved populations while complying with federal, state, and local regulations.
- **Provide Actionable Recommendations:** Develop phased implementation plans with measurable benchmarks and outcomes.
- **Ensure Longevity and Self-Sufficiency:** Propose financial and operational models that guarantee the long-term sustainability of affordable housing initiatives.

### **1.3 SCOPE OF SERVICES**

The scope of services will meet city objectives found in the previous section and be developed in partnership with the selected firm. Qualified firms will demonstrate the ability to provide services in the following areas:

#### **Financial Strategy Development**

- Design and evaluate innovative financing models using public and private funds.
- Develop strategies for blending funding sources and leveraging federal programs, including Section 108 loans.
- Propose mechanisms to sustain affordable housing investments.

#### **Land Use Analysis**

- Identify financial and legal models for co-locating municipal services and housing developments.
- Evaluate and recommend various site control strategies, including acquisition, leasing, and partnerships with other public entities, while ensuring legal permissibility.
- Explore ground lease arrangements to maintain long-term affordability while allowing for innovative financing and ownership structures.
- Develop strategies for joint-use agreements on municipal or school-owned properties.
- Develop tools, frameworks and proven models to systematically analyze and prioritize site opportunities.

#### **Stakeholder Collaboration**

- Engage with public agencies, private developers, and other stakeholders to test proposed models and ensure the effectiveness of proposed financial tools.

- Propose frameworks for public-private partnerships (P3s) to accelerate affordable housing development.

### **Risk and Compliance Assessment**

- Evaluate potential financial, legal, and operational risks associated with proposed strategies.
- Ensure compliance with federal, state, and local housing regulations, including legal requirements specific to North Carolina.

### **Implementation Roadmap**

- Develop a phased implementation plan with actionable recommendations and measurable outcomes.
- Incorporate benchmarks to track progress and success, including metrics to evaluate legal and regulatory adherence.

## **1.4 PROPOSED AREAS OF INTEREST**

The city is committed to innovative solutions and exploring the following strategy types. These examples highlight potential avenues for collaboration but are not exhaustive. The city intends to co-develop the final scope of work with the selected firm to ensure the best use of time and expertise. This collaborative approach acknowledges that there may be other critical avenues of inquiry that we have not yet identified but should consider during the engagement.

### **1.4.1 Affordable Housing for Educators and Public Employees on School System-Owned Land**

The city is exploring the feasibility of affordable housing developments for educators and public employees on land owned by the local school system to address the critical need for stable housing options for this workforce. Proposers may be asked to address:

- **Legal Feasibility:** What legal and regulatory considerations must be addressed to develop affordable housing on land owned by the school system in North Carolina? How can these challenges be resolved collaboratively with school system stakeholders?
- **Ownership Structures:** What ownership models (e.g., rental, shared-equity, cooperative) would be most effective for such a development, and how would these structures impact long-term affordability and sustainability?
- **Financing Strategies:** How could financing mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships, grants, or tax incentives, be structured to support the development of housing for educators while ensuring affordability?
- **Integration with Educational Facilities:** How could the housing development be designed to complement existing educational facilities or programs, potentially integrating with school operations or offering community resources for educators?

### **1.4.2 Flexible Financing Solutions**

The city seeks to develop innovative financing mechanisms that include both leveraged and unleveraged loan products tailored to meet the diverse needs of affordable housing development.

These products should maximize flexibility and affordability while addressing critical gaps in financing options for developers. Proposers may be asked to address:

### **Leveraged Loan Products**

**Product Design:** How would you design a loan product that blends private and public funding to maximize affordability while ensuring an acceptable return for private investors?

**Scalability and Sustainability:** What strategies would you employ to ensure the blended loan product can scale effectively and remain financially sustainable over time?

**Risk Mitigation:** What financial, legal, or operational risks are associated with blended loan products, and how would you mitigate them?

**Stakeholder Engagement:** How would your firm work with private lenders, public agencies, and philanthropic organizations to secure funding and foster partnerships that support the implementation of this loan product?

### **Unleveraged Loan Products**

The city recognizes that in certain scenarios, short-term, unleveraged financing options may better meet the needs of developers and stakeholders. Proposers may be asked to address:

**Bridge Loans:** How could short-term bridge loans be structured to provide immediate financing for critical phases of development, such as land acquisition, construction starts, or securing permits? What strategies could mitigate risks associated with repayment?

**Refinancing Options:** What refinancing mechanisms could be offered to developers nearing the maturity of existing loans or facing changes in financial conditions? How could these options stabilize projects and preserve affordability?

**Predevelopment Loans:** How could unleveraged loans be tailored to support the predevelopment phase, such as funding for site planning, environmental reviews, or architectural designs?

**Emergency Financing:** What types of unleveraged, rapid-response loans could be deployed to address unforeseen challenges, such as escalating costs, delays, or market changes?

**Developer Capacity Support:** How could short-term unleveraged loans be used to support smaller or minority developers who may face barriers to accessing traditional financing, enabling them to participate in affordable housing projects?

### **Blended Loan Products**

**Combination Financing:** How could a hybrid model leverage both leveraged and unleveraged loan products to address specific project needs, such as using bridge loans to secure immediate funding alongside long-term blended loans for sustainability?

By addressing the need for both leveraged and unleveraged financing options, the city aims to create a robust and flexible financial toolkit to drive the development and preservation of affordable housing. Proposers are encouraged to present innovative, actionable approaches that align with these goals while ensuring financial sustainability and equity.

### 1.4.3 Co-located Public Services with Affordable Housing

The city is exploring the feasibility of co-locating public services with affordable housing developments to maximize land use efficiency and improve access to essential services. Proposers may be asked to address:

- **Land Ownership Models:** What innovative ownership structures (e.g., joint ventures, ground leases, public-private partnerships) could ensure long-term affordability while accommodating public service facilities such as police, fire, and code enforcement?
- **Financing Options:** How could such developments be financed, considering public and private funding sources? Explore options such as tax increment financing (TIF), community development block grants (CDBG), federal funding programs like Section 108 loans, or private impact investments.
- **Management Structures:** What operational frameworks could be used to manage the shared facilities effectively, ensuring the long-term sustainability of both housing and public service components?
- **Types of Financial Instruments:** Propose financial tools such as revenue bonds, low-income housing tax credits (LIHTCs), social impact bonds, or layered debt structures to fund and sustain co-located projects.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** How can public agencies, private developers, and non-profit organizations collaborate on such projects to ensure equitable outcomes and alignment with municipal goals?
- **Design and Integration:** Provide insights on how the facilities could be designed to optimize shared usage, encourage resident engagement, and complement surrounding community development.

These areas of innovation aim to spark creative and actionable strategies. The city values a partnership that allows flexibility to refine the focus during the engagement, ensuring that any newly identified opportunities are explored to maximize the impact of this work. Proposers are encouraged to demonstrate how their expertise, experience, and vision align with this collaborative approach.

## 1.5 PREFERRED RESPONDENT QUALIFICATIONS

To ensure the successful achievement of the city's objectives, the ideal respondent will meet the following qualifications:

### *Expertise and Experience*

- Demonstrated expertise in affordable housing finance, including the development of innovative financial models and loan products tailored to meet the specific financial and legal requirements of municipalities.
- Proven experience blending public, private, and philanthropic funding sources for affordable housing initiatives.
- Extensive knowledge of federal funding mechanisms, including Section 108 loans, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, and similar programs.
- A strong track record in land use planning and legal analysis, particularly in evaluating and optimizing property for housing and mixed-use development.
- Experience working on projects integrating housing with municipal facilities such as libraries, schools, and public safety buildings.

- Familiarity with North Carolina’s legal and regulatory framework for land use, housing, and finance.

### ***Project Management and Implementation***

- Demonstrated ability to design and implement phased project plans with actionable recommendations.
- Experience providing detailed implementation roadmaps that include measurable benchmarks and success metrics.
- Strong organizational skills, including the ability to manage stakeholder collaboration and deliver complex, multi-disciplinary projects on time.

### ***Risk Management and Compliance***

- Ability to identify and mitigate affordable housing strategies' financial, legal, and operational risks.
- Expertise in ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local regulations, including legal requirements specific to North Carolina.
- Experience navigating complex legal frameworks related to land acquisition, leasing, and joint-use agreements.

### ***Innovation and Sustainability***

- Demonstrated ability to propose innovative financial and land use strategies tailored to the unique requirements of the municipality.
- Experience developing financial and operational models that ensure long-term sustainability and self-sufficiency for affordable housing initiatives.
- A history of incorporating equity principles into project design and implementation, addressing the needs of historically underserved populations.

### ***Capacity and Resources***

- Adequate staffing and resources to immediately begin the project upon contract award.
- A team with diverse skill sets, including financial analysis, legal expertise, and land use planning.
- Access to or established relationships with national-level resources and networks to support the project’s objectives.

## **2 EVALUATION AND SELECTION CRITERIA**

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Staff will evaluate qualifications received by the submittal deadline. Based on the applicants' qualifications and how well the submittals respond to the requested criteria, staff will select the consultant whose combination of subject matter expertise and experience completing similar projects best meets the city's needs. Staff will then work with the selected firm to develop a scope of work and fee.



## 3 SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

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Respondents to this RFQ must follow the submission requirements outlined below to ensure their proposals are considered for evaluation. Application materials must be submitted by email to [warren.wooten@charlottenc.gov](mailto:warren.wooten@charlottenc.gov) and must include a cover letter with a signature from a principal or executive director of the proposing organization.

### Statement of Interest

Provide a statement detailing:

- The proposer's interest in the project and highlights of the organization's qualifications.
- Understanding of the objectives outlined in this RFQ.
- A brief description of the project team, including key members and their relevant expertise.

### Applicant Qualifications

- **Organizational Chart:** Include an organizational chart describing the entities and key personnel on the proposer's team.
- **Resumes:** Attach CVs for lead personnel, highlighting their expertise and relevant project experience.
- **Project Experience:** Provide a brief description of similar projects completed by the team within the past fifteen years, emphasizing outcomes and relevance to this RFQ.
- **References:** Include at least three letters of reference for each entity on the project team. References should be from parties or agencies involved in the listed projects.

### Narrative

Provide a narrative demonstrating the proposer's ability to engage in a collaborative and flexible approach to achieving the city's objectives. The city values partnerships emphasizing innovation and adaptability, ensuring the engagement can evolve to address emerging needs and maximize impact. The narrative should include:

**Approach:** Detail how the proposer will work collaboratively with the city to develop and execute the scope of services, focusing on creative, actionable strategies that leverage funding, optimize land use, and enhance housing affordability.

**Collaborative Impact:** Describe how the proposer's expertise, experience, and vision will contribute to refining the focus during the engagement to ensure alignment with the city's goals and objectives.

**Deliverables and Timeline:** Specify the deliverables the proposer intends to provide to the city and the anticipated timeline, assuming a January 2025 start date. The city seeks initial strategies ready for piloting within three months and full project completion by Q3 of 2025.

This narrative should clearly convey the proposer's vision, expertise, and adaptability, highlighting their ability to collaborate effectively with the city to achieve measurable, innovative, and equitable outcomes.

### **City Discretion**

- The city may, at its sole discretion, request modifications or supplementary information to submitted proposals after the initial submittal.
- The city of Charlotte reserves the right to request additional information from applicants, reject any or all submittals, waive any irregularities in the submittal requirements, cancel this RFQ, and/or modify and reissue the RFQ at any time. If such an action occurs, the city will notify all applicants and any other parties requesting notice by posting updates online at: [www.charlottenc.gov/housing](http://www.charlottenc.gov/housing).

### **Public Records**

Pursuant to the North Carolina Public Records Act, all documents submitted in response to this RFQ will be considered public records and made available to the public upon request.

Respondents are advised to carefully review all requirements and provide complete, accurate, and timely submissions. Incomplete applications or failure to meet submission requirements may result in disqualification.

**Deadline to Submit:  
5:00 P.M. on January 15, 2025  
Proposals received after this time will not be considered.**

## **4 CITY CONTACTS AND RESOURCES**

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For additional information, please contact:

Warren Wooten, Assistant Director  
Housing & Neighborhood Services  
Phone: 704-336-2489  
Email: [warren.wooten@charlottenc.gov](mailto:warren.wooten@charlottenc.gov)

The **City of Charlotte Business INclusion (CBI) Program** promotes diversity, inclusion, and equitable opportunities in the city's contracting and procurement processes. The program focuses on increasing the participation of Minority, Women, and Small Business Enterprises (MWSBEs) by providing access to resources, training, and networking opportunities. CBI aims to enhance economic growth by fostering competitive and inclusive business practices that reflect Charlotte's diverse community.

For more information, visit [www.charlottebusinessinclusion.com](http://www.charlottebusinessinclusion.com).

## **5 DISCLOSURES**

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All submittals will become the property of the City, and may be reproduced in full or part and/or published online and/or on paper for public review, and will not be returned to the proposers. Proposals will be public records. Please do not submit any information that is confidential.

Compliance with Applicable Laws: The selected firm must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, including the North Carolina Public Records Act, N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 132, and related regulations governing public contracts.

**Public Records Disclosure:** All materials submitted in response to this RFQ, including proposals and supporting documentation, will become public records upon receipt and subject to disclosure under applicable law, except for information explicitly marked as "Trade Secret" or "Confidential" in accordance with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 66-152 and as outlined in the RFQ instructions.

**City's Rights and Options:** The city reserves the right to modify, cancel, or reissue this RFQ at any time and for any reason, and to request additional information from any or all proposers as deemed necessary to clarify or evaluate responses.

**Proposal Validity Period:** Proposals must remain valid and binding for a period of 180 calendar days from the submission deadline, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the city.

**No Obligation to Award:** Issuance of this RFQ does not obligate the city to award a contract or pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal or participation in the RFQ process.

**Conflict of Interest Disclosure:** Proposers must disclose any current or potential conflicts of interest, including relationships with city staff, officials, or contractors, that could be perceived as affecting the impartiality of the proposal evaluation or contract award.

**Debarment and Suspension Certification:** Proposers must certify that they are not currently debarred, suspended, or otherwise ineligible to participate in federally funded projects as per applicable federal regulations.

**Non-Collusion Certification:** Proposers must certify that their submissions are made without any form of collusion, fraud, or intent to restrict competition.

**Subcontracting and MWSBE Utilization:** Proposers must identify all proposed subcontractors and demonstrate efforts to include Minority, Women, and Small Business Enterprises (MWSBE) in their submissions, in alignment with the city's goals and policies.

**Addenda Acknowledgment:** Proposers must acknowledge receipt of all RFQ addenda by completing and submitting the Addenda Receipt Confirmation Form as part of their proposals.

**Trade Secrets and Confidential Information:** Any information claimed as a trade secret or confidential must be properly marked and accompanied by a justification statement. Information not marked as such may be subject to disclosure without notification to the proposer.

**Environmental and Sustainable Practices:** Proposers are encouraged to highlight how their proposed solutions align with the city's environmental and sustainability goals, including the use of environmentally preferable products or practices, where applicable.

**Proposal Format and Submission:** All proposals must follow the specified format, include all required forms, and be submitted by the stated deadline to be considered responsive. Late or incomplete submissions may be disqualified.

**Proposal Withdrawal or Modification:** Proposers may withdraw or modify their submissions before the deadline by submitting a formal written request. After the deadline, no changes are allowed unless specifically requested by the city.