

Scope of Work

Houston Best Practices: Framing and Communicating about Affordable Homes

The City of Houston seeks a consultant to conduct a research study with recommendations regarding the framing, messaging, and communication about affordable homes in Houston to clearly demonstrate need and create a strong and active group of supporters while decreasing opposition. Like many cities across the United States, Houston is facing a continued loss of affordable housing stock, a problem that was compounded after Hurricane Harvey damaged a significant portion of affordable homes in Houston, leading to even greater need.

In response to this need over the next several years, the City of Houston is investing almost \$1 billion to build, repair, and support homes for low- and moderate-income residents. Public and community support is critical to the success of any effort to create and preserve affordable homes. Research suggests that affordable home initiatives should be tailored to appeal to the personal experience and values of the people in the local community.

The consultant will conduct research about and make recommendations for best practices to communicate about affordable homes with Houstonians. At a minimum, the research study should include:

- A literature review (national scope) and summary of key findings from research studies related to affordable homes communications. This includes
 - Public opinion research that adds to the understanding of how respondents feel about affordable homes and the people who live in it
 - Language and messaging research that describes how respondents react to specific terms and ideas
 - Inclusion of applicable studies with geographies similar to Houston that have been impacted by disasters and used recovery funds to address affordable housing stock needs
- Houston area case studies, preferably in the city limits, showing a variety of communication techniques and community reaction to affordable home developments. The case studies should include both rental and homeownership, as well as, both repair and new construction. Consultants should conduct interviews with key stakeholders to inform the case studies.
- Recommendations related to Houston specific desired outcomes should include
 - A tactical messaging guide for the City, non-profit advocates, and residents or other proponents of affordable homes to use when communicating with the community with specific language and framing suggestions. The guide should have different techniques and substantiated recommendations for different neighborhood types or groups of residents.
 - A communications strategy for the City for various types of developments, including City funded, City supported, and partner developments. The strategy should include action steps, like (1) public campaigns and (2) specific informational resources. Strategies should be aligned to development types.

Creating and utilizing primary data from Houston or the Houston area is preferred to inform the study. Consultants should meet with City staff as work begins and periodically throughout the development of the study. Consultants should work with staff to finalize the selection of case studies to capture a representation of Houstonian's attitudes.

Deliverables

- Draft literature review
- Draft case studies

- Draft recommendations including messaging guide and communications strategy
- Draft study, including previous City edits from the drafts of the literature review, case studies and recommendations, to be reviewed by City before finalization
- Final study, including City edits to draft study, to be published by the City

Timetable:

All work should be completed within three months from the start of work. Timelines may be extended depending on the proposal.

Proposals will be scored based upon:

Proposal responses will be evaluated upon the following:

- The degree to which the proposal meets stated scope of work.
- The degree to which the proposer has the necessary skills and abilities to deliver this proposal.
- How the proposed price compares to the planned budget and timelines.

Proposals should include:

- A plan of action and your approach to fulfilling the scope of work.
- Detailed description of the final study and any other deliverables, including information and data to be used.
- Description of staffing and identification of project manager.
- Description of timeline to complete deliverables.
- Budget by deliverable.
- Description of the skills and abilities of proposer to complete the work within the time period.
- Written statement of proposer's background and experience related to work, along with a listing of recently completed similar projects, work samples, and three references.