



**BELLINGHAM  
WHATCOM COUNTY  
HOUSING AUTHORITIES**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – 02-2022**

**FOR**

**HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS**

**INSPECTION SERVICES**

**RFP ISSUED: OCTOBER 19, 2022**

**PROPOSALS DUE: NOVEMBER 18, 2022**

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## I. General Information

The Housing Authority of the City of Bellingham (BHA) is an independent public body that was established in 1945 to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing for low-income families and individuals throughout Whatcom County, Washington. The Housing Authority is primarily funded by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and all rental assistance programs are administered in accordance with Federal regulations and local policies.

BHA is currently soliciting written proposals from qualified individuals or firms to provide Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection services, for the term of one calendar year with an option to extend up to four additional years at the discretion of the Housing Authority.

Proposers must be an independent entity as defined as having no connection to BHA legally, financially (except with regard to compensation for services performed as a result of this RFP), or in any other manner that could cause either party to be improperly influenced by the other. Prior to contract execution, the successful proposer(s) must be approved by HUD as an independent entity eligible to receive Federal funds.

BHA invites qualified inspectors to submit proposals for single unit apartment inspections in multi-family buildings utilizing the Federal Housing Quality Standards (HQS) as described in the scope of service below.

### Following are the key dates associated with this Request for Proposals:

- a. RFP issued: October 19, 2022
- b. Questions due: November 1, 2022 by 12:00pm\*
- c. Response to questions posted on BHA's website: November 4, 2022 by 12:00pm\*
- d. Deadline for proposals: November 18, 2022 by 12:00pm\*
- e. Recommendation to Executive Director: November 30, 2022\*\*
- f. Start date of the inspections contract: January 1, 2023\*\*\*

\*All times are based on the Pacific Time Zone

\*\*BHA reserves the right to invite the highest scoring proposers in for negotiations. Once negotiations are complete selection(s) will be made.

\*\*\*Subject to change.

## II. Scope of Services

BHA is seeking proposals from one or more qualified and insured firm(s), to provide inspections based on Federal HQS standards as established under 24 CFR 982.401. See Attachment A for an overview of HUD HQS criteria.

The selected firm(s) (hereafter referred to as Contractor) must have sufficient personnel with necessary skill, judgment, and flexibility to perform all the duties and responsibilities associated with the inspection functions. Contractor shall be available to answer questions from owners, families, and BHA about inspection findings, including steps that are necessary to cure deficiencies. BHA will conduct criminal background checks on all personnel who will be providing services associated with this RFP and contracts are contingent upon acceptable results. Inspectors must have a valid Driver's License and reliable transportation.

This RFP is for Independent Contractor services encompassing four different types of inspections with a combined total estimate of approximately 300 individual inspections per year. The volume of inspections may vary significantly from month to month. Contractor is responsible for handling all scheduling and communication with property management personnel and/or tenants during the inspection process. BHA will provide inspection due dates after which point the Contractor shall be able to independently manage all aspects of an inspection including but not limited to providing necessary notice, fielding questions/concerns about scheduling, coordinating rescheduled appointments, and documenting results.

Inspection types arranged by anticipated volume beginning with the most frequent include:

### **Annual/Biennial Inspections**

Annual/biennial inspections shall be conducted using HUD's HQS and any additional local standards provided by BHA. BHA will provide Contractor with a list of units to be inspected each month, and it will be the responsibility of the Contractor to complete inspections by the specified due date. The Contractor shall contact all involved parties by first class mail at least 2 weeks in advance of inspection appointments to provide details on date and time. Contractor shall conduct each inspection and record results in a standardized manner as instructed by BHA. If unforeseen circumstances prevent the Contractor from being able to complete a previously scheduled inspection, both the owner/manager and tenant must be contacted in advance.

### **Initial ("Request for Tenancy Approval") Inspections**

Initial inspections shall be conducted using HUD's HQS criteria, with minor revisions required and provided by BHA. Initial inspections are time sensitive so Contractor must be able to perform the inspection within 5 business days of receiving notification from BHA. Contractor shall conduct each inspection and record results in a standardized manner as instructed by BHA. If unforeseen circumstances prevent the Contractor from being able to complete a previously scheduled inspection, both the owner/manager and BHA must be contacted in advance.

### **Reinspections**

Reinspections for residential units that previously failed an annual, biennial, or initial inspection shall be conducted using the same HQS criteria, but scope will be limited to assessing whether previously documented deficiencies were appropriately remedied. Reinspections shall be conducted within 7 days from when the Contractor is notified that repairs were completed. In some instances, an owner/manager may self-certify that repairs were completed in lieu of a physical reinspection. Contractor shall conduct each reinspection and record results in a standardized manner as instructed by BHA. If unforeseen circumstances prevent the Contractor from being able to complete a previously scheduled inspection, both the owner/manager and tenant must be contacted in advance.

### **Special Inspections**

If a participant or government official reports a life-threatening condition in the residential unit, the Contractor must inspect the unit within 24 hours of notification. If the reported condition is not life-threatening the Contractor must inspect the unit within 15 days of notification. During a special inspection, Contractor will generally inspect only those deficiencies that were reported. However, the Contractor will record any additional deficiencies that are observed and will

require that the responsible party make repairs.

**In the event HUD transitions inspection criteria from HQS to the National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) during the term of this contract, including any extensions, BHA will work with the Contractor(s) to adopt new requirements.**

**All inspections must be completed using a BHA provided mobile device/tablet. It is BHA's preference for a Contractor(s) to be involved with all inspection types listed above, but respondents to this RFP may include in their proposal specific inspection types they are interested in conducting if all are not applicable.**

### **III. Submittal Instructions & Requirements**

Questions pertaining to this RFP must be emailed to the address below and received by 12:00pm on November 1, 2022:

Steve Grichel  
Housing Programs Supervisor  
[steve.grichel@bellinghamhousing.org](mailto:steve.grichel@bellinghamhousing.org)

Proposals must be received no later than November 18, 2022 at 12:00 pm. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered. Offerors must submit their proposal by email to:

Steve Grichel  
Housing Programs Supervisor  
[steve.grichel@bellinghamhousing.org](mailto:steve.grichel@bellinghamhousing.org)

Proposals must include the following:

#### **1. Transmittal Letter/Introduction**

The letter of transmittal shall be addressed to Steve Grichel, Housing Programs Supervisor, and at a minimum must contain the following:

- a. Name of company and all principals;
- b. Name, title, email address and telephone number for a point of contact during the period of proposal evaluation; and
- c. Signature of the person authorized to bind the offering agency to the terms of the proposal.

#### **2. Statement of Qualifications & Experience**

This section should establish the ability of the proposer to satisfactorily perform the work stated herein and include details about insurance coverage including but not limited to auto, liability, and Worker's Compensation. The statement of qualifications should also establish the proposer's experience and/or knowledge of:

- a. Multi-family unit inspections including any standardized criteria that was applied;
- b. Capability to meet required inspection schedule and remain flexible based on number of inspections due each month; and
- c. Ability to communicate professionally, timely and courteously with staff, landlords, and assisted households.

#### **3. References**

Proposing firms should submit a list of no less than three (3) recent professional references. Reference information should include:

- a. Contact person and title when applicable
- b. Phone number (email optional)
- c. Context of relationship between proposer and person serving as a reference

**4. Proposed fee structure**

The cost for services shall be submitted on a per inspection basis by type of inspection performed. Fee structure must include cost rates for the following types of activities:

- a. Initial inspections
- b. Annual/biennial inspections
- c. Reinspections
- d. Special inspections
- e. Missed inspections (unable to access unit)
- f. Hourly rate during the initial training period
  - a. BHA will identify and pay for an HQS training as applicable based on proposer's experience.

**5. Completed Attachment C**

Form HUD – 5369-C: Certifications and Representations of Offerors, Non-Construction Contract.

**IV. Evaluation Factors:**

Proposals will be reviewed and ranked using the following selection criteria:

1. Experience/Ability to Perform (50 points)
2. Fee Structure (40 points)
3. References (10 points)

Offerors are encouraged to identify and clearly label in their submittal each evaluation criteria. BHA's evaluation will be based on information provided in the proposal. Offerors are solely responsible for all expenses of preparing and submitting their responses and interviewing.

**V. BHA Reservation of Rights:**

BHA reserves the right to cancel this RFP or to reject any or all proposals, to waive any informality in the RFP process, or to terminate the RFP process at any time, if deemed to be in its best interests.

BHA reserves the right not to award a contract pursuant to this RFP or to award a contract to multiple proposals.

BHA reserves the right to negotiate the fees proposed by the successful Offeror entity.

BHA reserves the right to reject and not consider any proposal that does not meet the requirements of this RFP, including but not necessarily limited to incomplete proposals and/or proposals offering alternate or non-requested services.

BHA will reject the proposal of any Offeror who is debarred by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) from providing services to public housing agencies and reserves the right to

reject the proposal of any Offeror who has previously failed to perform any contract properly for BHA.

## VI. Insurance Requirements & Conditions

### Insurance Requirements:

If awarded the contract, BHA will need a Certificate of Insurance and Additionally Insured Endorsement with Housing Authority of the City of Bellingham listed as additional insured for the following policies:

Insurance Type	Policy Limit
Error and Omissions	\$1,000,000
Comprehensive General Liability	\$1,000,000
Workers' Compensation	As required by State law

### Indemnity:

Contractor agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold BHA and its administrators, officers, agents, employees, volunteers harmless from and against any and all claims, demands, actions, losses, expenses, and liabilities for, or related to, loss of or damage to property or injury or death of any person relating to or arising or resulting in any way from the performance by Contractor.

### Contract Conditions:

1. The term of the contract will be for one year with the option of four additional one-year periods, at the sole discretion of the Bellingham Housing Authority.
2. The Contractor may neither assign contract or any rights thereunder, nor delegate any of its duties without first obtaining the written consent of BHA.
3. All work products prepared by the Contractor in fulfilling its duties under the Contract shall be and remain the property of BHA. Contractor may retain a copy of any work product prepared by the Contractor in fulfilling its duties under this Agreement for the Contractor's record.
4. The Contractor may not utilize the BHA database system to conduct other business outside of the BHA services.

### Section 3 Requirements:

Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 (Section 3) requires BHA to provide employment opportunities to Section 3 residents to the greatest extent feasible. Section 3 residents include tenants of BHA and other low-income residents of Whatcom County.

The successful Offeror will be required to submit Section 3 paperwork provided by BHA. BHA can provide assistance with any questions relating to those documents. Section 3 requirements only apply to new hires who have been hired due to the work this contract provides. Businesses are not required to create new positions if they are not needed.