

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

North Central Pennsylvania Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Market Study

Issue Date: January 4, 2022

Response Date/Time: February 4, 2022

Ms. Brittany Wortman
Community Development Coordinator
North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning
and Development Commission
49 Ridgmont Drive
Ridgway, PA 15853
bawortman@ncentral.com



This “Request for Proposals” and all subsequent addenda and revisions will be made available at <http://www.ncentral.com>. All prospective applicants should continue to check the website for any changes to the RFP.

Introduction

The North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission (here and after referred to North Central) is a private, non-profit corporation that was organized in 1965 as the designated Local Development District (LDD) for a six-county area in Pennsylvania that includes Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean, and Potter counties. As such, it is responsible for economic and community development initiatives targeted to enhance the quality of life of the people living within the counties that it serves. North Central develops plans, policies, and integrated strategies for transportation, community development, economic development and regional planning activities to soundly manage growth, development and improve quality of life at a regional level. The North Central region recognizes that in order to succeed and grow in a healthy manner, it must understand its current and future housing conditions, as well as unmet housing opportunities and needs.

To that end, North Central is issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Housing Needs Assessment and Market Strategy. North Central will be the principle agency involved in managing the Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Market Study. Regional housing needs assessment and market study planning provides multiple benefits to communities by documenting existing housing conditions in the community, identifying market and other forces that affect housing supply and demand now and over the next 10 years, identifying gaps or deficiencies in maintaining equitable access to safe, resilient, and reliable housing to as many community members as possible, and identifying opportunities for improving and expanding housing options to meet the region's needs.

Purpose

North Central seeks proposals from a qualified consultant that possess expertise in housing policy and regional planning to provide professional and technical planning services. The chosen consultant will develop and implement a regional housing needs assessment and market study that will provide the region, local governments, communities, developers, and the public a meaningful sense of the housing market, and understanding of key housing issues, and current and future housing needs in the region. The study will serve as a platform for housing strategy development to address the regional housing needs.

I. Study Area

The North Central's region is one of the largest geographically in Pennsylvania serving Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean, and Potter counties. The six-county region is 5,080 square miles in size. With an estimated 2020 population of only 217,419, the region is largely rural, yet includes the economic centers of Bradford, DuBois, and St. Marys. It is served primarily by Interstate 80, as well as US6 and US219. The City of Bradford at the region's northern end extends just 80 miles, or a 100-minute drive, from the Peace Bridge and the Canadian border at Buffalo, NY. The region is part of the Pennsylvania Wilds which is approximately 25% of the state's land acreage. The Allegheny National Forest, at nearly 241,000 acres, is a major natural feature of the region, as it is nearly 610,000 acres of state forest. The region is also served by outstanding water features such as the Clarion River Water Trail and the Susquehanna River Water Trail.

II. Goal

The primary goal of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Market Study is to define what the major gaps are between current and projected housing needs and housing supply.

III. Objectives

The primary objectives of this project are as follows:

- A. Identify current programs, agencies, and sources of funding addressing housing in the North Central region.
- B. Interview major stakeholders to discuss the North Central regions` housing needs and existing efforts.
- C. Document specific data relevant to current and future population trends, housing inventory and employment statistics.
- D. Analyze the real estate trends of all types of houses, sales prices, length of time on the market, and other relevant real estate market metrics.
- E. Develop recommendations on housing needs, affordability, suitable housing, sources of funding and implementation strategies.

IV. Scope of the Housing Needs Assessment and Market Study

The scope of work for North Central`s regional Housing Needs Assessment and Market Study is to include, at a minimum, the tasks listed below. **The contract for services is not to exceed \$58,500.**

A. Project Management

a. Establish Strategy Committee

- i. North Central will convene a Strategy Committee to guide the planning process.
- ii. The Strategy Committee will be responsible for holding an initial kickoff meeting with the consultant to discuss the scope and schedule, establish responsibilities, and develop a preliminary outreach strategy.
- iii. The consultant will be responsible for guiding the planning process, scheduling Strategy Committee meetings, as well as establishing and meeting key project milestones.
- iv. The consultant shall anticipate a minimum of monthly check-ins with North Central staff to provide updates on progress toward key deliverables.
- v. The consultant shall anticipate presenting the final document at a joint NC Prep and CEDS meeting.

B. Baseline Housing Initiatives Report

- a. The consultant will review existing documents, plans, studies, efforts, and organizations related to the housing market in the North Central region. The available data includes:

- i. 2016 Fair Housing Plan Analysis of Impediments
 - ii. 2018-2023 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
 - iii. County and regional housing data and plans as identified by stakeholders.
- b. The consultant will identify sources of funding and financing for housing.
- c. The consultant will review current programs and agencies addressing housing to identify redundancy, coordination, and collaboration across multiple agency efforts. The consultant will provide a baseline inventory of current services and programs.
- d. The consultant will conduct some form of public participation with residents whether it be putting out a public survey or meeting with and interviewing major stakeholders, as necessary, to discuss the North Central region's housing needs and existing efforts. Members of the Strategy Committee will facilitate the identification of key stakeholders and the compilation of data in the North Central region.
- e. The consultant will compile a housing inventory of available housing, what types of housing, condition of housing, ownership, aging housing stock, multiple-family units, neighborhood character, availability of utilities, and workforce housing.

C. Technical Memorandum (maps, graphics, charts, etc.)

- a. The consultant will gather specific data relevant to population, household, housing and employment statistics including, but not limited to, historical and population growth trends, demographic data, household data, and employment data.
- b. The consultant will conduct population forecasting for the North Central region as a whole.
- c. The consultant will examine the poverty, homelessness, sensitive populations, the elderly, disabled etc. and identify any concentrated areas of poverty with regard to developing fair housing policies.

D. Housing Stock, Trends, and Projections

- a. The consultant will review the current housing inventory and provide specific metrics for the North Central region regarding housing condition, ownership, type of dwelling, aging housing stock, multiple-family units, neighborhood character, availability of utilities, workforce housing, access to services, etc.
- b. The consultant will provide an inventory of existing subsidized housing, including availability, new or future subsidized housing and other dwellings which serve as a transitional and emergency housing.

- c. The consultant will research proposed housing units, planned developments, and housing trends across the region.
- d. The consultant will analyze and identify housing needs for specific housing types (rentals, starter homes, multi-generational, halfway houses, etc.).
- e. The consultant will identify COVID-19 impacts (evictions, homelessness, etc.).

E. Market Analysis Report

- a. The consultant will study residential real estate trends of all types of housing including an analysis of past residential sales prices, length of time on the market, and other relevant real estate metrics.
- b. The consultant shall include information from new residential units, types of building permits issued, and trends across the region.
- c. The analysis shall include the market rate for rental units in each municipality and availability of rental units across the region. Units shall be distinguished by type, number of bedrooms, size, location and price in the analysis.
- d. 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 projects.

F. Develop Implementation Strategies and Recommendations

- a. The consultant will develop recommendations for specific types, rate and other housing needs based on the Market Analysis Report. This shall be specific for each county and for the North Central region as a whole.
- b. The study will provide recommendations to combat deterioration of the older housing stock.
- c. The study will include recommendations to increase housing affordability and housing choices by considering job opportunities, education, strategies for employers, economic growth and access to services.
- d. The study will include the impact that demographic changes will have on North Central's housing stock and provide recommendations for suitable housing to fit the needs of the community.
- e. The consultant will identify sources of funding (federal, state, local and private resources) for technical assistance for housing and other related programs included in the current housing initiatives.

- f. The consultant will prepare a summary with the recommended initiatives and impacts.
- g. The final study should include action steps specific to which entity(ies) would implement and strategies for decision makers to use.
- h. The study must consider existing and projected housing and economic conditions and detail how such conditions will be impacted by the study.

G. Final Document and Presentation to Stakeholders

- a. The Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Market Study will be released to the public once a draft is finalized.
 - i. North Central, the Strategy Committee, and the consultant will host Public Meetings on the draft.
 - ii. A presentation will be conducted to a joint NC PREP and CEDS meeting.
 - iii. The public's questions, comments, and recommendations will be reflected in the final draft, which will be presented to the CEDS Committee, PREP Network, and North Central Executive Board prior to being finalized.

H. Deliverables

The final product will be a Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Market Study. The plan should include, at a minimum, the following elements:

- a. The consultant will provide a Baseline Housing Initiatives Report containing the information gathered under Task B.
- b. The consultant will provide a Technical Memorandum including maps, graphics, charts or other relevant depictions of the information gathered under Task C.
- c. The consultant will provide a Technical Memorandum or other document of summary of the existing housing inventory, projected housing trends, and identified needs as gathered in Task D.
- d. The consultant will provide a Market Analysis Report containing the information gathered in Task E.
- e. The consultant will provide a matrix with strategies for implementation identifying specific organizations with the capacity to implement action steps from information gathered in previous tasks.

V. Adoption of Plan

Upon completion of the final deliverables, the plan will be reviewed, modified (if necessary) and adopted. The consultant will be retained through this process in the event that modifications are required for adoption.

VI. Budget and Consultant Selection Process

A. Budget

The contract for services is not to exceed **\$58,500**.

B. Selection Process

1. If necessary, up to two prospective consultants may be selected for a short list and each will be requested to participate in a remote zoom interview and presentation to the Selection Committee. A recommendation of the preferred consultant will be made. Upon selection of the preferred consultant, North Central will be authorized to communicate to the selected consultant and begin negotiations.
2. The selected consultant will be notified of the decision by the Committee no later than two (2) weeks after the RFP due date. Contract negotiations will commence immediately upon notification. A negotiation period will be provided for the selected consultant and North Central to finalize the Scope of Services, Contract Fee, and Agreement. At the end of the negotiation period, the contract shall be awarded. If a negotiated contract cannot be mutually agreed to by both parties, North Central will terminate negotiation and begin negotiations with the second rated firm.
3. The selected consultant will be required to prepare project documents in a timely manner and submit monthly status reports indicating work completed to date, upcoming scope activities and any issues that could potentially impact the project schedule. To that end, the consultant will be expected to assign sufficient administrative, planning, design and support staff to complete the Scope of Work within the established and agreed to schedule. It is expected that this project will take approximately 4 months to complete.

Activity	Anticipated Completion Date
RFP Issued	January 4, 2022
Questions/Inquiries Accepted	January 4 th -18 th
North Central Response to Questions/Inquires	January 21, 2022
Proposals Due	February 4, 2022 by 11:59pm EDT
Consultant Selection	February 15, 2022
Plan Adoption	No later than June, 2022

VII. General Submission Requirements

1. Inquires:

Any questions or requests for additional information concerning this Request for Proposal and/or the Scope of Work should be directed in writing to Ms. Brittany Wortman, Community Development Coordinator, by e-mail at: bawortman@ncentral.com. Inquiries must be made before (January 18, 2022). Questions associated with this RFP received via phone call will not be responded to or acknowledged. Responses to questions or requests for additional information shall be posted to North Central's website (www.ncentral.com) and replies via e-mail shall be made no later than (January 21, 2022). It is the responsibility of the consultant to check the website for updates or addendums to this RFP. North Central will accept completed proposals until (February 4, 2022 at 11:59pm EDT).

2. Minimum Qualifications:

Consultants or consortia of consultants will be asked to demonstrate expertise and experience in all skill areas that may be appropriate to the work completed for a Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Market Study. All RFPs received by North Central will be reviewed and evaluated by a Selection Committee (the "Committee") comprised of representatives from North Central staff. Responses to this RFP will be evaluated based on the consultant's responses to all relevant criteria stated in this RFP. Proposals will be evaluated and scored by the Committee utilizing a ranking criterion that will consist of the following, but not limited to:

- Understanding of desired Scope of Work and proposed approach.
- Proven, relevant experience of the firm.
- Experience, expertise, and qualifications of personnel to be assigned to the project.
- Quality of proposal for public participation/ community outreach efforts.
- Quality of proposal for strategic planning efforts.
- Quality of responses from relevant references and past performance in terms of quality of work and the timeliness of the accomplishment.
- Completeness of Response to RFP.

3. Proposals from Consortia, Joint Ventures, and Teams:

Proposal statements from consortia, joint ventures or teams will be accepted. In such cases, a lead firm must be identified for contracting purposes. A qualifications statement must be prepared for each member of the consortia, joint venture, or team, and each qualifications statement should clearly identify the lead firm.

In selecting a lead firm, consortia, joint ventures, and teams should consider the following: (1) the lead firm should have sufficient experience and expertise to conduct or supervise all facets of the proposed project; (2) the lead firm will be legally responsible to North Central for performance of the total contract; (3) the lead firm must have sufficient resources to carry out the contractual responsibilities of the consortium, joint venture or team.

Please note that firms that are subsidiaries or affiliates of another may not rely on the experience, expertise or resources of its parent firm to meet these requirements.

4. Proposal Requirements and Format:

North Central will select a qualified planning consultant firm or team based on the information outlined below. Qualifying firms or teams must demonstrate experience and expertise in developing Regional Housing Needs Assessments and Market Studies or other similar regional economic or community development plans.

Written proposals should include, at a minimum, the following information:

- a. Letter of Interest: Please provide a Cover Letter outlining your firm's desire to assist with our Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Market Study. Please include a summary of the project, total budget cost, name and contact information of the firm's authorized representative and project manager. Please also list sub-consultants, if applicable.
- b. Consultant Qualifications & Capabilities: In no more than two pages, describe the qualifications and capabilities of the firm, team, or individuals as they specifically relate to experience with the proposed Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Market Study.
- c. Key Personnel Assigned to Project: Identify specific personnel that will be assigned to the following key roles for the project: Project Manager and Lead Technical Staff members. Personnel identified in the proposal must be the principal staff that will work on the project and represent most hours billed to the project. Resumes shall not exceed 2 pages in length. Project staff must meet all local, state, and federal requirements to perform work.
- d. Technical Approach/Proposed Scope of Work: Describe the technical approach and proposed Scope of Work that will be used to complete the plan development. Responses should address the proposed Scope of Work and contractors are encouraged to include recommendations.
- e. Cost Proposal & Schedule: Provide a detailed cost breakdown to complete the tasks outlined in the proposed Scope of Work. The contract for services is not to exceed **\$58,500**. In addition, please provide a project schedule that identifies and tracks each specific task and the anticipated date of key milestones & deliverables. The timeline is flexible as long as the plans are completed and submitted to North Central for final approval no later than June 30, 2022.

North Central's Regional Housing Assessment and Market Study will be funded through the United States Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration and the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Partnership for Regional Economic Performance. The consultant must consider compliance with all regulations applicable to such plans, and will also be subject to the Terms and Conditions of the EDA and PREP grants. Respondents are advised to review all applicable federal and state regulations prior to submitting a proposal.

- f. Past Project Experience: Include descriptions of comparable projects and provide summaries or reports of related and relevant work completed. Summarize the scope of work performed, why the unique approach to this project was successful, and provide client contact information, if applicable.
- g. References: Provide three references from comparable types of projects completed over the last five years. Include project names and locations, name of primary client contacts and their contact information including e-mail addresses and telephone numbers. Indicate the role of your firm in each project and each project's cost and date of completion.
- h. Equal Employment Opportunity Statement: Please provide a detailed statement describing your Equal Employment Opportunity practices and any statistical employment information that it deems appropriate and relative to the composition of its workforce or its subcontractors.
- i. Insurance Certificates: Please include a copy of the required insurance certificates listed under Section VIII.
- j. Commitment of Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Goal: Please provide a letter certifying that you have complied with the DBE goals expressed in the RFP.

5. Signature Requirements

Proposals must be signed by a representative of the firm or team having legal authority to contract on behalf of the firm or team. Proposals will be treated as bona fide offers and must remain open for a period of ninety (90) days from the closing date for submissions.

6. Submission of Proposals:

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, North Central is requiring all proposals to be submitted via email. North Central will accept completed proposals until February 4, 2022 at 11:59pm EDT. All proposals shall be emailed with the following in the subject line: “[Firm Name]’s North Central Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Market Study.” Please e-mail proposals to Ms. Brittany Wortman at bawortman@ncentral.com.

VIII. General Terms and Conditions

Compliance with Local, State & Federal Laws

All respondents shall comply with all applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations. As this plan will be funded through the United States Economic Development Administration and the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Partnership for Regional Economic Performance, the respondent shall review all applicable regulations, terms and conditions prior to submitting a response. Any contracts awarded pursuant to this Request for Qualifications will contain provisions required by the federal and state funding sources, as appropriate.

Disadvantaged, Minority & Women Business Enterprises (DBE/MBE/ WBE) Requirement

North Central takes all necessary affirmative steps to assure that Minority Businesses Enterprises (MBE), Women's Businesses Enterprises (WBE) and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) are used when possible. Although this project does not stipulate a required compliance target, North Central will make every effort to consider awarding the contract to a qualified DBE/MBE/WBE firm.

In the case of proposals submitted from Consortia, Joint Ventures and Teams, lead firms should consider the use of DBE/MBE/WBE firms. Proposals must clearly identify the DBE/MBE/SBE firm, the role the DBE/MBE/WBE will play in the project and the tasks assigned to the DBE/MBE/WBE. Proof of DBE/MBE/WBE certification must be submitted with the proposal. Responses that fail to provide proof of DBE/MBE/WBE certification and description of project involvement will be deemed incomplete.

Equal Employment and Nondiscrimination

All contracts awarded under this RFP are subject to all other applicable state and federal laws concerning civil rights, nondiscrimination and equal opportunities for employment.

All the potential companies must demonstrate a commitment to the effective implementation of an affirmative action plan or policy on equal employment opportunity.

The potential company must ensure equal employment opportunity to all persons and not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, physical disability, mental disorder, ancestry, marital status, criminal record, or political beliefs. The company must uphold and operate in compliance with Executive Order 11246 and as amended in Executive Order 11375, Title VI and VII of Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, the Fair Employment Practices Act, and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990.

In response to this RFP, companies should furnish a detailed statement describing their Equal Employment Opportunity practices and any statistical employment information that it deems appropriate, relative to the composition of its work force or its subcontractors.

Freedom of Information

Respondents are advised that all materials submitted in response to this RFP shall become the sole property of the North Central and shall be subject to the provisions Pennsylvania General Statutes (re: Freedom of Information).

Right to Cancel

North Central reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time, elect to award portions of the Scope of Work, and/or decide not to consider any or all of the respondents submitting information in response to this request.

Cost of Preparing Proposal

All costs associated with any response to this RFP, including the development of costs and participation in the selection process, are the sole responsibility of the respondent firms. North Central will not reimburse any firms for such costs nor will any successful firms be permitted to negotiate such costs as part of any contract or agreement with North Central.

Other

Any firm selected to perform any or all work associated with this RFP will be required to execute an agreement with North Central and meet any conditions on use of funds imposed by the United States Economic Development Administration and the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Partnership for Regional Economic Performance. All fees will be negotiated and stated in the agreement.

Insurance Requirements

Insurance certificates are required with responses to this RFP. Insurance certificates must be provided in the bid application, documenting coverage for the following:

- a. Worker's Compensations and Employers Liability in accordance with State of Pennsylvania Requirements.
- b. Public Liability Insurance: Comprehensive General Liability, (bodily injury, personal injury, and property damage liability) including company's contingent Completed operations and contractual liability with a minimum:
 - I. \$1,000,000 each occurrence
 - II. \$1,000,000 personal and advertising injury
 - III. \$1,000,000 general aggregate; and
 - IV. \$1,000,000 products/completed operations aggregate

The company shall carry and maintain in full force and effect for the duration of any contract resulting from this RFP, appropriate insurance. The company agrees to protect and defend, indemnify, and hold the North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission and the six counties of Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean and Potter, demands and causes of action of every kind and character including the amount of judgments, penalties, interest, court costs, and legal fees incurred by North Central or the counties in defense of same, arising in favor of taxes, claims, liens, debts, personal injuries including employees of the counties or North Central, death or damages to property (including property of North Central or the counties) and without limitations by enumeration, all other claims, or demands of every character occurring and caused in whole or in part by any negligent act or omission of the company, any one directly or indirectly employed by the company or anyone for whose acts company may be liable regardless of whether or not it is caused in part by North Central or their member counties. The company will designate and provide North Central and counties with the identity of a person or persons in the company's employ who shall be responsible for handling claims from the public efficiently and expeditiously. Policies shall be issued by an insurance company authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

- Insurance similar to that required by the company shall be provided by or on behalf of all subcontractors to cover its operation(s) performed under this contract and included in all subcontracts.
- All other insurance requirements would remain in effect.
- All insurance certificates must name North Central as additional insured on the policy. Said Certificate must state that coverage cannot be cancelled or materially altered without thirty (30) days written notice to North Central.

Indemnification

In addition, the proposer shall, at all times, save, indemnify and hold harmless North Central, its officers, agents, employees and servants from liability of any nature or kind, including costs and

expenses for or on account of, any patented or copyrighted equipment, materials, articles, or processes used in the performance of this contract, or on account of any and all claims, damages, losses, litigation expense and counsel fees arising out of loss or injuries (including death) sustained by or alleged to have been sustained by the public or any persons affected by the proposer's work, or by the proposer or any subcontractor, or anyone directly or indirectly employed by them while engaged in the performance of their duties in connection with this contract.

Collusion

By responding, the firm implicitly states: that his/her proposal has not been made in connection with any other competing firm submitting a separate response to this RFP; is in all respects fair; and has been submitted without collusion or fraud. It is further implied that the firm did not participate in the RFP development process, had no knowledge of the specific contents of the RFP before its issuance, and that no employee of North Central either directly or indirectly assisted in the vendor's proposal preparation.

Form of Contract

North Central anticipates that this procurement will be a cost reimbursement contract based on monthly reports. Consulting fees shall be paid upon satisfactory completion of work tasks. Selected consultant must provide documentation of work to include providing copies of receipts and expenses for work performed. Invoicing is done on a monthly basis.