

## **Affordable Housing Solutions Specialist**

### **Request For Proposals**

The Community Development Agency (CDA) Division of the City of Youngstown Department of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) is seeking an Affordable Housing Solutions Specialist (AHSS). This opportunity is a professional service contracted position.

#### **Summary of Provider Services**

The City of Youngstown's Community Development Division (CD) works to provide quality, affordable housing services to meet residents' fundamental need for shelter. Shelter is an important end, in and of itself, and is an achievement that warrants significant social investment. The CD staff recognizes the benefits from affordable housing that extend beyond shelter.

The role of affordable housing is essential to increasing residential stability, which may lead to improved educational and social outcomes for children and improved labor market outcomes for adults. The focus on the community-wide impacts of affordable housing is needed because affordable housing contributes to the economic development of distressed neighborhoods and to economically vibrant and successful communities. Affordable housing also benefits particular populations, such as the elderly, the homeless, and people with mental and physical illnesses. The impact of housing on health, education, and economic development outcomes has opened up the need for the City to solicit proposals for an Affordable Housing Solutions Specialist (hereinafter, AHSS). The AHSS will work to assist designated CD staff with housing assignments that focus on the connections between housing, community, and quality of life. The AHSS will help to identify and implement viable solutions. The AHSS's efforts and recommendations will align with the policies and procedures, regulations, and guidelines of the City and HUD Community Development Block Grant Programs.

The City of Youngstown's Community Development (CD) division manages HUD program funds, including CDBG funding for housing and community services, HOME funding for affordable housing rehabilitation and construction, and ESG funding for homeless shelters and supportive services. The City is also using a HUD HOME-ARP allocation for additional options for homeless shelters and homeless services. The AHSS will work to help designated CD staff with housing assignments that focus on housing and homelessness. Work will be done at the request and direction of the CD Director and the CD Housing Director. The AHSS will perform duties independently through a Professional Services Agreement.

The candidate must have working knowledge of federal and HUD community development programs such as CDBG, HOME, and ESG. The applicant should understand real estate development, housing finance, and housing matters that pertain to primarily low-moderate income individuals and families and possess at least five (5) years of experience in community development, planning, or general public agency processes. Graduation from an accredited college or university with Bachelor's Degree in a service-related field is preferred. Graduation from a college and or university does not replace practical experience related to the AHSS provider services contract position. Candidates for the AHSS contract must demonstrate experience working effectively with non-profit organizations and low-moderate income individuals and families.

#### **Essential Duties and Responsibilities**

- Help CD identify and address the accumulation of residents' unmet housing needs. Make recommendations and support developing the housing portions of the City's HUD 2025-2029 Five-Year Consolidated Plan

- Ensure effective two-way communication with both internal (City departments and employees) and external (community members, non-profit service providers, groups, businesses, etc.) through an ongoing review of resident interests and issues
- Provide resources and support to encourage trusting, effective, vibrant, and inclusive leadership structures within communities
- Support an effective, innovative social media platform to generate interest, participation, and engagement of members of the City's diverse communities, particularly, residents in the low-moderate income neighborhoods
- Develop strategies and methods to enhance and encourage public involvement, such as organizing public forums around community topics, issues, and other distinctive characteristics of a diverse local community
- Recommend changes and additions to City policies that encourage community engagement
- Develop, implement, and coordinate various projects and activities as assigned
- Actively support the vision, mission, goals and values of the CPED Department, CD, and the City
- Collaborate with the City's non-profit homeless service providers to assist CD in implementing and executing HOME-ARP and ESG funds
- Consult with CD Director, staff, and the Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinator regarding collaboration, coordination of operations, planning, and implementation of ESG and HOME projects, including HOME-ARP-funded projects
- Work with City's Health Department Health Improvement Zone workers as a liaison for CD
- Provide information focused on the social impacts of housing on the lives of disadvantaged residents, especially on the relationship between housing location, neighborhood composition, social networks, and access to opportunity
- Assist the CD division with program planning and program performance monitoring, including with the Mahoning County Homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) and Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Authority
- Research and report to CD on the social network impacts of housing programs that mix incomes, public housing redevelopment programs, housing self-sufficiency programs, housing choice processes for low-income people, and minority experiences of assisted housing programs in at least five (5) cities that are similarly sized to Youngstown
- Report on the role of the public housing authorities in the future of affordable housing Additionally, research at least five (5) communities that are addressing poverty more broadly, including the equity impact of economic development policies

**Successful Candidates for this Contract Will:**

- Have a diverse, functional aptitude related to affordable housing, federal entitlement grants, affordable housing strategies, and the needs of homeless individuals and families
- Use accrued knowledge of housing and connection with the community to assist the CD division with development and implementation of additional innovative programs designed to improve residents' quality of life
- Maintain knowledge of community services and supports
- Have a working knowledge of basic principles and practices of effective project and program planning, organization, implementation, and administration
- Have a basic knowledge of communication techniques including verbal, written, web, media, and other related technological advances and how to strategically apply them in a municipal environment.
- Understand the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Be able to attend meetings and events within the community that occur in the evenings and on infrequent weekends

**Successful Candidates Will be Skilled in:**

- Performing community outreach, social engagement, problem solving and event planning
- Creating inclusion and building community trust
- Public speaking
- Establishing and maintaining effective, ongoing working relationships with the neighborhoods, the community, public officials, and staff
- Effectively working with politically-sensitive situations, analyzing complex problems, and developing creative solutions with demonstrated expertise
- Becoming familiar with Youngstown's communities, including the schools, businesses, neighborhoods, and cultural groups
- Planning, organizing and coordinating programs and projects
- Facilitating inclusive meetings with a wide range of stakeholders
- Performing a variety of duties involving frequent and responsible public contact
- Demonstrating critical and creative thinking skills, taking initiative, and developing innovative methods to accomplish set goals
- Effectively maintaining relationships with a variety of elected officials
- Using social media as part of an effective communication strategy
- Meeting schedules and timelines
- Understanding and following oral and written direction
- Providing information to a variety of officials, boards, and staff on neighborhood and community relations issues
- Responding quickly and appropriately to inquiries from the public regarding CD issues
- Soliciting cooperation and resolving conflicts
- Exercising good judgment, discretion, and maintaining confidentiality

**\*\*Education does not substitute meaningful experience\*\***

Interested individuals are to submit a résumé and an accompanying cover letter to John K. Noga, City of Youngstown Housing Director.

[jnoga@youngstownohio.gov](mailto:jnoga@youngstownohio.gov).

The deadline for application is Tuesday, July 23, 2024.