



Request for Proposals: Housing Development Technical Assistance

A. BACKGROUND

The [Northland Foundation](#) is a publicly supported, place-based foundation working in rural Northeast Minnesota and neighboring Native nations. The Northeast Region includes Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis Counties, and all or parts of five Native nations of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe (District I), and Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (District II).

The mission of the Foundation is to support people and communities working toward a future where everyone feels they belong and can thrive. We accomplish this mission via grant funding to public and nonprofit organizations, services to support small businesses, and a variety of programs and supports focused on early childhood, youth development, and intergenerational work.

B. PURPOSE

The purpose of this RFP is to solicit proposals from experienced housing technical assistance providers to support local, community-based activities necessary to develop a range of housing types. Funding for this opportunity is being administered by the Northland Foundation as allocated through the 2023 session of the Minnesota Legislature and is governed by the Minnesota Housing Agency. Under the supervision of the Northland Foundation, the selected provider will assist rural communities within the 7-county Northeast Minnesota region in planning for and executing housing development plans over a period of three years from the execution of the subcontract.

C. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The definition of technical assistance is necessarily broad to encompass a range of supports as dictated by the needs of participating communities. Therefore, respondents to this RFP should have deep expertise in the complexities of housing development, including but not limited to advising and providing education to municipal leadership and communities on different types of housing and corresponding financial implications, how to effectively address community buy-in, development and use of housing studies, identification of appropriate development sites, zoning practices, development incentives, financial resources such as grants or establishing local housing trust funds, and strategies to connect with potential developers.

Technical assistance may be one-time or ongoing depending on the needs of each community accessing technical assistance services. The length of technical assistance in any given community will not be limited to a specific timeline but instead tied to the goal(s) of TA services, which may include help with a specific housing-related task or series of tasks to help communities develop or advance housing plans.

The selected service provider will have the demonstrated capacity to:

- Provide responsive and accessible technical assistance throughout the 7-county Northeast Minnesota region, including the counties of Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis.
- Deliver a broad range of TA approaches and levels of support to effectively respond to diverse and unique community needs.
- Assess the strengths and needs of each participating community and make clear recommendations for action.
- Develop trusting and collaborative relationships with a variety of stakeholders.
- Gather and report meaningful progress and outcome data.
- Assist in developing an application process for communities to access technical assistance.
- Provide ongoing support and follow up beyond initial assessment and recommendation as needed and as capacity allows.

The selected technical assistance provider will strive to reach several goals outlined below as approved by the Minnesota Housing Agency and submit **monthly progress reports** to the Northland Foundation, including:

1. Name(s) of communities receiving services, with the goal of providing TA to a minimum of 4 communities per year.
2. Type of entity requesting services, i.e. city or county government, and key contact information.
3. County in which the community is located, with a goal of providing technical assistance to communities within at least 5 counties in the Northland Foundation's 7-county service area over the 3-year life of this project.
4. Objective and results relative to technical assistance for each community served, with the goal of at least 50% of all technical assistance engagements resulting in a demonstrated tangible objective, such as an executed housing study, new zoning laws, establishment of a LHTF, formally secured developer, etc. (versus only conceptual consultation or advice).

Such tangible outcomes need not be the result of solely the TA provider's direct effort but may result from technical assistance activity. For example, if conducting a housing study is advised through the technical assistance process, the TA provider does not have to actually conduct the study but if accomplished through other means (i.e. a different consultant hired by a city), it would qualify as a tangible result of technical assistance.

5. Progress updates of ongoing technical assistance, with a goal of at least 50% of technical assistance provided to any given community on an ongoing basis, as demonstrated by new or updated activity month over month. In other words, some technical assistance may be provided on a discrete, one-off conversation basis vs. ongoing assistance to the same community over time. Both types count towards the goals outlined in the scope of services, but we expect at least 50% of communities that access TA will receive assistance that is sustained over time.

NOTE: The Northland Foundation will work with the selected provider to monitor and hone goals over time to reflect the realities of how frequently and for what purpose technical assistance is requested.

D. APPLICATION

Applications must address all the following elements to be considered:

Narrative Components		
1.	Organization name, structure (nonprofit, LLC, sole proprietorship, etc.), and mailing address.	
2.	Primary contact name, title, phone and email address.	
3.	Describe the fee structure for providing technical assistance (i.e. hourly or daily rate, retainer, project-based fee, etc.). Detail what expenses the described fee structure encompasses (such as compensation, benefits, and overhead), and list any additional expenses that would be billed separately (i.e. travel, supplies, equipment). If fees vary depending on the type of technical assistance provided, please describe in detail. <i>*Note: Because this is a new initiative, the exact number of communities accessing technical assistance is unknown, as are the number of hours per week that will be required. We estimate this body of work to fall between 20 and 40 hours per week, which may vary from week to week. We seek to work with a vendor with a degree of flexibility and will negotiate the final terms of the contract with the selected service provider.</i>	
Evaluation Criteria		Max Score
4.	Description of previous experience providing housing development technical assistance. Be sure to note the outcome of any projects you have been involved with and what housing development tools you used (LITC, tax abatement, zoning ordinances, etc.) Include any experience in the Northeast Minnesota region, if applicable.	55
5.	List the principal staff that will be involved in this project. For each, include name, title, tenure with the organization, and 3-5 sentence summary of housing expertise.	20
6.	Describe your capacity and ability to work with multiple communities at the same time. Include any limitations to your availability such as minimum or maximum number of hours per week or other factors that would affect scheduling.	25
7.	We intend to work in partnership with the selected provider to develop an outreach strategy to promote the availability of technical assistance. How would you approach outreach/promotion of these services and what previous experience do you have promoting your expertise?	10
8.	Provide a sample Action Plan for the first 12 months: detail your approach to providing technical assistance, including at a minimum how you would assess housing needs in communities requesting technical assistance, how you would address the large geographic scope of the region, experience documenting and reporting technical assistance activities and outcome data, and overall philosophy of community engagement.	35
9.	(Optional) Include up to three letters of recommendation supporting your application (not included in the total RFP 8-page limit).	Bonus: 5
Total Points Possible:		150

E. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals should be no more than a total of 8 pages (excluding up to three letters of recommendation) and be emailed to Michelle Ufford, Director of Grantmaking, at michelle@northlandfdn.org **no later than midnight on Friday, April 11.** *Late submissions will not be accepted.*

F. RFP REVIEW PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Applications will be reviewed by Northland Foundation leadership between April 14 and May 9. Applicants will be notified should any questions arise during this review timeframe. The successful bidder will be notified by writing no later than May 14, followed by a period of contract negotiation, including determination of the official start date.

Please address any questions related to this RFP to Michelle Ufford, Director of Grantmaking, at michelle@northlandfdn.org **using the subject line of 'Housing TA RFP Question'.**