

Erie County Human Relations Commission

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: FAIR HOUSING TESTING SERVICES

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: **AUGUST 24, 2015**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Erie County Human Relations Commission is a neutral judicial body that administers and enforces the Erie County Human Relations Ordinance. The Commission is an arm of the County Government created to eliminate discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodation. Through the enforcement of the Ordinance, the Commission affords individuals the ability to file housing discrimination complaints. The Commission also engages in education of the community through fair housing seminars. The Commission wants to engage a qualified independent entity to test the rental housing community in the County of Erie, Pennsylvania on the basis of at least two (2) of the following protected classes under its Ordinance: race, color, familial status, religious creed, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, disability of the person, and the use of guide or support animals because of the disability of the person.

The Commission is not looking for fair housing complaints to result from the fair housing testing. What the Commission is looking for is for the testers to test landlords in the County of Erie, Pennsylvania in order to provide a statistical analysis as to the manner in which the individual testers are treated by the landlords. For example, an individual tester would respond to an ad in the newspaper for an apartment and view the apartment with the landlord. The Commission would be requiring that the testers go to at least two (2) different sites, testing each site with regard to at least two (2) of the protected classes (which shall be determined by the Commission after consultation with the entity). Further, the Commission would require the agency to analyze the testing results and to provide and present a Final Cumulative Report (as further detailed herein).

The Contract for the project will begin on the earliest date that an agreement can be reached and will end on March 31, 2016. The funding for this activity derives from the County of Erie's Act 137 fund; therefore, all aspects of the Contract must comply with state and federal regulations, as well as local ordinances.

II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF WORK

The Commission wishes to contract services for fair housing testing for the purpose of gathering statistical data on fair housing issues within the County of Erie, Pennsylvania.

A. Investigative/Enforcement Services:

1. Serve as a testing service to conduct telephone inquiries and in-

person, on-site, paired testing inquiries, as appropriate, on the basis of at least two (2) protected classes (to be identified by the Commission in the final Contract) at two (2) or three (3) sites within the County of Erie (to be determined by the Commission after consultation with the chosen entity).

2. Serve as a provider of qualified, trained testers to conduct such testing in the County of Erie at two (2) or three (3) sites to be determined.
3. Furnish trained testers, staff, materials, equipment, travel, and all necessary elements for the completion of the Contract.

B. Meetings/Informational Sessions:

Conduct at least two (2) face-to-face meetings in Erie, Pennsylvania with Commission members, Commission staff, and/or County of Erie staff:

1. One (1) meeting shall be conducted **prior to** the commencement of testing activities in order to discuss testing needs, site choices and project scope.
2. One (1) meeting shall be conducted following the completion of all testing activities in order to present the required Final Cumulative Report and answer any questions posed at such meeting.

C. Final Cumulative Report:

Conduct a thorough analysis of testing materials and results and provide and present a Final Cumulative Report upon the completion of all testing activities, which shall include, but not be limited to:

1. A description of the testing methodology utilized; including, but not limited to, a description of the selection and training of the testers and the design of each test.
2. Copies of tester reports/notes.
3. An analysis of each telephone inquiry and in-person, on-site, paired test for each protected class/basis and for each site.
4. Analysis and charts of overall data collected and professional recommendations in light of the results of all tests.

The Final Cumulative Report shall be provided to the Commission for its review at least ten (10) days prior to the scheduled date of the meeting at which the Final Cumulative Report is to be presented.

III. PROPOSAL FORMAT AND PROJECT COMPLETION SCHEDULE

A. Proposal Format:

1. Title Page: Include the name of the project, entity name, contact person, address, telephone number, fax number, E-mail address, and date of Proposal.
2. Letter of Transmittal: Nor more than two (2) typed pages. Briefly state the entity's understanding of the work to be performed; detail the testing Methodology that the entity proposes to utilize; detail how services would be delivered; state the entity's proposed cost to the Commission, which should be expressed as a set amount per site/location and/or per paired test/audit and which cost should be all-inclusive and take into account all services that are to be provided (e.g. testers, testing services, expenses, mileage, reports, analysis, cumulative reports, meetings, etc.); and make a positive commitment to perform the work to be done within the allotted time period and within the fixed fee established.
3. Table of Contents: Provide a clear identification of the materials included, by section and page number.
4. Summary of the Entity's Qualifications: Include a brief history of the entity's operations; evidence that the entity has the capacity to complete the scope of work and to maintain an effective record keeping system, including fiscal resources; and a copy of the entity's incorporation, 501(c)(3) tax status, and board of director's roster (if applicable).
5. Summary of Personnel Qualifications: Include a list of each staff person that would be assigned to this project and a list of duties that would be assigned to each staff person. Include a brief résumé of each such person which, at a minimum, includes such person's education/training, professional experience and description of similar projects completed in the last five (5) years. Also include information regarding any professional affiliations/certifications of the entity's Director(s)/Manager(s).
6. Summary of Subcontractors' Qualifications and Training: Include brief résumés (including, at a minimum: education, relevant professional experience, and professional affiliations/certifications) of any technical, cost estimating, design, and other subcontractors to be assigned to/hired for this project. With regard to the actual "Testers," please provide information and evidence regarding the method/program used to train the Testers; certification that each Tester has, in fact, received

such training; certification that the Testers and the entity meet the requirements listed in 24 CFR § 125.107; and the level of experience of each Tester (though each Tester need not be identified by name).

7. Sample Testing Summary Report: Include a copy of a testing summary report – similar to the Final Cumulative Report being requested for this project – that the entity has generated within the past year for a similar testing project. The report *may* be redacted, as necessary.

B. Project Completion Schedule/Deliverables:

1. First Face-to-Face Meeting: Shall be conducted in Erie, Pennsylvania prior to the commencement of testing activities in order to discuss testing needs, site choices and project scope.

2. Testing Activities/Analysis: Shall be conducted at selected sites in the County of Erie, Pennsylvania following the first meeting with the Commission and/or County staff, and shall be concluded in sufficient time for the entity to analyze the results and draft/submit the Final Cumulative Report by the date it is due.

3. Final Cumulative Report: Shall be transmitted to the Commission on or before the date that is **at least ten (10) days prior to the date set for the second meeting** with the Commission and/or County staff.

4. Second Face-to-Face Meeting: Shall be conducted in Erie, Pennsylvania following the completion of all testing activities in order to present the required Final Cumulative Report and answer any questions posed at such meeting. **Must be completed on or before March 31, 2016.**

IV. PROPOSAL REVIEW AND CONSIDERATIONS

A. The proposal review committee is comprised of Commissioners and Commission staff. The review committee will rank each entity and prepare a short list of candidates for potential interview and/or final selection.

B. The ranking of each entity shall be based upon: (1) the entity's knowledge of testing, of fair housing law, and the proposed methodology; (2) the entity's prior experience in conducting fair housing testing in similar housing markets; (3) the qualifications of agency staff; and (4) the proposed cost of the project. Each criterion will be given equal weight.

C. The Erie County Human Relations Commission reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals received, to waive any non-substantive deficiency or irregularity, and to select the proposal which best meets the requirements of the project and the interests of the Commission and the County of Erie. The successful applicant

will be chosen by a majority vote of the Commission members.

D. The Erie County Human Relations Commission is not responsible for non-receipt of proposals sent by ordinary mail. Late delivery of proposals will not be accepted.

E. Proposals may be withdrawn up until the date and time set for receiving proposals. Any proposal not so withdrawn shall, upon opening, constitute an offer for a period of sixty (60) calendar days to provide the services set forth.

F. The entity submitting the selected proposal will be contacted by Commission staff and shall be required to enter into a final, fixed-rate Contract.

V. SUBMISSION

Two (2) copies of the proposal are to be submitted **by 12:00 p.m. NOON on August 24, 2015** to: Erie County Controller's Office, Attention: Mary Schaaf, Room 107, located at the Erie County Courthouse, 140 West 6th Street, Erie, PA 16501. For more information, please contact Mr. Joseph Aguglia at 814-451-7021 or at jauglia@eriecountygov.org or cscalise@eriecountygov.org.