

## Request for Proposal (RFP) for Property Management services

The Buffalo Neighborhood Stabilization Company, Inc.(BNSC) is seeking proposals from qualified, professional property management firms to provide property management services for its West Side Homes project, currently in predevelopment and will include 53 apartments and 1 commercial space over 12 sites

The purpose of the RFP is to solicit proposals from vendors to act as the exclusive leasing broker and agent for the appropriate properties as designated by BNSC or its designees, with the responsibilities and upon the terms and conditions set forth herein. The ideal vendor will have experience managing,, leasing and maintaining affordable housing and commercial properties.

Please remit an electronic version of the consultant's proposal no later than 5PM on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020:

Jenifer Kaminsky

Email: [jen@bnsbuffalo.org](mailto:jen@bnsbuffalo.org)

Ms. Kaminsky will serve as the primary contact for the review process for the consultant's proposal. Any questions regarding this RFP should be addressed to Ms. Kaminsky through email at the above address.

### *1. Entity Background and Information*

PUSH Buffalo's housing arm, Buffalo Neighborhood Stabilization Company (BNSC), is a non-profit housing corporation dedicated to creating affordable housing units on Buffalo's West Side. It was created in 2009 to address the growing housing needs found in the organization's growing Green Development Zone.

BNSC's mission is to:

- Increase access to quality, affordable housing by substantially increasing the number of units being renovated and constructed each year.
- Enhance the neighborhood fabric by coordinating investments in infrastructure and rehabilitate vacant lots.
- Prevent gentrification and displacement of residents by ensuring affordable rental and homeowner housing opportunities.
- Act as a land bank to acquire vacant housing and lots and stabilize them in preparation for development.

PUSH and BNSC, use several programs and national models to develop high-quality, affordable housing on Buffalo's West Side.

PUSH's members are the community organizers who make affordable housing a reality in Buffalo. Our members work with partners and funders to create a healthy, just and strong city that includes community control of resources, living wage jobs and access to quality education, healthcare and transportation.

#### Beliefs:

- Real people have real power.
- We know what we want where we live.
- We deserve a seat at the table.
- When turning our neighborhoods around, we are all in this together.
- When we show up in big numbers, people listen.

#### Values

- Member Involvement – We base our decisions on member participation and consideration of alternatives.
- Inclusiveness – We encourage a diversity of opinions.
- Ownership – We take advantage of opportunities to create and control community resources.
- Results Oriented – Our plan is an accomplishment – we have outlined a series of measurable goals and outcomes that will ultimately lead to results.
- Relevant – We will respond to changing political and social climates by evaluating trends that are prevalent to the goals and objectives of our organization.
- Justice – We are committed to promoting social justice that gives real power to real people.

#### Goals

- Create strong neighborhoods.
- Develop neighborhood leaders.
- Decrease the rate of housing abandonment.
- Create an energy future independent from utilities.

#### Strategies

- Build a more democratic, action-orientated organization that addresses poor housing conditions and the lack of living wage jobs in our neighborhoods.
- Decrease the rate of housing abandonment by reclaiming properties from neglectful public and private owners and redeveloping them for occupancy.
- Lead direct action campaigns against corporations and government agencies whose practices contribute to the high poverty rate in our community.
- Create a replicable model of grassroots neighborhood organizing and redevelopment that can be deployed in other low-income communities throughout the Rust Belt.

## 2. *West Side Homes project description*

The Buffalo Neighborhood Stabilization Company Inc (BNSC), the housing development arm of PUSH Buffalo, proposes to develop 53 units of high quality affordable rental housing development on Buffalo's West Side. The project was conceived to align with BNSC and PUSH Buffalo's organizational missions to create sustainable housing, community facilities, and living wage jobs for West Side residents. Through a planning process that began in 2017, community members identified these sites to be returned to use as affordable housing and have been directly involved in the planning and conception of the project. The project is strategically situated within and adjacent to PUSH Buffalo's Green Development Zone, an area on the West Side that PUSH and BNSC have designated for targeted affordable housing reinvestment and community building initiatives.

The project is expected to include 2 substantially rehabilitated and 14 newly constructed buildings, which will consist of 2 family homes and some small multi-family buildings on 12 sites. A small amount of storefront/non-residential space is also planned. Total project costs are currently estimated at \$19,527,573.

BNSC anticipates submitting applications for project funding in 2020, beginning construction in 2021, and achieving qualified occupancy in 2022.

BNSC has also partnered with Best Self Behavioral Health to designate 30% of the apartments for homeless individuals and families with a substance use disorder or serious mental illness.

PUSH and BNSC have extensive experience with developing and managing quality affordable housing and community spaces. BNSC uses a variety of strategies to create a safe, decent and viable neighborhood on the West Side of Buffalo. This Project fits directly within the creativity, vitality and spirit of Buffalo's Massachusetts Avenue Corridor Green Development Zone (GDZ) and the vision that its residents have for its future. The GDZ was founded by PUSH in 2008. It is a place-based initiative anchored in a 25-block section of the city's West Side that includes green affordable housing construction, community-based renewable energy projects, housing weatherization, green jobs training and urban agriculture.

The best plans and the ones with the highest likelihood of success build on the assets currently available and address the daily needs of those currently living on the West Side. This new project proposes a strategy that meets these local needs, reinforces the positive work that has been going on for several years, and works toward a comprehensive and sustainable neighborhood with opportunities for all who live here.

Throughout 2017 and 2018, PUSH's Community Development Committee (CDC) participated in the planning and decision-making process that has led us to this outline for this sustainable in-fill project. The CDC actively advocated for more supports in the housing work that BNSC does and identified Best Self Behavioral Health as a strong service provider in the community – leading to the partnership we are now pursuing. The CDC studied maps of BNSC and City-owned property and identified clusters around PUSH's community hub at School 77 and Grant Street Neighborhood Center around Grant and West Delavan – which are now the sites we are incorporating in the project.

The project will include 53 units of affordable housing for low-income individuals and families and a small amount of non-residential space. The unit breakdown will include 6 one-bedroom

apartments, 14 two-bedroom apartments, 22 three-bedroom apartments, and 8 four-bedroom apartments. Square footages are planned to be consistent with NYS Homes and Community Renewal's design standards.

BNSC currently performs maintenance services for all property it owns. It is anticipated that maintenance work for West Side Homes will be performed by BNSC via a contract with the managing agent.

BNSC aims to utilize the highest quality, most sustainable materials possible in order to ensure the highest quality and healthiest housing. Work at the homes proposed will include upgrading and replacing of existing gas heating and cooling systems to high efficiency electrical air and water source heat pump systems. Work will include new roofs, systems, interiors, and repairs to the facade. For new and renovated buildings, work will include high functioning building envelopes in support of energy efficient systems designed to meet or *exceed* HCR standards. For all sites storm water mitigation is planned to minimize flow into the Buffalo sewer system.

BNSC has also assembled an experienced development team for this project, including:

- Christa Construction as General Contractor
- Stieglitz Snyder Architecture with eco\_logic STUDIO as Architects
- Cannon Heyman & Weiss, LLP as Legal Counsel
- Oxford Consulting Inc. as Financial consultant

### 3. *Scope of Services*

The ideal vendor will have affordable housing expertise as well as experience marketing, leasing and maintaining multi-unit and single-family homes, and commercial properties:

The selected Agent will be responsible for all aspects of managing the property including but not limited to:

- Provide marketing and management materials necessary for BNSC's application process to various funding agencies
- Provide draft property management rental rules and regulations for BNSC to review.
- Setting rents according to annual budgets and in compliance with Regulatory Agencies
- Order repairs, services, and maintenance on the various buildings and grounds as requested by BNSC and West Side Homes tenants. It is anticipated that such maintenance work will be carried out via a contract with BNSC.
- Market, lease, screen and select tenants from property wait list
- Certify tenant eligibility in accordance with project Regulatory Agreements
- Prepare and execute lease agreements using only lease forms approved by BNSC.
- Collect rent and late charges as needed.
- Conduct a minimum of two exterior and interior inspections per year of the properties, providing a written report of recommendations for necessary maintenance and any major deficiencies with photos to BNSC.

- Provide tenants with 24-hour emergency telephone contact number for emergency repairs. Identify and address emergency situations immediately upon occurrence and provide follow up while keeping the BNSC informed.
- Handle all tenant relations in compliance with BNSC vision, mission and values
- Provide a monthly report/statement for each individual property indicating the income received, monthly budget to actuals, income withheld for services (with a description of the services), vacancies, turn-over schedule, bills paid, arrears, and budget for property turn over.
- Implement sustainable, green energy and recycling programs where possible
- Coordinate with BNSC staff to participate in the preparation of Annual Audits as well as filing of federal and State tax forms when applicable.
- Re-key locks for new tenants when appropriate.
- Change electrical, gas, garbage, sewer and water billing as required between property occupancies.
- Acknowledge and comply with the provisions of the law and particularly concerning deposits. Vendors will collect a deposit from every tenant, additional deposits required for properties allowing animals.
- Work with BNSC designees to procure proper property insurance.
- Coordinate all scheduled and unscheduled maintenance work.
- Coordinate and supervise minor tenant improvement work (i.e. paint, carpet, etc.).
- Coordinate annual occupant fire drill where applicable.
- Inspect the properties, in the company of the renter, prior to move in and complete a detailed inspection report that shall be provided to the BNSC.
- Conduct a final inspection when the property is vacated, with a move out inspection report.

#### 4. *Funding programs and agencies anticipated for West Side Homes:*

The Agent will be responsible for complying with applicable Agency regulations, including New York State Homes and Community Renewal, the City of Buffalo and New York State Empire State Development, and relevant funding programs.

- NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)
- 9% Low Income Housing Tax credits (LIHTC)
- NYS Low Income Housing Tax credits (SLIHC)
- Homeless Housing and Assistance Program (HHAP) from Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
- HOME funds via the City of Buffalo
- Supportive Housing Opportunity Program (SHOP) from NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR)
- Better Buffalo Funds (BBF) from NYS Empire State Development (ESD)
- Community Investment Funds (CIF) from NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR)

#### 5. Management Goals

- a. The Agent shall provide a desirable, well maintained, habitable, and affordable place to live for an economically, racially and ethnically integrated resident population, without regard to race, religion, sex, color, family status, disability status, national origin, marital status,

ancestry, gender identity or sexual orientation, and in accordance with BNSC's mission, goals, and values.

- b. The Agent shall house eligible, suitable and responsible residents and maximize occupancy and rent collection efforts.
- c. The Agent shall provide effective and timely services to the residents.
- d. The Agent shall maintain effective working relationships with BNSC, the City of Buffalo, the State of New York, and the property's lenders and investors

The BNSC reserves the right to request further information from the chosen property management professional.

All correspondence shall be directed through BNSC, or designee. To be eligible to respond to this RFP, the proposer(s) must demonstrate that they, or the Principals assigned to the project, have successfully performed the services in the Scope of Services section of this RFP.

The Contractor shall provide the BNSC with a current written listing of all its clients. The list must be kept current at all times. The Contractor shall notify the BNSC of any new client(s) within ten days of such commitment(s).

#### *6. Conflict of Interest*

In the event the Contractor becomes aware of any conflicts or potential conflicts between the interest of the BNSC and the interests of clients of the Contractor, the Contractor shall immediately notify the BNSC, or designee, in writing, of such conflict. Written notice may be in the form of an email notification. In the event the BNSC becomes aware of any conflicts or potential conflicts between the interest of the BNSC and the interest of clients of the Contractor, the BNSC shall promptly notify the Contractor of such conflict. The BNSC and the Contractor shall attempt to resolve any such conflict in a manner mutually acceptable to the BNSC and the Contractor.

#### *7. Proposals*

Proposals shall include the following:

Qualifications and Experience | Summarize your firm's qualifications, experience, and special expertise in providing the type of services identified in the project description. Include resumes for key personnel. Also include the following:

- Name of parent company
- Length of time in business
- Length of time in business providing proposed services
- Gross revenue for the prior fiscal year

- Total number of clients
- Total number of clients in proposed service area
- Average retention rate (years of service) of the firm's other clients
- o Experience working with similar developments, if any
- Number of full-time personnel
- Headquarters location
- Proof of all necessary permits and licenses to perform property management services

**Management Approach** | Provide a brief overview of your property management philosophy, methods and practices, and how they would meet the needs identified in the requested services section. Describe how you would envision communication and reporting occurring between your firm, the tenants, and the BNSC.

**Pricing Methodology** | Provide base property management fees. Any additional fees (above the base fee) should be itemized as a separate line item and priced as a cost reimbursement plus administrative markup with the markup clearly identified.

**References** | Include a list of references, including contact names, phone number and email address, for at least two recent or current properties managed by your firm.

## 8. Fee Schedule

Proposals must be made in the official name of the firm or individual under which the business is conducted (showing official business address).

Please also include responses to the following:

- What outside vendor services does your firm typically employ?
- How will the firm help the BNSC identify and correct potential safety risks or hazards?
- Will your firm assist in investigating accidents or damage to the property? Does the firm have prior experience in this capacity?
- How will the firm ensure the buildings are adequately maintained?

Proposals should be simple and straightforward and provide a concise description of the consultant's ability to meet the requirements of the RFP. Any additional information that the consultant would like to submit should be included in a separate section titled "Supplemental Information".

The selected consultant will serve as a consultant to the BNSC, and not an employee of the BNSC and shall act on behalf of the BNSC. The selection process will be based on the consultant's qualifications in the areas specified herein, as well as verifiable references for past similar, successful projects.

## *9. Length of Contract*

The length of the contract is expected to be a two-year term with the option for the BNSC to extend for one additional year.

## *9. Other Information*

- Signed Proposals – all proposals must be signed by a person authorized to sign on behalf of the Respondent and to bind the Respondent to statements made in response to this RFP.
- Irrevocability of Proposals – by submission of a clear and detailed written notice, the Respondent may amend or withdraw its proposal prior to the closing date and time. A Respondent who has withdrawn a proposal may submit a new proposal prior to the closing provided that such proposal is done in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP.
- Changes to Proposal Wording – the Respondent will not change the wording of its proposal after closing, and no words or comments will be added to the proposal unless requested by the BNSC for purposes of clarification.
- Acceptance of Terms – unless specifically excluded in writing, all the terms and conditions of this RFP are accepted by the Respondent and incorporated in its proposal.
- Respondent's Expenses – Respondents are solely responsible for their own expenses in preparing, and submitting, a proposal and for subsequent negotiations with the BNSC, if any. The BNSC will not be liable to any Respondent for any claims, whether for costs or damages incurred by the Respondent in preparing, and submitting, the proposal, loss of anticipated profit in connection with any final Contract, or any other matter whatsoever.
- Currency and taxes – prices quoted are to be in U.S. dollars

## *10. Sub-Contracting –*

- Using a sub-contractor (who should be clearly identified in the proposal) is acceptable. This includes a joint submission by two Respondents having no formal corporate links. However, in this case, one of those Respondents must be prepared to take overall responsibility for the successful performance of the Contract and this should be clearly defined in the proposal.
- Sub-contracting to any firm or individual who's current or past corporate or other interests may, in the BNSC's opinion, give rise to a conflict of interest in connection with the Project will not be permitted. This includes but is not limited to, any organization or individual involved in the preparation of a response to this RFP.
- Where applicable, the names of approved sub-contractors listed in this proposal will be included in the Contract. No additional subcontractors will be neither added, or other changes made, to this list in the Contract without the written consent of the BNSC.

11. Acceptance of Proposals – this RFP should not be construed as an agreement to procure goods or services by the BNSC. The BNSC is not bound to enter into a Contract with the Respondent who submits the lowest priced proposal or with any Respondent. Proposals will be accessed in light of the evaluation criteria. The BNSC will be under no obligation to receive further information, whether written or oral, from any Respondent.

12. Form of Contract – by submission of a proposal, the Respondent agrees that, should it be identified as the preferred consultant, it is willing to enter into a contract with the BNSC, subject to successful negotiations by both parties, in writing, and approval by relevant funding agencies.

13. Liability for Errors – while the BNSC has used considerable efforts to ensure an accurate representation of information in this RFP, the information contained herein is supplied solely as a guideline for Respondents. The information is not guaranteed or warranted to be accurate by the BNSC, nor is it necessarily comprehensive or exhaustive. Nothing in this RFP is intended to relieve Respondents from forming their own opinions and conclusions with respect to the matters addressed in this RFP.

14. Modification of Terms – the BNSC reserves the right to modify the terms of this RFP at any time in its sole discretion. This includes the right to cancel this RFP at any time prior to entering into a Contract with the preferred property management firm.

15. Ownership of Proposals – all documents, including proposals submitted by Respondents in response to this RFP become the property of the BNSC. They will be received and held in confidence to the extent allowable by law.

16. Use of Request for Proposal – this RFP, or any portion thereof, may not be used for any purpose other than the submission of proposals.

17. Confidentiality of Information – information pertaining to the BNSC obtained by the Respondent as a result of participation in this Project is confidential and must not be disclosed without written authorization from the BNSC.

18. Material Ownership – all materials submitted, included but not limited to proposals in response to this RFP and any and all information, documentation, and presentations provided by the Respondent to the BNSC on a go-forward basis, shall become the sole property of the BNSC.

19. The selected Respondent and any other contractors and sub-contractors will be expected to consent to the personal and subject matter of the BNSC as the exclusive forum for the resolution of any disputes.

## *20. Background and Prior Experience*

Describe and give examples of the professional experience and training you/your firm have had over the past three years from BNSC with:

- Working with diverse committees involving non-profits, community groups, businesses, residents and other organizations and institutions;
- underserved, people of color and various demographics
- Affordable housing, community development and organizational development
- Supportive Housing

## 21. *References*

Please provide the contact information for three previous clients whose work you have referred to who would be willing to provide a reference. Briefly describe the work you did for them.

Familiarity with Buffalo, New York

Describe your familiarity with Buffalo, New York and give examples of projects you or your firm have done in Buffalo that are similar to this scope of work.

## 22. *Work Samples*

- Provide 2 examples of monthly property management reports given to clients

All interested prospective Contractors shall submit the following information in 2 hard copies and an electronic copy BNSC to demonstrate their qualifications for undertaking the project.

Late responses will not be accepted at the conclusion of the RFP process, all Respondents will be notified of the outcome. Please remit an electronic version of the consultant's proposal no later than 5pm on February 13th to: Jenifer Kaminsky Email [jen@bnsbuffalo.org](mailto:jen@bnsbuffalo.org) will serve as the primary contact for the review process for the consultant's proposal. Any questions regarding this RFP should be addressed to Jenifer Kaminsky through email at the above address.