

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

WEB BASED SOFTWARE SYSTEM FOR ACCEPTING MULTIFAMILY FUNDING APPLICATIONS

REQUIRED BY

MISSOURI HOUSING DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



Strength, Dignity, Quality of Life

MISSOURI HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

RESPONSES DUE:

Friday, November 20, 2009 by 5:00 P.M. CST

SECTION I: INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

**Missouri Housing
Development
Commission:**

In 1969, the 75th General Assembly of Missouri, in the face of a general housing shortage severely affecting low and moderate income persons, established the Missouri Housing Development Commission (“MHDC” or the “Commission”) in order to increase the availability of decent, safe and sanitary housing at prices within the means of low and moderate income persons. The Commission is a governmental instrumentality of the state of Missouri and a body corporate and politic. The Commission’s authority is derived from Chapter 215 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri, as amended and supplemented.

Purpose of RFP:

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (“RFP”) is to request proposals from software vendors and developers for a web based software system for accepting multifamily housing funding applications. This request includes consideration for off the shelf as well as custom developed solutions. Interested firms should respond in accordance with this RFP.

SCOPES Initiative:

MHDC is underway on a multi-year initiative to improve business processes, and subsequent areas for improvement in its technology applications and human processes. The overall objective of this initiative has been nicknamed “SCOPES”. RSM McGladrey, Inc. is working as “General Contractor” for the overarching SCOPES initiative, which encompasses the web based software system for accepting multifamily housing funding applications.

**Submission of
Proposal:**

Five (5) printed copies and one electronic copy of the proposal must be submitted by the Proposal Due Date noted above to:

*James Block, Production Data Manager – Project Lead
Missouri Housing Development Commission
3435 Broadway
Kansas City, Missouri 64111*

Proposals must be submitted in printed bound form, along with one electronic copy on a CD-ROM, in a sealed envelope marked “Proposal for web based software system for accepting multifamily funding applications” and shall include all information required pursuant to this RFP. The envelope shall be marked with the name of the firm submitting the Proposal.

(Neither faxed copies nor electronic submissions will be accepted.)

Proposal Due Date:

Issuance of RFP – Monday, October 26, 2009
Deadline for submission of vendor questions – November 16, 2009
Deadline for MHDC responses to vendor questions– November 18,
2009
RFP response deadline - November 20, 2009 by 5:00 P.M. CST

SECTION II: PROCEDURES AND INSTRUCTIONS

- Questions:** Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to the Commission in writing by mail, facsimile or electronic mail, as follows:
James Block
Production Data Manager
Missouri Housing Development Commission
3435 Broadway
Kansas City, Missouri 64111
(816) 759-6829 (fax)
jblock@mhdc.com
MHDC will attempt to answer all questions within 2 business days.
- Standards of Conduct:** Please refer to the Commission's "Standards of Conduct" for information regarding contact with MHDC Commissioners or staff in connection with this RFP. The Commission's "Standards of Conduct" are available on MHDC's website at www.mhdc.com.
- Furthermore, pursuant to the Standards of Conduct, any response under this RFP shall disclose the name of the individual, entity and/or entities having ownership interests in the respondent. All entities identified in this disclosure shall be reduced to their human being level irrespective of the number of entity layers that may be present for any disclosed entity. Questions regarding this requirement may be directed to the commission's General Counsel, Bramwell Higgins, by phone at 816-759-6870 or email at bhiggins@mhdc.com.
- Modifications to Proposals:** Respondents may not modify or correct its Proposal any time after the Proposal Due Date, except in direct response to a request from the Commission for clarification.
- Revisions to this RFP:** In the event that it becomes necessary to revise or clarify any part of the RFP, MHDC will provide an addendum on MHDC's website at www.mhdc.com.
- Expense of Preparation of Proposals:** MHDC is not responsible for any expense incurred in preparing and submitting a Proposal or taking any action in connection with the selection process, or for the costs of any services performed in connection with submission of a Proposal.
- Reservation of Rights:** MHDC reserves the right to conduct any investigation of the qualifications of any firm that it deems appropriate; negotiate modifications to any of the items proposed in the Proposal; request additional information from any firm; reject any or all Proposals; and waive any irregularities in any Proposal. **MHDC retains the right to negotiate the fees and compensation arrangements for the web based software system for accepting multifamily housing funding applications.**
- Public Records:** Firms responding to this RFP should be aware that responses received become public records under state law once the evaluation process has been completed.

Visits and Interviews All firms responding to this RFP must be prepared to schedule a visit to MHDC offices or to another location upon request by the Commission. In addition, firms responding to this RFP may be interviewed as a part of the selection process.

SECTION III: TECHNOLOGY OVERVIEW

Description Missouri Housing Development Commission is seeking an on-line, web-based application system that will meet the needs of multifamily housing funding programs administered by MHDC’s Rental Production division. Applications for these programs are processed utilizing a competitive bid process.

Objective/Goal MHDC is seeking an on-line application system that best meets our current needs for applicant data collection and iterative versioning of the submitted application as a working document. We are seeking a provider with the most advantageous solution and a demonstrated, proven track record with similar deployments/implementations of application systems at similar organizations. MHDC reserves the right to consider among other things: cost, technological capabilities, service/support, and the long-term compatibility with MHDC systems in the over-all RFP evaluation.

To view the current Microsoft Excel application and application addendum, see exhibits A & B. There are multiple worksheets/tabs with business rules and developed drop down menus. It is this application and addendum that we would like combined and developed into an online, web-based format for data collection and export. Detailed functional requirements are provided below.

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1. FUNCTIONAL CRITERIA

1.1. General

- 1.1.1. The system must provide capabilities to support users via a web-based interface (e.g. browser) in the following functional roles:
 - 1.1.1.1. Applicants applying for multifamily rental housing programs.
 - 1.1.1.2. Applicants supplying various supplemental forms as requested via electronic attachments.
 - 1.1.1.3. Selected MHDC staff collecting application materials, viewing applicant submission data, and reporting.
- 1.1.2. The vendor must provide a system that can be customized to meet the needs of MHDC funding programs.

1.2. On-Line Application

- 1.2.1. The system must provide a customizable, on-line application for Rental Production multifamily programs.
- 1.2.2. All elements of the current MHDC application and application addendum must be captured by the on-line application. See exhibits A & B for details.
- 1.2.3. Applicants must have a means of supplying supplemental materials on-line through uploading various document formats. A checklist will be provided listing the required material. See exhibit C for details.
 - 1.2.3.1. The supplemental materials must be tied to the original application and project number so departments can easily view and print these materials along with the application. The ultimate goal is to have a complete, viewable, electronic file containing a completed application and all supporting documentation regardless of format.
 - 1.2.3.2. It is highly desirable that the system provide the ability to include and require supplemental materials based on program funding requested and project type.
 - 1.2.3.3. The system must provide the ability to accept and track non-electronic documents such as architectural plans, hard-copy reports, photos, etc.
 - 1.2.3.3.1. The system must provide means to indicate that the department received a non-electronic document.
- 1.2.4. The system must provide the ability for the applicant to complete the application in multiple sessions.

- 1.2.5. The system must provide the ability for an applicant to apply for multiple MHDC programs.
- 1.2.6. The system must provide the ability for an applicant to submit multiple, separate applications (e.g. for different developments).
- 1.2.7. It is highly desirable that the applicant have the ability to copy their data from one working application (possibly from a previous year) into a new or another version.
- 1.2.8. The system must provide a clear means for the applicant to save changes during data entry and edit sessions.
- 1.2.9. The system must warn the applicant of attempts to exit without saving.
- 1.2.10. The system must provide a means to abandon changes without saving.
- 1.2.11. The system must assign an MHDC Project Identification Number to each application. It is highly desired that MHDC provide guidance for logic built into the number.
- 1.2.12. The system must provide the ability to capture the date and time of application submission.
- 1.2.13. Where possible entry fields must be tied to standardized and user extensible lookup tables for items such as counties, governmental district, and program(s) requested, etc.
- 1.2.14. The on-line application must allow for identifying text, images, and logos provided by MHDC such that the application reflects MHDC rather than vendor ownership and branding.
- 1.2.15. The system must provide the ability to conditionally define drop down lists of values, required fields and valid values, i.e., dynamic content, on application as needed. The vendor should describe the available mechanisms for providing this functionality.
- 1.2.16. The system must provide the ability to accept online payment at the time of application. Please provide information regarding purposed online payment acceptance method.
 - 1.2.16.1. It is highly desirable that the collected application fees be automatically deposited in the appropriate MHDC account at the time the application is submitted. Please provide information of how fees are collected by your system.
 - 1.2.16.2. The collection of application fees must include a mechanism for tracking application fee payment that allows for auditing and reconciliation of submitted application fees with MHDC accounts, complies with MHDC policies, and is tied to the project number.

- 1.2.17. It is highly desirable that the system provide a means for the applicant to be led only to relevant fields or sections of the application. The design of the application should not confuse the applicant by the availability of extra fields, sections, or forms that are not relevant to his/her application.
- 1.2.18. The system must provide the ability to customize deadlines for application submissions by program.
- 1.2.19. The system must provide the ability to prevent applicants from applying to programs after application deadlines.
- 1.2.20. The system must provide the ability to customize terms and conditions by program.
- 1.2.21. The system must provide the ability to automate an email response for notification of application receipt with date stamp upon submission of the application.
- 1.2.22. The applicant must be able to print a copy of the information that she/he submitted in a concise form.
- 1.2.23. It is highly desirable that the system provide clear instructions/help in a web-based format while the applicant is completing the application.
- 1.2.24. The system must provide the ability for the applicant to make updates and interact with multiple versions post submission as needed (see 1.3.2).

1.3. Departmental Interface – Application Processing

- 1.3.1. Selected MHDC staff must have the ability to view applications via a secure, web-based interface.
- 1.3.2. The system must provide the ability to update fields on the application after submission via versioning (through to a final version at construction completion). Each version should be identified appropriately. MHDC will identify this set of fields during design.
 - 1.3.2.1. It is highly desirable that the application management system track any modifications made to application information by the department after application submission through the use of a change log or other means (please specify).
 - 1.3.2.2. The system must have the ability to track the version/status history as versions change.
- 1.3.3. Describe the system's basic and custom reporting capabilities. Describe the capability to export data and to build customizable export files. Departments must have the ability to filter, sort, and export viewable lists of applicants by multiple fields, including but not limited to:

- Program type (funding source)
- County
- City
- Government Districts
- Project Name
- Project Number
- Application Status
- Amount Requested
- Funding Year.
- Other

- 1.3.4. Departments must have the ability to search for applicants. It is highly desirable that departments have the ability to search by user defined query--multiple fields defined with Boolean logic.
- 1.3.5. Security regarding MHDC staff's ability to view detailed application information must be customizable as needed.
- 1.3.6. Departments must have the ability to view the complete application information as submitted by the applicant for defined views.
- 1.3.7. Departments must have the ability to print a completed individual application, including supplemental materials, in a format matching the printed application form with all information as originally submitted by the applicant.
- 1.3.8. Selected individuals must have the ability to print individual and all applications for a selected cycle/term.
- 1.3.9. It is highly desirable that selected individuals have the ability to print selected sections from an individual application or batch of applications.
- 1.3.10. MHDC (with appropriate permissions) must have the ability to purge selected application records from the system.
- 1.3.11. MHDC staff must have the ability to identify duplicate applications from a single applicant to the same program in the same term.
- 1.3.12. The system must provide the ability to add departmental and administrative users to the system.

2. TECHNICAL CRITERIA

2.1. Technical Specifications

- 2.1.1. All users must access the system via standard browsers.
- 2.1.2. The vendor must clearly identify browser types and versions supported by the vendor's system including a minimum recommended connection speed.

- 2.1.3. The vendor must clearly identify any limitations of operating systems or browser types not supported by their product. The vendor system must be fully accessible to users with disabilities.
- 2.1.4. All transmissions with the on-line application system and application management tools must be secured through SSL.
 - 2.1.4.1. If packaged or off-the-shelf solution, it is highly desirable that transmissions be protected through a logon scheme that includes a password or other equivalent method of access control (please specify).
 - 2.1.4.2. If custom developed, the preferred method will integrate with SharePoint portal authentication mechanisms.
- 2.1.5. If password control is used for either access to the on-line application or the application management tool, it is highly desirable that a method be available for expiration of passwords, reset of passwords, and lockout after a set number of unsuccessful attempts.
- 2.1.6. The vendor must provide assurance that the system will be able to support the peak demands of the applicants submitting on-line applications without degradation to the system performance and response time. For a given funding round, there may be 150-200 applicants with potential multiple versions.
- 2.1.7. Performance must not negatively impact the user experience. The vendor should describe performance benchmarks (also capacity and capabilities) that are run and the results from those tests. Also, the vendor should indicate which benchmarks would be run for the MHDC's implementation.
- 2.1.8. The vendor should address capability to integrate captured data with other systems such as MHDC back office or line of business systems.

2.2. Architecture

As part of the vendor selection process, MHDC needs a detailed assessment of all technical proposals to assess the efficiency of implementation, maintain conformance with MHDC common practices, and to expand those common practices to meet new needs. Please respond to the points below:

- 2.2.1. Database considerations:
 - 2.2.1.1. If packaged or off-the-shelf solution, the provided database must be open and non-proprietary so data can be exported into another database as needed.
 - 2.2.1.2. If custom developed, Microsoft SQL is the preferred platform. The vendor should anticipate working closely with MHDC to develop database details. MHDC will need to approve the data model.
- 2.2.2. Microsoft SharePoint Integration (MHDC uses MOSS 2007):

- 2.2.2.1. If packaged or off-the-shelf solution, describe how your system integrates with Microsoft SharePoint.
- 2.2.2.2. If custom developed, describe how your system integrates with Microsoft SharePoint.
- 2.2.3. Describe the architecture of your application at a high level. How does your application secure data transmission between tiers of this architecture that must communicate over public networks?
- 2.2.4. MHDC prefers to host the system. The vendor should describe the system's operational architecture and hosting environment recommendations.
- 2.2.5. It is highly desirable that the vendor provide MHDC a means to monitor the status of the on-line web application availability and usage.
- 2.2.6. The vendor should describe its approach with respect to data backups and archives.
- 2.2.7. The vendor must describe data redundancy methodologies used to insure no single point of failure would result in permanent loss of data or unacceptable interruption of service.
- 2.2.8. It is highly desirable that logs record user access as well as record information about what activities and actions have been performed.
 - 2.2.8.1. Describe how user access and user activity logging is typically required by clients who deploy your application.
 - 2.2.8.2. Describe data modification or business event logging is typically required by clients who use your application.
 - 2.2.8.3. Describe how the application logs runtime messages and errors.
- 2.2.9. Are there any known impacts of implementing your system or solution on commonly used back office systems? If so, please describe the impacts you or clients who have implemented your system have observed and provide some relevant metrics to quantify the impact.

2.3. Ownership and Use of Data

- 2.3.1. Exclusive Data Rights. MHDC holds exclusive rights to all data captured by the on-line application and entered on the application manager interface. The vendor cannot sell or use data for its own research or benefit without prior approval granted from the MHDC.

3. TECHNICAL SUPPORT

3.1. Implementation Support

- 3.1.1. MHDC intends to implement a customized on-line application system as a multi-phased project. We intend to implement the basic functionality of our system on a pilot timeline that makes the application available to prospective applicants as early as possible. The vendor will be asked to support the development, design, testing, and deployment process. The implementation plans requested below should be developed to consider the development and delivery of the baseline system and plans for a complete roll-out at a later date.
- 3.1.2. Implementation Approach. The vendor should describe the typical implementation approach taken for a project such as ours. Included in this discussion should be the general roles of the vendor and MHDC personnel. If the vendor has a standard implementation overview or guide, the vendor may provide documentation of this process. The vendor should address the following in the discussion:
 - 3.1.2.1. Define services explicitly not covered by implementation support services.
 - 3.1.2.2. Describe any prerequisites incumbent upon the MHDC prior to the acquisition of implementation support—e.g., administrator training required certifications, etc.
 - 3.1.2.3. Describe how determination is made that the products are fully and successfully implemented and that the agreement for implementation support has been entirely fulfilled.
 - 3.1.2.4. Detailed Implementation Plan - Phase I. The vendor should provide a detailed implementation plan for phase I (pilot) of the project; that is a plan to deliver the basic functionality of a timeline that makes sense. The plan should include a delineation of tasks and subtasks, detailed schedule including milestones with final estimated delivery date, and level of effort categorized by the functional role and experience.
 - 3.1.2.4.1. The implementation plan should also include a detailed task list and schedule for the MHDC deliveries required for the vendor to customize the product for baseline delivery.
 - 3.1.2.5. Preliminary Implementation Plan-Full Implementation. The vendor should develop a primary implementation plan for a phased approach to implementing the full functionality of the proposed solution over two application cycles.
 - 3.1.2.6. The vendor should identify all key personnel and provide brief biographies of them.

3.2. Operational Support

- 3.2.1. The vendor should describe the tools and services typically provided that will support MHDC and its ongoing maintenance of the system provided.
 - 3.2.1.1. The vendor should clearly indicate what types of costs are associated with the types of support. This should include items covered by the contract, fees charged per incident, or hourly fees. The vendor is strongly encouraged to provide different pricing options for enhanced levels of support if all support will not be priced in standard implementation.

3.3. Training Services

- 3.3.1. The vendor should describe their overall strategy for training of the MHDC users including:
 - 3.3.1.1. Strategies employed for training users in different functional roles, e.g. administrator departmental staff, super-users, departmental users, and executives.
 - 3.3.1.2. Timing of training with respect to the implementation plan.
 - 3.3.1.3. Materials provided during training.

3.4. Software Maintenance and Terms

- 3.4.1. Scheduled Maintenance (if applicable). The vendor shall address how scheduled maintenance is typically performed. This shall include a discussion of the frequency of scheduled maintenance, the scheduling, and the effect on the availability of the on-line application.
- 3.4.2. Services Updates (if applicable). The vendor should describe the strategy used to update services to new versions and how updates are made available to clients. The vendor should describe the frequency at which updates are provided and methods to communicate the availability of product updates. The vendor should describe the effect of updates upon customized screens, web pages, database fields, etc., that may have been implemented by the MHDC.
- 3.4.3. Modifications. Describe the process for MHDC to perform ongoing and future customizations.
 - 3.4.3.1. The vendor must provide a system that has the ability to be modified as our processes and needs mature. The vendor should address how such changes are supported by either:
 - 3.4.3.1.1. Describing the skills required for MHDC administrative staff to make ongoing changes and if this is recommended or,

- 3.4.3.1.2. Describing what change requests are costed into the contract, which changes can be implemented informally and quickly, e.g. within 24 to 48 hours of request, vs. which require a more formalized change order procedure. The vendor should describe the change management process and address whether older applications are archived, how easily applications can be adjusted, how data loss is prevented, whether questions can be turned off, and whether there is a versioning system for the application forms.

Typical requests for modifications may include:

- Addition of fields to the on-line application
- Changes to which fields are required to be completed on the application or when certain fields are required (dynamics of fields)
- Addition of reports available to departments or management
- Customization of export files
- Addition of department-specific forms to the on-line application (i.e. supplemental forms)
- Changes to drop-down lists or valid values for fields on the on-line application

SECTION V: STRUCTURE OF PROPOSAL

- A. The Commission desires to consider Proposals in a consistent and easily comparable format as established in this RFP. Proposals not organized as set forth in this RFP may, at MHDC's discretion, be considered unresponsive. Do not refer to other parts of your Proposal in lieu of answering a specific question.
- B. Each response shall include a transmittal letter signed by an authorized representative of the firm. In the transmittal letter the respondent shall certify (i) that no elected or appointed official or employee of the Commission is financially interested, directly or indirectly, in the performance of the services specified in the RFP, (ii) that the information included in the response is true and correct to the best of its knowledge and (iii) that the person signing the transmittal letter is authorized to execute the response on behalf of the respondent.
- C. Proposals should be organized in the same manner as the individual information request contained in **Section VII: Proposal Details**. Responses to each lettered question shall begin on a separate page (e.g., answers to Question 2 should begin on a separate page from the response to Question 1).
- D. Exhibits containing additional information may be attached to provide more detail to respondent's offerings or services.

SECTION VI: EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation of Proposals will take place at the MHDC office. The Evaluation Committee will evaluate the Proposals in part by considering the following factors, in order of importance:

A. Depth and breadth of solution offering:

1. Experience and expertise of Respondents;
2. Experience of the project manager in the area of managing, scheduling, and meeting project objectives on time and within budget;
3. Relevancy of similar work experience to the scope of work to be performed under this RFP;
4. Demonstrated ability to lead, facilitate and coordinate projects involving extensive expertise in analysis, requirements gathering, design, development of new and streamlined application process;
5. Management approach to the project and a logical methodology for carrying out the tasks in **Section IV: Functional Requirements**.
6. Cost of the Respondent's proposed SOW;
7. Respondent's work load; and
8. Availability of Respondent's personnel for meetings.

B. Respondent qualifications:

1. Completeness and scope of project vision;
2. Respondent commitment to support product and client mission; and
3. Financial viability.

C. Depth and breadth experience and/or engagements with state Housing Finance Agencies ("HFA") such as MHDC and/or other local, state, or federal government agencies:

1. Number and types of HFA or governmental agency projects completed or in process;
2. Breadth of successful project experience;
3. Range of scope and complexity of projects; and
4. Breadth and depth of state, local or federal government business processes, systems integration, and other requirements addressed by solution.

The lowest priced bid will not be the sole criterion used to determine who is selected. The successful Respondent will be responsible for the performance of any third parties it includes in its bid. Notwithstanding the above, MHDC reserves the right not to award this contract or to award on the basis of cost alone, to accept or reject any or all proposals, to award the contract as separate solutions, and to award in its best interest.

SECTION VII: PROPOSAL DETAILS

Firms responding to this RFP should prepare clear and complete responses to each of the following questions and information requests. Brevity and clarity of responses will be appreciated.

- A. Personnel and Location. Provide the name, telephone number, fax number and email address of the Respondent and identify a primary contact person regarding the response.
- B. Firm Overview. Provide an overview of the Respondent's firm(s), including the full legal name of the institution(s) and the state(s) of organization. Is the firm(s) a minority- or woman-owned business? Describe firm's inclusion of minority and women participation, including the firm's employees and/or any participation with a minority- or woman-owned firm.
- C. Other Clients and References. List at least three relevant related clients to who you currently provide similar services. Please provide the contact information to serve as references.
- D. Experience. Describe in detail the respondent's experience in provide services requested.
- E. Scope of Service. Respond to your services to fulfill the requirements **in Section IV: Functional Requirements**.
- F. Timeliness. Indicate the plan for providing the services required within a reasonable timeframe.
- G. Proposed Fees. State a fee schedule upon which the respondent would base its charges to MHDC. Please include estimated travel and related expenses.
- H. Rationale for Selection. Present the case for the selection of your response as the most qualified. Include any relevant information not already provided.
- I. Undocumented Workers. Pursuant to *Mo.Rev.Stat. §285.530.2*, all respondents to this RFP shall provide MHDC with an affidavit stating that the respondent does not employ any person who is an unauthorized alien in conjunction with the contracted services, and that the respondent is enrolled in and participating in a federal work authorization program with respect to the employees working in connection with the contracted services. This affidavit shall be updated and executed again at the time the engagement of the selected respondent is memorialized in a contract. Furthermore, prior to execution of any contract contemplated herein, the respondent shall provide evidence of participation in a federal work authorization program. Questions regarding this requirement may be directed to the commission's General Counsel, Bramwell Higgins, by phone at 816-759-6870 or email at bhiggins@mhdc.com.
- J. MHDC TO DRAFT. By submitting a response to this RFP all vendors agree that, if selected, MHDC shall draft the contract documents describing the relationship between the vendor and MHDC.

