



Underwriting For Good

Call for vendors

For decades, the system of American mortgage lending has produced racially unequal outcomes and left communities of color out of the full benefits of homeownership, resulting in today's worsening racial wealth gap. Meanwhile, mission-driven lenders, fair housing and consumer advocates, community development financial institutions (CDFIs), and innovative government actors have created promising alternative approaches to mortgage lending that better serve the credit needs of people of color and especially low- to moderate-income homeowners of color. These alternatives have the potential to help close the racial wealth gap, but they currently do not operate at scale.

That's why the Center for New York City Neighborhoods, Inc. (the Center), a New York-based non-profit, is building Underwriting for Good (UFG), an underwriting platform that will build on the best practices of these promising alternative lending approaches and bring them to scale.

Made possible with generous grant support from the Housing Affordability Breakthrough Challenge created by Enterprise Community Partners and Wells Fargo, UFG will expand access to the dream of homeownership on fair terms for thousands of households that have thus far been excluded from the primary vehicle for American wealth building.

UFG will automate existing manual alternative credit underwriting processes; leverage financial and non-financial data to better understand a borrower's true ability to repay; and support homeowners with ongoing housing and financial counseling through monitoring and early intervention. It also aims to overcome the challenge of serving underbanked households that may not be served by traditional credit report systems. By replacing manual underwriting with automated data systems, we will also reduce the cost of credit for marginalized communities by lowering barriers to access. UFG will integrate with existing loan origination systems (LOS) and loan counseling software to deliver approvals to investors.

Though at inception this system will target homeowners in New York State, we believe UFG will have national impact by providing other organizations who share our goals with a blueprint to expand equitable homeownership lending.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

We are seeking a pool of technology vendors that represent the full spectrum of our society and are well-versed in fair housing, civil rights, and consumer protection issues in mortgage lending. Members



of traditionally underrepresented communities are especially encouraged to apply, including women, people of color, LGBTQ people, and people with disabilities. They must also possess the technical skills needed to take on a number of tasks associated with developing, building, and implementing Underwriting for Good, including the following:

TECH COMPONENTS

- **Credit Analysis and Scoring Automation**
 - Automate data sourcing inputs into a credit decisioning model for borrowers, underwriters, housing counselors, and finance agencies
 - Develop algorithms that evaluate and root out inherent biases that may prevent borrowers of color from obtaining loans at competitive and fair pricing
 - Develop algorithms that continuously enhance credit decision-making by using borrower performance data, including through the use of machine learning, while avoiding pitfalls that may perpetuate biased results
 - Develop application that collects key borrower data from traditional (assets, income, taxes, credit, real estate, insurance) and nontraditional sources (rent, payday loans, medical payments, auto insurance, utilities) and applies and analyzes the data to produce a consumer's financial profile utilizing a quantifiable score or rating.
 - Develop algorithms for the purpose of monitoring long-term borrower financial health
 - Develop APIs for the purpose of communicating data between first-party and third-party applications
 - Prioritize the improvement of fair housing and equitable lending outcomes consistent with UFG's mission
- **Data Warehouse**
 - Build and maintain a data repository on a cloud infrastructure platform that can:
 - index data sets (such as utility bill payment history),
 - ensure data is stored securely,
 - provide REST APIs for other components of the system,
 - Including first-party and third-party applications
 - and retrieve data measuring financial health.
 - Protect consumer data and maintain privacy law compliance

WE'RE LOOKING FOR DIVERSE VENDORS

There is a chronic lack of diversity in the mortgage industry, and the mortgage lending and the credit-decisioning space underutilize firms led by people of color and women. We seek firms that understand and prioritize racial equity in their work and will use this experience to help us build



Underwriting for Good. We're seeking lived experience or experience working with and engaging our core constituencies -- communities of color.

Next Steps

If you are excited to be a part of this project and have the tech skills we are looking for, please let us know! Send the following information to [email] (up to 5 pages):

- Company name & location
- Technical capabilities
- Example projects & clients
- 2-3 references
- Description of your company and mission statement
- Percentage of people of color and women members of your staff, executive team, and board of directors
- Whether you are a participant in minority trade or business associations and, if so, which ones (e.g. [NAMMBA](#), [NMBBAA](#), [NSBE](#), [NFBPA](#), [NAREB](#), [NABA](#), [NAHREP](#), [PROSPANICA](#), [NAHPA](#), etc.)
- Whether you are MWBE-certified
- Description of why you are interested in working on Underwriting for Good and what tasks you believe you could undertake
- Description of your experience working in the mortgage industry

Please note that we are not accepting technical and cost proposals at this time for the above tasks. We ask everyone interested to submit an RFQ; as UFG development gets underway, we expect to invite qualified firms to respond to a formal Request for Proposal (RFP).

Questions about this RFQ may be sent to procurement@cnycn.org. All responses will be collected and posted to our website at <http://cnycn.org/contracting>.

About the Center

The Center for New York City Neighborhoods promotes and protects affordable homeownership in New York City so working- and middle-class families can build strong, thriving communities. We carry out our mission to promote and protect affordable homeownership through the lenses of racial equity and climate change. Established by public and private partners, the Center meets the diverse needs of homeowners throughout New York state by offering free, high-quality housing services. Since our founding in 2008, our network has assisted over 200,000 homeowners, and provided more than \$60 million in funding to community-based partners. Through the Center's CDFI lending subsidiary, Sustainable Neighborhoods LLC, we have made over \$100m in mortgage loans to homeowners whose needs are unmet by conventional lending channels.



To learn more about the Center, visit <https://cnycn.org>.