



# New York State Homeowner Assistance Fund Community-Based Outreach

August 2021

## Request for Proposals

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### OVERVIEW

The Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF) was established as part of the 2021 American Rescue Plan to help homeowners who were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The New York State Legislature 2021-2022 Budget Authorization Bill directed New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) to manage and operate the \$539 million fund for the State of New York. HCR has selected Sustainable Neighborhoods LLC (Sustainable Neighborhoods, or SN), a wholly owned subsidiary of the Center for NYC Neighborhoods (the Center), as New York State's vendor to administer the HAF program. HCR has developed this [draft plan](#) to provide homeowner assistance through HAF.

Sustainable Neighborhoods is pleased to announce that it is seeking community-based organizations ('Organizations') to conduct targeted outreach across New York State to encourage participation in the HAF program, educating homeowners and community stakeholders about the program, how to sign up, and what to expect. SN is specifically looking to target outreach efforts to reach New York State homeowners who are struggling to pay their housing costs, who are at or below 100% AMI, and who are:

1. homeowners of a manufactured home
2. homeowners of a cooperative
3. homeowners in mortgage distress, or
4. homeowners without a mortgage but who are behind on taxes, water bills, and/or utility bills

SN is particularly interested in engaging these homeowners, the “Target Outreach Population,” with an emphasis on assisting socially disadvantaged individuals<sup>1</sup>, seniors, and homeowners who have limited internet access, and/or limited English proficiency.

Sustainable Neighborhoods is seeking qualified organizations that have the current capacity to prioritize this project **immediately upon selection**.

### SCOPE OF WORK

We are seeking proposals from Organizations to conduct intensive outreach for a 3-month period starting mid-September to the Target Outreach Population to raise awareness of and increase enrollment in the New York State Homeowner Assistance Fund. Organizations may propose to provide outreach services in one or more of the following regions of New York State: Finger Lakes, Mid Hudson, Southern Tier, Western New York, Capital Region, North Country, Central New York, Mohawk Valley, New York City, and Long Island (See Map 1). We are seeking to ensure that we have statewide coverage in all regions across the state.

While maintaining continuous and transparent communication with SN, Organizations will report on weekly activity and progress, including event outcomes, event sign-in sheets, event flyers, stakeholder successes, phone banking logs, door-knocking logs, etc. Organizations will also adjust tactics as needed or as requested by SN to ensure broad awareness of and accessibility to the HAF program. With program flyers, presentations, social media toolkits, other program materials, and other support to be provided by SN’s Communications team, selected organizations **will begin mid-September**, pending final approval of the NYS HAF plan, so that the Target Outreach Population can learn about and apply for the HAF program as soon as the program opens.

We welcome proposals that clearly describe deep knowledge and expertise performing one or more of the following activities, with the ability to begin service delivery by mid-September:

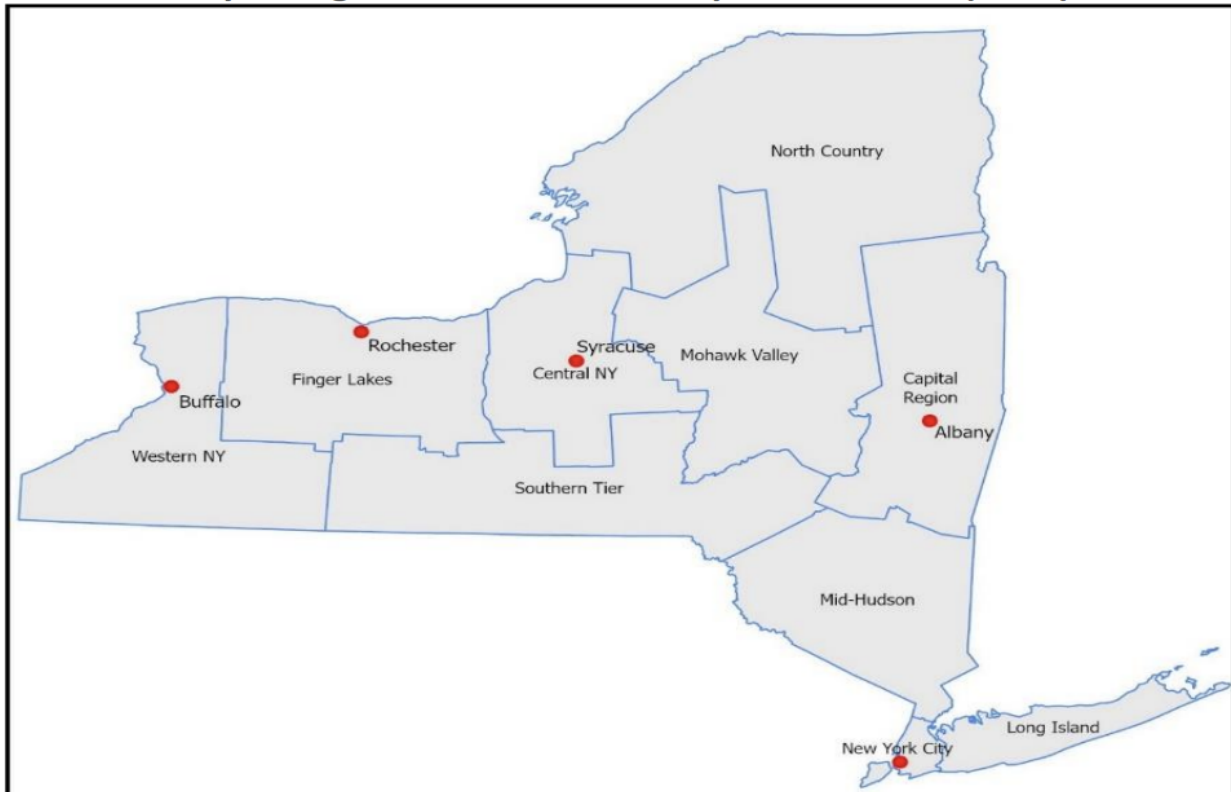
- Promoting and holding neighborhood meetings with homeowners, including virtual and in-person events, following CDC COVID-19 related guidance;
- Increasing education and program awareness to “first referrers”— trusted local leaders who are active in these targeted communities, who can help promote the program to hard-to-reach homeowners;

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<sup>1</sup> Socially Disadvantaged Individuals is defined, per US Treasury guidance, as “those who have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias because of their identity as a member of a group without regard to their individual qualities. The social disadvantage must stem from circumstances beyond their control. There is a rebuttable presumption that the following individuals are socially disadvantaged: Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. In addition, an individual may be determined to be [Socially Disadvantaged] in accordance with the procedures set forth at 13 CFR 124.103(c) or (d).”

- Promoting the program through social media platforms and the distribution of press releases to neighborhood newspapers;
- Direct outreach activities that could include phone banking and targeted door-to-door outreach, particularly in areas where there is limited internet access;
- Assistance with applications
- Other methods deemed appropriate.

**Map 1: Regional Economic Development Councils (REDC)**



## SUBMITTING RESPONSES

In order to be considered, Organizations should email their Proposal to [HAFOutreach@cnycn.org](mailto:HAFOutreach@cnycn.org) no later than **5 pm EST on September 8, 2021, with a subject line of “HAF OUTREACH RFP RESPONSE.”**

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The Proposal should be no more than four pages and should contain the following information and documentation, and follow the order below.

- **Organizational Background.** Provide a brief description of your organization including its mission, number of years working on homeownership issues, geographic areas served, services provided, outreach staff, and any other staff providing homeownership-related assistance. Confirm your organization's familiarity with the [New York State Language Access Policy](#) and capacity to serve homeowners in accordance with it. Confirm your organization's technical and financial competence to deliver, including the ability to focus immediate attention on this project. Confirm that your organization is a 501c3, and please indicate if your organization is a HUD certified housing counseling agency.
- **Relevant Experience Reaching the Target Outreach Population.** Describe your organization's experience conducting outreach to residents in your selected geographic area(s); deploying tactics that have been used to successfully reach residents during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the Target Outreach Population. Include your organization's experience working with community members at or below 100% AMI, seniors, communities historically subjected to housing discrimination, and residents with limited English proficiency, and/or limited internet access,
  - Describe your organization's experience effectively and expediently ramping up operations under tight deadlines; and adjusting resources and methods as needed to meet program demand. Include past performance metrics that demonstrate this track record.
- **Approach and Methodology.** Describe your organization's understanding of the scope, and your organization's strategy for reaching the Target Outreach Population in specific geographic area(s).
  - Describe the tactics and methods of outreach your organization would utilize to implement your outreach, such as in-person events/workshops, virtual events/workshops, door knocking, phone banking, etc., and how many homeowners would be reached by each tactic and method.
  - Describe the infrastructure already established to perform the tactics and methods proposed, including the kind of data that your organization already has available to develop outreach plans; and whether your organization plans to leverage any existing relationships with local community stakeholders.
  - Include specific and achievable targets, including the number of homeowners you anticipate reaching who are owners of manufactured homes, owners of cooperatives, and or non-mortgaged homeowners who are behind on taxes, water bills, and/or utility bills.
  - Describe how you plan to reach homeowners at or below 100% AMI, seniors, socially disadvantaged individuals, homeowners with limited English proficiency, and/or homeowners who have limited internet access, and what percentage of homeowners you plan to reach could be described as such.
- **Staffing and Management Plan.** Describe your organization's key personnel to provide services and the proposed staffing plan. Identify the key, existing personnel who will be assigned to the project, including their years of experience and functions on this project. Confirm what

percentage of staff for this project are expected to be NY State residents, define themselves as Socially Disadvantaged Individuals (as defined above), and/or are bi- or multilingual.

- **Ability to Conform to the Sustainable Neighborhoods' Timeline.** Describe your organization's current capacity to perform services under the proposed program, and describe specifically how your organization will meet the aggressive project schedule set forth in **Exhibit A**.
- **Commitment to Diversity.** We seek organizations that understand and prioritize racial equity in their work. We're seeking lived experience or experience working with and engaging our core constituencies -- communities of color. Describe your organization's commitment to advancing diversity and racial equity within its program operations and delivery of services.
- **Budget and Scope.** Please use the Excel form separately attached as **Exhibit B** to:
  - Indicate your organization's budget request up to a maximum of \$25,000 and proposed scope. Grants can include up to 10% in administrative costs. The grant period is 3 months from contract execution, but may be extended for an additional 3 months at SN's sole discretion. Grants are anticipated to be paid monthly, subject to satisfactory performance against the proposed scope.
  - List your organization's homeowner outreach methods and/or stakeholder engagement methods; how many of each method will be conducted (for example: number of social media posts) or how many homeowners and/or stakeholders will be reached through each method.
- **Due Diligence Checklist.** Complete the checklist attached as **Exhibit C**.

Upon receiving proposals, Sustainable Neighborhoods retains the right to negotiate specific details, responsibilities, amounts and grant periods with applicants; use its discretion in accepting or denying proposals for select parts or all of the services listed above; and award a contract to one, multiple, or none of the applicants to fulfill the services listed above. SN may also elect to extend the term of the grants beyond the initial 3-month grant period.

## SELECTION PROCESS

Sustainable Neighborhoods will evaluate responsive proposals based on the Evaluation Criteria below. During or after the review of responses, Sustainable Neighborhoods may submit written questions and requests for clarification, and may conduct interviews.

Sustainable Neighborhoods shall evaluate each organization's proposal in terms of:

- Organizational Background
- Relevant Experience Reaching the Target Outreach Population
- Community Outreach Approach and Methodology
- Staffing and Management Plan
- Ability to Conform to Sustainable Neighborhoods' Timeline
- Demonstration of Commitment to Diversity

- Cost
- Responses to Due Diligence Checklist

Interested organizations may submit questions via email to [HAFOutreach@cnycn.org](mailto:HAFOutreach@cnycn.org) during the period indicated in Exhibit A. Answers to all questions will be emailed to all respondents.

Awards shall be made to Organizations whose proposals are responsive to this RFP and are most advantageous to SN based on the factors above.

### Exhibit A: Project Schedule

A. Date for Issuing RFP:	August 31, 2021
B. Date to ask questions:	11am Sep 7, 2021
C. Responses to questions from SN:	5pm Sep 7, 2021
D. Date for Submission of Proposals:	<b>5pm September 8, 2021</b>
E. Dates for Evaluation of Proposals:	Sept 9-Sept 12, 2021
G. Final Selection:	September 13, 2021
H. Date Draft Contract Circulated:	September 13, 2021
I. Date for Execution of Contract:	September 14, 2021
J. Outreach Kick-off Meeting:	Mid-September
K. Outreach launch:	<b>Mid-September</b>

Organizations are responsible for meeting all deadlines. Sustainable Neighborhoods reserves the right to modify this Project Schedule as necessary.

**Exhibit B: Budget**

Outreach Method	Proposed #	Cost	Total Cost (b*c)
<b>Face-to-face homeowner and stateholder outreach</b>			
<i>Community outreach (door knocking, calls, etc.), cost per hour</i>		\$41	\$0
<i>HAF in-person information sessions, cost per session</i>		\$600	\$0
<i>HAF virtual information sessions, cost per session</i>		\$400	\$0
<i>Application Assistance, cost per application</i>		\$150	\$0
Subtotal			\$0
Admin @	10%		\$0
Grand Total			\$0.00



### **Exhibit C: Due Diligence Checklist**

Organizations should attach the following documents to their proposal:

- A copy of the organization's 501(c)(3) determination letter
- For housing counseling agencies certified by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), or have HUD Certification through an approved HUD intermediary, please attach proof of HUD Certification.
- A copy of your organization's most recent financial audit

Organizations should attest to the following:

Has your organization or any affiliate ever...

1. Had a business license suspended or revoked?
2. Been subjected to an investigation by a government entity for a criminal or civil violation?
3. Been the subject of an indictment, judgment, conviction, or plea for conduct constituting a crime?
4. Had any labor law violations that were deemed willful?
5. Entered into a consent order or been the subject of a government enforcement order from federal, state, or local government regarding a violation of law?

IF YES to any of the above, provide a written description and explanation of how the violation was resolved.