

Request for Proposals: Code Enforcement Process Improvement Workshop Facilitator

Issued: Wednesday, March 15, 2023

Due: Tuesday, April 4, 2023

Summary

The St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative (the “Collaborative”) is requesting proposals for a facilitator to conduct process improvement workshops for the City of St. Louis’ code enforcement system for vacant properties. Over the past two years, the Collaborative has worked with a consultant, to process map the City’s code enforcement ecosystem and has identified several points in the process where improvements could be considered. The Collaborative would now like to hire a process improvement facilitator to work with Collaborative stakeholders, inspectors from the City’s Building Division, and other affected departments and personnel to brainstorm and reach consensus around methods to improve the consistency and effectiveness of code enforcement to further the redevelopment of vacant properties.

Collaborative staff will be the administrative lead for this process, with support from organizational partners involved in the Strategic Code Enforcement Project Group.

Project Goals

High vacancy rates and an aging housing stock disproportionately impact the health and safety of St. Louis’ communities of color. As other cities have shown us, adaptive and proactive “strategic” code enforcement is a powerful systems change tool that can stabilize neighborhoods by reducing vacant property and preventing displacement.

The St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative has spent the last two years working to develop a deeper understanding of the code enforcement process in the City of St. Louis. Process mapping has highlighted gaps in code enforcement that allow vacant properties to remain vacant and in violation of the property maintenance code. Although we have highlighted several areas of intervention, we are specifically looking for a process improvement facilitator to work with the City’s Building Division, Information Technology Services Agency, and City Counselor’s Office to understand the current subprocess between when a building inspector receives an inspection request and when they cite, condemn, and/or mark the property as vacant.

These workshops should (1) work with Building Inspectors to understand the current inspection process for vacant buildings, focusing on points in the process where discretion is used in making decisions. They should also (2) emphasize consensus building around a consistent process for vacant building inspections from inspection to citation. Participation from the Information Technology Services Agency and City Counselor’s Office will provide guidance on what information or enforcement mechanisms follow the inspection process. Finally, the workshops should (3) generate short- and medium-term process improvement recommendations that are co-developed with City staff and feasible to implement.

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Project Background

Both the code enforcement system and the larger vacancy challenge are too complex for one entity or even sector to fix on its own. The St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative is a coalition of community members, private and non-profit stakeholders, and City agencies committed to reducing vacant property in St. Louis that launched in 2018. Strategic code enforcement is a fundamental component of our work.

Over the past two years, the Strategic Code Enforcement Project Group of the Vacancy Collaborative has been process mapping St. Louis' code enforcement process for vacant properties with support from a consultant. Through process mapping, the Collaborative has increased its understanding of pain points within the City's code enforcement process that prevent it from effectively returning vacant properties to productive use. This project will enable us to intervene in a specific, known pain point of the process while developing a stronger understanding of the code enforcement process as a whole. Participants are familiar with the challenge at hand and represent the essential stakeholders in making strategic code enforcement a reality: affected City departments, legal experts, community leaders, and nonprofit representatives.

Thanks to a generous investment from the Missouri Foundation for Health, the Vacancy Collaborative is able to hire a facilitator with process improvement expertise. Staff from the Vacancy Collaborative, housed at Community Builders Network (the fiscal agent for the Vacancy Collaborative), will administer the contract.

Proposed Timeline

Wednesday, March 15, 2023 - RFP issued

Tuesday, April 4, 2023 - Proposals due

Friday, April 8, 2023 - Facilitator selected

April 11-28, 2023- Workshop planning

May 1-5, 2023 - Process improvement workshops

May 8-19, 2023 - Final deliverables

May 20, 2023 - Final invoicing due

Qualifications Desired

- Expertise in operations and quality improvement related to code enforcement.
- Expertise in facilitating process improvement workshops.
- Experience working with other cities on similar projects and knowledge of best practices.
- Experience working with city staff and cross-sector collaboratives.
- Demonstrated commitment to keeping racial equity at the center of the work.

Selection of a proposal will be based on qualifications and project proposal, not price. Community Builders Network of Metro St. Louis serves as the fiscal agent for the St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative.

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Partner Roles

This project will be supported by several community partners and City agencies to ensure broad involvement by stakeholders both impacted by and carrying out code enforcement activities in St. Louis.

City Agencies (Building Division, Neighborhood Stabilization Team, City Counselor's Office, St. Louis Development Corporation, Information Technology Services Agency, others as needed)

- Make staff available to participate in the process improvement workshops.
- Share information related to the current code enforcement system.
- Commitment to implementing the process improvements identified through the workshops.
- Provide space to hold the process improvement workshops.

Vacancy Collaborative Staff and Project Team

- Support facilitation of the process improvement workshops.
- Facilitate and support all consultant and partner relationships for the duration of the project.

Contract Amount

The total contract amount is not to exceed \$12,000, including up to \$10,000 for professional services and a travel and accommodations allowance of up to \$2,000, if needed.

Submission Requirements

Proposals should be no more than two (2) pages and include the following information:

1. Contact information
2. Description of background (or organizational history)
3. Explanation of any related project experience and how you or your organization meets the desired qualifications
4. Proposed approach for completing the project, including addressing your approach to complementing the existing roles and partners, and the proposed timeline
5. Proposed deliverables to achieve the project's desired outcomes
6. Proposed project budget, including justification for travel expenses
7. Two questions you have before beginning the project

Submissions must be sent via email to Torrey Park, Director, St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative:

Email: torrey@communitybuildersstl.org

Subject: Process Improvement Proposal - [submitter's name]

Deadline: Wednesday, April 4, 2023 @ 5:00 pm CST

Proposals may include attachments. Interested applicants can also reach out with questions or to request more information via email to Torrey Park.

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About the St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative

The St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative is a coalition of community members, private and non-profit stakeholders, and City agencies committed to reducing vacant property in St. Louis. The VC helps to coordinate existing vacancy efforts under one umbrella and empowers the public and private sectors to work together toward solutions. We convene central committees and six working groups to facilitate systemic change, advance new policies, share success stories, and support neighborhood-centric solutions.

www.stlvacancy.com

