

# Request for Proposals (RFP) Addendum #1

**Agency:** Minnesota Housing Finance Agency

**Addendum Number:** 1

**Date of Addendum:** 7/16/24

**Title:** Engagement and Support of Consultants with Lived Experience and Hosting Community Conversations for Olmstead Implementation Office

## SCOPE OF ADDENDUM

The following are changes to the RFP: (1) Posting vendor questions to the RFP and Minnesota Housing Finance Agency's answers.

**Vendor questions to the RFP and Minnesota Housing Finance Agency's answers are as follows:**

1. **Question:** What is the total budget for the project? Are there maximum spend amounts for expenses related to any of the activities?

**Answer:** In the RFP, we are not providing a budget total. The cost should be provided to us based on the Contractor's projection of the scope of work outlined in the RFP. We are looking for proposals that effectively do the work outlined in the RFP, in a cost-effective manner.

The Olmstead Implementation Office can make a large investment (hundreds of thousands of dollars) into this work, but the cost detail is a significant factor in the evaluation process as described in Section 5 – Evaluation Procedures and Criteria. We recognize this project has unknown costs, such as the type of accommodations that will be provided to people with disabilities or their need for technology to complete the project. To help manage the costs over the life of the project, we will work with the selected contractor during contract negotiations to identify “must have” work (such as providing sufficient accommodations to people with disabilities) and “nice to have” work (certain food options at meetings or how many community events each consultant with lived experience attends in person). To accommodate “must have” costs, we will be flexible with respect to the “nice to have” work over the course of the project.

2. **Question:** Is there an incumbent (and has this model been used before)?

**Answer:** There is no incumbent for the work with the Olmstead Implementation Office (OIO). A model with some similarities was used by Minnesota Housing Finance Agency and the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness, involving consultants with lived experience of homelessness. More information can be found here: <https://mich.mn.gov/crossroads-justice-strategic-plan>.

3. **Question:** In the OIO's experience, has recruitment of lived experience consultants under long-term, high-commitment projects been successful? Have there been any comparable efforts or projects undertaken in the past by the OIO (or a vendor on their behalf) in the past?

**Answer:** As noted in question 2, the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness's experience with a similar model is described in various places, including [here](#). The model was highly successful with a very large number of people applying for the position and willing to commit to the project long term. OIO has not worked with consultants in this manner before. OIO has current and prior experience with community engagement, and some of our other current plan efforts are described here: <https://mn.gov/olmstead/mn-olmstead-plan/about/update.jsp>

4. **Question:** Are there any technology standards and types of devices that would be needed for "supplying technology" (e.g., audio-visual disability equipment, tools for people who may not have great use of hands, etc.) – or is the consultant asked to coordinate with MHFA, who would provide the technology?

**Answer:** The type of devices and accommodations that will be needed will depend on the needs of the chosen consultants. The standard will be that each chosen consultant will have the necessary technology to complete their tasks. It will be the Contractor's responsibility to ensure each consultant has the appropriate technology. Relevant expenses should be included in the Cost Detail. For example, the Contractor must ensure that consultants are able to participate in remote meetings and complete other required work using a laptop or other device. If consultants already have access to such a device, the Contractor is not expected to provide a new device. The Contractor is not expected to provide any technology that is not needed to carry out the specific duties of this project or is determined to not be reasonable under an accommodation request. OIO will work with the Contractor to determine potential adjustments to the work of a particular consultant if necessary to reasonably accommodate their needs.

5. **Question:** What are you expecting in regard to food and location amenities for these 3 in-person meetings aside for ADA compliance needs? The overall price point for the events seems relatively low considering the amount of people you plan on having attend. Would these be lunch meetings or snacks only?

**Answer:** We are expecting nice but low-cost options for the food and location. Nothing fancy is expected. The type of food will be dependent on the time of the event, which should be dictated by the times most convenient for community members. If lunch or dinnertime sessions are most convenient, a meal should be provided (for example, sandwiches). If an event is at a time when there is not typically a meal, snacks are appropriate. The Contractor should provide the opportunity for people to share dietary restrictions or request reasonable accommodations in advance.

6. **Question:** Was this model of involving lived experience individuals utilized in the initial 2015 plan creation?

**Answer:** No. Utilizing consultants with lived experience has not been done before related to the Olmstead Plan. Other methods were used to gather public input, including public listening sessions, e-mail input, and phone conversations. A summary of how public comments were gathered is included in the Olmstead Plan.

7. **Question:** Was there a previous RFP awarded with SWIFT BID ID that could be reviewed from 2015?

**Answer:** No. An RFP for this work was not issued in 2015. At that time, an agreement with Minnesota Management and Budget's Management and Analysis Division was used for facilitation services at Subcabinet meetings and public listening sessions.

8. **Question:** How do you envision people with lived experiences submitting invoices in becoming contractors for this project with only 2 weeks of onboarding guidance budgeted for? Will you have external support from the Small Business Development Centers or other small business resources to ensure they are supported? Or is this an expectation of the prime contractor to coordinate and ensure all goes smoothly? If this is the expectation of the prime contractor, given many lived experience individuals have cognitive and physical impacts to learning new skills and abilities, should ongoing support of this exceed the 2 weeks of initial orientation?

**Answer:** The consultants with lived experience will not contract with the state and are not expected to register as a business. The selected Contractor will have the direct relationship and contract with the consultants with lived experience. The Contractor is expected to coordinate and ensure that all goes smoothly with invoicing, reporting, and payment for the consultants with lived experience as well as managing their expenses such as travel reimbursement. The two-week orientation of the consultants is expected to cover the items outlined in Section 2 – Summary of Scope on page 6 of the RFP. There will be continued meetings and training after the two-week orientation, as described in the RFP.

9. **Question:** Per your contract sample, are you expecting people with lived experience to have commercial liability insurance and other insurances? Your current terminology would list them as subcontractors?

**Answer:** Contract requirements and terminology will be negotiated with the Contractor. OIO will consider all feedback and requests for specific contract language within its contracting requirements as a state entity. Requests for changes to the draft contract language can be made in Attachment B: Exceptions to Minnesota Housing's Terms and Conditions form included in the RFP.

10. **Question:** In Section 2 – Summary of Scope on page 9 it states: "Prior to this goal development period, OIO and the Subcabinet agencies will work with the contractor to develop any additional needed trainings and training materials for consultants on

this phase of work.” What is the maximum number of training meetings and number of training materials that will be additionally developed if needed?

**Answer:** Minnesota Housing/OIO will develop any additional training materials, as described in this statement, that may be needed. The role of the contractor will be to review any additional training materials developed by OIO and offer any comments or suggestions. The number of training meetings the consultants will have with OIO at this phase is not known at this time but will be part of the consultants’ hourly time already described in the RFP. We anticipate each consultant will likely have an additional one or two training sessions, one of which may be with the entire consultant group and one that may be individualized. The additional training may be, for example, on the specific disability programs of the agencies to which a consultant is assigned. The contractor will also help OIO to determine the best training strategy for the consultants and ensure we are aware of any reasonable accommodations that may be required in providing the additional training materials.

11. **Question:** In Section 2 – Summary of Scope on page 9 it states: “The consultants will attend Subcabinet and Leadership Forum meetings, in person or virtually.” If consultants choose to go in person to these meetings should this be budgeted for in reimbursing transportation, possible lodging, and food? Also, how many meetings will be conducted through this process?

**Answer:** The contractor should budget for reimbursing transportation, lodging, and food for consultants at Subcabinet meetings. The Subcabinet meets approximately four times a year, for 90 minutes each meeting. Ideally the consultants with lived experience would be able to attend all or most of the Subcabinet meetings in person. Virtual participation is always an option for a particular consultant, if that is their preference and/or required for their needs. While we want to provide the opportunity for consultants to be at meetings in person, we will work with the contractor to manage costs within the negotiated budget and prioritize work if costs are much higher than expected. For example, if travel, accommodation, etc., become larger than expected costs, there would be an option of having a smaller portion of consultants attend each meeting in person, which could be rotated so that each consultant has the opportunity to participate in at least one or two meetings per year.

Leadership Forum meetings are currently all virtual (and 90 minutes in length), and the consultants’ participation in these meetings would be virtual. These meetings take place up to six times a year. It is anticipated that consultants would be part of at least half of these meetings. Even if they are not directly participating, the consultant may benefit from observing these working meetings.

12. **Question:** For the in-person events, would you want the lived experience consultants to be attending in-person and would that then require lodging or special

transportation for those who need to travel a long distance and may not be able to endure traveling that far and back again in one day or need someone to drive them?

**Answer:** See answer to question 11. If a consultant needs special transportation, the Contractor would be expected to provide the transportation or to connect the person to available transportation resources (e.g. <https://arcminnesota.org/resource/disability-transportation-services/>). The Contractor will be expected to reimburse transportation costs and to provide reasonable accommodations. Virtual participation is always an option for a particular consultant if that is their preference and/or required for their needs.

13. **Question:** Is using incentives for participant engagement in community conversations and other activities allowed? If so, are there guidelines or limitations on the types or amounts of incentives that can be offered?

**Answer:** Due to applicable limitations, any incentives for participant engagement in the community conversations would need to be provided by OIO directly through the issuance of gift cards. Please do not account for the cost of incentives in your proposal.

14. **Question:** Could you clarify the specific accessibility requirements for the community conversations? For example, what types of accommodations (e.g., ASL interpretation, CART captioning) are mandatory or preferred, and are there preferred vendors or processes for arranging these services?

**Answer:** ASL and CART captioning should be provided in the community conversations. The building space should be ADA compliant and allow for wheelchair access. The meeting environment should be as free as possible from background noises, other sounds, or flashing/blinking lights. A quiet room could be needed by some participants. Presenters should describe what's on the screen and identify themselves before speaking. Any documents attached electronically should be remediated for screen reader accessibility following WCAG 2.1 guidelines, and plain language should be used. OIO staff have expertise in remediating documents for screen reader accessibility and will be available to support the Contractor if needed. Invitations should specify what accommodations will be made available to all participants, and information on how and by when participants may request additional accommodation based on their needs. We welcome additional suggestions to make the conversations accessible. There are not preferred vendors or specific processes required to arrange these services.

15. **Question:** Are there specific cities or counties within the designated state regions (metro area, northern region, and southern region) that should be priorities for the community conversations and engagement efforts?

**Answer:** No. In choosing the locations, the Contractor should consider the importance of participants being drawn from both rural and metro areas of the state. The Contractor may also consider other factors, like transportation access,

locations where people are already gathered or may be familiar with, and other factors related to accessibility.

16. **Question:** Would you consider referring to lived experience individuals not as consultants, given the legal ramifications of what this would mean, but instead lived experience individuals could be referred to as Feedback Curation Interns? This could possibly open the door for a stipend participation option that would allow you all to reaching a wider diversity of participants in order to help support their navigation of income requirements for those who are on any sort of income related SSI or MA, as many are.

**Answer:** OIO is open to discussions about alternative names/titles, however the fundamental relationship between the Contractor and the individuals with lived experience will remain the same. Any requests for changes to the draft contract can be submitted using the exceptions form identified as Attachment B of the RFP. OIO will consider all requests regarding the contract within its requirements as a state entity and the requirements of any applicable state or federal law.

17. **Question:** Is the OIO open to a submission for this RFP with a subcontractor written in to handle the consultant recruitment, training, and payment responsibilities? The subcontractor would likely be a community-based disability advocacy organization.

**Answer:** Yes. OIO is open to an RFP response that includes subcontractors.

18. **Question:** If awarded the contract, would it be possible to utilize the State's (in-house or contracted) services for ASL, CART, and any other live interpretation needs?

**Answer:** Providing ASL, CART and other interpretation supports will be the responsibility of the selected Contractor. OIO can provide information on services it has used in the past.

19. **Question:** Are there specific components of the Olmstead Plan which are to be explored and revised during the term of this project? Would the entire plan be expected to be addressed?

**Answer:** The entire plan is being re-envisioned. The re-envisioning will be grounded in the definitions and key themes that the consultants identify, as described in Section 2 – Summary of Scope on page 8 of the RFP. We expect there may be some current Plan goals that are brought forward in the same or similar fashion. Other goals may be eliminated, changed, or added. The current Olmstead Plan is on our website, and visualizations of the Plan goals can be found at:

<https://mn.gov/olmstead/mn-olmstead-plan/plan-goals/>. As described in the RFP, consultants will be assigned to specific agencies; therefore, once the high-level themes are identified, the work of specific consultants will be primarily aimed at goals applicable to those agencies.

20. **Question:** Was this project ever awarded in the spring? Was a previous contractor unable to finish it? If so, is there feedback from their efforts you would be willing to share with us?

**Answer:** A different project was awarded in the spring. That project was to conduct small “focus group style” (10-15 person) community conversations with specific organizations to reach people with disabilities who may have barriers to participating in other parts of our planning process. For example, there may be one conversation taking place in Spanish with a Latinx-focused organization, another with people in segregated settings, and another with people with brain injuries, all of whom may be unlikely to access a large community conversation. This earlier contract was executed in the spring and the conversations are taking place now. “Summaries of input from [these] smaller community conversations” will be provided to the consultants with lived experience, as described in Section 2 – Summary of Scope on page 8 of the solicitation. Other than the consultants receiving summaries of the findings of those small conversations, this RFP has no relationship to that contract. The large community conversations in this RFP are open to the public and are not targeted to a specific disability community or organization.

21. **Question:** In the spring, OIO stated that the final deliverables for this contract were the summaries of the community conversations. Can you confirm that this is still the case and further reporting is not in the scope of this solicitation?

**Answer:** This question may be discussing a separate project described above in question 20. The deliverables of this RFP are described in Section 2 – Summary of Scope of the solicitation, including that the contractor must “provide a detailed written summary of each [larger] community conversation” that occurs under this contract.

This addendum shall become part of the RFP and should be returned with, or acknowledged in, the response to the RFP.

RESPONDER NAME:

SIGNATURE:

TITLE:

DATE: