



## **Notice of Selection: SME Strategy Consulting was selected on August 27, 2024**

### **Request for Proposals**

#### **Purpose:**

The Housing Authority of Skagit County is requesting proposals from qualified strategic planning consultants to create a Strategic Plan to guide the organization's work over the next 5-7 years.

HASC seeks a vendor who has demonstrated experience in successfully developing consensus-based strategic plans, has strong facilitation skills, has proven experience with housing authority strategic planning, and a strong understanding of the needs of this organization and the community which it serves.

#### **Project Overview:**

HASC is guided by a 5-member Board of Directors who work with the Executive Director to set the direction of the agency. HASC employs 31 full time employees in the following departments: Property Management, Weatherization Program, Section 8 Voucher Program, and Administration.

Since 2018 HASC has experienced significant challenges due to a zero-percent affordable housing vacancy rate, construction costs and inflation, significant changes and instability within HASC's outside community partners and funders, and increased pressure to solve affordable housing insufficiency in our community.

To help us as we grow, HASC is looking for a consultant to create a strategic plan through a comprehensive and participatory process.

This plan should align with the HASC philosophy and mission statement as well as meet the housing needs of HASC's jurisdiction, while addressing specific ways that HASC Board and staff can increase capacity and sustainability of resources and assets.

#### **HASC Philosophy:**

HASC strives to maximize resources to serve as many people as possible, while prioritizing children and young people, to uplift future generations, for long term impact. HASC endeavors to provide equal housing opportunities for participants to live in community settings among others of diverse backgrounds and income levels, while providing safe, affordable, and healthy housing, where residents can pursue their goals for self-sufficiency and actualization.

#### **HASC Mission Statement:**





The Housing Authority of Skagit County provides, facilitates, and finances housing for a diverse population of low-income and medium-income residents of Skagit County and San Juan County. We serve farmworkers, migrant families, low-income and medium-income individuals and families, elderly and non-elderly individuals with disabilities, homeless veterans and other homeless individuals and families, and low-income homeowners requiring weatherization of their homes.

### **Threshold requirements:**

Experience in working with housing authorities on strategic planning.

Ability to oversee the process of developing a strategic plan in person (as opposed to offering remote services.)

Ability to plan and facilitate a one-day team building and goal setting retreat for board members.

Demonstrated ability to design, collect and evaluate data in the pre-planning stage through staff and board interviews, surveys, and other research.

Sound methodology demonstrated for determining strategic planning direction.

Proven ability to complete the strategic planning process within the timeline given.

Ability to provide positive references from former clients.

### **Scope of Work and Deliverables:**

Design and execution of a strategic visioning and comprehensive planning process, including the following steps, to be concluded no later than 11/29/24:

1. Collection of information, including background research on HASC history and environmental scan of organization and opportunities ahead, using interviews, surveys and/or any other method that will be useful in receiving staff and board input.
2. Planning and facilitating a one-day board retreat in which collected data is reviewed, board discussion facilitated, and consensus reached regarding overall vision and strategic plan (by 9/13/24).
3. Collation of results into 20+ page strategic plan, complete with specific, clear, and measurable goals and objectives, as well as an action plan for implementation with timelines and milestones, and a projected budget for implementation.





- 4. Follow-up vision building meeting with staff and board members (by 11/29/24).

**RFP Schedule:**

HASC reserves the right to modify the following schedule as needed.

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| RFP Issue Date                  | 06/18/24                               |
| Deadline for questions by email | 07/16/24                               |
| Proposal Due Date               | 07/17/24                               |
| Committee Evaluation            | 07/18/24 through 07/29/24              |
| Notification of Selection       | <del>07/30/24</del> week of August 5th |

**Anticipated Strategic Planning Schedule:**

We anticipate the strategic planning process to take place within the following timeline. Dates may be adjusted, but the entire process must be completed by 11/29/24 in order to meet the requirements of the project’s funder.

|         | Est. Duration:                          | Due date:       |
|---------|---|-----------------|
| Phase 1 | Collection of Information               | 6 weeks         |
| Phase 2 | One-Day Board Retreat                   | 09/13/24        |
| Phase 3 | Collation of results                    | 10 weeks        |
| Phase 4 | Final meeting and conclusion of project | <b>11/29/24</b> |

**Selection Panel:**

Board members and housing authority staff members will review, evaluate, rank and select the applications according to the criteria described above. HASC may at its discretion select none of the proposals submitted.

**Suspension and debarment:**

Contracts shall not be awarded to debarred, suspended, or ineligible contractors. Contractors may be suspended, debarred, or determined ineligible by HUD in accordance with HUD regulations (24 CFR Part 24) or by other Federal agencies, e.g. Dept. of Labor for violation of labor regulations, when necessary to protect the HASC in its business dealings.

**Other important notices:**

If an insufficient amount of funding is available for this project, HASC reserves the right to change or withdraw its request for proposals. HASC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any informality in the RFP process, or to terminate the RFP process at







any time, if deemed by HASC to be in its best interests. HASC reserves the right to reject and not consider any proposal that does not meet the requirement of this RFP, including but not necessarily limited to incomplete proposals and/or proposals offering alternate or non-requested services. HASC shall have no obligation to compensate an applicant for costs incurred in responding to this RFP.

**Contact information:**

Please direct any questions by email to:

Beverly Sarchet

Administrative Assistant

[\*\*bsarchet@skagitcountyha.org\*\*](mailto:bsarchet@skagitcountyha.org)

**Email applications to:**

Beverly Sarchet

Administrative Assistant

[\*\*bsarchet@skagitcountyha.org\*\*](mailto:bsarchet@skagitcountyha.org)

Applications will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on July 17, 2024

**Other background materials:** HASC impact statement (email for copy) or see website: [www.skagitcountyha.org](http://www.skagitcountyha.org).

**RFP Questions and Answers:** (Updated as needed)

**Q1:** Could you tell us the scope of the project you are envisioning and how much it will pay?

**A1:** This is a light touch planning project. It involves facilitating discussion during a one-day Board Retreat for ten people (venue paid for separately by HASC), creating a 20-page report, and performing informational interviews with up to 35 people.

The project award amount will be less than \$50,000.

**Q2:** Related to the Threshold Requirement, “Ability to oversee the process of developing a strategic plan in person:”

- What percentage of strategic plan development needs to take place in Burlington, Washington?





- What strategic development activities may take place in a place other than Burlington, Washington?
- Can onsite strategic development activities be overseen by a subcontractor?

**A2:** Related to the Threshold Requirement, “Ability to oversee the process of developing a strategic plan in person:”

- The Board Retreat must be in person (one day.)
- Interviews and pre-planning before the retreat could be done remotely, by phone/Zoom. The final meeting and report could be by Zoom.
- A subcontractor could be used but would need to be included in the proposal, so HASC could evaluate the subcontractor as well.

**Q3:** How will information related to the RFP (responses to questions, changes in timeline) be published?

**A3:** Questions/answers will be posted to the website as they come in.

**Q4:** A staff engagement meeting at the beginning of the process of strategic planning would guarantee more buy-in than a staff vision building meeting at the end alone. Are you open to that option?

**A4:** The RFP specifies minimum expectations and does not preclude a staff engagement meeting at the beginning. The consultants may propose their own methods of obtaining the necessary information to meet the deliverables.

**Q5:** How much engagement might be helpful or needed with key partners in the community?

**A5:** The Board designed the scope taking into consideration needs of the Board, as well as the time and resources available and thus limited the scope to an internal process with staff and the volunteer Board. The consultants may propose additional services to include surveys or questionnaires, which may be used to solicit limited community engagement; however, community meetings are not part of the scope of this process.

**Q6:** With respect to the Collection of Information,





- a. How many people would you like the consultant to engage? Are they all internal to the organization? If they are not all internal, what is the general number of internal vs. external people you wish to include?
- b. Is there a specific number of people you would like the consultant to interview directly (as compared to more group-focused methods of information gathering, like surveys)?

**A6:** With respect to the Collection of Information,

- a. The total number of people to be interviewed is about 35+ (staff and board). There is no external interviewing anticipated in this RFP.
- b. Surveys would be an acceptable form of collecting information. At least ten people (board, director and managers) should be interviewed directly.

**Q7:** Would you prefer that the proposal be offered as a time and materials or a fixed price approach? Or a menu of options from which to discern a package of tasks and costs?

**A7:** A fixed price for what is requested in the RFP would be best. The consultant could price out additional services separately, if desired (such as external interview/surveys).

