



NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES

Because Justice is for All

NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES

on behalf of

Eviction Prevention EcoSystem Collaborating Partners

Community Justice Project ♦ Just Mediation Pittsburgh ♦ [Neighborhood Legal Services](#) ♦
RentHelpPGH ♦ Pittsburgh Hispanic Development Corporation

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL Strategic & Communications Planning

Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS) is a private, not-for-profit law firm that provides free civil legal assistance to low income residents in Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, and Lawrence Counties in Southwestern PA.

The Eviction Prevention Ecosystem is a collaboration of RentHelpPGH, Pittsburgh Hispanic Development Corporation, Community Justice Project, Neighborhood Legal Services, Just Mediation Pittsburgh and other community based organizations.

NLS and its collaborating partners seek proposals to assist the collaborators with strategic planning and the development of a communications framework inclusive of key message development .

Eviction Prevention Ecosystem

In 2016, the Pittsburgh Foundation began convening stakeholders in an Evictions and Affordable Housing working group, bringing together landlords and tenants, legal aid attorneys and housing advocates and government officials and nonprofit staffers, to study, discuss and envision steps to address the eviction crisis in Allegheny County. Over time, an envisioned solution began to emerge: a well-coordinated “eviction prevention ecosystem” that includes legal assistance (though expanded legal aid and pro bono capacity), mediation programs, rental assistance, community education for renters and landlords, resource navigation to connect people to information and resources, as well as systems advocacy designed to improve processes and laws that will help prevent evictions and stabilize families.

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LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

Funded, in part, by the Commonwealth and through a contract with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCEd). The official registration and financial information of Neighborhood Legal Services may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. Federal regulations applying to NLS require that we notify all donors that no funds can be expended by NLS for any activity prohibited under P.L. 104-134 or otherwise prohibited by 45 C.F.R. §1600 et seq.



The Eviction Prevention Ecosystem, as we see it, is a network of organizations and people who collaboratively work to reach people at all stages of housing instability and to connect them to the services that they need or provide those services directly. Primary partners include RentHelpPGH (RHP), Pittsburgh Hispanic Development Corporation (PHDC), Community Justice Project (CJP), Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS), and Just Mediation Pittsburgh (JMP). Working together, and with a growing network of diverse community based organization (CBO) partners, we hope to ensure that **all** Allegheny County residents, especially those who are hardest to reach, are able to connect with providers for resource access, eviction diversion, and legal services. And through consistent outreach and resource navigation, including by our CBO partners, we are striving to catch folks in need of assistance before their situation devolves into crisis. The cultural diversity and competency of our CBO partners will also fortify the collaborative's ability to address and overcome language, cultural, and technological barriers that exist in underserved communities.

Considerations

Collaborative partners secured a Management Assistance Grant from the Forbes Funds to underwrite the costs associated with the development of the strategic plan and communications framework for collaborative partners in the Eviction Prevention Ecosystem. NLS is the fiscal agent for this grant funded project.

Planning Objectives

We seek a Consultant who can help facilitate a strategic planning effort to: (1) define our collaborative mission, vision, and core values; (2) establish clearly articulated goals for our collaborative work; (3) identify strategies and work plans to achieve those goals; (4) develop common messaging for collaborative effort; and (5) determine how to sustain or develop the capacities needed for successful collaborative efforts.

Collaborative project partners seek to embark on a robust planning process to formalize a strategic vision and operational plans (workflow/processes, technology, communications, sustainability, etc.) for our collective collaborative eviction prevention efforts to prevent disruptive evictions and stabilize housing for low-income families in Allegheny County. We also intend to develop a shared communications strategy and key messages about our eviction prevention efforts so that our communications effectively tell the story of each partners' work and the important role they play in the collaborative project. We intend to formalize a common vision for our collaborative efforts as well as a strategic direction.

We recognize that an effective eviction prevention system has many components. The work to be done with respect to eviction prevention will provide a roadmap or clear matrix of how various eviction prevention components such as legal aid, mediation, resource navigation, pro bono and possible additional collaborators operate in sync with specific roles and responsibilities. We currently operate utilizing a data-driven model so efforts will make sure that we identify the appropriate technology platforms that allow for systems integration and/or efficiencies in data collection. Most importantly, work plans and system improvements will be

identified, collaborative messaging will be clear and services will be easily understood and accessible to the low-income community, potential volunteers and the general public.

The Products We Seek

At the conclusion of the strategic planning process we expect to have:

- A clear statement of the Collaborative's mission, vision and core values that will encapsulate its purpose, direction and uniqueness.
- Defined roles for collaborators and work plans.
- Clearly identified advocacy objectives that seek to prevent evictions or reduce significant barriers to housing stability. These objectives will be:
 - Realistic about current limited resources but bold in terms of impact and expectations for future growth.
 - Developed to complement the work of collaborators and other (potential) partners
 - Based on a thorough understanding of the communities we serve.
- Identify capacities we need to maintain and those we need to develop or adjust to accomplish our goals successfully, together with strategies for expanding, sustaining, developing or restructuring these capacities.
- Clear strategies to achieve objectives.
- Development of communications framework and key messages so collaborators speak in synchronicity about the collaboration.

Timeline

We would like to begin the strategic planning process as soon as feasible ideally no later than April 1, 2022.

Consultant Attributes:

- Prior strategic planning experience
- Familiarity with the needs of low-income individuals and the challenges that affect housing security
- Familiarity with Allegheny County demographics and resources highly desirable
- Commitment to making meaningful change for low-income communities and community members

Proposal Deadline: February 28, 2022

Anticipated Project Budget: \$20,000 to \$25,000

Submission Information: Proposals may be submitted electronically to:

Christine Kirby
Director of Development
Neighborhood Legal Services
kirbyc@nlsa.us

Inquiries: Please direct all inquiries or questions to Christine Kirby at 412-586-6137 or via email to kirbyc@nlsa.us.

Proposal Contents:

- Summary of prior relevant experience
- Identification of project personnel
 - Resume or CV for project personnel
- Narrative proposal, including timelines and method
- Budget (include payment terms)
- Professional References
 - Provide three references including a brief summary of work performed and contact information.
 - Sample(s) and/or Testimonial(s) of similar work

The Eviction Prevention Ecosystem collaborative partners including RentHelpPGH, Pittsburgh Hispanic Development Corporation, Community Justice Project, Neighborhood Legal Services, and Just Mediation Pittsburgh is extremely grateful to the Forbes Funds and its Management Assistance Grant Program for grant funding to underwrite this strategic planning and communications initiative.