

LEAD SAFE

CLEVELAND COALITION

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR A ADDITIONAL GRANTS TO PROPERTY OWNERS ADMINISTRATOR

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Background

The Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition (LSCC) was created in 2019 to address the public health crisis of lead poisoning. The cornerstone of the LSCC's work is supporting the City of Cleveland's Lead Safe Certification law which requires residential rental properties built before 1978 to be proactively certified as lead safe. Lead is an environmental toxin that affects the brain, heart, bones, kidneys, and nervous system, and there are no safe levels once it is in the bloodstream. Lead poisoning occurs when lead builds up in the body, often over months or years, causing serious problems. Unfortunately, many of these problems are not detected until years after exposure. The current system often requires a child to be poisoned *before* taking action. The LSCC is implementing an alternative, preventative approach that not only saves money, but also protects Cleveland's children from lead poisoning.

To support the Lead Safe Certification and broader lead poisoning prevention effort, the LSCC created and capitalized the Lead Safe Home Fund. The Lead Safe Home Fund is a first-of-its-kind, public-private solution to make homes lead safe. Its primary function is financial assistance for property owners to create lead safe homes. CHN Housing Partners currently provides the bulk of the Lead Safe Home Fund financial assistance, and that role will continue.

Intent of this Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

To select one or more experienced Administrators to provide grants to property owners. Special focus will be on developing home repair capacity in Cleveland's housing nonprofit landscape, particularly at BIPOC-led organizations, to meet the overall housing instability crisis. The selected Administrator(s) will work in tandem with CHN Housing Partners.

Anticipated Contract Term

The anticipated term for contracts resulting from this RFQ may last up to five (5) years. Actual contract terms may vary, depending upon the scope of work and project needs. Applicants selected for the resulting contract must be available to commence work on January 1, 2023. The anticipated contract term for this RFQ is January 1, 2023, to September 30, 2027. An initial six-month ramp-up contract will commence on January 1, 2023, and end on June 30, 2023. The first full fiscal year will begin July 1, 2023.

Anticipated Budget

The anticipated budget for all executed contracts will total no more than \$19.65M over five years. The actual annual contract budget per Administrator may vary depending upon the scope of work, project needs, number of selected Administrators, and final Lead Safe Home Fund budget negotiations.

Non-assignment

The work and services associated with this RFQ will be performed by the selected Administrator(s). The Administrator(s) retains the right to employ any person required to assist with accomplishing the scope of work at the Administrator's expense.

Schedule

- August 29, 2022 – RFQ issued
- September 7, 2022, 10:00 am ET – Pre-Response Conference
- **September 21, 2022, 12:00 pm ET – Deadline for RFQ Responses**
- On or around October 21, 2022 – Administrator(s) selected
- On or around November 4, 2022 – Selected Administrator(s) submit their preliminary scopes of work and budgets
- By December 31, 2022 – Administrator(s) under contract with Enterprise Community Partners, with work to begin on January 1, 2023

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II. BACKGROUND

A. Lead Poisoning

No amount of lead exposure is considered safe, yet a Case Western Reserve University study found over 25% of Cleveland children tested positive for lead poisoning prior to kindergarten. Cleveland’s lead poisoning rates are about four times the national average. The problem is even more severe in specific Cleveland neighborhoods like Glenville and Clark-Fulton, where a disproportionate number of children of color live, often in substandard housing.

At even low levels, lead exposure can damage a child’s developing brain and cause lifelong, often irreversible, problems that affect education, behavior, and health. A 2020 report released by Case Western Reserve University’s Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development underscored the downstream consequences of childhood lead poisoning.

The report detailed the findings from a research project that— using data over a 20-year period— tracked the life outcomes of more than 10,000 children in Cleveland with elevated blood-lead levels compared to a control group of students who did not have elevated lead levels. By comparing these carefully matched groups, researchers were able to focus on the impact of lead poisoning on both

people and public systems. The report found:

- 1) Children with elevated blood-lead levels had a 27% lower chance of being on-track for kindergarten than children who do not have elevated lead levels.
- 2) Children with elevated lead levels were 25-30% more likely to enter the juvenile justice system, and 34% more likely to be incarcerated as adults (age 18 to 23).
- 3) By age 23, those with elevated lead levels were more likely to have relied on public assistance programs, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (53% more likely), homeless services (40% more likely), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (17% more likely).

Black children are disproportionately affected by lead poisoning compared to their white counterparts, and lead exposure was concentrated in areas of disinvested neighborhoods—areas historically tied to segregation, redlining, and subprime lending.

B. Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition

The Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition (LSCC) is an inclusive, public-private partnership formed in 2019 to address lead poisoning in the community. The LSCC represents more than 500 members and 140 organizations, state and local governments, and families impacted by lead. All these different leaders and organizations believe the same thing: No child should be poisoned by lead. The LSCC approach protects Cleveland's children by merging smart, adaptable public policies; knowledgeable agencies willing to collaborate; proven community programs and leaders; and public and private sector accountability.

The Coalition is led by a diverse Steering Committee composed of Committee Chairs, individuals directly impacted, civic leaders, at large members, and City of Cleveland representatives. The Steering Committee oversees the affairs of the Coalition, ensuring its viability while pursuing its mission, purpose, and guiding principles.

With community voice embedded in all aspects, to date, the LSCC has worked on:

- 1) Championing the successful implementation of Cleveland's lead safe certification;
- 2) Supporting, evaluating, and adapting workforce development, community engagement, and the hotline operations of the Lead Safe Resource Center;
- 3) Supporting, evaluating, and adapting home repair loans, grants, and incentives administration of Lead Safe Home Loans and Grants;
- 4) Setting and meeting fundraising goals for Lead Safe Home Fund;
- 5) Advocating for local, state, and federal investments and policies to create more lead safe spaces and lead poisoning interventions;
- 6) Telling the story of lead poisoning prevention in Cleveland to bolster community engagement, strengthen the base, and expand membership;
- 7) Championing the successful implementation of Cleveland's lead safe certification;
- 8) Supporting, evaluating, and adapting workforce development, community engagement, and the hotline operations of the Lead Safe Resource Center;
- 9) Supporting, evaluating, and adapting home repair loans, grants, and incentives administration of Lead Safe Home Loans and Grants;
- 10) Setting and meeting fundraising goals for Lead Safe Home Fund;
- 11) Advocating for local, state, and federal investments and policies to create more lead safe spaces and lead poisoning interventions; and
- 12) Telling the story of lead poisoning prevention in Cleveland to bolster community engagement, strengthen the base, and expand membership.

C. Key Partners

Many organizations support the work of the LSCC. These organizations and their responsibilities are presented below.

- Enterprise Community Partners facilitates the LSCC and, on behalf of the LSCC, serves as the official contracting entity of the LSCC's main tool, the Lead Safe Home Fund.
- Mt Sinai Health Foundation, Enterprise Community Partners, and the United Way of Greater Cleveland are the three fiscal agents for the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition. These organizations hold investments made to the Lead Safe Home Fund and make payments to administrators who execute the programs and services of the Fund based on the contracts administered by Enterprise Community Partners.
- Currently, there are two Administrators of the Lead Safe Home Fund. Environmental Health Watch serves as the Administrator for the Lead Safe Resource Center, which includes lead safe certification navigation, community engagement, and workforce development. CHN Housing Partners is the Administrator for the Lead Safe Home Loans and Grants.
- The City of Cleveland and other public sector partners are critical leaders and co-creators with the LSCC. The LSCC and its Lead Safe Home Fund largely exist to support the functions of the City of Cleveland, foremost including the Lead Safe Certification.
- Lead Safe Home Fund Investors come from every sector: public, private, corporate, and philanthropic. Collectively, their investments support all of the work of the LSCC and its Lead Safe Home Fund.
- Numerous other organizations and individuals participate as members of the LSCC, including leaders on the Steering Committee and working committees and subcommittees: Governance, Resource Development, Community Engagement, Research and Evaluation, Policy, Educational Interventions, Lead Safe Child Care Settings, Special Events, and Workforce Development.

D. Lead Safe Home Fund

One of the fundamental pillars of the LSCC's approach is the creation and capitalization of the Lead Safe Home Fund. The Lead Safe Home Fund is a first-of-its-kind, public-private solution to make homes lead safe. The Lead Safe Home Fund supports effective, enforceable, and equitable solutions for property owners and families. To date, it has achieved these solutions through two critical, interrelated functions: 1) a spectrum of Lead Safe Home Loans and Grants; and 2) a Lead Safe Resource Center to provide system navigation, workforce development, community engagement, and more.

The Lead Safe Home Fund is modeled on best practices and informed by a depth and breadth of research into the needs of property owners and the condition of their properties. Working in coordination with existing resources and programs, the Lead Safe Home Fund was originally built to:

- **Focus on prevention.** The Fund proactively improves living conditions so children do not ingest or inhale lead hazards in or around the home.
- **Be strategic.** The Fund provides access to Lead Safe Home Loans and Grants for property owners who lack the resources to remediate their homes.
- **Coordinate services and public education and engagement.** The Fund supports a one-stop-shop Lead Safe Resource Center to serve families, property owners, and the broader community on all things related to lead poisoning prevention.
- **Train and develop the workforce.** The Fund, through the successful implementation of the Lead Safe Resource Center, offers training courses to build a lead safe workforce.
- **Be flexible and responsive.** The Fund appropriately targets and maximizes resources through expert, third-party administrators.

- **Complement the Lead Safe Certification system.** The City of Cleveland adopted groundbreaking legislation requiring residential rental units built before 1978 to proactively achieve lead safety. The Fund provides resources and incentives to help property owners comply with the law.

In 2022, the Lead Safe Home Fund experienced a significant increase in funding due to a \$52.5M pledge from the Cleveland Clinic, a \$17M pledge from the City of Cleveland, and a \$1M federal earmark passed in March. With this new revenue, the Fund has approximately \$115.3M to spend over seven years. Given this new budget, the LSCC is expanding the Lead Safe Home Fund programming and capacity, now referenced as Lead Safe Home Fund 2.0. In broad strokes, expanded programming will encompass:

- **Additional workforce development.** To meet the accelerated and expanded Lead Safe Grants and Loans demand, the LSCC will build on its existing lead safe worker training curriculum and collaborate with community-based organizations to hire/train in-house lead safe workers.
- **Relocation assistance for families facing displacement.** The LSCC will identify, fully form, and launch pilot programs that support families facing displacement due to lead. These programs will also serve as proofs of concept to help families facing other types of displacement.
- **Lead safe child care.** The LSCC will launch, analyze, improve, and scale a fully developed pilot program to become a best practice model for proactively protecting children from lead hazards in child care settings.
- **Additional grants to property owners (subject of this RFQ).** The LSCC will deploy financial assistance for property owners to create lead safe homes.

E. Commitment to Racial Equity and Social Justice

The LSCC is unwavering in its commitment to racial equity and social justice. Recognizing that Black and Brown children continue to bear the disproportionate burden of lead exposure, the LSCC has structured itself to encourage unity, racial equity, inclusion, and power-sharing in the broader community.

The LSCC subscribes to 10 guiding principles. One principle (*Genuine Community Partnership*) calls for the LSCC to develop genuine community partnerships, where the voices of people directly affected by lead are full partners in the project design and implementation. Another (*Solidarity and Collaboration*) requires the LSCC to act in solidarity and collaboration with groups working on similar issues with compatible visions, treating each other with justice and respect, both on an individual and an organizational level. Lastly, the LSCC operates with *Integrity*, working in a mode of community-centeredness by “walking its talk.” The LSCC acknowledges that it must live out the values it is struggling for and work toward justice, peace, and community.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

A. Statement of Need

The LSCC is seeking one or more experienced Administrators to provide grants to Cleveland property owners. Special focus will be on developing home repair capacity in Cleveland’s housing nonprofit landscape, particularly at BIPOC-led organizations, to meet the overall housing instability crisis.

B. Scope of Work

The Grants to Property Owners Administrator(s) will manage and operate a substantial and sustainable fund to support compliance with the Lead Safe Certification system and make homes in Cleveland lead safe. The selected Administrator(s) will be an organization with 1) a proven track record of previous

successful grantmaking, especially with property owners (including homeowners and rental property owners); 2) a history of strong financial performance, 3) a sound operational structure, 4) demonstrated ability to manage a high volume of individual transactions, and 5) a functional platform that will serve as a nimble and flexible vehicle to ensure efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness. The Administrator(s) will operate in tandem with the LSCC, CHN Housing Partners, Environmental Health Watch, and the other Lead Safe Home Fund Administrators starting January 2023.

The Grants to Property Owners programming includes lead safe and lead safe plus home repair grants. Presently, eligibility criteria for grants are: 1) Owner must provide proof of ownership to the residential unit; 2) Property must be built before 1978 and located in the City of Cleveland; 3) Owner must have rental registration issued by the City of Cleveland Department of Building and Housing if it's a rental unit; and 4) Owner must be current on all property taxes or have some form of tax payment plan in place.

The Grants to Property Owners Administrator(s) will be responsible for the following:

- Managing a robust, multi-million-dollar fund comprised of public and private funding sources;
- Co-creating a platform to administer grants for property owners to make vital repairs that result in lead safe homes;
- Managing all aspects of Grants to Property Owners, including accounting, investor reporting, and compliance;
- Working closely with the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition, CHN Housing Partners, other Lead Safe Home Fund Administrators, the City of Cleveland, and other key Coalition stakeholders to ensure coordination of available resources;
- Providing fair and seamless service delivery to clients in conjunction with the Lead Safe Resource Center;
- Maintaining integrity and processes of the Lead Safe Home Fund existing Grants to Property Owners program, including the eligibility parameters, the lead safe and lead safe plus home repair standards, in-house construction management, and Salesforce and broader LSCC tracking and reporting procedures;
- Participating in and contributing to broader marketing efforts of the Lead Safe Home Fund, the Lead Safe Resource Center, and other Lead Safe Home Fund programming;
- Supporting the investor outreach efforts of the LSCC;
- Annually deploying approximately \$3 million in grants to property owners, with an estimated peak annual volume of 500 transactions per year in the next five years; and
- Publicly reporting on metrics to the LSCC as well as Lead Safe Home Fund investors, including all reporting requirements tied to public sector funding sources.

Respondents should have experience with consumer lending or grantmaking, and the ability to manage grantmaking staff, construction management staff, associated insurance, contracting, quality control, and reporting.

The Administrator(s) should be a trusted, mission-driven entity with a strong track record and, preferably, a long-term commitment to Cleveland. They should have empathy, passion, and a deep interest in working with the community. The Administrator(s) should be able to quickly and effectively take on this program and move it to market. They should have a complete understanding of the lead safe certification and lead safe workforce licensures/certifications process and have the ability to manage bureaucracy.

The Administrator(s) will be working in partnership at all levels and should have a history of healthy collaboration. Respondents should be comfortable serving as a spokesperson for the program, including answering questions from the LSCC and its partners, elected leaders, and the public.

This scope of work is a general guide to the work expected to be performed and is not a complete listing of all services that may be required or desired.

C. Budget and Timeline

The expected budget and timeline for this work are *up to* \$19.65M over five years. Actual amounts available in a year will vary depending on the scope of work, the availability of funds, number of selected Administrators, and funding parameters.

D. Additional Information

Below is a list of resources providing additional background for your response.

- [Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition](#)
- [About the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition and its Guiding Principles](#)
- [Lead Safe Home Fund Investor Report, October 2021](#)
- [Lead Safe Loans, Grants, and Incentives webpage](#)

IV. SUBMISSION

A. Eligibility

This RFQ is open to mission-driven entities seeking to make a difference in the lives of Cleveland's children and families. Entities should have robust internal controls, a healthy financial position, and a strong track record. Additionally, the organization must demonstrate successful experience working in partnership with communities providing technical assistance, capacity building, program development, and/or organizational/program support or services.

Specifically, to be eligible to apply, respondents must:

- Have familiarity with Cleveland and its diverse neighborhoods, and preferably a strong track record of work in Cleveland;
- Commit to program partnership for the entire term of the project;
- Have relevant home repair experience, lead safe and lead abatement experience preferred;
- Demonstrate financial strength and stability;
- Provide strong recommendations from the program and funding community; and
- Demonstrate clear support from their Board of Directors.

Respondents must offer services in an accessible and non-discriminatory manner regardless of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, citizenship status, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, or any other protected class.

The LSCC will not fund organizations that require membership in certain religions or advance a particular religious faith. Faith-based organizations may be eligible if they welcome and serve all members of the community regardless of religious belief.

B. Proposal Content

Interested entities should submit a response, which includes the following components.

- **A Cover Letter (One Page Maximum)**
- **A Table of Contents**
- **Organizational Contact Information (One Page Maximum)**
 - Share organization name, tax ID, address, phone number, and website.
 - State proposal contact person's name, title, address, phone number, and email address.
- **Project Understanding and Proposed Approach (Four Pages Maximum)**
 - Describe your understanding of the purpose and scope of this project.
 - Describe your approach to fulfilling the project's scope of work.
 - Identify existing and potential partners and partnership opportunities related to this project.
 - Outline the potential or anticipated project challenges and how they might be addressed.
 - Provide a preliminary expense budget based on your approach and understanding of the project.
- **Prior Experience and Organizational Ability (Two Pages Maximum)**
 - Explain what makes your organization uniquely qualified to serve as the Grants to Property Owners Administrator.
 - Detail the organization's previous experience relevant to this project.
 - Identify potential areas of operational opportunity for the organization and strategies to address them as it relates to this project. Strategies may include but are not limited to adequacy of assigned staff, support staff, administrative resources, equipment, and research tools.
- **Project Management and Methodology (Six Pages Maximum)**
 - Describe practices and measures used within the organization to manage complex projects, including, but not limited to, staff supervision, training and development, and relevant organization accreditations or certifications that would be deployed for this project.
 - Describe the technical assistance the organization currently provides to consumers and partners in the community.
 - Provide an overview of the organization's current partnerships and/or collaboration and identify the organization's role within the group. Describe how these partnerships and/or collaborations will inform the approach to partnership in the role of Administrator.
 - Describe your project management approach, including your methods and infrastructure (e.g., software and technology) to track, measure, and report status, measure effectiveness, and demonstrate impact.
- **Attachments**

The following documents should be combined into one pdf document, starting with a table of contents.

 - Organization leadership, biographies
 - Board roster
 - Board oversight policies and procedures
 - Staff chart, including existing staff who will be assigned to this project and what positions will be created for this project
 - Current year's organizational budget
 - Current Certificate of Good Standing
 - Statement of Diversity and Inclusion

- Most recent Form 990 and three years of audits
- Proof of insurance
- Two client references illustrating successful services provided within the last three years
- One letter of support signed by the Board President
- One letter of reference from one of the organization's top three funder partners

C. Response Package and Format

Complete but straightforward and concise responses are recommended for ease of review by the Review Committee. Documents should use a font size no smaller than 11 points and page margins of at least 1" on all sides (excluding headers and footers). Text in tables can be smaller but should still be readable. Marketing and sales-type information should be excluded. All parts, pages, figures, and tables should be numbered and clearly labeled.

D. Time and Place for Submission of Responses

Responses must be received by **12:00 pm ET on Wednesday, September 21, 2022**. Responses must be submitted electronically in pdf format via email to leadsafecleveland@gmail.com. The subject line of the email should read "Statement of Qualifications for LSCC Additional Grants to Property Owners Administrator." Late submissions will not be considered.

V. EVALUATION AND SELECTION

A. Evaluation Criteria

The RFQ responses will be evaluated based on the following criteria.

- Strong program and mission alignment with the LSCC's mission to protect children and families from lead exposure;
- Strong board and managerial leadership;
- Demonstrated commitment to racial equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice;
- Ability and history of providing services in an equitable, accessible, and non-discriminatory manner;
- Clear ability to articulate the programming needs of the Lead Safe Grant to Property Owners Program;
- Exceptional track record, ability to build program infrastructure, and ability to sustain organizational operations for 10+ years;
- Board of Directors and funder support to be a lead poisoning prevention implementation entity;
- Good financial health and standing according to generally accepted accounting practices;
- Track record of delivering stated outcomes in other programs or partnerships;
- Ability to serve as a spokesperson on projects with a high degree of public scrutiny;
- Ability to work in partnership to achieve goals; and
- Effective and efficient delivery of quality services is demonstrated in relation to the budget approach and allocation. The allocation is reasonable and appropriate.

B. Review Committee

Representation on the Review Committee will include Steering Committee, Fiscal Agents, and Executive Committee members from the LSCC; key investor representatives; and subject matter experts. This

committee will be responsible for evaluating and rating responses, conducting interviews, and performing other reference checks and vetting as needed.

C. Selection Process

The Review Committee will evaluate responses based on the evaluation criteria and interviews if invited. If selected, the LSCC will negotiate the specific scope of services, budget, deliverables, and timeline with the Respondent. Once approved, contracts will be drafted and executed.

D. Timeline for Evaluation and Selection

The evaluation and selection timeline is as follows:

- September 21, 2022, 12:00 pm ET – Deadline for RFQ Responses
- September 22 – October 21, 2022 – Respondent reviews, scoring, and interviews take place
- On or around October 21, 2022 – Administrator(s) is selected
- On or around November 4, 2022 – Selected Administrator(s) submits their preliminary scopes of work and budgets
- By December 31, 2022 – Administrator(s) under contract with Enterprise Community Partners, with work to begin on January 1, 2023

VI. INQUIRIES

A. Questions

Questions regarding this RFQ should be emailed to Consultant Gretchen H. Kunkel at leadsafecleveland@gmail.com. No oral inquiries will be accepted.

B. Clarifications or Additional Information

Any clarification or additional information that may substantially affect the outcome of this RFQ will be posted on the [LSCC website](#). It is the Respondent's responsibility to check this website for any updates.