

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**FOR THE EVALUATION**

**OF THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUND**

**DEADLINE:** **MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2015**

The Community Revitalization Fund (CR) is seeking an evaluator or an evaluation team to conduct a summative evaluation of a $23 million affordable housing fund. GNOF’s Community Revitalization Fund was created and launched in partnership with national and local foundations in 2007 in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to support New Orleans’ housing and community revitalization. This RFP seeks an evaluator who can create and implement an evaluation design that goes beyond traditional evaluation and draws upon the power of narrative to understand the complexities of the Fund’s work and its impact on the lives of New Orleanians, the local community development sector, the Greater New Orleans Foundation, and the funder collaborative that supported the Fund.

**Proposals for the evaluation must be submitted to Isabel Barrios, CR Fund Program Officer, in the form of one electronic copy emailed to** [**Isabel@gnof.org**](mailto:Isabel@gnof.org) **and one hard copy mailed to: Greater New Orleans Foundation, 1055 St. Charles Avenue, Suite 100, New Orleans, LA 70130. Proposals are due on Monday, March 9th, 2015.**

The evaluator/evaluation team will:

1. Include GNOF staff in the design of the evaluation
2. Create a participatory evaluation process that will seek input from GNOF, its funders, and its grantees in evaluation design and implementation.
3. Collect and organize important data on the impact of the Fund.
4. Develop a creative and engaging evaluation report with a strong narrative that incorporates data on results, as well as grantee, funder, and citizen voices to tell the story of the Fund’s impact.
5. Employ photography, audio, and video recording to develop a video message that can be shared with funders, grantees, and the public.
6. Elevate storytelling as a way to illustrate the impact of the Fund.

**THE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION FUND**

The Greater New Orleans Foundation’s Community Revitalization Fund was created and launched in partnership with national and local foundations in 2007 in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to support the housing and community revitalization needs of New Orleans. A total of $23 million was raised for affordable housing and community development in New Orleans. Grants from the Fund supported housing and community revitalization activities that sought to create—or were a component of—a working system that generated equitable housing and community development at scale. The Fund objectives and strategies were as follows:

1. **Strengthen the affordable housing sector** within the City of New Orleans such that it is more professional, more productive, and better designed. GNOF’s goal is that all facets of the affordable housing sector—public and private, rental and owner-occupied—have well-trained and experienced staff, as well as access to best practices and policies and rich professional resources.

* The Fund supports promising and experienced local developers in attracting new staff and building the capacity of existing staff to engage in large-scale redevelopment work that is now required by this city. The Fund is a) identifying a cadre of promising individuals, nonprofit organizations, quasi-governmental agencies, and city and state offices that are charged with redevelopment and support their work; b) underwriting working capital and technical assistance to key actors in the housing development community.
* The Fund is working to increase public and private capital funding pools for housing initiatives, as well as establish or broker more cooperative relationships between lenders, developers, the City of New Orleans, and the State of Louisiana.

1. **Fund housing production**, either directly or indirectly. GNOF’s goal is to have thousands of units of rehabilitated and newly-constructed homes made available to New Orleanians within the Katrina Diaspora and to others seeking to repopulate the city. These units will be high-quality, ecologically safe and healthy, and affordable within mixed-income settings.

* The Fund will create new or improve existing processes and systems in land disposition, land banking, nonprofit and for-profit affordable housing financing, new housing construction, housing rehabilitation, government permitting, and zoning.
* The Fund will support methods or efforts aimed to increase housing production throughout the city and shorten the development cycle without sacrificing quality.

1. **Promote the redevelopment of New Orleans according to equitable and Smart Growth principles.** GNOF’s goal is to make grants promoting development that creates mixed-use, mixed-income, and mixed-race neighborhoods, each anchored by community facilities, schools, health-care facilities, pedestrian-friendly streets, and dynamic public open spaces.

* The Fund will encourage the adoption of the principles of the Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP), a comprehensive plan for the city of New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina and, if necessary, provide resources to ensure that UNOP has the force of law.
* The Fund will support the successful integration of green building practices in neighborhood development.
* The Fund will support efforts for New Orleanians who became "citizen planners" during post-Katrina planning processes to ascend into leadership roles and become effective stewards of the implementation process.

1. **Increase GNOF’s capacity as a leader for rebuilding efforts**. GNOF’s goal is to use the diverse experiences and supportive professional networks of the fund’s participants to build its grantmaking practices in a discreet, peer-to-peer setting.

* There will be a fund for community revitalization projects where none previously existed.
* GNOF will hire personnel with relevant expertise in order to manage the organization overall and the community revitalization program specifically.
* Funders, community development practitioners, and government will demonstrate increased commitment to the improvement of New Orleans’ housing production system.

Funder group members: The CR Fund has a total of 22 funders—local and national—-including: The Ford Foundation, Kellogg Foundation, Kresge Foundation, Gates Foundation, Hilton Foundation, Taylor Foundation, and Entergy Foundation.

Grantees:

The CR Fund made grants to over 50 organizations such as universities, neighborhood-based community development corporations, large-scale developers, and recovery organizations. (See appendix for full listing.)

**EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

GNOF is seeking an evaluator or evaluation team to address the following questions:

1. How and to what extent did the work of the CR Fund help New Orleans families return to a rehabbed or new home?
2. How and to what extend did the CR Fund increase GNOF’s capacity as a leader in community development?
3. How and to what extent did the CR Fund strengthen the affordable housing sector in New Orleans?
4. How well did a funder collaborative serve as an effective strategy for funding post-disaster rebuilding and development?

The final set of questions will be determined collaboratively with the evaluator.

**EVALUATION GUIDELINES**

The major areas of this evaluation are:

1. Quantitative and qualitative outcomes in affordable housing rehabilitation and development.
2. Qualitative outcomes for residents served by our grantees.
3. Quantitative and qualitative outcomes in the strengthening of the affordable housing sector.
4. Quantitative and qualitative outcomes in the increased capacity of the Greater New Orleans Foundation to lead in the rebuilding of New Orleans.

**PRELIMINARY EVALUATION DESIGN** should include:

* Brief statement of the purpose of the evaluation
* A demonstrated understanding of the goals and objectives of the Community Revitalization Fund
* The evaluator’s approach to working with GNOF, its grantees, the people it serves, and CR Fund funders

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EVALUATION:**

The evaluator will:

* Meet with GNOF staff, grantees, and funders to determine relevant evaluation questions and select a final set of areas of inquiry with their input;
* Propose appropriate data collection methodologies;
* Analyze qualitative and quantitative data;
* Prepare an evaluation report and present to GNOF for approval; and
* Coordinate with GNOF and a videographer/photographer to develop an audiovisual component of the report.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

Your proposal should describe the relevant capabilities of the firm—including short descriptions of similar projects—and describe who will be working on the evaluation and their prior experience, team roles, and responsibilities. The successful proposal will demonstrate:

1. Extensive expertise and experience in evaluation, research, and knowledge-building particularly related to work undertaken by non-profit, philanthropic, and community-based programs or organizations.
2. Knowledge of the fields of community development, philanthropy, and affordable housing is preferred.
3. Strong analytical skills and an ability to articulate a range of findings (performance measures, progress reports, community impact, practical and constructive feedback, etc) in a useful manner to all key stakeholder groups.
4. Experience in developing participatory, story-centered evaluations with multi-media approaches.

Preference will be given to qualified applicants located in the Gulf Coast Region or qualified applicants who can partner with a qualified local entity.

**PROPOSED BUDGET**

Describe the resources necessary to implement the evaluation that you propose. Your budget should provide as much detail as possible on salaries and fringe, full- and part-time effort projected for the evaluator and/or team, direct costs such as travel and supplies, and indirect costs.

**PROPOSALS MUST**

* Contain a cover sheet
* Be signed by a person authorized to contract for the selected and proof of authorization for the signature should be included
* Describe the relevant capabilities of the evaluator/evaluation team, and videography / photography partners
* Include three references of clients for whom the firm has conducted related projects with contact information and short descriptions of the relevant projects.
* A budget
* Be limited to 15 double-spaced, typed pages with all margins set at one inch.

**SELECTION PROCESS**

GNOF staff will select a proposal based on the following:

* Proposed design and implementation of the evaluation
* Professional experience and reputation in evaluating the effectiveness of community development efforts
* Knowledge of issues in the field of community development, philanthropic collaborative, and disaster recovery
* Creativity in the format proposed for the final report
* Budget

**ATTACHMENTS**

* List of Community Revitalization Funders
* List of Fund grants already awarded
* Interim CR evaluation

**Deadline: Monday, March 9, 2015**

**Please mail a copy to:**

Isabel Barrios, CR Fund Program Officer

The Greater New Orleans Foundation

1055 St. Charles Avenue

New Orleans, LA 70130

**Please email a copy to**: Isabel@gnof.org