

Request For Proposals (RFP)
Virginia LISC's
United For Progress (UP) Neighborhoods Initiative – Richmond, Va.
Target Neighborhood: Fulton

I. Background

Building Sustainable Communities is about bringing together physical redevelopment and human development, the place and the people, in the work of community revitalization. LISC invites a select group of organizations in Richmond's Fulton Hill Community to participate in the *UP (United for Progress) Neighborhoods Initiative*, a program that will include extensive community engagement, quality of life planning as part of the investment process to create healthy, sustainable communities, places where families can live, work, and raise their children.

Virginia LISC is offering a 2 year grant to implement the *UP Neighborhoods Quality of Life Planning process in the Fulton Hill Neighborhood (see attached map)*. A quality of life plan is written by and with the neighborhood and will identify specific projects designed to enhance the community. The 2-year grant amount will range between \$100,000 and \$150,000 per year. A pre proposal conference will be held on Friday, February 26th, 10:00 am at the Powhatan Community Center, 5051 Northampton St., Richmond.

Up Neighborhoods Objectives

Five main objectives guide our work in Building Sustainable Communities:

- Expanding **capital investment** in housing and other real estate
- Improving residents' access to quality **education**
- Building **family income and wealth**
- Developing **healthy environments and lifestyles**
- Stimulating local **economic activity**

Core Elements (Fundamental to the success of the initiative)

- **Civic Partnership and Buy-in**
Understanding and early consensus around community engagement and a comprehensive focus has been established among key partners.
- **Selection of Target Neighborhoods and Convening Agencies**
Three Richmond neighborhoods have been identified and convening agencies will be selected early in the process to create a structure and focus for investment.
- **Community Organizing at the Neighborhood Level**

An organizing strategy is in place and being implemented by community partners. Community engagement is recognized as an ongoing function, essential to all of the work.

- **Quality of Life Planning**
A Quality of life Plan will be developed for the target neighborhood that addresses the various growth opportunities in the neighborhood (ex., jobs, housing, commercial development, health, recreation, family financial security, education, etc.)
- **Leveraging Funding**
LISC's role in the Sustainable Communities program is viewed as an opportunity to catalyze new and more substantial resources for the participating neighborhoods. Securing these resources requires a partnership between the neighborhoods and LISC.
- **Early Action Projects** (aka Quick Start Projects)
Early action projects will be identified and funded to take place during the quality of life planning process.
- **Neighborhood Outcomes**
Neighborhood outcomes will be identified and articulated through the Quality of Life plans. Roles and responsibilities of implementing partners are made clear.
- **Neighborhood/Convening Agency Staffing**
Dedicated staff and related funding support are provided to the neighborhood through the convening agency. A Community Coordinator is provided to support the community's organizing, planning and project efforts.
- **Communications and Storytelling**
Capturing the story of how the Building Sustainable Communities process takes place in each neighborhood is important. Resources and ideas will be provided to ensure that this process of change is documented.
- **Learning Network**
Over time, a learning network will be developed featuring training, peer learning and cross site communications among all of the participating neighborhoods. The Network will allow participants to share ideas and continually improve the work happening in their own neighborhood and the other neighborhoods in the program.

II. The Request For Proposal (RFP) Process

The request for proposals should cover 2 years (annual renewal after year one is contingent upon successful completion of year 1 goals). The RFP process will select a Convening Agency (CA) to implement the UP Neighborhoods Quality of Life Planning Initiative, culminating in a written plan for the Fulton neighborhood. A template for the planning process will be provided to the selected Convening Agency (CA).

The follow items can be funded: 1) operating support for staffing dedicated to community building and quality of life planning (see clarification below); 2) operating support for limited back office administrative costs (see 2 below); 3) funding for early

action grants (see 3 below). LISC will provide technical assistance with organizational development consultants and will assist in raising funds for plan implementation. LISC will also seek to secure AmeriCorps members to support convening agency implementation of quality of life planning efforts. Finally, LISC will assist in identifying planning professionals to draft the plan and corresponding action steps, in conjunction with stakeholders.

- 1) Operating support will be made available to support staffing dedicated to community building, planning and plan implementation. The grant can only be used to add a new full time staff person or to change the role of an existing staff person for these purposes. (see attached draft position description).
- 2) Back office administrative costs can include, but are not limited to, the following: rent, part of Executive Director's time, a part of the time of the staff person supervising the new or reassigned staff position referenced in 1 above, a portion of clerical support.
- 3) Recognizing that the smallest investments create momentum and so that neighborhoods can act while in the midst of planning, the convening agency will make available (to neighborhood groups, churches, organizations) initial seed money and technical assistance for **neighborhood-based early action projects** to help the neighborhoods create immediate impact. Early Action projects have included, neighborhood clean-ups, pocket parks, gardens, health screenings and many, many creative ideas from neighborhoods. Additionally, as quality of life plans are developed and action steps identified, LISC will assist the convening agency in raising funds and leveraging resources for projects connected to plan implementation. Neighborhoods will need to work together with community stakeholders to create strategic partnerships and identify additional resources to address priorities outlined in their quality of life plans.
- 4) Participating Convening agencies will be required to identify targeted strategies to retain and strengthen organizational capacity. At the start of the initiatives, an initial organizational assessment will be made using the LISC CapMap© or other organizational diagnostic tool. A reassessment will take place during each of the following two years to determine change over time and identify new areas for retention and growth. Technical assistance will be made available to help convening organizations make improvements in response to these assessments. Practitioner networks will also be fostered to help connect those individuals working in particular areas of community development, such as community building, and provide the opportunity to share best practices.
- 5) Grass Roots Communication. It is vital to establish open lines of communication between and among all stakeholders during this process. The convening agency will be expected to work with the neighborhood to create and implement a variety of strategies to keep the community informed of the progress of the Battersea UP Neighborhoods initiative. Ideally, communication strategies will also provide

opportunities for regular feedback and input from residents. These can include: website, newsletters, flyers, events, listening projects or other creative methods.

- 6) Virginia LISC will seek to secure AmeriCorps members via national LISC to help with community engagement and implementation of the Quality of Life Plan.

Neighborhoods will be responsible for community building activities, the development of a quality of life plan, and plan implementation. The convening agency (CA) in each neighborhood will be expected to convene neighborhood stakeholders, monitor the quality of life planning process, oversee staff, and participate in organizational development activities. The convening agency will also be the fiduciary agent for all funding associated with the initiatives.

III. Convening Agency (CA) Eligibility Criteria

Organizational Leadership: The applicant must be a 501 (c) (3) organization, including any community organization, neighborhood association or group of associations that has been meeting for at least one year, has some track record of success in the targeted neighborhood, and has a clear objective for neighborhood revitalization.

Collaboration: The convening organization must provide evidence of a track record of collaborative partnerships with residents, neighborhood groups and other non-profit and for-profit organizations. This may include, but not be limited to, collaborating on projects, community events and/or neighborhood planning.

Neighborhood Engagement: There must be evidence of resident involvement in past/current projects. Strong resident leadership must be cultivated. The CA must indicate how broad resident involvement will be ensured in the quality of life planning process.

Matching Funds: The convening organization must demonstrate an organizational structure that will support participation in the initiatives. No direct cash match is required; however, if awarded, the applicant must provide other related program costs, including but not limited to, office space, office supplies, and phone and computer connections.

IV. Evaluation

Participating neighborhoods will first be required to complete a quality of life planning process. The quality of life planning process includes engagement of stakeholders, visioning, planning and action. The duration and intensity of the planning process will depend on the neighborhood. In some neighborhoods, the planning process will only necessitate re-engaging stakeholders to transform an existing plan into a quality of life plan and immediately take action. Other neighborhoods may find that they are ready to begin a new planning process. The quality of life plan should identify specific priorities,

outline goals and action steps to achieve those goals, and determine which stakeholder will take the lead in accomplishing those goals.

Convening organizations will be required to submit an annual work plan that outlines activities and specific goals for the year. These work plans will be based on the quality of life plan developed by the neighborhood and should make every effort to be representative of the needs and priorities of the neighborhood. They will also be required to submit quarterly and annual reports to measure progress toward these goals. LISC consultants will work with the CA to create a neighborhood Logic Model that will serve as the basis for an annual measurement of progress against goals outlined during the planning process.

Continued annual funding and participation in *UP Neighborhoods* is dependent upon a demonstrated satisfactory commitment and capacity to fulfilling the goals of the quality of life plan and the overall goals of *UP Neighborhoods*.

UP Neighborhoods seeks to make the case for funders and actors in the Richmond region to embrace a holistic model of community development that is neighborhood-driven. So, in addition to evaluation at the neighborhood level, we will be contracting with an external evaluator to assess progress of the initiatives individually and *UP Neighborhoods* as a whole. More details will be shared on this process after the evaluator is identified and the details defined.

V. Selection Criteria

The selection criteria will be based on a number of quantitative and qualitative measures. These measures will address questions of organizational capacity, neighborhood development experience, defined need and opportunity, anticipated outcomes, resident and stakeholder involvement, sustainability and RFP quality.

After an initial review by staff, proposals will be reviewed by the interim steering committee of the *UP Neighborhoods Initiative* using a point system. The steering committee will make its recommendation for CA to LISC. The following areas will be scrutinized in the review process, with potential point values detailed.

Community Attributes & Challenges (15 points possible)

Tell us about your community, including the extent to which there is a need for neighborhood revitalization and opportunities for civic, social, physical and economic development. Applicants should focus on demonstrating the **extent of the problems and strengths** in the geographical area that will be targeted. Sound and reliable data should be used whenever possible, but other means of documenting needs and opportunities are also acceptable. The first two sections of the proposal provide the opportunity to elaborate on this criterion. The first part asks for a description of the neighborhood and

the second part asks the applicant to relate the eleven principles of healthy neighborhoods (see attached) to the targeted neighborhood.

- Clarity of neighborhood boundaries, demographics and assets identified. (3 points)
- Attributes and challenges related to civic development. (3 points)
- Attributes and challenges related to social development. (3 points)
- Attributes and challenges related to physical development. (3 points)
- Attributes and challenges related to economic development. (3 points)

Organizational Capacity and Experience (15 points possible)

This refers to the convening organization's ability to bring together stakeholders to carry out the neighborhood's vision for itself. A demonstrated recent track record of success in convening and engaging stakeholders to complete a project is required, though the size of that "success" is not as important as the completion of the project and the collaborative partnerships developed. Successful applicants will also have internal financial controls in place and be able to manage the influx of funds that will be involved with these initiatives. This criterion also addresses the extent to which the organization has the experience and resources to participate in these initiatives, including an active board of directors that is engaged and follows established governance practices. Staff, board and/or community partners should have expertise in related professional disciplines such as real estate, urban planning, or social services. The third part of the proposal gives applicants the opportunity to address the organizational capacity and experience of the convening organization. The organizational budget attachment will also provide the interim steering committee with insight on this criterion.

- Recent track record of success. (7 points)
- Financial controls. (3 points)
- Organizational experience and resources. (5 points)

Experience working in the targeted community (20 points possible)

This refers to the level of involvement by the CA in the targeted neighborhood as well as involvement of residents, neighborhood groups, institutions, businesses, government and partner organizations in CA-led neighborhood revitalization activities. Participation and collaboration among individuals, groups and organizations will be the key to a neighborhood's success in these initiatives. Partners will be necessary to help take ownership of the action steps that flow from the quality of life plan. The convening organization cannot be expected to take the lead on every issue, but instead bring together neighborhood stakeholders to take ownership of the plan and take action on its implementation. The last two parts of the proposal provide the opportunity for applicants to address the history of the Convening agency's involvement in the targeted community as well as the level of community involvement in CA-led revitalization efforts, both through examples of collaboration and letters of support from collaborating partners, neighborhood institutions and neighborhood leaders.

- History of neighborhood revitalization work in targeted neighborhood stakeholders. (8 points)
- Quality of current/future partnerships and how they connect to the attributes and challenges identified. (6 points)

- Quality of resident engagement. (6 points)

VI. Review of Proposals

LISC staff will make an initial review of proposals using basic eligibility requirements (see page 4). Then, *UP Neighborhoods Steering Committee* will review proposals using a point system based on the evaluation criteria (see page 5). The top scoring applicant (s) may be asked to prepare a presentation for the steering committee at a meeting open to the public. Following recommendation by the steering committee, the final decision will be made by LISC.

VII. Timeline

Distribution of request for proposals:	February 16, 2010
Pre proposal conference	February 26, 2010
Proposals due:	March 15, 2010
Staff Review and Recommendation:	March 30, 2010
Steering Committee Review and Selection:	April 2 nd , 2010
Candidates' Presentation to community:	April 6 th , 2010
LISC Decision:	April 12, 2010
Funds Disbursed Quarterly beginning:	May 2010

VIII. Application Requirements

1. Proposals must be received at the LISC office no later than 5:00 PM March 15th, 2010.
2. Please submit 1 original and 1 copy. Hard copies only – **we will not accept emailed or faxed proposals.**
3. Please use the attached template as a guide. Answer each part as described and in the order it is listed. Proposals should be no more than 5 pages.
4. Please attach a completed **cover sheet**, an **operating budget** that details sources and uses of funds, and a copy of the convening agency's **IRS 501(c)(3) Determination Letter, letters of support from key collaborating groups, organizations or neighborhood leaders.** Please do not submit any other attachments.
5. Please note that the proposal should be on the letterhead of the applicant agency.

Please submit proposals to:
 Veronica Jemmott, Senior Program Officer
 Local Initiatives Support Corporation
 413 Stuart Circle, Suite 300
 Richmond, VA 23220

Contact Info:

Email: vjemmott@lisc.org

804-358-7602, ext. 12