



Request for Proposals Statewide Housing Campaign

Introduction

Minnesota Housing Partnership (MHP) advocates for equitable housing policy, produces data-informed research to inform solutions, and delivers community development services across the United States. MHP's mission is to expand housing and community development opportunity for those most impacted by economic and racial disparities by leading collaborative work to promote system change and grow equitable development capacity.

MHP's community development team works directly with communities, regions, and organizations to achieve their housing and community development goals. We have deep experience in serving rural communities and Native Nations, throughout Minnesota and beyond.

MHP's policy work includes leading many statewide housing campaigns, including work as a founding member of the Homes for All coalition and recently a successful effort to establish a Minnesota Affordable Housing Tax Credit. For the 2022 legislative session, MHP led the "Yes to Invest: \$2 billion for housing in 2022" initiative, which influenced the scope and amount of housing investments proposed by lawmakers including the Governor and the House.

Campaign Background

MHP is excited to launch a multi-year statewide housing campaign in 2022. As part of this campaign, MHP seeks consulting services for three areas of work. Respondents may apply for all or part of the scope of work components.

- **Narrative and Messaging.** Develop a housing narrative, with special attention to a narrative that connects with rural and Greater Minnesota values. We would like this narrative work to build on the insights and recommendations of the [Housing Justice Narrative](#) project and reflect race equity and climate resiliency priorities. Narrative development should take into account inputs from rural, Greater Minnesota, ex-urban and suburban communities, Tribal Nations, and Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) community members.
- **Campaign strategy and design.** Design and implement a three-year campaign plan, guided by the Campaign's four goals below, to include communications and messaging strategies as well as field organizing and engagement. The plan should include options for paid and earned media.
- **Marketing collateral.** Create content for a variety of communications and marketing platforms, including digital, video, radio, and more.

In essence, we seek to change the hearts and minds of people throughout the state about housing—dispel myths and stereotypes about who needs and lives in affordable homes, and promote



understanding about how housing affects our ability to succeed and thrive – in order to achieve legislative victories for housing stability at the state legislature.

Campaign Goals

Goal 1: Establish a common narrative that includes rural housing needs and reflects race equity and climate resiliency priorities. Refute disinformation and misinformation that perpetuates housing myths.

Goal 2: Measurably intensify ongoing support for housing, by public and lawmakers and candidates, including in selected target districts in Greater Minnesota.

Goal 3: Motivate support from the public, candidates, and lawmakers to achieve policy goals to increase state funding and policy for housing stability and affordable homes. Specific campaign goal(s) to be determined and may change over the course of the 3-year campaign. A similar initiative, [Yes to Invest: \\$2 billion for housing](#), was created for the 2022 legislative session.

Goal 4: Create housing champions throughout Minnesota, especially in selected target districts in Greater Minnesota, by developing or increasing relationships and commitment to long-term housing movement work by campaign participants, organizing partners, community influencers, and others.

Audience

This project would be intended to reach members of the general public, as well as state candidates and lawmakers. This campaign will build the base of housing advocates and champions, prioritizing identified target districts.

Campaign Timeline

This multi-year campaign will be divided into phases for the purpose of timeline. Services requested in this RFP, other than developing a multi-year campaign plan, are for Phase I of the campaign which will conclude February 28, 2023. Phase II of this campaign will be from February 2023 through the first half of 2025.

Campaign Start Up Budget

The budget range for the scope of work is \$125,000 to \$165,000. This budget is inclusive of consultant time as well as hard costs, to include polling and paid media. RFP responses should describe how this budget range could be utilized for a menu of expenses, including: time and costs for narrative development, polling, creating and implementing a campaign plan and campaign strategy, content creation, and paid media.

Additional budget-related information. In addition to the budget described above, we have additional budget and resources to provide the following:



- MHP will provide significant staff support to this campaign, including campaign management and strategy, organizing and field engagement, and communications support
- Funds are available for compensation of community experts for narrative development and campaign advice and participation
- Funds are available for field activities including compensation for organizing partners, canvassers, and events
- MHP will provide sub-grants to collaborating organizations across Minnesota

Scope of Work:

- **Narrative and messaging.** Develop persuasive campaign narrative and messaging, building on research from the Housing Justice Narrative project, original research of Minnesota constituencies, and successful housing campaigns with similar goals.
 - Utilize polling, interviews, focus groups and other qualitative and quantitative data and techniques to refine and localize a housing campaign narrative that resonates with rural community interests and needs.
 - Narrative development should take into account inputs from rural, Greater Minnesota, ex-urban and suburban communities, Tribal Nations, and Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) community members
 - Identify unique messaging that is persuasive with various constituencies, prioritizing rural communities.
- **Campaign strategy and plan.** Develop a three-year campaign strategy and plan, including benchmarks and analytics, to end in June of 2025 or at the end of the legislative session. Plan should include:
 - Recommended benchmarks and activities for each of the four campaign goals.
 - Campaign structure and engagement activities, including grassroots and grass tops engagement in the targeted districts.
 - Strategy for deploying housing narrative through messaging and engagement activities, including connecting to policy objective.
 - Strategy for grassroots engagement, field, and candidate engagement activities.
 - Engagement with campaign committee for advice, feedback, and direction.
 - Research and analysis to establish and analyze campaign short-term and long-term goals, benchmarks and activities, including targeted districts for grassroots engagement and organizing.
 - Post-election plan and strategy, including messaging, organizing activities, and public engagement and lawmaker engagement activities.
 - Track and document the effectiveness of each campaign activity and the campaign as a whole and make adjustments as needed during the campaign period.



- **Marketing collateral**
 - Develop of collateral, website or presence on MHP's website, digital and other communications assets.
 - Paid and unpaid media strategy and purchasing.
 - Paid and unpaid social media campaign.
 - Develop of video and written storytelling collateral.

- **Final report** including evaluation of campaign strategy and results, and recommendations for next phase of 3-year campaign.

RFP Responses should include:

- Description of entity applying.
 - Include biographies or resumes of those individuals that will be involved in staffing the proposed work.
 - Please describe which areas of the scope of work you are applying for.
 - If the proposal includes collaborating partner organizations, identify roles of each partner and how your work will be integrated and managed.
 - If the proposal is for only one or two components from the scope of work, please indicate your approach to working with other consultants for other components.

- Description and examples of past experience with:
 - Narrative research and development
 - Campaign message development
 - Statewide issue and public education campaigns (please indicate if your campaign experience includes housing and/or rural issues)
 - Media and messaging tools and collateral development and deployment.

- Please provide responses to these questions and limit each response to 300 words or less. If a question applies to an area of work you are NOT applying for, please so indicate.
 - What is the importance of narrative to a campaign?
 - What is your process for developing narrative? How would you approach narrative development for this campaign?
 - Please provide up to 3 lessons you have learned from working with campaigns that you would bring to this one.
 - What leads to a successful working relationship with a communications or campaign consultant in your opinion?
 - What experience have you had working with campaign committees? What is your approach to a successful working relationship with a campaign committee?
 - How would you approach developing persuasive, effective, and memorable campaign messaging for this campaign? Please feel free to use past examples and or propose ideas you think could work for this campaign.



- Please provide an example of how your narrative or messaging influenced a campaign objective or outcome.
 - What is your experience with Minnesota politics and Minnesota communities, especially/including rural communities? If you don't have this direct experience, how would you gain the information you need to be successful for this scope of work?
 - One of the target areas we are likely to select for this campaign, for field and engagement activities, is St. Cloud and the surrounding area. What are up to three ideas or activities for engagement in that area?
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- What is your proposed timeframe for completion of each significant element of the campaign? If your proposal is only for one element of this campaign, such as narrative development, please describe the timeframe for that element and any contingencies that may affect your proposed timeline. If appropriate, you can incorporate your proposed timeline in the detailed description and budget for proposed costs and expenses; how you include this information is up to you.
 - Please provide a detailed description and budget for your proposed costs and expenses for activities outlined in the RFP, including for any hard costs such as polling or paid media. Please include optional components if appropriate.
 - What is your walk up song?

RFP responses will be evaluated by:

- Demonstrated experience and success in developing narrative for campaigns, as well as developing messages and engagement strategies based on narrative
- Understanding of housing issues, and preferably housing-related campaign experience
- Understanding and experience working with rural communities
- Experience with state-wide campaigns, including campaign strategy
- Experience with creating or procuring content for campaigns, including website, digital assets, and other communications collateral
- Experience integrating communications tools with field engagement, candidate engagement
- Experience working with a campaign committee
- Ability to begin work ASAP
- Approach that is robust and includes understanding of engaging diverse team of staff, board, and external leaders
- Teams and consultants comprised or owned by Black, Indigenous, people of color, and women are strongly encouraged to apply.

RFP Response Deadline:

Responses are due by Thursday, July 14, 2022, end of business (5:00 pm). Please send all responses via email to RFP_Housing_Campaign@mhponline.org. Review of RFP responses will begin as soon as responses are received and will continue until selection.



Additional Background: Minnesota Housing Partnership

Goals, major programs, activities, key collaborations, and services.

MHP exists to ensure that all Minnesotans have a home they can afford. We engage with diverse, multi-sector partners to inform improved housing systems and better align resources to benefit and reduce disparities in housing outcomes for historically under-resourced communities.

While Minnesota's housing challenges are great, there are also great opportunities before us. Locally and nationally, we see increased awareness of the importance of rental assistance and wealth-building for low-income and Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) individuals and communities. Building on this, MHP educates, engages and activates a broad group of stakeholders around the goal of safe, affordable, accessible housing for all Minnesotans. Understanding how to align these interests with resonant messaging and supporting research/facts requires investing in relationships, collaborations, and partnerships that span sectors, partisan lines, race, and class. Through expanding partnerships, we will continue our positive impact, while we explore new strategies to improve the equity, effectiveness, and scale of Minnesota's affordable housing market.

Tumultuous recent years, marked by the housing and economic impacts of COVID-19 and a community roiled by stark racial injustice and inequities, reinforced the necessity of safe, affordable, accessible housing to sustain education, elders, jobs, and health. MHP's role convening housing and community stakeholders to address urgent needs and formulate responsive strategies and policies has never been more important. We are leading targeted efforts to activate practitioners and community advocates, to use this opportunity to create lasting and equitable housing systems that intentionally target benefits to historically disinvested populations.

MHP has identified three primary barriers to housing equity and affordability facing Minnesota communities:

1. Insufficient resources to meet affordable housing needs, and resource allocation and systems that create inequitable housing outcomes for Minnesota's lowest-income and BIPOC households;
2. Lack of public will to support affordable housing initiatives and change entrenched systems; and
3. Inconsistent collaboration and expertise among communities, housing agencies, and people most impacted to develop and preserve needed housing and create equitable ownership opportunities.

MHP creates statewide change through three primary program areas, which align and magnify each other to address barriers and increase opportunity:

POLICY/ADVOCACY: We engage with diverse, multi-sector coalitions and community partners to protect and expand housing investment at the federal, state, and targeted local levels. We promote better



policies and systems to ensure equitable allocation of housing resources and opportunity to address racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities created by past and current systems.

RESEARCH/COMMUNICATIONS: Using a data-driven approach and disaggregating data by race/geography/income/other indicators, we research and communicate affordable housing need and disparities for under-resourced communities across Minnesota. We lift up diverse voices/stories and broadly inform our policy and community capacity work.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING: We leverage our national housing expertise/assistance to advance community-driven housing initiatives and ownership opportunities in Greater Minnesota communities/Native Nations. We prioritize communities advancing projects informed by, partnering with, and led by communities most impacted by housing gaps and disparities. Building on this, we will co-create new pathways to expand resources and opportunities for BIPOC developers in Greater Minnesota.

Populations and communities that are priorities for MHP's work:

MHP's partnerships and activities are designed to benefit Minnesotans who most need affordable homes and are most impacted by economic and racial disparities. This includes scaling housing development to meet the needs of low-income Minnesotans and facilitating ownership opportunities to create economic mobility and build wealth for BIPOC communities and low-income households.

We work collaboratively, bringing together growing networks of community groups, Native Nations, low-income renters, and housing leaders with policymakers, multi-sector industry leaders, and local governments. Our work intentionally targets housing gaps impacting people most impacted by disparities in housing affordability and creates accountabilities from decision makers (and intermediaries like ourselves) to the communities their decisions impact. This includes engaging community members in administrative advocacy through MHP's relationships with federal, state, and regional housing funders (e.g., HUD, USDA, Minnesota Housing, Met Council).

MHP's impact and networks are statewide, with a long-term focus on rural Greater Minnesota communities and Native Nations.

Our approach and engagement are informed by objective data/research, like our 2021 "State of the State's Housing" report, which details stark and growing disparities across Minnesota for BIPOC communities, low-income households, and seniors. While housing costs continue to increase (+14% since 2000) disproportionately to income (-1%), cost burden disparities persist: 58% of Black renters pay >30% of their income for housing compared to 44% of white renters. The data illustrates the urgency/importance of intentionally creating more equitable housing systems, and building power, participation, and accountability to the people most impacted by housing need.



MHP is focused on expanding our networks and changing how we work, through measurable race equity goals and benchmarks across the organization. This has manifested in our current partners/coalitions:

- We have created advisory groups for policy and research, intentionally ensuring that BIPOC leaders influence our policy development and research;
- We prioritize policies identified as most important by BIPOC groups, such as rental assistance/COVID relief, tenant opportunity to purchase/alternative ownership structures, enhancing housing rights/enforcement (i.e., source of income protection), and addressing environmental justice;
- To grow power/influence in federal housing policy, we co-founded an advocacy campaign with grassroots/BIPOC organizations (Opportunity Starts at Home-Minnesota), extending our coalition work beyond statewide/federal coalitions like Homes for All, National Low Income Housing Coalition, and the National Rural Housing Coalition;
- We expanded already-unique partnerships across housing industry sectors (private development companies along with public/nonprofit) to engage labor, energy/sustainability, and private employer stakeholders;
- We leverage our national capacity footprint and networks including Native partners nationwide to build trust and collaboration with under-resourced Greater Minnesota communities and Native Nations, and advance community-driven projects. Our focus on projects involving and benefiting racial/ethnic/socioeconomic populations most impacted by housing disparities intentionally addresses historic disinvestment and increases engagement with, and accountability to, impacted communities;
- We are expanding engagement with Greater Minnesota BIPOC communities and nonprofit/CDFI funders to facilitate participation of emerging and BIPOC individuals in rural affordable housing development, expanding equity and access to Greater Minnesota's housing development industry.



Statewide Housing Campaign Campaign Concept Paper

Minnesota Housing Partnership

To address the need to increase support for housing as a priority issue and combat misinformation and disinformation, MHP will create a multi-year housing campaign that provides resonant and easily digestible information about housing needs and solutions and presents a people centered narrative of local housing needs across Minnesota.

We seek to change the hearts and minds of people throughout the state about housing—dispel myths and stereotypes about who needs and lives in affordable homes, and promote understanding about how housing affects our ability to succeed and thrive – in order to achieve legislative victories for housing stability at the state legislature.

While Minnesota’s housing challenges are great, there are also great opportunities before us. Locally and nationally, we see increased awareness of the importance of rental assistance and wealth-building for low-income and Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) individuals and communities. Understanding how to align these interests with resonant messaging requires investing in relationships that span sectors, partisan lines, race and class. Through expanding partnerships, we will continue our positive impact, while we explore new strategies to improve the equity, effectiveness, and scale of Minnesota’s affordable housing market.

Problem definition:

- Misinformation perpetuates inaccurate “myths” about workers, housing affordability, and families struggling to maintain and afford their housing.
- Misunderstanding of the core causes of and solutions for housing needs result in policies and investments that are ineffective and not strategically targeted to solve community challenges.
- Depreciation of a free and independent press, particularly in Greater Minnesota.
- Lack of intensity of support for housing as a priority issue.
- Evolution of news consumption, narratives, and meaning making from disciplined journalism to crowdsourced social media and entertainment news.
- Insufficient investments in policies and programs that drive equitable access to housing and benefits from housing

Campaign objective and goals:

Create a housing narrative and campaign that provides resonant and easily digestible information about housing affordability, how housing affects job availability and retention, and humanize the people and families that need housing assistance, within each local community across Minnesota. The campaign will accomplish the following:



Campaign Goals

Goal 1: Establish a common narrative that includes rural housing needs and reflects race equity and climate resiliency priorities. Refute disinformation and misinformation that perpetuates housing myths.

Goal 2: Measurably intensify ongoing support for housing, by public and lawmakers and candidates, including in selected target districts in Greater Minnesota.

Goal 3: Motivate support from the public, candidates, and lawmakers to achieve policy goals to increase state funding and policy for housing stability and affordable homes. Specific campaign goal(s) to be determined and may change over the course of the 3-year campaign. A similar initiative, [Yes to Invest: \\$2 billion for housing](#), was created for the 2022 legislative session.

Goal 4: Create housing champions throughout Minnesota, especially in selected target districts in Greater Minnesota, by developing or increasing relationships and commitment to long-term housing movement work by campaign participants, organizing partners, community influencers, and others.

Campaign components:

- Grounded in local expertise. Minnesota has tremendous talent in people and organizations throughout our state; we will partner with local experts to design engagement strategies, develop messaging, and guide and advise the campaign.
- Strategic. We will use a data-informed approach to develop messaging and identify target areas for grassroots organizing and campaign focus. Factors may include:
- Sustained. Create an engaging campaign with message repetition that will allow for the concepts and language of challenges faced to become commonplace and normalized. Over time, the campaign could stay fresh through new mediums and platforms, new voices and messengers, and continuous successive delivery of the same theme in different messaging vehicles and packages.

Measurable. To ensure accountability and results, benchmarks will be developed to track progress. Measures could include public attitude, policies and investments.

Campaign activities and strategies will include:

- Professional staffing: Hire communications and strategy team and campaign coordinator. Strategy and planning: Define campaign goals and measures for an initial 7-month period and envision and outline the long-term arc of the effort (approximately 3 years).
- Research: Investigate similar campaigns across the country, including consultation with one organizer or leader from each similar campaign, to inform our campaign strategy. Ongoing research throughout campaign to inform target district strategy, and review use of narrative and messaging by media, local influencers, and candidates.
- Messaging: Summarize effective campaigns and strategy tools, determine geographic and demographic targets, develop narrative and core messaging to be informed by polling, feedback from



local influencers, and existing research of the Housing Justice Narrative project (www.housingnarrative.org), test messaging through focus groups or other means, and create measures for evaluating success including baseline polling.

- Communications: collateral: Create a variety of communications and media tools including website, social media, billboards, media placements, editorials, and video storytelling.
- Campaign leadership: Establish a campaign committee, reflecting the diversity of Minnesota and committed to campaign goals of racial equity and resiliency.
- Field engagement: Identify 2-4 select geographies for field engagement, identify local champions and organizers for each geography to help design and implement effective field strategies. Field strategies may include a range of activities such as pop-up events, deep canvassing, candidate engagement, and candidate questionnaires.
- Local individuals and organizations: The campaign's greatest tool will be local champions. We will need to identify, coordinate with, support, and educate local champions to use this campaign to amplify messages and target local action to produce expanded, more equitable housing outcomes.

Timeframe:

MHP intends to start this work immediately upon receiving funding, as soon as July 2022. Phase I of the campaign will run through February 28, 2023, to include creating the campaign team, identifying community partners, and developing and deploying strategy, messaging and tools.

The initial goal will be to leverage the opportunity of this election year to test campaign assumptions by developing a housing narrative, engaging local communities in housing conversations, and supporting these efforts through messaging and organizing activities. After the November elections, the campaign will evaluate messaging, strategies, and tools and then revise as needed.

We will request additional funding for Phase II of the campaign, to sustain and expand campaign work through June of 2025 or the end of the 2025 legislative session. Activities will include expanding engagement in key rural communities as we roll out this multi-year campaign, building from and expanding upon the successes and lessons of Phase I of the campaign.

Phase I: Campaign creation and launch, July – September 2022

- Define goals and objective for campaign. Create initial short-term goals for quick deployment of campaign.
- Conduct snapshot review of similar campaigns and efforts across the country to incorporate into campaign strategy.
- Hire communications team to develop housing narrative, campaign strategy and plan, and create and deploy messaging.
- Develop narrative and message through polls, interviews, and other techniques.
- Develop campaign committee structure and recruit initial members.



- Identify 2-4 target areas for deeper relationship building and grassroots organizing; consult with at least one organizer or leader from each selected target area.

Phase I continued: Campaign Implementation through February 2023

- Prepare early messaging and graphics/visuals to push out with paid and earned media and organizing partners.
- Continue to build campaign committee; utilize campaign committee to advise campaign strategy and amplify campaign implementation through collective action Hire campaign coordinator.
- Hire organizing partners and field staff for identified target districts.
- Conduct outreach to 2-10 organizers and leaders in each target district to validate and amplify messaging.
- Deploy candidate questionnaire and candidate engagement activities.
- Develop creative content based on locally informed narrative, including collateral, digital, website, direct email, and video; work with campaign committee and organizing partners to utilize narrative research and deliver messages.
- Implement campaign plan, with weekly opportunities for strategy adjustment
- Develop and implement detailed post-election plan for engagement of volunteers and elected lawmakers

Phase II: Three-year campaign (2022-2025)

- Utilize lessons from Phase I of campaign to review and revise campaign goals, including campaign staffing and field engagement; co-create/adapt messaging with Greater Minnesota organizers and leaders as part of roll out of the continued campaign.
- Expand campaign impact and reach, with focus on engagement in Greater Minnesota communities, in balance with funding, capacity of staff, on-the-ground community influencers, and organizers.
Proposed Approach:

Strategy, planning and research:

- Definition of campaign goals and measures
- Research - geographic and demographic targets, focus groups, polling
- Outline long term arc of this effort – 3 year plan
- Launch “after Labor Day” 2-month focused preliminary campaign
- Utilize draft messaging, sample creatives,
- Billboards, media placements, social media, videos, and editorials.

Tools:

- MHP staff to provide core campaign staffing, backfilling other duties with temporary staff as needed.



- Campaign coordinator hired in 2022
- Consultants for communication, strategy development, campaign
- Paid and unpaid media to include social media, direct marketing, videos, editorials, billboard
- Engagement strategy to include candidate questionnaire, candidate forums, presence at events, canvassing, and contracting with organizing partners in target districts
- Local champions will be key to the success of this campaign. We will need to identify, coordinate with, support and educate local champions to help develop and amplify messages and identify local action to produce outcomes.