



# REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

## Home Sharing Pilot Program

**ISSUE DATE:**1/10/2025

**SUBMISSION INFORMATION:**

HomeShare@cob.org  
Planning & Community Development Department  
210 Lottie Street  
Bellingham, Washington 98225

**CLOSING DATE AND TIME:**

Complete copies of each proposal must be received by 4:00 p.m. Pacific time on 02/07/2025

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PROCESS**

### **Inquiries.**

All inquiries related to this Request for Proposal (RFP) are to be directed, in writing, to the following. Information obtained from any other source is not official and should not be relied upon. Inquiries and responses will be recorded and will be distributed to all Proponents.

Email: [HomeShare@cob.org](mailto:HomeShare@cob.org)

Mail: Planning & Community Development Department  
210 Lottie Street  
Bellingham, Washington 98225  
Attn: Taylor Webb

Telephone: 360-778-8311

### **Submittal Instructions.**

Proposals should be submitted in a single PDF document. Complete copies of each proposal must be received by 4:00 p.m. Pacific time on 02/07/2025 via email to [HomeShare@cob.org](mailto:HomeShare@cob.org).

Do not submit proposals by facsimile or in person. In-complete applications will not be accepted.

### **Late Proposals.**

Late proposals will not be accepted and will be returned to the proponent.

### **Evaluation Process.**

Evaluation of proposals will be by a committee formed by the City.

The evaluation committee will check proposals against the mandatory criteria. Proposals not meeting all mandatory criteria will be rejected without further consideration. Proposals that do meet all the mandatory criteria will then be assessed and scored against the project criteria. The City's intent is to enter into a contract with the proponent who has the highest overall ranking.

### **Negotiation Delay.**

If a written contract cannot be negotiated within thirty days of notification of the successful proponent, the City may, at its sole discretion at any time thereafter, terminate negotiations with that proponent and either negotiate a contract with the next qualified proponent or choose to terminate the Request for Proposal process and not enter into a contract with any of the Proponents.

### **Estimated Time Frames.**

The following timetable outlines the anticipated schedule for the Request for Proposal and contract process. The timing and the sequence of events resulting from this Request for Proposal may vary and shall ultimately be determined by the City.

Request for proposal issued	1/10/2025
Request for proposal closes	2/07/2025
Proposal evaluation completed	2/14/2025
Negotiation of contract commences	2/28/2025
Contract executed	3/14/2025
Service delivery begins	4/01/2025

## I. **BACKGROUND**

The City of Bellingham and Whatcom County continue to experience low vacancy rates and rental prices that exceed the median wage for affordability. This means that residents of Whatcom County experience a high level of competition when affordable units become available as well as increasing level of cost burden for many households.

On November 21, 2024, Bellingham Mayor Kim Lund signed an executive order directing City departments to take immediate actions to increase housing opportunities in Bellingham. With interest rates and construction costs at high levels, creativity is needed to achieve additional housing supply.

There are a significant number of homeowners who are not using all their existing bedrooms. A number of these existing homeowners struggle to remain stably housed themselves and could benefit from a housemate to help cover their housing costs and/or help with up-keep of the house or other chores, provided appropriate program supports and assurances are available.

To increase the supply of affordable housing by more fully utilizing existing housing stock, the City of Bellingham is seeking a Vendor to pilot a home-sharing program.

## II. **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- Provide a pilot program that connects prospective tenants with homeowners who have vacant/underutilized bedrooms within our community to more fully utilize existing housing stock
- Ensure the program centers the needs of homeowners who are struggling to remain stably housed themselves by providing thorough safety and roommate matching services and offering easy ways to prioritize the provision of chores by renters in lieu of money
- Provide a streamlined and easy-to-access platform for community members to utilize a Home Sharing service as part of the program
- Provide support for community members interested in participating and/or hosting within the Home Sharing program by building relationships and providing technical assistance

- Market the Home Sharing program to targeted populations within the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County, highlighting the benefits of the program

### III. AVAILABLE FUNDS

The City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department will have approximately \$45,000-\$55,000 available annually to allocate for the Home Sharing pilot program per this application. The City intends to enter into a two (2) year contract for the program with the option to renew the contract for three one-year (1) year extensions upon mutual consent, pending available funding and successful programmatic outcomes.

Funding sources for this application are based on estimates and funding is dependent on appropriations.

### IV. REQUIREMENTS AND PROJECT SCOPE

#### General Requirements/Scope of Work:

The Vendor will provide a digital-based service for matching persons who own homes (hosts) with spare rooms to adults in need of affordable housing (renters). This service may be in the form of a service currently operated by the Vendor in other localities and modified for use in the City of Bellingham/Whatcom County.

#### The Vendor must satisfy the following specific requirements:

- Assist hosts and renters in a timely manner over the phone, but also with options to communicate via electronic means such as text, email or video, including an option for skilled 'live' assistance;
- Be well-versed in Washington State Residential Landlord-Tenant Act (RLTA) and Federal Fair Housing Act (FHA), including details about how home sharing is different than other rental situations. Support hosts in determining how they are able to require specific types of tenants while still being in compliance with RLTA and FHA and educate tenants about these same issues.
- Collect and process rental payments from renters and distribute payments to hosts in a timely manner;
- Protect the private information and data of hosts and renters;
- Conduct background checks on hosts and renters, including contacting at least 2 references for a host and for a renter;
- Acquire from renters employment verification or proof of school enrollment;
- Provide a means for hosts and renters to resolve disagreements around payments, typical roommate issues, and RLTA issues. The vendor must maintain a data base of inquiries and complaints showing number and type and documenting any actions taken.
- Develop an application and leasing process in compliance with RLTA and FHA that facilitates matching based on detailed preferences and specific needs of

hosts and renters (an example of such a preference might be music style, food preparation timing or quiet hours; an example of a need might be a reduced rent in exchange for the renter performing specific household chores). Review and process all applications.

- Provide a written progress report to the City of Bellingham by December 1, 2025 on work conducted to set up the program and initial results from use of the service during the prior period. Reporting must detail participant information including numbers of participants, income, age, demographics (race/ethnicity) and employed/student status separated by hosts and renters; vendor information including payment processing amounts and timing, assistance provided (number and timing of responses by type), number and type of disputes/complaints and their resolution status, and duration of tenancies. Provide quarterly reports with more abbreviated information. The quarterly and progress report format is negotiable but must be agreed upon in writing at the time of contracting.

To be considered for funding, the proponent must meet the following criteria:

- Experience designing and implementing projects and/or programs;
- Ability to provide or secure the expertise, supplies, materials, equipment, staffing and all other aspects necessary to carry out the project or program;
- Ability to provide proof of insurance and endorsement listing the City as additional insured, showing the insurance as primary and non-contributory and waiving subrogation for the duration of the project. Coverage shall include but is not limited to:

○ Workers Compensation	Statutory Amount
○ Automobile Liability	\$1,000,000
○ Broad Form Comprehensive Liability	\$1,000,000/occurrence
	\$2,000,000 aggregate

## V. PROPOSAL FORMAT

The following format and sequence should be followed to provide consistency in proponent response and ensure each proposal receives full consideration. All pages should be consecutively numbered and submitted in a single PDF document.

- a) Proposal cover letter as per sample provided.
- b) A short summary of the key features of the proposal.
- c) The body of the proposal, including pricing, i.e., the "Proponent Response."
- d) Project Budget

## VI. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following criteria, shown in order of importance, form the basis upon which evaluation of proposals will be made.

Proposals must demonstrate the Vendor's understanding of the City of Bellingham needs and expectations as described above and must demonstrate the Vendor's capability to meet those needs and requirements.

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Weight</b>
How well does the project achieve the goals and objectives of the RFP?	25
What is the accessibility and support of the program for individuals who are low-moderate income levels?	25
Does the project team have demonstrated experience and expertise with implementing similar projects?	25
Is the project feasible, including likelihood of approval, realistic fees/costs, completeness of budget and timeline?	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>

*The City of Bellingham promotes equal opportunity and shall not discriminate against any person or proposal based upon race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, nationality or disability.*

## **VII. EVALUATION PROCESS**

- 1) Proposals will be vetted by an internal team to identify possible regulatory or procedural issues that may affect the feasibility of project implementation.
- 2) A review committee of 3 or more representatives will be formed to evaluate the proposals submitted. The City may seek involvement from representatives of Bellingham/Whatcom County Housing Authority, Whatcom County Health & Community Services, Community Development Advisory Board (CDAB), City Planning and Community Development, Mayor's Office staff and/or other partner organizations for review and scoring of proposals to develop a funding recommendation to the Mayor. Oral interviews, additional questions or information may be requested at this stage.
- 3) The Mayor will make the final decision on contracting. CDAB and City Council will be kept informed of progress, with presentations provided to both on program participation and results.

**EXHIBIT A**  
**SAMPLE Proposal Cover Letter**

***Letterhead or proponent's name and address***

***Date***

Subject:       ***Request for proposal name***

The enclosed response is submitted in response to the above-referenced Request for Proposal. Through submission of this proposal we agree to all of the terms and conditions of the Request for Proposal.

We have carefully read and examined the Request for Proposal and have conducted such other investigations as were prudent and reasonable in preparing the proposal. We agree to be bound by statements and representations made in this proposal and to any agreement resulting from the proposal.

Yours truly,

\_\_\_\_\_

*Signature*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Type or print*

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal name of proponent: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_