



**The City of New York
Human Resources Administration
Concept Paper**

Immigrant Opportunity Initiatives (IOI) Program

Purpose

The following Concept Paper is a precursor to the forthcoming Immigrant Opportunity Initiatives (IOI) program Request for Proposals (RFP). The IOI program has existed for several years, but starting in Fiscal Year 2015, the City of New York (City) moved the IOI program from the City Council discretionary funding budget of the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) to the baseline budget of the Human Resources Administration (HRA). The IOI program provides legal services to non-citizens to assist with applications for citizenship, permanent residence, and many other immigration-related legal services. HRA's Office of Legal Services Initiatives is seeking qualified service providers to implement the IOI program.

The primary goals of the IOI program are to:

- Provide legal services to low-income immigrants related to gaining and maintaining immigration status and moving along the path towards citizenship, such that low-income immigrants may benefit from increased stability and better access economic empowerment opportunities
- Strengthen immigrant families and communities
- Address poverty and inequality through facilitating immigrant access to justice, including legal assistance for low-wage immigrant workers
- Support immigrant workers' rights and ensure equal workplace standards for all workers
- Build and strengthen partnerships between community immigrant service providers and legal services agencies while increasing the knowledge and use of IOI programs

The service delivery goals of the IOI program that will be outlined in the Request for Proposals (RFP) include the following:

Legal Services: Legal advice and representation for low-income immigrants seeking to attain citizenship and lawful immigration status and/or enforce workers' rights, with a focus on legal services that will help strengthen immigrant families and underserved communities, serve children and survivors of domestic violence or human trafficking, and protect low-wage

immigrant workers who have experienced workplace exploitation or a violation of their labor and employment rights. To provide these services, HRA is seeking qualified service providers who have experience in effectively providing advice, assistance in navigating the immigration system, and representation of immigrants in complex immigration proceedings, including federal court appeals, and other court matters.

Case Management: Providing non-legal support by assisting immigrants with gathering documents required to attain immigration benefits, providing interpretation and translation support, and helping to complete applications for immigration benefits for attorney review, among other tasks.

Community Outreach: Ensuring that information about IOI services is available to target communities. Educating community members about their rights as immigrants, educating community leaders and related groups about IOI services and how to encourage low-income immigrants to seek services and successfully engage with IOI contractors.

HRA strongly recommends that proposers seek to provide a continuum of services to immigrants through a lead legal services agency in partnership of front-line community-based organizations that can provide non-legal case management services and outreach and experienced legal services organizations that can provide backup assistance and complex legal representation. Legal services organizations must be able to provide the full range of legal services for immigrants either directly or through subcontracts with another organization, provided that such partnerships are cost-effective. A range of subcontracts and linkages with community-based organizations should be included in the proposal in order to show a meaningful reach into multiple immigrant communities.

Partner Agencies

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs:

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) promotes the well-being of immigrant communities by recommending policies and programs that facilitate successful integration of immigrant New Yorkers into the civic, economic, and cultural life of the City. Access to justice for immigrants is a core priority for MOIA in the de Blasio administration, and MOIA will be partnering with HRA on development and oversight of the IOI program.

HRA:

The HRA Office of Legal Services Initiatives will offer programmatic oversight for the IOI program. HRA will also assist IOI providers with benefit coordination and emergency homelessness prevention assistance when needed. The provision of legal assistance to low-income New Yorkers, including immigrants, is a key component of HRA's mission to fight poverty and income inequality and prevent homelessness.

Target Population

The target populations are low-income immigrants who are seeking citizenship, permanent residence, or another authorized immigration status and/or enforcement of workers' rights, with a particular emphasis on immigrant families, underserved immigrant communities, children, survivors of domestic violence or human trafficking, and low-wage workers who have been exploited by employers. The target population for the education/outreach component is broader. This component includes community leaders and organizations, including elected officials, religious organizations and community groups that can identify immigrants in need of assistance and encourage them to seek services.

Service Delivery Model

Proposals must include legal services, case management, and outreach to the target population. While proposers may seek to demonstrate the ability to provide all of these services within one organization, the Agency strongly encourages proposers to build contractual partnerships among agencies specializing in legal services, case management or outreach. Proposers can demonstrate expertise with multiple immigrant populations or service areas or partner but should also develop subcontracts and linkages with other groups in order to ensure that the IOI program services have the broadest reach possible while also maintaining expertise with a variety of immigrant populations.

For example, a proposal could include a consortium of groups in which there are multiple community-based organizations that provide non-legal case management, community education, outreach and engagement, have the relevant language skills, and help with document gathering, in partnership with a legal services provider with a proven track record that provides backup assistance to the staff of the community-based organizations, reviews cases, and takes on full representation for the most complex cases in immigration proceedings, including federal court, and other court matters.

Ultimately HRA and MOIA seek to ensure that individual organizations focus on the work that is their "highest and best use" and that the constellations of groups proposing to work together provide the full range of services needed to assist immigrant populations in all five boroughs.

Program Activities

Legal Services

In immigration matters, legal services must be provided by attorneys or Board of Immigrant Appeals (BIA) accredited representatives. Providers must provide a full range of legal services, such as:

Legal Advice:

- Inquiries to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
- Legal advice and counseling regarding eligibility, including advising clients when they should not complete an application

- Preparing and filing applications for residency, citizenship, deferred action, and other immigration matters

Legal Representation:

- Representation in complex cases that require visa processing, naturalization, deferred action, asylum petitions, self-petitions immigration court proceedings, administrative and federal court appeals and any other complex issues that related to the applications listed above.

Providers must be able to demonstrate a proven track record of providing each of these client services. In all cases, an experienced immigration law attorney must supervise the legal services provided.

The selected providers will be required to have at least five (5) years of experience in the provision of immigration legal services. Experience in providing high quality services can be demonstrated by a proven track record of legal representation for substantial numbers of immigrants in immigration proceedings and administrative and federal court appeals.

For matters involving the provision of legal assistance to enforce workers' rights, providers must specify a full range of legal services that will be available to clients, and an experienced employment law attorney must supervise the legal services provided. Selected providers will be required to have at least five (5) years of experience in the provision of employment law legal services for immigrants. Experience in providing high quality services can be demonstrated by a proven track record of legal representation for substantial numbers of immigrants in employment law proceedings.

Individuals served by the IOI program may present a range of legal issues that must be addressed. Providers must demonstrate that such legal needs not directly related to immigration (such as housing, consumer issues, etc.) will be addressed under other contracts or programs that the provider has in place or through a referral agreement with another provider.

Case Management

In order to most effectively serve the largest number of immigrants, the goal of the case management services will be to help screen immigrants for service eligibility and potential legal options in advance of legal advice and counseling from an attorney, assist the household in gathering supporting documents such as birth certificates, marriage certificates and divorce papers, tax transcripts, and the like, provide interpretation and translation support, offer preliminary support in completing forms, and help the household with case follow up and support

Case management can be subcontracted by non-legal staff, including social service workers and paralegals, which can provide all of the services up to and after the legal services are provided.

Community Outreach

Research has shown that a large percentage of immigrants have not availed themselves of some or all of the services and legal options available to them. Providers and/or subcontracted organizations should engage the target population directly through a range of outreach techniques and should work to educate community leaders and other service providers about IOI services. Outreach activities can include:

- Providing direct street outreach in targeted locations
- Providing information at street fairs and community events
- Presenting information about the program at religious institutions, community events, community classes, and other forums
- Meeting with elected officials and staff
- Mailings (including emails) and advertisements

Selected providers will be required to have at least five (5) years of experience in the provision of legal services, case management, and/or community outreach for immigrants.

Potential Executive Action

Providers will be required to have a contingency plan to work with the City to address any additional programmatic needs that may arise from any federal Deferred Action or Executive Action on immigration that may occur during the contract period, including redirecting contract services to address any such federal action.

Program Outcomes

Contractors will provide individual data and outcomes on all program activities.

Legal Services

- Individuals screened for legal services
- Applications filed and application outcomes
- Legal proceedings and outcomes

Case Management

- Individuals screened
- Individuals supported in document gathering
- Individuals assisted with form filing
- Outcomes of individual cases, to the extent known

Outreach

- Outreach events
- Number of individuals reached
- Types of outreach materials & strategies
- Details on referrals provided

Proposers will need to demonstrate that they are able to collect the exact demographic, process, and outcome data required by HRA. Proposers will not have to use a data system created by HRA, but must be able to submit required data fields in a format designed by HRA on a regular basis.

Anticipated Number of Contracts

HRA anticipates that up to ten (10) awards will be awarded for the IOI program and encourages providers to submit joint proposals setting forth a continuum of services

Service Areas

Services may be provided in any area of the City, but the Agency is seeking proposals that will permit the provision of services in all five boroughs that are available to all immigrant communities. Proposers should describe the neighborhoods targeted in each borough they propose to serve.

Funding and Payment Structure

It is anticipated that the total available funding for the contracts awarded from this RFP will be \$3,226,694. HRA expects that the payment structure for the contract awarded under this RFP will be 100% line item, but contingent on meeting certain performance metrics, i.e. contractors must achieve enrollment targets in order to receive full funding. The contractors will have quarterly service targets in proportion to the agreed upon annual service targets. The Agency will review performance at the end of each quarter and reserves the right to recalculate the annual service targets based on current performance and reallocate the cases and budget accordingly.

Proposals must include outreach, casework, legal advice, and legal representation. Legal representation, however, must account for 75% of the total funding request in the proposal with an average case rate of \$2,000.

Proposer's total funding request must be at least 10% of the total available funding, but may not exceed 25% of the total available funding. Once a selection is made, HRA will proceed to award to the next technically highest ranked proposer until all of the funding has been allocated. Only technical proposals that have a technical score above the natural break will be considered. HRA reserves the right to award the highest technical proposal(s) an amount greater than it has proposed, based on the vendor's capacity.

The final total funding amount depends on the availability of funds and is subject to change. Proposers should not exceed the anticipated funding amount in their proposals.

Planned Method of Evaluating Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated pursuant to the criteria set forth in the RFP. This will include the quality of the proposer's approach and program design. In addition, the evaluation will assess the proposer's successful, relevant experience in providing similar services as demonstrated by documentation included in the proposal. Proposals will also be evaluated based on the organization's staffing model and organizational structure as it relates to capacity to deliver these services.

HRA will award contract(s) to the highest technically rated proposal which does not exceed the average cost per case (or in the case of outreach, the funding available), and whose proposals are determined to be the most advantageous to the City, taking into consideration the price and such other factors or criteria set forth in the RFP.

HRA reserves the right to determine, based on the proposer's demonstrated organizational capability, experience in targeted communities, and the best interests of the City, the level of services a contract will be awarded, as well as the dollar amount for each such contract. Once 25% of the award has been allotted to one proposer, HRA reserves the right to award the available funding to next technically highest ranked proposer. HRA also reserves the right to award more than 25% of the total award to one proposer if that will result in the most effective services.

HRA will award contracts based on need, programmatic distribution, and geographic distribution. Negotiations may include capacity reductions or increases as compared to the proposed capacity.

Proposed Term of the Contracts

It is anticipated that the term of the contract(s) awarded from this RFP will be for three (3) years from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2018. The contract(s) may include one (1) option to renew for three (3) additional years, from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2021.

Use of HHS Accelerator

To respond to HRA's Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI) RFP and all other client and community services (CCS) Requests for Proposals (RFPs) released in 2014 and later, vendors must first complete and submit an electronic prequalification application using the City's Health and Human Services (HHS) Accelerator System. The HHS Accelerator System is a web-based system maintained by the City of New York for use by its human services Agencies to manage procurement.

Required Service Pre-qualifications

The Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI) RFP will be released exclusively through the HHS Accelerator system. Only organizations with approved HHS Accelerator Business Application and Services Applications for one or more of the following will be able to propose:

- Outreach
- Legal Services
- Case Management

To submit a prequalification application to become eligible to apply for this and other CCS RFPs, please visit <http://www.nyc.gov/hhsaccelerator>.

Procurement Timeline

Expected RFP Release:	February 2015
Expected Proposal Submissions Due:	March 2015
Expected Award Selection Announcement:	April, 2015
Expected Contract Start: Wednesday,	July, 2015

Feedback on Concept Paper

Please submit all comments to this concept paper no later than 30 days after release of concept paper to accoprocurements@hra.nyc.gov.