



Request for Proposals for Fair Hearing Officers

SCHEDULE

Issued: July 20, 2026

Deadline for Questions: August 20, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. EST

**Deadline for Submitting Proposals: September 30, 2026
at 5:00 p.m. EST**

**MaineHousing Contact for this Request For Proposals: Ashley Carson,
Chief Counsel**

E-mail: acarson@mainehousing.org

Maine State Housing Authority ("MaineHousing") does not discriminate on the basis of protected classes under the applicable federal and state nondiscrimination laws, in the admission or access to, or treatment in, its programs and activities and in employment. MaineHousing will provide appropriate communication auxiliary aids and services upon sufficient notice. MaineHousing will also provide this document in alternative formats upon sufficient notice. MaineHousing has designated the following person responsible for coordinating compliance with applicable federal and state nondiscrimination requirements and addressing grievances: Kelley Stonebraker, Maine State Housing Authority, 26 Edison Drive, Augusta, Maine 04330, Telephone Number 1-800-452-4668 (voice in state only), (207) 626-4600 (voice), Maine Relay 711, or Email EqualAccess@mainehousing.org.

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Request for Proposals for Fair Hearing Officers

I. INTRODUCTION

Overview

In this **Request for Proposals for Fair Hearing Officers** (the “RFP”), Maine State Housing Authority (“MaineHousing”) is requesting proposals from experienced, qualified, and professional companies (“Vendor”) who can provide fair hearing services for MaineHousing’s rental assistance programs under Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937, its Stability Through Engagement Program (STEP), and its Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP).

About MaineHousing

MaineHousing’s mission is to assist Maine people in obtaining and maintaining quality affordable housing and services suitable to their housing needs. MaineHousing is a quasi-independent state entity that, at its core, couples the efficiencies of the private financial markets with public purpose goals to provide affordable home ownership and rental housing opportunities for Maine people. In addition, it administers a number of federal housing-related programs including the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program, the Section 8 Rental Assistance programs, the Emergency Solutions Grant Program, the Weatherization Assistance Program, and the Home Energy Assistance Program on behalf of the State of Maine. These federal programs, as well as others, reduce costs associated with housing for Maine people.

For more information about MaineHousing, please go to www.mainehousing.org.

II. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Review and Compliance

It is the responsibility of each Vendor to review this entire document, including its attachments, and comply with all requirements of this RFP. "Vendor" refers to any person or entity who may, or does, submit a proposal in response to this RFP.

Questions and Answers

All Vendor questions deemed relevant and material to this RFP along with the response answers will be posted by MaineHousing at <http://www.mainehousing.org/>, no later than August 20, 2026.

Any responses or answers provided by MaineHousing to Vendor questions will automatically become a part of this RFP.

Proposal Terms

All proposals submitted by Vendors and received by MaineHousing will be treated as contract offers. A Vendor's proposal must remain open from the time of receipt of the proposal by MaineHousing and continue for a minimum of 90 days after the date of Vendor's product demonstration, pursuant to this RFP and may not be unilaterally modified by Vendor during that period.

Alterations, modifications or variations of a proposal after the submission deadline will not be considered by MaineHousing, unless authorized by an amendment or addendum to this RFP issued by MaineHousing.

In the case of any award pursuant to this RFP, the awarded Vendor must keep in effect all proposal terms, including pricing, throughout any contract negotiations.

Proposal Costs

MaineHousing is not liable for any expenses incurred by the Vendor in the preparation, delivery, or presentation of their proposals.

Costs of developing and delivering proposals and demonstrations pursuant to this RFP are solely at the expense of the Vendor.

Proposal Materials

All proposals submitted, including all items and materials submitted as part of the proposals, become the property of MaineHousing, whether or not selected. Proposal materials may be appended by MaineHousing to any contract between MaineHousing and the Vendor providing such materials.

Contract Term

The initial term of the contract awarded, pursuant to this RFP, will be for one (1) year from the date the contract is executed between the Vendor and MaineHousing. MaineHousing reserves the sole right and option to extend the contract in incremental terms of one (1) year each which, including the initial contract term, will not exceed a total of five (5) years.

III. REQUIREMENTS

General Requirements/Scope of Work

At a minimum, MaineHousing's expectation is to select a Vendor to provide the following:

- Communicate with assigned MaineHousing staff regarding hearing scheduling, exhibit submission, and distribution of filings.
- Conduct hearings in accordance with the Maine Administrative Procedures Act, applicable federal regulations, and MaineHousing program guides, utilizing C2T digital recording services or a comparable recording service acceptable to MaineHousing.
- Within program timeframes, independently prepare and submit recommended decisions to MaineHousing for consideration and final agency action.
- Handle transmission, use, access and storage of sensitive and confidential hearing materials, particularly in regard to PII (Personally Identifiable Information), in accordance with applicable

regulations and best practices, including but not limited to those set forth by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Health and Human Services, and MaineHousing.

- Track work performed for invoicing MaineHousing for services performed.
- Submit to MaineHousing invoices for services performed on at least a quarterly basis, as applicable.
- Maintain required job skills and core competencies.

Skills and Core Competencies:

- Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.
- Ability to interpret complex regulations and policy.
- Experience in conducting quasi-judicial hearings in person and telephonically.
- Working knowledge of and experience with a recording service.
- Ability to work well with individuals from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds.
- Demonstrated good judgment and integrity.
- Ability to work independently.
- Proficiency with software applications, platforms, and protocols, such as word processing (Microsoft Word), web-based applications (including ShareFile), recording software, and electronic security protocols such as email encryption.

Education and Experience

- Juris Doctor Degree.
- Membership in the Maine Bar Association preferred.
- Experience in conducting trials or fair hearings both live and telephonic.
- Experience with the programs in question preferred.

Proposals must demonstrate the Vendor's understanding of MaineHousing's needs and expectations as prescribed in this RFP, and must demonstrate the Vendor's capability to meet those needs and requirements.

IV. PROPOSAL PRICING

Cost Items

The Vendor must provide:

A detailed, **itemized firm pricing** for all costs associated with this RFP.

The basis of the price and any underlying assumptions must be included in the Vendor's cost proposal.

Payment

Payment will be net 30 days after receipt of correct invoice containing information required by MaineHousing. Payment is made following the hearing and issuance of a Final Recommended Decision.

V. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

This section of the RFP deals with the requirements for the contents and submission of proposals.

Demonstration of Qualifications

Submit the following:

- Appendix A – Vendor Information Sheet
- Appendix B – Vendor Certification Form
- A brief background of the Vendor if an entity (firm, agency, organization, etc.).
- Identify specific individuals who will be performing the services, and provide resumes for each, with details regarding the qualifications and experience in completing the types of work described in this RFP.
- Proposed rates, to include provision for travel.
- Appendix D – Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form
- Describe the cybersecurity protections in place with regard to any computer system or network to be used in connection with work performed for MaineHousing culminating from this RFP.
- A statement regarding Vendor's commitment to equal opportunity, diversity and inclusivity in internal hiring practices and policies, and regarding working relationships with women- and minority-owned firms, if applicable.
- Names and contact information of three references (other than MaineHousing) for which you have provided services similar to those described in this RFP. *See table below.*
- Copies of two written decisions you have authored or writing samples, redacted for PII if applicable.

Business References

Vendors must provide a minimum of three (3) business references from clients who reference details. MaineHousing reserves the right to contact and verify any or all references provided.

Using the following table format, Vendors must provide up-to-date, accurate, and complete contact information for each of the three (3) business references:

RFP: MaineHousing RFP for Fair Hearing Officers	
Business Name:	
Business Reference Contact Information	
Name:	
Street Address:	
City, State, Zip:	
Phone, including area code:	
Email address:	
Alternate Contact Information	

Name:	
Street Address:	
City, State, Zip:	
Phone, including area code:	
Email address:	
Project Information	
Brief description of services performed for this reference.	
How long have you worked with this reference?	
Any other pertinent information about services provided that relate to this RFP.	

Deadlines & Delivery

It is the responsibility of each Vendor to ensure a timely submission of their proposal to MaineHousing at acarson@mainehousing.org. See **Appendix C** for all proposal deadlines.

All proposals **must be submitted by e-mail in PDF format.**

MaineHousing is not responsible for late delivery of a proposal for any reason.

Late proposals **will not be accepted or considered.**

Hard copy, facsimile or telephone proposals **will not be accepted or considered.**

When submitting your proposal to acarson@mainehousing.org, the email subject line must state:

"RESPONSE TO FAIR HEARING OFFICERS RFP"

Organization/Formatting

Proposals must be presented following the prescribed instructions within this RFP. The proposal, along with all supplemental documentation required under this RFP must be:

Submitted in electronic .PDF format

Pages numbered consecutively

Provided in the sequential order listed below:

1. Appendix A – Vendor Information Sheet
2. Appendix B – Vendor Certification Form

3. Appendix D - Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form
4. A brief background of the Vendor
5. Resumes
6. Proposed Rates
7. Cybersecurity information
8. Equal Opportunity Statement
9. Reference Information
10. Copies of recent written decisions/writing samples

Content

All information requested by this RFP must be submitted as part of Vendor's proposal. **Only information that is received in response to this RFP will be evaluated.**

References to information submitted to MaineHousing outside this RFP process or references to Internet website addresses will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered by MaineHousing.

Cross-references to other portions of a Vendor's proposal submitted in response to this RFP are acceptable, but must reference the specific section number and heading for identification.

All proposals must include completed and signed Vendor Information Sheet (Appendix A) included in this RFP. The Vendor Information Sheet must be placed at the front of the proposal.

All proposals must include a completed and signed Vendor Certification form attached to this RFP under Appendix B.

RFP Point of Contact/Submission

To ensure clear communications, the following individual has been designated the point contact for this RFP. All requests, questions, proposal documents and/or correspondence must be communicated through this designated RFP contact:

Name:	Ashley Carson
Title/Dept:	Chief Counsel/Legal & Compliance Department
Address:	MaineHousing, 26 Edison Drive, Augusta, ME 04330
Email:	acarson@mainehousing.org
Tele#:	207-624-5728

Vendor contact with any MaineHousing employee, consultant, or other MaineHousing representative concerning this RFP other than the MaineHousing contact person given above will be grounds for proposal rejection.

Questions

All questions must be in writing and submitted only to the designated RFP contact email address previously given. Attempting to ask questions in person, or by telephone, will not be allowed and can disqualify a Vendor.

Vendors will only rely on written statements issued from MaineHousing's designated RFP point of contact.

VI. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

An evaluation committee consisting of MaineHousing staff will review all proposals. The evaluation committee may also include external partners. The evaluation committee may contact the Vendor to clarify any response, and obtain information from any available source concerning any aspect of the proposal. MaineHousing may request any Vendor present to the evaluation committee as part of the selection process.

Vendor is cautioned that the evaluation committee is not required to ask for clarifications or information that is essential for a complete and thorough evaluation of Vendor proposals. Therefore, all proposals should be complete when submitted.

MaineHousing intends to select the proposal or proposals that provide the best value in meeting MaineHousing's business objectives identified in this RFP. MaineHousing will also take into account the detail and completeness of proposals.

Subject to the reservation of rights and the other terms and conditions of this RFP, MaineHousing will select the Vendor or Vendors whose proposal is most advantageous to MaineHousing. Any award is contingent on successful negotiation of the final contract terms. In no event will any claimed obligations of any kind be enforceable against MaineHousing unless and until MaineHousing and the selected Vendor enter into a written contract. This RFP and any successful Vendor's proposal, as may be modified pursuant to this RFP will be incorporated by reference into and be part of any contract between MaineHousing and the Vendor. MaineHousing will determine a detailed work plan with any selected Vendor prior to initiating product and/or services to help maximize efficiency for the Vendor and MaineHousing.

VII. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Rights Reserved by MaineHousing

In addition to the rights reserved by MaineHousing elsewhere in this RFP, MaineHousing reserves the right to:

- Adjust the timetable for this RFP as deemed necessary, including but not limited to extending proposal deadlines.

- Waive informalities and minor irregularities in proposals received.

- Reject and not consider any or all Vendors who do not meet the requirements of this RFP, including but not limited to incomplete responses and/or non-responsive proposals.

- Reject any or all proposals received and not to award a contract pursuant to this RFP, or to cancel or terminate this RFP process at any time, whether before or after any proposals have been submitted or received, if deemed by MaineHousing to be in its best interest.

- Negotiate price or other factors included in any proposal submitted to MaineHousing, and in the event MaineHousing is unable to negotiate a mutually satisfactory contract with the successful Vendor under this RFP, MaineHousing may, in its sole discretion, negotiate with another Vendor or cancel this RFP and not award a contract to any Vendor.

Reject the Vendor selected pursuant to this RFP and to offer a contract to another Vendor in the event the selected Vendor does not enter into the required contract to provide related services described in this RFP.

Negotiate directly with one Vendor if the responses to this RFP demonstrate a lack of competition.

Correct or amend this RFP. In no case will this RFP be amended within seven (7) days of the proposal submission deadline unless the amendment includes an extension of time or is for the purpose of extending the deadlines. MaineHousing will not be liable for any costs incurred as a result of changes to this RFP.

Other Terms and Conditions

Conflict of Interest. The Vendor, any principal or affiliate of the Vendor, or anyone who will be paid for work on the Contract, that has business ties, familial relations, or other close personal relations with a current MaineHousing employee or a commissioner, or anyone who was a MaineHousing employee or a commissioner within the past year must disclose this information under **Appendix D - Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form**.

Vendor Certification Form. As a mandatory requirement of this proposal, **all** Vendors must complete and submit the Vendor Certification Form attached to this RFP as **Appendix B**, along with their proposal submission.

Confidentiality and Nondisclosure. Vendor shall maintain in trust and confidence and shall not disclose to any third party, except as such disclosure may be authorized in writing in advance by MaineHousing, and shall not use for any unauthorized purpose, any and all information, documents and data received or obtained from or on behalf of MaineHousing. Vendor may use such information, documents and data only to the extent required for the purposes described in this RFP. Vendor shall adhere to all security, confidentiality and nondisclosure policies and procedures required by MaineHousing for the protection of such information and data from unauthorized use and disclosure and from loss.

Maine Freedom of Access Act. Information submitted by a Vendor in any proposal becomes public information, and is subject to disclosure in accordance with the requirements of law, including without limitation the Maine Freedom of Access Act, 1 M.R.S. Section 401 et seq. ("FOAA"), except as provided therein. Vendor acknowledges that MaineHousing is required to comply with FOAA.

Protest Procedures. Protests of any award made pursuant to this RFP must be submitted in writing to MaineHousing at the address given on the cover page of this RFP, to the attention of: Director. To be considered, protests must be received by MaineHousing within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of notification of the contract award and provide specific reasons and any supporting documentation for the protest.

Women and Minority Owned Businesses. Women and minority owned businesses are encouraged to apply. To subcontract any of the work, Vendor must follow the steps outlined in 2 CFR 200.321.

APPENDIX A
VENDOR INFORMATION SHEET

for

MaineHousing Request for Proposals for Fair Hearing Officers

Please provide the following information, completed and signed, and place this form at the front of the proposal:

General Information	
Company Name:	
Federal Tax ID:	
Street Address:	
City, State, Zip:	
Telephone#:	
Contact Person for Questions	
Name:	
Title:	
E-mail Address:	
Telephone#:	
Business Description	
# Years in Business:	
# Years providing products/services as described in this RFP:	
Current Company Size:	
Current # Workers and Current # of Customers:	
Evidence of Workforce expertise, experience, qualifications, and knowledge	
<i>Please be sure to include all supplemental qualification documents.</i>	

Summarized Narrative of Vendor's ability to provide the services, materials, and labor required under this RFP:	
List of planned resources to be assigned to meet the obligations of this RFP:	

APPENDIX B
VENDOR CERTIFICATION FORM
for

MaineHousing Request for Proposals for Fair Hearing Officers

Vendor Name	
Vendor Address	

The undersigned Vendor represents and certifies as follows:

1. The prices in this proposal have been arrived at independently and without consultation, communication, agreement or disclosure with or to any other Vendor or potential Vendor.
2. No attempt has been made at any time to induce any firm or person to submit any intentionally high or noncompetitive proposal or to otherwise submit or refrain from submitting a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition.
3. Vendor has not given, and will not give at any time hereafter, any economic opportunity, future employment, gift, loan, gratuity, special discount, trip, favor, or service to any employee or representative of MaineHousing in connection with this RFP.
4. Vendor acknowledges that MaineHousing will determine whether a conflict of interest exists and that MaineHousing reserves the right to disqualify any Vendor on the grounds of actual or apparent conflict of interest.
5. Vendor has not employed or retained any person or entity to solicit or obtain any contract resulting from this RFP and has not paid or agreed to pay to any person or entity any commission, percentage, brokerage, or other fee contingent upon or resulting from the award of any such contract.
6. Vendor understands and acknowledges that the representations in its proposal are material and important and will be relied on by MaineHousing in evaluating the proposal. Vendor certifies that, to the best of its knowledge, all of the information contained in its proposal is true, correct and complete and acknowledges that any intentional misrepresentation by Vendor will disqualify Vendor from further consideration in connection with this RFP.
7. The undersigned individual is legally authorized to sign this Vendor Certification Form for and on behalf of Vendor and to bind Vendor to the statements made herein.

Name, Title and Signature of Individual with Authority to Bind Vendor	
Name	
Title	
Signature	
Date	

APPENDIX C
KEY PROPOSAL DATES

for

MaineHousing Request for Proposals for Fair Hearing Officers

All dates are subject to change at MaineHousing's discretion.

All proposal documents, correspondence, and/or questions must be emailed to: acarson@mainehousing.org

RFP Issuance:	
Date Issued:	July 20, 2026
Questions & Answers:	
Questions:	Questions will be received: From: <u>July 20, 2026 to August 20, 2026, no later than 5 p.m. EST</u> Questions must be emailed directly to: acarson@mainehousing.org
Answers:	All questions, and their subsequent answers, will be posted on the MaineHousing website for public viewing. Questions will be answered no later than <u>August 31, 2026</u> <i>To locate these postings, go to the MaineHousing website located at:</i> https://www.mainehousing.org/rfp
Pertinent Proposal Dates:	
Deadline for Proposal Submission:	<u>September 30, 2026, no later than 5:00 p.m. EST</u> <i>**Please be sure emailed proposal is in PDF format, as well as all supplemental documentation.</i>
Proposal Evaluation Review and Demonstration Phase:	From: <u>September 30, 2026 – October 15, 2026</u>
Contract Offering:	<u>October 15, 2026</u>

APPENDIX D
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE FORM AND
CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY – MAINEHOUSING PARTNERS *
for
MaineHousing Request for Proposals for Fair Hearing Officers

To maintain the continued confidence of Maine citizens in carrying out our joint mission to assist Maine people in obtaining and maintaining quality affordable housing, MaineHousing Partners must avoid situations which are, or appear to be, at odds with their responsibilities to MaineHousing. Maine law and federal regulations (when federal funding is involved) govern conflicts of interest.

MaineHousing Partners must ensure that **no** person who is an employee, agent, or consultant of the Partner – *and* who performs any functions with respect to any MaineHousing program – may obtain a personal or financial interest or benefit (other than their earnings) from MaineHousing programs, either for themselves or for those with whom they have family, business, or close personal ties. As soon as the Partner becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest:

- The Partner must disclose to MaineHousing all personal and business relationships between Partner’s employees and any contractors, agents, or consultants who work on MaineHousing programs.
- The Partner must disclose to MaineHousing all employees (including temporary employees and volunteers) of the Partner who are applicants for MaineHousing programs administered by the Partner.
- The Partner must disclose to MaineHousing anyone who will be paid for work on MaineHousing programs who is a current or former MaineHousing employee or commissioner – or has family, business, or close personal ties with a current or former MaineHousing employee or commissioner (within the last year.)

Conflict of Interest Definitions

A ***conflict of interest*** arises when the personal interest of an employee (or a family member, friend, or business associate of the employee) conflicts or potentially conflicts with the employee’s work duties or responsibilities to MaineHousing. Conflicts of interest can occur when actions may be improperly influenced by a secondary motive, such as:

- financial gain,
- professional advancement, or
- desire to do favors for family and friends.

An ***appearance of a conflict of interest*** exists if circumstances are believed to create a risk that decisions may be improperly influenced by other motives. It is important to note that a conflict of interest may exist, regardless of whether any unethical or improper act has taken place.

A ***direct interest*** occurs when the employee individually, or through a majority stakeholder position in an entity, owns or is a party to any contract, business agreement, project, or property. Individuals with management, control or other decision-making responsibilities, or voting rights for an entity, are also considered to have a direct interest.

* This policy applies to all individuals and organizations who receive funding from or who have a business or contractual relationship with MaineHousing. Pertinent partners include, but are not limited to: Grantees, Subgrantees, Sub-recipients, Community Action Agencies, Shelters, Developers, Applicants, Contractors, Administrators, and Vendors.

An **indirect interest** occurs when family members, friends, or business associates of the employee have ownership or contractual rights in any contract, business agreement, project, or property. Shares in an entity by the employee or commissioner through an investment vehicle, a trust or estate arrangement, mutual fund, or other intermediary also meets the definition of an indirect ownership interest. Additionally, any ownership interest in a related entity (such as a parent company or subcontractor) that plans to do business with MaineHousing is considered an indirect interest.

Family members are defined broadly, and include spouse/partner, mother, father, son, daughter, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, nephew, niece, uncle, aunt, first cousin, grandparent, grandchild. Family members also include all "half" or "step" relatives (e.g. half-brother or step-daughter).

Conflict of Interest Procedures

Personal or Business Relationships Involving Employees

As soon as a Partner becomes aware of a personal or business relationship involving an employee that could give rise to perceived partiality, an appearance of a conflict of interest, or an actual conflict of interest in connection with MaineHousing programs, **the Partner shall disclose the relationship to MaineHousing in writing, with a description of the Partner's plan to manage the potential conflict.** Once reviewed and approved by MaineHousing's Director of Audit, the plan must be signed by the employee and representative(s) of the Partner and submitted to MaineHousing. Plans must be reviewed and re-signed once a year.

Employees as Applicants for MaineHousing Programs

If eligible, Partner employees (including temporary staff and volunteers) are encouraged to apply for MaineHousing programs administered by the Partner. However, in advance of a benefit being paid, approval of any program application by a partner employee **requires two levels of signature**, including the Director or other Senior Executive of the Partner.

Copies of signed applications must be submitted to MaineHousing, and maintained by the Program Department in accordance with required Records Retention periods. The Partner must also retain original signed and approved applications in accordance with required Records Retention periods.

Compliance with the Partner Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedures will be monitored by MaineHousing staff and subject to periodic program audits.

If you are unsure whether a situation constitutes a conflict of interest, please consult with your contact at MaineHousing, or email MaineHousing's Internal Auditor, Kimberly Whitley, at kwhitley@mainehousing.org.

APPENDIX D
MAINEHOUSING PARTNERS
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE FORM

I have read and understand the *Conflict of Interest Policy – MaineHousing Partners*.

☐ YES

☐ NO

Do you (or any of your principals or affiliates, or anyone who will be paid for work in connection with the project, program, contract or services at hand), have business ties, family relationships, or other close personal relationships with a current MaineHousing commissioner or employee or anyone who was a MaineHousing commissioner or employee within the past year?

☐ NO

☐ YES (please describe below, or attach)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Title: _____