

# **REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)**

## **Urban Matters Pilot Program**

**RFQ Issued: December 3, 2013**  
**RFQ Due: January 3, 2014 at Noon**

### **Goal of the RFQ**

The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) is requesting qualifications from community based organizations to participate in a pilot program called Urban Matters (UM). (See 'Exhibit A' for program guidelines). The URA is interested in expanding its community outreach to distressed neighborhoods throughout the City of Pittsburgh and partnering with neighborhood organizations to encourage greater resident engagement and participation in community planning and redevelopment activities. The URA recognizes that with more formal community education, engagement and participation, residents in the City's most distressed neighborhoods will take greater ownership in these activities.

### **Background Information**

The URA is the City of Pittsburgh's economic development agency. Our goals are to create jobs, increase the City's tax base and improve the vitality of businesses and neighborhoods, and the City's livability as a whole. The URA offers a variety of programs and financing products that range from assisting low-income clients to achieve homeownership, to reclaiming brownfields for new development and helping communities reinvent themselves.

The URA plans to select one or more applicants who successfully respond to this request and meet the qualification criteria that will be included in the subsequent Request for Proposals (RFP). Qualified applicants will be asked to participate in a one-day training workshop that will outline the UM pilot program dynamics and have an opportunity to ask questions of the URA with regards to the RFP. The UM pilot will include three months of preplanning work once a community partner is selected, eight weeks of in-class work with project participants, and some time for project completion and final presentation preparation. The community partner organization will begin working with the URA for approximately seven months, beginning in mid-March 2014 and ending early October 2014.

Since this is a pilot program, the URA is seeking a wide range of qualities from each applicant. The success of the community partner completing the project will depend on the following:

- At least one dedicated staff member to work with the URA on all technical and administrative aspects of the project for the duration of the project;
- The engagement, interest and attendance of students are important to the entire process and the community partner should work with the URA to gauge and intervene when necessary to improve participation / enthusiasm; and
- The dedication and wherewithal to establish a long-term relationship with the URA for future projects, programs and events in the neighborhood.

### **Dates and Contacts:**

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Primary Contact: Karen Abrams - 412-255-6425; [kabrams@ura.org](mailto:kabrams@ura.org)

Inquiries Contact: Ashlie Bird - 412-255-6618; [abird@ura.org](mailto:abird@ura.org)

### **Project Description**

The URA Urban Matters is an arts- and design-based program constructed to teach youth in Pittsburgh's distressed neighborhoods how to examine and communicate URA and other key civic processes to their peers, community residents and other stakeholders. The goals are to: (1) demystify urban policy and planning issues that impact their communities and (2) increase participation in decision-making processes that shape their communities. Urban Matters is a pilot program of a larger URA initiative to empower residents in low-income communities and historically under-served populations to participate in policy-making, planning, design and development activities in their neighborhoods. Urban Matters will adopt much of the civic engagement methodology created by the Center of Urban Pedagogy (CUP). Through its Urban Investigations program, CUP engages young people between 15 and 18 years of age in after school and summer programs, asking a basic question about how the city works and then answering it over the course of a summer or semester. From CUP:

“[Students] gain the skills to investigate their own communities. They gain access to the decision-makers that affect the world around them, and engage in active citizenship. Students learn how to creatively communicate their ideas through design. Project-based learning allows students to shine in multiple ways: from interviewing to illustration, from audio production to writing. Students see the city as the product of a decision-making landscape and are empowered to participate

in it. The products that students create with a visual artist find real audiences and impact communities outside of the school in arts and social justice fields.”

You can visit the CUP website for more information about its methodology at [www.welcometocup.org/projects/urbaninvestigations](http://www.welcometocup.org/projects/urbaninvestigations).

Program participants will make site visits and conduct interviews while working with URA staff and other partners to produce a visual representation of what they learned to their peers, community groups and other stakeholders. A teaching artist will be contracted out by the URA to work directly with students. The teaching artist will be selected prior to the selection of the partner organization. The final product could be a video, brochure, poster, website, etc. The URA will provide a grant to the selected community partner to cover administration, transportation, stipends for students and other necessary costs if approved. The grant amount will be included in the Request for Proposals.

In order to enhance the likelihood for success, the pilot program will need to be a joint effort between the community partner organization, the URA and the teaching artist. The roles of each are outlined below; however, the URA is willing to consider alternate project scenarios, if such scenarios are in the best interest of the project participants, community partner and the URA.

## **URA**

- Select guiding questions/topic
- Conduct topic research
- Conduct interviewee research
- Develop interview list
- Manage curriculum development
- Arrange interviews
- Manage the final product process
- Write content
- Oversee art direction
- Edit text
- Bring in other collaborators as necessary
- Secure final event space
- Plan final event

## **Teaching Artist**

- Conduct topic research
- Develop curriculum
- Develop activities
- Lead project in-class
- Create final product

## **Community Partner Organization**

- Provide/ recruit students (minimum of 10, but no more than 15)
- Provide classroom space with work tables
- Provide meals and snacks
- Provide secure storage space
- Provide access to printing facilities
- Provide computers and internet access
- Manage attendance
- Communicate with students' families
- Take on liability
  - Insurance (for transportation, for working with students during summer and possibly after school after formal in-class session ends)
  - Waivers from parents for participation and recording

## **Proposal Submission:**

The proposal should be sent electronically to Karen Abrams, manager, Diversity and Community Affairs, at [kabrams@ura.org](mailto:kabrams@ura.org), or one hard copy of the proposal may be submitted to:

Karen Abrams  
Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh  
200 Ross Street, 12th Floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

### Inquiries

All inquiries related to this RFQ are to be directed, in writing, to Ashlie Bird, project coordinator, at [abird@ura.org](mailto:abird@ura.org).

### Closing Date

All responses must be received on or before Friday, January 3, 2014, Noon.

### Late Responses

Late responses will be accepted only if an extension is provided at least 24 hours in advance.

### Qualifications Review Committee

The qualifications review committee will be made up of URA staff and external collaborators. The URA will make final determination of qualified respondents. The qualifications review committee will check responses against mandatory criteria. Responses not meeting all mandatory criteria may not be considered for review. Qualified respondents will be provided with a copy of the RFP if one is issued and required to attend a mandatory one-day workshop before completing an RFP.

### Selection of Shortlist

Only applicants who have been selected to receive an RFP will be contacted. Selected applicants will be notified of their status by Wednesday, January 15, 2014. The RFP will be sent out to selected respondents by Wednesday, January 22, 2014 and will include information about the one-day training workshop.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

- Organization must be in a distressed neighborhood (see 'Exhibit B' for list) in the City of Pittsburgh;
- Years of experience in youth programming / education;
- Capacity to provide adequate facilities, supplies and administrative assistance to participants, teaching artist and URA; and
- Ability to take on liability for insurance and waivers from parents of participants.

### **Submission Requirements**

The RFQ requirements shall include the following information not to exceed two pages:

1. Overview of Organization and Neighborhood
  - a. Description of organization
  - b. Description of neighborhood and existing neighborhood projects
2. Youth Programming and/or Youth Education Experience
  - a. Types of projects and programs of your organization- past and current
  - b. Number and ages of youth served
3. Organizational Capacity
  - a. Description of the organizational capacity
  - b. Key staff, their experience and what roles and responsibilities (at least one staff member) would be in completing the project
  - c. Response to the Evaluation Criteria
4. Fee Proposal for the Project
  - a. Outline proposed costs for meals and snacks, transportation and administrative support, and other costs associated with this project

### Additional Information

- The URA shall have the right to verify the accuracy of all information submitted and to make such investigation as it seems necessary to determine the ability of a prospective partner organization to perform the obligations in the response. The URA reserves the right to reject any and all responses.

- The URA reserves the right to retain all responses submitted and use any of the ideas in a proposal regardless of whether that proposal is selected.
- Submission of a response indicates acceptance by the applicant of the conditions contained in the request for qualification.
- There is no express or implied obligation for the URA to reimburse firms for any expenses incurred in preparing qualifications in response to this request.
- During the evaluation process, the Qualification Review Committee may, at its discretion, request one or all respondents to make oral presentations.
- Responses to the Request for Qualifications will not be opened publicly.
- Mistakes:
  - *Prior to submission date:* A respondent may correct mistakes discovered before the time set from the receipt of responses by withdrawing the original response and resubmitting a new response before the date set for the receipt of responses.
  - *After submission date:* Mistakes cannot be corrected after the submission date except when the URA decides, at the sole discretion, to allow a mistake to be corrected.
- To ensure receipt of all addenda to the Request for Qualifications, please email Karen Abrams, manager, Diversity and Community Affairs, for inclusion on the list at [kabrams@ura.org](mailto:kabrams@ura.org).

#### **Attached Exhibits**

- A. [Urban Matters Program Guidelines](#)
- B. [URA Urban Matters 2013 Distressed Neighborhoods](#)