

BLUE SKY CENTER



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Call for Housing Consultant - Phase 1: Creative Community Engagement
December 2018 - January 2020



Creative Community Engagement for the Development of a Cuyama Valley Housing Plan

Blue Sky Center is seeking proposals for a Housing Consultant (“Consultant”), to carry out periodic on-site and off-site work from late 2018 through early 2020, in New Cuyama, California. Applicants should be established housing professionals working in the fields of community development and housing, and be experienced in community outreach, ethnographic research, and rural development. This work is the first step in the development of an eventual housing plan of action for the Cuyama Valley; the information learned and community input provided regarding housing barriers and economic opportunities will inform a housing plan document to be created in mid-2019.

Submission Requirements

Responses to this request for proposal (RFP) are **due by email to RFP@blueskycenter.org by 10AM Pacific on December 10th, 2018, with a subject line of “Housing Consultant Proposal,”** in the form of a single PDF not exceeding six (6) letter-sized pages (8½” x 11”) pages. Please reach out to the same email address with comments or clarifying questions. Include within the response:

- Statement of interest
- If applying as part of an organization, a description of the organization’s mission, history, and relevant past work
- Profiles of three (3) relevant projects with project scope, documentation, and relevant details, including a description of community engagement methods employed in each project
- Addressing, either through the project examples or the statement of interest, meeting the qualifications
- Indication of hourly or per-item rates for travel, on-site, and off-site work



Project Background

Blue Sky Center (“Blue Sky”) is a nonprofit community organization in New Cuyama, CA working in the multi-faceted arenas of rural community development by supporting a local economy based in entrepreneurship and a “Made in Cuyama” ethic. More info on Blue Sky can be found on our website [here](#) and within this RFP below.

Blue Sky has been awarded an Enterprise Community Partners grant (HUD Section 4) in the amount of \$30,000. The deliverables have a housing focus, while entwining housing with economic opportunity, education, infrastructure, and community vibrancy, acknowledging the realities in rural environments that all depend on each other. New Cuyama, where Blue Sky is based and the largest townsite in the Cuyama Valley, has a population estimate of 551 residents, with the greater Cuyama Valley estimated between 1,500 and 2,500 residents. Common for rural places, US Census data is limited and carries wide margins of error. Through this project, we are trying to seek to both fill in missing data points and to create a model of rural outreach that can help translate information to the higher resource urban/power centers.

The Enterprise grant covers costs of research and outreach for five (5) specific tasks: 1) a comprehensive survey of the Cuyama Valley regarding housing availability, economic opportunity, recreation, and community ideals/desires; 2) outreach meetings and events executed creatively to garner community buy-in, participation, and knowledge with assistance from a housing plan consultant; 3) the hiring of an expert housing consultant to provide regional and local data and assist in writing a housing plan for the Cuyama Valley; 4) creating/expanding partnerships with housing agencies and local government; and 5) creating a resource directory (print and online) for housing and economic development opportunities. The grant award start date was September 1, 2018, with an 18-month period of performance into early 2020.

Scope of Work

The Consultant will work with BSC staff throughout 2019 to execute the Enterprise grant, namely on items 1, 2, and 4 of the five tasks described above with a defined scope of work developed after the selection of the Consultant. The Consultant will focus on research materials and outreach, along with the collection, analysis, and visualization of a body of recorded experience of Cuyama Valley residents via in-person interactions and the community-wide survey. Acting as a host and guide, the Consultant will guide participants through exercises/experiences/conversations that will glean qualitative and quantitative data otherwise overlooked or missed when conducting research like this. The Consultant will assist in the development, release, and collection of the community-wide survey with input into the survey scope collected from residents and regional partners. The Consultant will work to connect new partnerships and strengthen existing partnerships of entities working in the Cuyama Valley.

The work/activities must reflect Blue Sky’s values of inclusivity, community co-authorship, and rural vibrancy. The development of this work does not need to be completely predetermined before arrival; we anticipate working with the Consultant to develop programming and expect the work to be informed by visits to the Valley and the residents. Before arrival and throughout the project term, Blue Sky will assist in formulating the project/programming/activity, provide direct staff support for the work/activities, and provide community connections needed to execute along with funding as budgeted in the Enterprise grant.

This project will require several multi-day visits to the Cuyama Valley.



Qualifications

- Applicants may be single practitioners, groups, or non-profit or for-profit agencies
- Experience in affordable housing, rural development, and/or related issues
- Experience in small events planning, leading participatory workshops, and alternative engagement tactics more relevant to small towns and rural communities
- Experience in creative community engagement
- Lived rural experience and/or appreciation
- Spanish and English verbal fluency; English written fluency at a minimum, Spanish written fluency a plus
- Experience with federal grants is a plus

Remuneration

Consultant fees: For the execution of the scope of work, a total amount of up to \$4,750 will be allocated. The Consultant will issue an invoice(s) for payment no more than once a month, billing at an hourly rate. Proposals should include a clear breakdown of hourly rates including: on-site work, off-site work, and travel time.

Travel reimbursement: Proposals should indicate per item costs for any travel expenses that may be charged. A total amount of up to \$1,450 is budgeted to cover expenses of visits to the Cuyama Valley. Mileage is to be paid at the established federal rate; lodging and per diem is not to exceed federal rates.

A budget for community engagement direct expenses (materials, printing, snacks, meeting space rental, et cetera) is provided separately from this contract by Blue Sky from the Enterprise grant budget.

When on-site in the Cuyama Valley, lodging may be provided in-kind by BSC via guest rooms in our main building. Amenities include a sleeping room, workspace, shower/bathroom, and kitchen.

About the Cuyama Valley & Blue Sky Center

Blue Sky Center is a rural nonprofit located in New Cuyama, California, in the Cuyama Valley, with the mission to strengthen our rural communities within the Cuyama Valley by supporting entrepreneurs and building our regional creative and economic resources. This area is home to approximately 2,000 residents across 300 square miles of high-desert California landscape, just north of the Los Padres National Forest and south of the Carrizo Plain National Monument. Route 166 connects New Cuyama to Santa Maria on the Central Coast and Bakersfield in the southern end of the Central Valley, both about an hour's drive away; Santa Barbara and Los Angeles are both about 2-½ hours to the south and southeast, respectively.

Founded by the Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) in 1952 as a company town, New Cuyama now serves a small population composed of 216 housing units, and contains the Cuyama Valley High School (& Elementary School in Cuyama), the Cuyama Valley Recreation District office, a family resource center, a post office, a small library, and a number of commercial businesses. Blue Sky Center operates out of renovated industrial and office buildings from the ARCO era. The larger Cuyama Valley is home to a number of agricultural operations, which is the primary industry, along with oil production and ranching. The majority of the Cuyama Valley is located within unincorporated Santa Barbara County, with some parts of the valley located in San Luis Obispo, Ventura, and Kern Counties. Other townsites in the Valley include Cuyama and Ventucopa; a significant portion of the population lives outside the three townsites on ranches and farms.

More information on Blue Sky Center can be found on our [website](#), our [2017 Annual Report](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#).



Timeline

- RFP released: November 19, 2018
- RFP response due: 10:00 AM PST on December 10th by email to RFP@blueskycenter.org
- Interviews may be conducted at Blue Sky's discretion
- Selection notification: December 13, 2018

Evaluation metrics

- Established profession in rural development, housing, research, and/or creative engagement
- Quality and relevance of work examples
- Capacity to plan, execute, and synthesize project requirements
- Informed understanding of rural places, as shown by a history of work and/or personal experience

Requirement to disclose conflict of interest

Any person/business responding to or evaluating this RFP that has a real, possible, or perceived conflict of interest must disclose the conflict(s) within the response/proposal submission/evaluation process. Any person/business that assisted in the development of this RFP is excluded from responding.

Nondiscrimination statement

Blue Sky Center is committed to provide equal opportunity without regard to race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, ancestry, citizenship status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law.