REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
West End Choice Neighborhood
Development Partner

ISSUE DATE: Monday, July 20, 2026
DUE DATE: 4:00 p.m. Monday, August 17, 2026

INTRODUCTION:

In 2025, the Johnstown Housing Authority (JHA) and the Cambria County Planning Commission (CCPC), received a Choice Neighborhoods (CN) Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to create the West End CN Plan. The Plan focuses on the mixed-use redevelopment of Coopersdale Community, a 121-unit public housing site managed by JHA. The Plan will also include several neighborhood improvement investments and people-oriented projects designed to increase opportunities for JHA residents. For more information, visit Choicewestend.com.

The West End CN Plan will include a roadmap for the future redevelopment of the Coopersdale Community including the 100% replacement of the existing 121 units within the site or in other opportunity areas, as part of new mixed income developments. Based on the completed Housing Market Analysis (attached), the West End could support up to 241 units of mixed-income rental housing and homeownership units, including the 121 units of replacement housing. In addition, the Housing Market Analysis notes the demand potential for 10 home ownership units within the Choice Neighborhood planning area.

The West End CN Plan is aligned with the City of Johnstown's Comprehensive Plan update, (in progress) and provides targeted strategies for residents that will create pathways to additional housing (rental and homeownership), improved skillsets, higher education, better employment, and a reimagined community with enhanced connectivity and services. The Plan will spur investment and help community members to initiate incremental change that improves the quality of life.

INVITATION:

JHA is requesting qualifications from qualified professional developers to partner and help finalize the Housing Element of the West End CN Plan, as outlined in more detail in the Scope section below.

Following completion of the CN Plan, the Grantees intend to apply in partnership with the selected developer for a HUD Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grant (CNI), should the opportunity be available in FY2027 or FY2028. The Grantees are committed to implementing the CN Plan, with or without future CNI funding.

Upon completion of the scope of work outlined in this RFQ to finalize the CN Plan Housing Element and apply for CNI funding, the selected developer, JHA, may work in good faith to negotiate a master developer's agreement for implementation. JHA & the selected developer would then serve as co-developer partners, supporting the creation, maintenance, and tracking of project budgets and financing throughout the entirety of the project phases.

INVITATION SCOPE:

The developer selected in response to this RFQ will be expected to undertake and deliver the following to help complete the Housing Element of the CN Plan and apply for a future CNI grant, Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and/or other funding sources:

1. Review and assess the Grantees' current site Concept Plans, Housing Market Study, and feedback from residents, the CN Steering Committee, and other community engagement efforts;

2. Develop and refine a Final Concept Plan for the site(s), which will be incorporated into the Final CN Plan. The Final Concept Plan should include feasible site(s) layout, defined unit types and counts, dimensions, and preliminary renderings;

3. Assist in the acquisition of several key parcels in proximity to the Coopersdale Community, providing opportunities for off-site housing.

4. Develop a feasible project phasing plan, which will be incorporated into the Final CN Plan, that accounts for the CN build-first goals to avoid resident displacement;

5. Assess the financial feasibility and develop an initial funding structure with potential sources, including a preliminary operating pro forma and development budget, with the understanding that the selected developer will ultimately take the lead in securing local, state, federal, and private funding to accomplish the site(s) development;

6. As a member of the team, assist in material preparation for the Final CN Plan and the Choice Implementation Grant application, including materials that demonstrate developer capacity.

TIMELINE FOR DELIVERABLES:

Draft deliverables for the Final Choice Neighborhood Plan are due **February 5, 2027**. Feedback will be provided no later than **February 19, 2027**.

INVITATION EVALUATION:

Developers must have extensive experience and financial resources to develop comprehensive housing plans. The selected developer must demonstrate the ability and experience to develop and implement a mixed-income, mixed-finance, mixed-use development, leveraging a range of funding sources such as Low-Income Housing (LIHTC) Tax Credits, Municipal Bonds, New Market Tax Credits, HOME, CDBG, FHLB, etc.

Preference will be given to developers who have successfully completed similar and other HUD related housing developments. Developers must be able to prove they have implemented and operated housing in comparable scope, scale and complexity to the Housing Element of the CN Plan.

Developers are encouraged to present a development team with professional disciplines that will initiate and coordinate the tasks required to advance the project through various stages from conception to completion.

Other team members are allowed on a discretionary basis to the developer and therefore are not required for initial disclosure. As co-developing partner, JHA reserves the right to actively assist in the procurement of project architects, engineers, general service providers, and all major professional service consultants.

A joint review committee will consider qualifications that clearly demonstrate knowledge of, and ideally experience with, the HUD CN program and applicable federal regulations and requirements. All qualifications must conform to requirements outlined herein.
JHA reserves the right to select the firm determined to be the most responsive and responsible and that best meets their needs for the specified tasks. JHA also reserves the right to negotiate all terms of the contract(s), including price.

PROJECT AREA - BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The planning area consists of the West End, a .8 square mile neighborhood that lies between the Conemaugh River to the north, Laurel Avenue to the south, and is enclosed by Johnstown's corporate limits on both the east and west sides. The boundary follows Census Tract 136.

The West End neighborhood is primarily residential, with very limited commercial uses and several significant industrial employers, most notably Johnstown Wire Technologies. Historically, development formed around the steel and iron manufacturing buildings, which influenced the various zoning districts seen today. With a population of 3,142, the West End is nestled within a valley, surrounded by hills and natural open space.

JHA's Coopersdale Community, located within the West End, consists of six, four-story walk-up buildings with apartments ranging in size from 1BR to 5BR. The 121-unit public housing complex was built in 1959 and is adjacent to the Conemaugh River. With a population of 339, Coopersdale Community is one of several properties that JHA manages, with a diverse range of age groups.

OVERALL PROGRAM GOALS, VISION, AND PRINCIPLES:

The Grantees have established the following program goals for the revitalization effort:

1. Create a vibrant, safe, community of high-quality design that meets or exceeds industry standards, and that attracts and retains a broad income mix of residents;

2. Create a sustainable, livable environment featuring a mixture of tenures that could include family and senior housing, rental and homeownership, and non-residential uses (*currently, the Plan calls for up to 241 mixed-income rental housing units [inclusive of the 121 replacement JHA units] and 10 affordable homeownership units targeted at first-time homebuyers. Community facilities and potential supportive commercial development opportunities will be determined in consultation between the JHA and CCPC*);

3. Physically integrate new development into the fabric of the West End community, respecting the local context and character of the neighborhood;

4. Ensure a high percentage of existing residents can return to redeveloped properties;

5. Create high-quality, sustainable new development that meets or exceeds industry standards and incorporates state-of-the-art energy conservation and green practices;

6. Maximize the leverage of public housing funds with the use of the mixed-finance process, including Low Income Housing Tax Credits, private funding, and other financial sources;

7. Maximize economic development opportunities for residents, businesses, and women- and minority-owned businesses;

8. Promote all phases of the program and ensure long-term financial stability of developments;

9. The developer may consider the development of off-site replacement units on JHA-owned properties or sites that can be acquired by JHA or the developer;

10. Promptly achieve milestones and deliver development products; and

11. Comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations, policies, edicts, approval requirements, and court orders.

The Vision for the West End is as follows:

> *Coopersdale is a historic, diverse, and resilient community committed to building a safe, vibrant, and accessible neighborhood for all. By honoring its formative past, residents and community partners work together to strengthen housing opportunities, enhance recreational spaces, and support local businesses. As a community, we overcome challenges to create opportunities that build a future of prosperous growth for the West End.*

In addition, housing principles guided discussions about development types and strategies reflected in the West End CN Plan. They were informed by residents, the Steering Committee, JHA and CCPC staff, and City officials.

Housing Principles:

1. Housing is not a “one size” that fits all and should respond to numerous lifestyles.

2. The home ownership units should be separated from the rental units and have individual entrances.

3. Common spaces, such as stairwells and corridors, should have controlled access and be well-lit.

4. A central amenity should bring the community together.

5. Create outdoor space with better lighting, seating, and shade.

6. Open spaces should be engaging, lively, and amenity-rich, encouraging frequent use and community appreciation.

7. Crossing Cooper Avenue is difficult and therefore most community amenities should be located on the west side.

8. Parking lots should be small and integrated discreetly throughout the community.

9. Existing buildings are too large and have an institutional appearance, which makes the community feel out of scale and character with the surrounding neighborhood.

10. The architecture should be contextual, utilizing the types and styles found in the neighborhood and Johnstown.

11. Create a flexible, community space in a mixed-use building that meets the everyday needs of its residents.

12. Harness the Conemaugh River as a community asset through scenic & visual enhancements.

13. This is the northern gateway to the City and should promote the entire community.

REGULATORY SUMMARY:

The mixed-finance developments will be implemented under HUD's "Mixed Finance" Rule for public housing and HUD's "Subsidy Layering" Rule. The Mixed Finance Rule permits public housing authorities to: (i) allow the development of projects that include nonpublic housing units in addition to public housing units; (ii) enter into partnership or other arrangements with nonprofit and for-profit private developers to own the mixed-finance development; and (iii) transfer operating and capital subsidies to public housing units. In addition, mixed finance developments will be subject to HUD's Cost Control and Safe Harbor Standards.

Consistent with Presidential Executive Orders 11625, 12138 and 12432, and Section 3 of HUD Act of 1968, (implemented by 24 CFR Part 75), JHA will make efforts to ensure that small and minority-owned businesses, women's business enterprises, labor surplus area businesses and individuals or firms located in or owned in substantial part by people residing around the mixed finance developments are used when possible.

The selected developer will be required to comply with procurement requirements, relevant regulations, and any other applicable provisions of federal, state, and local laws. The developer must not have any interest which would conflict with the performance of services required by this RFQ or the future CN Plan housing project implementation.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

The instructions below provide guidance for the preparation and submission of qualifications. Their purpose is to establish the requirements, content, and specific format for organizing qualifications so that submittals are complete, contain all essential information, and can be evaluated fairly. The following represents the extent of the instructions and conditions that are required to be met.

a. Letter of interest: The cover letter must list the development team members and identify the primary contact person. The letter must include a statement that the qualifications will remain valid for not less than 90 days from the date of submission.

b. Profile of the Developer: Provide a narrative overview of the developer's experience in the planning, construction and management of projects similar to what is proposed, including financial capacity. Include the following information:
   - Comparable Projects: Provide a narrative profile for each of the three most comparable projects completed in the last five years, including location, cost, sources of financing, number of units, bedroom mix, income levels served, community engagement, and PHA/non-profit partners or codevelopers, if any.

   - Key Staff: Provide profiles of staff, including the Project Manager, who will be involved in the redevelopment effort. Specify the roles of key staff in carrying out this development initiative and their previous experience with comparable housing development and redevelopment.

- Property Management: Provide a one-page narrative describing the corporate approach to property management, with reference to management of mixed-income, mixed-finance, and mixed-use rental developments of similar sizes.

- Organizational Chart: Provide a corporate organizational chart. Include all related entities proposed for the development team.

- References: Provide 3 references. Prefer references from the "Most comparable projects" profiled above.

- Financial Capacity: Describe the financial capacity of the developer and provider of guarantees.

- Guarantees: Describe guarantees provided for prior projects and discuss how the developer intends to honor all guarantees should the need arise.

JHA may request additional documents and information in connection with demonstrating the developer's financial capacity.

c. **Profiles of Proposed Development Team Members**: Include supplemental narrative description of each proposed firm, not to exceed two pages per development team member.
    - Provide resumes of key staff, including the project contact, who will be involved in the redevelopment effort. Specify the roles of key staff in carrying out this development initiative and their previous experience with comparable housing development and redevelopment.

d. **Technical Response to Proposed Concept Plans**: Include the developer's initial response to the conceptual plans for on-site housing, market conditions, and the guiding principles for housing development. Specific site designs or renderings are not required in the submission. The response should address:
    - Quality of design
    - Sensitivity to neighborhood context

- Inclusion of energy efficiency and "green" design features
- Inclusion of visitable and accessible features

e. **Financing**: Describe how the developer would pursue financing for the redevelopment effort if selected as development partner. Identify the various funding sources that are appropriate for creating mixed-income developments and the developer's capacity to obtain awards.

Note: HUD's Cost Control and Safe Harbor Standards will be the basis for negotiating business terms of a potential development partnership, including predevelopment costs, developer fee, and other cost sharing provisions.

f. **Community Participation**: Describe how the team will continue to involve the community in the redevelopment activities. Note the approach and methods the team will utilize to assure meaningful participation by community stakeholders and government entities in the planning and implementation.

g. **MBE/WBE/Section 3**: JHA and the City are interested in maximizing the economic benefits of revitalization for the residents and businesses of the West End. The response must include a discussion of the approach and methods the developer will utilize to assure stimulation of the local economy by using local businesses including construction contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, legal counsel, accounting, etc. Additionally, the response should address the approach and methods the developer will utilize to: (i) seek and enable strong participation by minority-owned and women-owned businesses; and (ii) assure significant employment of residents of JHA and other individuals eligible as Section 3 participants.

h. **Cost**:

- Provide a firm fixed fee for the Housing Element Plan services (current scope). Describe any potential add-ons and the firm's fixed fee for any add-on services.

INSURANCE AND BONDS:

The selected developer will be required to maintain General Liability, Worker's Compensation, Automobile Liability, Professional Liability, and other forms of Insurance, with firms authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, during the duration of performance of activities pursuant to this RFQ. The developer will also be required to indemnify JHA against claims and obligations due to actions and activities of the developer and not arising from negligence or misconduct of JHA and its employees.

SUBMISSION AND CONTENT QUALIFICATIONS

Submittals must be made in electronic form and in strict accordance with the requirements of this RFQ. Following evaluation of qualifications and approval by JHA, the respondents who are found to be responsive to the RFQ will be ranked.

Communication regarding the solicitation and written questions may be submitted via email to **Michael Alberts malberts@jhaonline.org**. Written answers to all submitted questions will be distributed anonymously and publicly at jhaonline.org/rfq.

All qualifications must be received no later than **4:00 p.m. Monday, August 17, 2026**. All qualifications will be valid for 90 days.

Submit qualifications to the following addresses:

Michael Alberts
Executive Director
Johnstown Housing Authority
malberts@jhaonline.org

All qualifications will be considered as they are construed by the Grantees, with the Grantees reserving the right to reject any and all materials and the right to request oral presentations of all or some of the proposers. The Grantees request that information be succinct. After reviewing the qualifications, additional information may be requested by the Grantees.

AMENDMENTS TO THE RFQ:

The Grantees reserve the right to cancel or revise in part or in its entirety this RFQ, including, but not limited to, the selection schedule, the submittal date, and the submittal requirements. The Grantees reserve the right to reject any and all qualifications and to waive minor irregularities. The Grantees further reserve the right to seek new qualifications when doing so is reasonably in the best interest of JHA. All prospective respondents will be notified by written addenda if the Grantees cancel or revise this RFQ.

SELECTION PROCESS:

A selection panel of JHA and CCPC representatives will review all responsive submissions to this RFQ. The selection panel shall be sole judge as to evaluation and ranking of submittals. Based on the evaluation and ranking, interviews may be conducted with selected respondents.

AWARD(s):

It is anticipated that the top-ranked respondent(s) will be interviewed (at the Grantees' option). The final selection of pre-qualified respondents will not create a binding contract or obligation on the part of JHA to enter into a master developer's agreement or any other agreement with any of the pre-qualified respondents.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Draft Housing Concepts
Attachment B - Housing Market Analysis
Attachment C – Community Snapshot