

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) Concept Paper for Citywide Partners in Preservation Program

I. Program Background

The continued demand for affordable housing, economic challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and limited oversight of rent-regulated housing have contributed to an unstable situation for tenants across New York City. While the passage of the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act (HSTPA) in 2019 transformed protections for rent-regulated tenants, HPD and housing advocates remain concerned that landlords will neglect repairs, perform low-quality or unpermitted construction work, or pursue unlawful evictions to displace tenants.

Around the same time, New York City launched several anti-displacement programs and resources to protect vulnerable tenants, address harassment and neglect by landlords, and stabilize communities. Leading the effort, HPD launched the Tenant Anti-Harassment Unit (TAHU) and expanded its Certification of No Harassment (CONH) program to better protect tenants facing dangerous building conditions or harassment resulting from the alteration or demolition of a building. Beyond HPD, the Mayor's Public Engagement Unit (PEU) formalized the Tenant Helpline during the COVID-19 pandemic to help tenants navigate and access City resources. And more recently, the Office of Civil Justice expanded the implementation of Right to Counsel citywide, guaranteeing free legal assistance to all low-income tenants facing eviction. Despite the success of these anti-displacement initiatives, two challenges continue to impact tenant stability and require additional attention from all housing stakeholders.

First, interventions on behalf of tenants tend to be reactive and sometimes occur too late, namely after tenants in rent-regulated buildings have already left. Government agencies and community-based organizations (CBOs) generally respond to complaints and concerns as they arise instead of taking a proactive approach. Second, there is limited coordination between government agencies, CBOs, and legal services providers regarding their work in particular buildings or neighborhoods. More so, there is no single entity tracking or coordinating their interventions to ensure they collectively have the greatest impact and best support tenant organizing activities including forming associations in rent-regulated buildings experiencing high risk of harassment.

In response to these challenges, HPD's Office of Neighborhood Strategies launched the Partners in Preservation pilot program in 2019 with joint funding from Enterprise Community Partners and the New York City Housing Development Corporation (HDC) in three neighborhoods in Upper Manhattan and the Bronx. The 18-month pilot program



was developed to foster closer partnerships and collaboration between CBOs, legal services providers, and government agencies to more strategically identify and address tenant harassment and untenable living conditions in rent-regulated buildings.

Through a competitive procurement process, HPD selected CBOs in the three pilot areas that received funding to hire additional organizers to jointly implement the program with dedicated staff at HPD. During regularly scheduled meetings, the tenant organizers and HPD staff identified target buildings and coordinated interventions, including code enforcement and building surveys, forming tenant associations, and involving other City and State agencies. As a result, the partner CBOs significantly expanded their organizing capacity and reached over 3,000 households in 250 buildings, formed 72 tenant associations, led 170 tenant leadership workshops, and trained more than 350 new tenant leaders.

In June 2022, Mayor Eric Adams released *Housing Our Neighbors: A Blueprint for Housing and Homelessness* outlining the City's strategies to tackle the housing crisis and ensure all New Yorkers have access to safe, secure, and affordable housing. The *Blueprint* identified Partners in Preservation as a critical program for enhancing local capacity to address tenant harassment. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2023, the City anticipates awarding up to five annual contracts as a planned citywide expansion of Partners in Preservation. This expansion will build on the success of the pilot, further entrench legal representation as a tenant organizing strategy, incorporate key insights and recommendations gathered from community-based organizations during the procurement process and improve coordination between tenant organizing groups, legal service providers, HPD and other city agencies.

II. Purpose of Concept Paper

In anticipation of the release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) in Fiscal Year 2023 (see section VII), HPD offers this Concept Paper to provide insight into the Partners in Preservation pilot program and how HPD envisions expanding the program citywide. Through dedicated funding, this program aims to expand the capacity of tenant organizing groups to help stabilize tenants in rent-regulated buildings citywide while also improving coordination between tenant organizers, legal services providers, and city and state agencies collectively working to address harassment. As part of this Concept Paper, HPD seeks feedback from CBOs, legal services providers, housing stakeholders, and the community at large on the approach outlined herein.

III. Populations to be Served

The Partners in Preservation program is designed to ensure the long-term stability of low- and moderate-income tenants and preserve rent-regulated housing in communities subject to intense speculation and landlord harassment. Rent-regulated buildings are a critical source of affordable housing for the city's most vulnerable residents. During the pilot program, tenant organizers worked mostly with low-income tenants, many of whom were seniors, undocumented immigrants, and/or had limited English proficiency. HPD



anticipates serving similar populations across the city through the program expansion and will work closely with the selected CBOs to ensure the program is meeting the unique needs of tenants who reside in each target area.

IV. Goals and Objectives of the Concept Paper and RFP

HPD offers this Concept Paper and the future RFP to gather feedback and proposals from tenant organizing CBOs, housing stakeholders, and the public at large to:

1. Build upon the work accomplished during the [pilot program](#) and expand the program to additional neighborhoods subject to speculation, displacement, and harassment
2. Facilitate closer coordination between CBOs, legal services providers, HPD, and other government agencies to ensure a more proactive and coordinated approach to addressing landlord harassment
3. Broaden the capacity of tenant organizing CBOs with dedicated funding and resources to organize more tenant associations, inform more tenants about their rights, and counter tenant harassment and displacement
4. Better understand new patterns of landlord harassment that have emerged since the rent regulation reforms in 2019 and the end of the eviction moratoria in 2022 to develop recommendations for how the City may act

V. Proposed Program Approach

HPD will launch the expanded program citywide, selecting up to five contractors to administer the program—one for each borough. HPD will identify priority areas for program implementation based on data analysis and other neighborhood goals and initiatives, including support for tenant outreach efforts in response to the Soho-NoHo rezoning. Priority geographies will be identified in the RFP to ensure full transparency and to ensure successful proposals are submitted for HPD's review.

HPD will prioritize applications from contractors that include a minimum of two (2) sub-contractors with a history of supporting tenants in HPD-identified priority neighborhoods within each borough. HPD anticipates the contract amount will increase as the size of the proposed sub-contracting team increases. HPD will have the discretion to approve or disapprove sub-contractors throughout the program, under a system outlined explicitly in the upcoming RFP and in close coordination with the relevant borough contractor.

HPD expects each contractor to select sub-contractors with an entrenched history and relevant organizing experience in target geographies identified through an analysis of building and population vulnerability data, made available through the Agency's updated Tenant Harassment Risk Model and the City's Equitable Development Data Explorer, including the Displacement Risk Index. This analysis, illustrated in the map below, identifies neighborhoods with a large concentration of rent-regulated buildings where tenants appear to face a high risk of harassment and displacement pressures. HPD welcomes public feedback on the draft map. As mentioned, a final version of this map



will be published in the RFP to guide applicants in their responses and better communicate the expected composition of the sub-contracting teams.

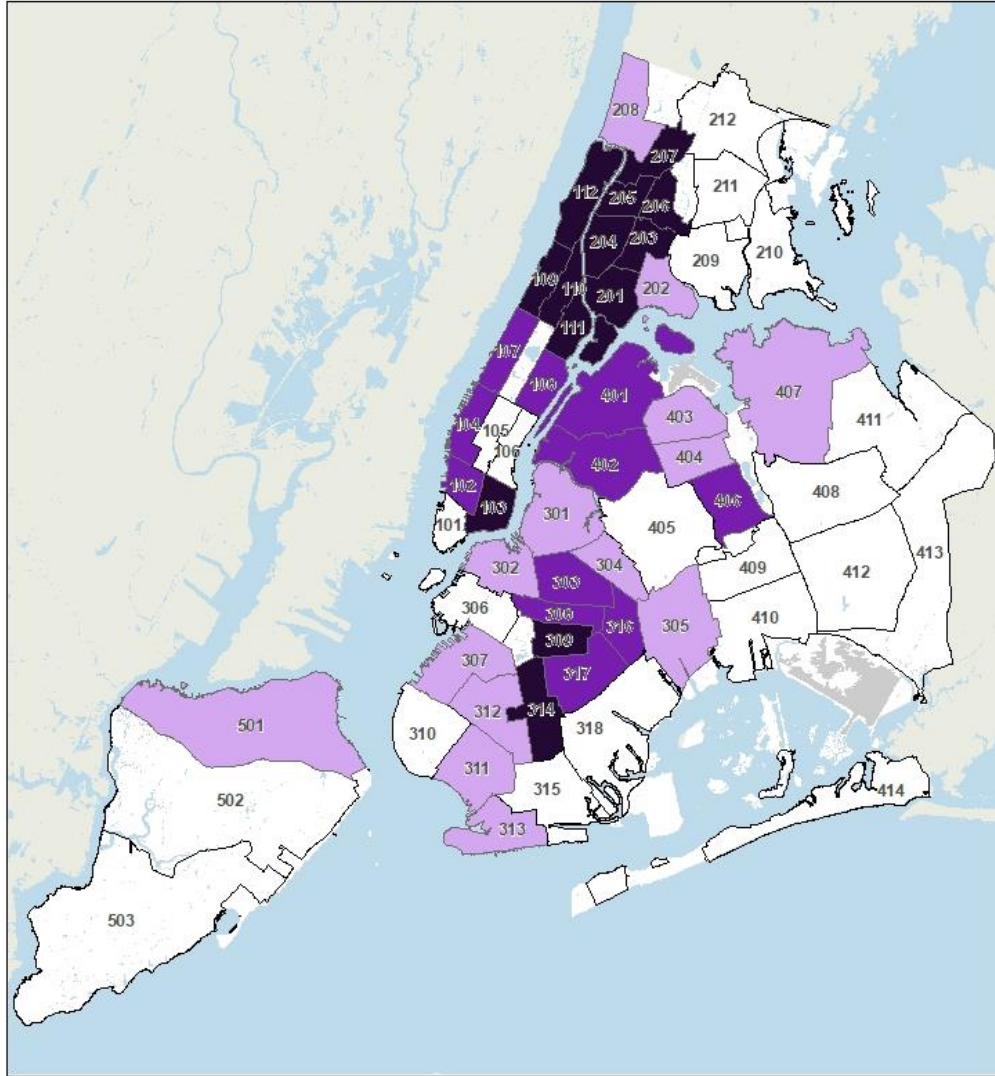
In assessing proposals, HPD will give preference to proposals that include sub-contractors representing priority geographies. However, contractors are encouraged to propose additional geographies for inclusion in the program. HPD will also strongly encourage the inclusion of small, less-prominent organizing groups as sub-contractors to ensure the representation of diverse communities in each borough. HPD intends to cover as much of the city as possible within the limitations of internal staffing capacity, suitability of the program per given geography, and available funding for each borough.

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Partners in Preservation Priority Community Boards



Legend

■ High Priority ■ Medium Priority ■ Low Priority □ Applications Encouraged

Created By: New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development
Office of Neighborhood Strategies

Date Created: 8/17/2022

During program implementation, the contractor, its sub-contractors, and dedicated HPD staff will use a combination of data analysis, portfolio and news research, building referrals from both HPD and PEU, and on-the-ground experience to identify rent-regulated buildings suitable for the program. This list may include both buildings with demonstrated instances of ongoing or widespread harassment and buildings where



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there are allegations that a landlord has begun to engage in predatory tactics or illicit behaviors.

In each of the target buildings, the contractor and its sub-contractors are expected to conduct outreach, organize tenants, and work with housing attorneys funded through the Office of Civil Justice (OCJ), the Mayor's Public Engagement Unit's (PEU) canvassing staff, the HPD team, including staff in the Office of Neighborhood Strategies and in the Office of Enforcement and Neighborhood Services, and possibly other government agencies, to facilitate tenant stability. Through established referral protocols and regular meetings organized by the contractor, the HPD team, the contractor, and its sub-contractors will jointly develop, and coordinate interventions tailored to the specific conditions in the building and the tenants' vision to improve those conditions. HPD encourages the contractor and its sub-contractors to organize tenants living in buildings with portfolios and build campaigns of portfolio-wide coalitions with other CBOs in the city.

Additionally, the selected contractors and sub-contractors will work closely with HPD to create and implement broader tenant protection and borough-wide education strategies as part of the expanded program. These efforts are expected to include hosting events, developing an anti-harassment campaign, and distributing materials that inform tenants of their rights and encourage tenants to refer buildings to CBOs participating in the program for organizing.

Central to the program is its emphasis on strengthening partnerships between City agencies, CBOs, and legal services providers to address tenant harassment more proactively and to prevent the further attrition of affordable housing. Although not parties to the upcoming contracts, HPD will partner closely with PEU and OCJ to expand outreach capacity and ensure rent-regulated tenants targeted through the program have access to full representation in Housing Court, as needed. Specifically, OCJ-funded housing attorneys are expected to accept referrals from HPD, tenant organizers, and tenant associations seeking full representation in Housing Court to compel landlords to address ongoing maintenance and harassment issues present in program target buildings. Housing attorneys may also support Know Your Rights workshops alongside tenant organizers, hold legal clinics when requested, and facilitate other legal activities outlined by OCJ.

Throughout program implementation, HPD will coordinate with other City and State agencies to review referrals for enforcement actions and ensure that the appropriate agencies are aware of the concerns of the CBOs/tenants. The HPD team will ensure that information is communicated to the agencies to inform their enforcement strategies and targets.

VI. Roles and Responsibilities



The success of Partners in Preservation relies on close coordination among all stakeholders involved. As such, it is important to have a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, which is as follows:

CBOs (Contractor and Sub-Contractors)

- Contractor:
 - o Oversee, manage, and administer the contract on behalf of the sub-contractors, ensuring contractual requirements are met
 - o Organize and lead regular meetings between HPD, the contracting team, and its sub-contractors to facilitate close coordination and strategize organizing activities
- Contractor and Sub-contractors:
 - o Attend regular meetings between the contracting team, HPD, and its sub-contractors
 - o Conduct outreach and door-knocking in target rent-regulated buildings identified through data analysis, portfolio and news research, field work, and referrals from HPD
 - o Collaborate with the HPD team and other government agencies, including PEU, to develop and implement tailored strategies to educate, support, and stabilize tenants in target buildings. Interventions can include tenant organizing to form tenant associations, one-on-one counseling, leadership trainings, service referrals, affirmative litigation, and other appropriate remedies
 - o Provide referrals to the HPD team where appropriate for code enforcement and additional action by other government agencies and related entities, including legal services providers
 - o Design and implement education events or campaigns to inform a broad array of tenants of their rights and encourage them to act on these rights
 - o Regularly monitor and report progress towards achieving the program goals and deliverables
 - o Contribute to the evaluation of the Partners in Preservation program by describing insights gained through the implementation and providing recommendations about how the program could be improved and/or expanded

HPD

- Oversee and manage up to five contracts expected to result from the upcoming RFP
- Establish clear building referral procedures and communication protocols to ensure close collaboration and information sharing between HPD and the contracting team
- Communicate City and Agency policies and procedures related to code enforcement and other tenant-oriented interventions, services, and programs to the contractors
- Maintain and update the Tenant Harassment Risk Model to identify target buildings for coordinated outreach with the contractors



- Support tenant organizing activities, litigation, and other strategies to stabilize tenants in program target buildings by helping them navigate City and State agencies
- Manage referrals received from contractors, including communicating conditions to multiple City and State enforcement agencies and tracking next steps on referred buildings
- Review and refer requests from contractors for full representation affirmative litigation to OCJ and ensure the provision of legal representation, legal clinics, and Know Your Rights trainings for all tenants and tenant associations targeted through the program
- Collaborate closely with PEU to increase capacity for tenant outreach and ensure tenants are aware of City and State resources
- Evaluate the successes of the contractors and agencies in addressing tenant harassment and sharing lessons learned among contractors and agency partners
- Develop and implement a public information campaign to raise awareness about tenant harassment, reporting maintenance issues to relevant City agencies, and other related topics

PEU

- Conduct preliminary outreach (canvassing, phonebanks, peer-to-peer texting) in buildings in priority geographies
- Identify individual tenants who are in need of support and provide case management to address housing related issues, referrals to City agencies and legal services
- Establish a referral system to HPD and contractors for buildings with widespread issues and patterns of harassment that may benefit from tenant organizing

VII. Upcoming Request for Proposals

In Fiscal Year 2023, HPD plans to release an RFP to solicit proposals from contractors to administer and implement Partners in Preservation in each borough alongside HPD-approved sub-contractors. Funding in each borough will be split between the contractors, for program administration and management, and their respective sub-contractors, for hiring additional organizers and program staff. HPD reserves the discretion to determine the final number of contracts and their respective award amount.

In the proposal, the contractors and proposed sub-contractors must demonstrate extensive knowledge of the unique needs of rent-regulated tenants in priority neighborhoods, an active history of tenant organizing on behalf of low-income New Yorkers, and the capacity to help HPD expand and institutionalize Partners in Preservation as a critical tool in preventing displacement and furthering housing preservation. Once selected, HPD will work with each borough contractor and its sub-contractors to customize the program to meet the diverse and unique needs of tenants across each borough.

The upcoming RFP will also specify the preferred make-up of the sub-contractors, ideally comprised of local, neighborhood-based organizations with a history of organizing



and community engagement in priority geographies (see draft map below). HPD will outline clear protocols to redirect contractor resources throughout the program, to ensure programmatic flexibility in response to evolving displacement concerns, city priorities, or continued underperformance.

Lastly, the RFP will outline expected deliverables and performance targets that the contractor and its sub-contractors must meet during the program, including outreach, organizing, and tenant education and events. The HPD team will jointly develop strategies with organizers to best meet the needs of the tenants and use the full force of City agencies and legal representation to ensure tenants know their rights and have the tools to hold their landlords accountable and stably remain in their homes.

The RFP will result in up to five contracts awarded—one in each borough.

VIII. Proposed Method of Evaluating Proposals

A contract will be awarded to the responsible proposer whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to HPD, taking into consideration the price and technical merit. Evaluation criteria will include, but not be limited to, the quality of the proposed approach and program design, make-up of the sub-contracting teams, existing capacity and organizational needs, and relevant experience providing similar services (particularly tenant organizing) in priority geographies, as stated in the questionnaire of the RFP.

Preference will be given to proposals that include sub-contractors from target geographies outlined in the RFP (i.e., areas experiencing high risk of tenant harassment based on our analysis of data from HPD's Tenant Harassment Risk Model and the City's Equitable Development Data Explorer). HPD will also consider the addition of sub-contractors representing other geographies not identified in the Agency's data analysis if the proposals make the case for high program need within those areas.

HPD will specify in the RFP the preferred make-up of the sub-contractors to ensure proper coverage in priority geographies, inclusion of smaller, nascent organizing groups, and clear representation of the diversity of tenants in each borough. HPD reserves the right to disapprove sub-contractors proposed by contractors if they do not meet the requirements of the program as will be outlined in the RFP. Likewise, HPD also reserves the right to recommend sub-contractors to contractors.

Moreover, proposals will be evaluated based on the organization's staffing model and organizational structure as it relates to capacity to deliver these services. HPD reserves the right to conduct site visits, interviews, and to request attendance of meetings as HPD deems applicable to evaluate the proposals.

IX. Proposed Term of the Contract(s)

It is anticipated that the term of the contract award for this RFP is for three years from fall/winter 2023 through fall/winter 2026. Renewal options will be available if funding allows. The timeline is subject to change.



X. Funding Information

HPD anticipates awarding up to five annual contracts for the three-year contract period, subject to renewal if funding allows. The amount of funding awarded in each borough will vary according to the quality of the proposal, the size of the sub-contracting team, proposed hiring needs, and expected outcomes (e.g., number of tenant associations, housing court actions initiated, etc.). HPD will also consider the current capacity to deliver the services outlined by the program in its evaluation. This amount includes funding for contract administration by the borough contractor and staffing and program costs for the sub-contractors.

It is anticipated that the payment structure of the contracts awarded from the RFP will be budget-based. HPD welcomes comments from potential proposers or other interested parties on the planned payment approach and will consider alternate approaches.

HPD reserves the right to determine the size of each contract based upon the quality of the proposal, the proposed sub-contractors, and demonstrated capacity and needs. Applicants should not exceed the anticipated maximum budget in their responses.

XI. Procurement Timeline

HPD anticipates that the RFP will be released in early 2023. A pre-proposal conference will be held approximately two weeks after the release of the RFP. The proposal due date will be approximately six weeks after the pre-proposals conference. It is anticipated that the contractors will be recommended for award by late summer 2023 with the contract start date in fall/winter 2023. The timeline is subject to change.

XII. Use of PASSPort and HHS Prequalification

To respond to the forthcoming Partners in Preservation 2.0 RFP, organizations must have an account and [an Approved HHS Accelerator PQL qualification](#) status in PASSPort. Proposals and Prequalification applications will ONLY be accepted through PASSPort. If you do not have a PASSPort account or Approved PASSPort HHS Accelerator PQL Application, please visit www.nyc.gov/passport to get started. If you have any questions about your HHS Accelerator PQL status or for assistance with creating a PASSPort account, please contact the Mayor’s Office of Contract Services (MOCS) by submitting an inquiry to the MOCS Service Desk.

XIII. Comments and Feedback

Comments and feedback are invited by CBOs, legal services providers, other housing stakeholders, and the community at large. Please email PIP@hpd.nyc.gov and indicate “Citywide Partners in Preservation Program Concept Paper” in the subject line of the email.

XIV. Provider Conference



In addition to the above, HPD will hold a conference for interested providers to gain additional information about the Partners in Preservation program and provide feedback and input directly to HPD. The conference will be held on **January 25, 2023, from 2:00pm to 3:30pm**. If you plan to attend this meeting, please visit [Citywide Partners in Preservation Info Session – Public Forum](#) to register, and/or email PIP@hpd.nyc.gov on or before **January 18, 2023 at 2pm** with the attendee's name and include **"Citywide Partners in Preservation RSVP"** in the subject line.

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