

WILLACY COUNTY STANDARD WEBSITE PUBLIC NOTICE

(Wednesday, May 22, 2023 – June 20, 2023)

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Planning Consultant

Willacy County Resilient Housing Guide

Background:

Willacy County was selected as a pilot community to develop a Resilient Housing Plan as part of an EPA-funded project titled: “Community Resilience Housing Guide: Creating a Stronger Post-Disaster Housing Framework for the Gulf Coast.” As a pilot community, Willacy County will receive technical support from a project team consisting of Smart Home America, Mississippi State University’s Gulf Coast Community Design Studio, and the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, along with funding to hire a Planning Consultant to assist with developing a Resilient Housing Plan that follows the general direction of the draft Resilient Housing Planning Guide developed by the project team.

Willacy county needs more intentional planning that enhances quality of life for residents of all ages, considers anticipated changes in the climate over time and prepares the community for disruptions. In 2020 the county took a closer step to actualizing this need by adopting a new countywide comprehensive plan that outlines a 20-year vision for the community and covers a variety of topics essential to the growth of the county. To continue this process, the county needs to address it’s housing issue. Many recent disasters have highlighted some vulnerabilities in their housing stock and policies. Willacy is at risk for tropical storms, storm surge, flooding, high winds, and wildfires. A Resilient Housing Guide would help increase availability of good, reliable homes and guide county and city staff in best practices for new development and set a plan for enhancing their recovery process after disaster events.

Scope:

Task 1: Complete Resilience Index Process with county, city staff and elected officials.

Set up a meeting, working with the project team leader to set a venue, invite the proper staff and set a date. The consultant will facilitate a discussion with staff regarding their resilience. At the conclusion the consultant will review the answers provided and write up a report that includes short- and long-term suggestions for Willacy and its municipalities to increase their resilience.

Deliverable:

- Community Resilience Index meeting
- A report with conclusions and recommendations

Task 2: Setting a baseline of Housing and Data Collection

The consultant will work with Project team leader to determine and invite individuals to participate on the Decision-Making Group. This group will help ground truth information during and after the data collection, guide chapter development, assist with planning outreach events and have final review of the guide.

The project team will decide on key areas within the county that will be focused on for the purposes of assessment. The following areas are likely to be included in the assessment:

- Raymondville
- Port Mansfield
- San Perlita
- Lyford
- Sebastian
- Housing Inventory
- Open Space Assessment
- Housing Age Inventory

Data sets and sources will be assessed in a 2.5 acre grid and will include but is not limited to:

- Housing Age- Appraisal Data
- Housing Density
- Housing Foundation Type
- Open Space Assessment- Texas GLO, TPWD
- Housing Type
- Building footprint- Microsoft
- Social Vulnerability Index-
- Flood Hazard Zones- TWDB, FEMA
- Wind Hazard Zones
- Building Codes
- Flood Management Ordinances
- Land Use/Zoning- USGS, NRCS
- NFIP/Severe Repetitive Loss- FEMA
- Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM)-FEMA
- BLE Viewer Data- TWDB

Deliverables:

- Outline of Data Sources
- GIS Map of existing housing units and structural vulnerability
- Analysis Tool for estimating probable damage and loss from various storm scenario
- Report that includes Housing Inventory, Open Space Assessment, Housing Age Inventory

Task 3: Engagement

Consultant will work with Project Team and Decision-making Group to invite appropriate stakeholders, to be determined by the county staff, to have an open house event. In collaboration with Texas A&M AgriLife CHARM team and the county, a selective stakeholder meeting will be scheduled to engage a variety of stakeholders from different backgrounds. The event will use data collected to produce visual materials, talk about goals of the project, and have activities that will collect feedback. An overview of the project up until this point will be presented to attendees.

The Project Team will work closely with the Team lead to craft a message that appeals to stakeholders and provides transparency about the process. Several entities are involved in supporting the development of the Guide and coordinating them to work together will be important for the success of the project.

Deliverables:

- Create Marketing and Meeting materials including visuals, like infographic boards, maps, images of housing types, etc.
- Planning and facilitating at least 1 meeting with strategic stakeholders
- Compiled Report of meeting process and feedback received

Task 4: Work with Project Team and Decision-Making Group to Complete Guide Chapters

Combining data collection and public feedback, the consultant will lead development of the chapters using the Resilient Housing Guide, developed by Smart Home America, as a guidebook. The remaining chapters will focus on how to decrease housing density in high-risk areas, increase housing density in lower risk areas, implementing more resilient building codes and coordinating how the county recovers after a disaster.

Resilient Housing Guide Chapters:

- Existing Housing Assessment
- Housing Land-Use Idealization Map
 - Displays desired location and types of housing to meet predicted housing needs
 - Housing density and Type
- Housing Land-Use Idealization Plan
- Damage and Loss Reduction Plan
 - Assessing land use policies in municipalities
 - Focus on housing renovations, new construction, and post disaster damage
- Disaster Recovery Housing Plan
 - Sheltering
 - Temporary housing
 - Repair
 - Replacement housing
- Community and Stakeholder Communication Plan

- Short term outreach activities to present housing guide
- Promote long-term ongoing programs to promote resilient land use/construction practices
- Strategic Funding
 - Options for available state & federal funds to pursue after disasters

The Decision-Making Group (DMG) will be crucial during this phase. The consultant will create the Housing Land-Use Idealization Map and hold a workshop or charette with the DMG to determine where added housing is desirable and where reduced housing is better. Factors such as the historical value and history of neighbors, dominant non-housing land uses, conservation and open space areas and zoning.

The land-use idealization plan will help to inform the Damage and Loss Reduction Plan, a prioritized action plan for improving resilience of housing structures. Aimed at reducing damage and loss to housing. Consultants will work with Team lead and DMG to think about land use policy changes, improvements to construction practices and resilience of housing that is repaired and built following a disaster. The DMG will think about the Housing Land Use Idealization exercise regarding how they feel housing and land use should be organized and reconcile that with the existing land use. The finished product will be a prioritized action plan for land-use and building standards.

To help prepare the community for potential disasters and what that means for recovery, a Disaster Recovery Housing Plan that considers the four stages of housing needs will be prepared. The four stages include: storm shelters, temporary housing, repair to existing housing and replacement housing. The plan will follow FEMA recommendation and will coordinate with the ongoing Hazard Mitigation Plan process. Specific stakeholders will be invited to participate this process including local elected/appointed officials, emergency management officials, local and region Emergency Support Function staff, American Red Cross and/or other non-governmental disaster response organizations, public housing authorities and rental property representatives.

As a way to ensure that this becomes an actionable plan with tangible goals and steps, the project team will create a Stakeholder and Community Education Plan to determine short-term outreach activities to educate the community about the plan and identify ongoing and potential new programs to promote resilient land use and construction practices, including FORTIFIED construction. Up to three meetings, inviting members of the public and relevant advocacy groups will be scheduled to maintain open communication about the goals and objectives of the plan. Appropriate forms of communication about project updates and upcoming meetings will be decided on with help of DMG and project lead.

Finally, the consultants will work with the project team and team lead to identify accessible pots of funding for mitigation and recovery. Including this in the plan will help the county to be prepared and informed about where to apply in the event they have extensive damage to their housing stock and need to rebuild. Information about the source, requirements and strategies for leveraging funding programs will be outlined in this section of the plan.

Deliverables:

- Housing Land-Use Idealization Map and Plan
- Workshop with Decision-Making Group about Housing Land-Use Idealization Map
- Damage and Loss Reduction Plan
- Disaster Recovery Housing Plan
- Stakeholder and Community Education Plan
- Strategic Funding Plan

Expected Outcomes for Willacy County:

- New Maps showing housing density and associated risk
- A suite of land use policy suggestions
- Proposed changes in development and construction priorities to lead to more resilient housing
- Create possible path forward to adopt more resilient building standards
- Outline of funding strategies for mitigation and recovery
- A path to inform and educate the community about the Plan

Compensation:

Compensation for the requested services will be \$20,000.

Terms:

Please provide a letter of interest that demonstrates an understanding of the project and scope of work along with a statement of qualifications by no later than 2:00 p.m., Tuesday, June 20, 2023. The selected Consultant will be properly licensed and have experience in this field.

This project should begin as soon as possible after selection of a consultant and should be completed by September 2023.

Please email your proposal to Jessica Rodriguez, Community Development Specialist at:

jessica.rodriguez@co.willacy.tx.us

Willacy County reserves the right to negotiate with any and all proposers, as per the Texas Professional Procurement Act and the Uniform Grant and Contract Management Standards, Minority Business Enterprises, Small Business Enterprises, Women Business Enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are encouraged to submit proposals. Willacy County is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

