AFFORDABLE HOUSING REFERENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY DATABASE (AHRAD)

NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

Date: **August 10, 2018**

Deadline: **Original: 2 p.m. EDT on September 3, 2018**
Now Extended to 2 p.m. September 11, 2018

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The District of Columbia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is requesting input on the design and approach to a new database and public website it is anticipating creating to provide District government agencies and residents comprehensive reference information on affordable housing in the District of Columbia drawn from existing administrative and public datasets. In addition to requesting information and comments on the technical aspects of the design and work plan for the Affordable Housing Reference and Accountability Database (AHRAD), DHCD welcomes suggestions on approaches to implementing the database and public website.

This document is a RFI only. It is not being posted as a statement of work (SOW) at this time, nor does it constitute a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Application (RFA) or a promise to issue any related solicitation in the future.

Respondents are advised that DHCD will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI. All costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party's expense. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future solicitation.

PURPOSE OF THE RFI

The purpose of this RFI is to solicit input from information technology professionals and DC's affordable housing and real estate community on the technical aspects of the design and work plan for the proposed AHRAD. Stakeholders responding to this RFI are asked to provide informed responses and feedback regarding the project overview below and describe any benefits, changes, limitations, unintended consequences, and potential economic gains or losses that may result from the project. In addition, respondents can provide recommendations (including proposed draft language for a future solicitation) regarding the best approach for system design and implementation—specifically noting how the system would address the District's objectives.

We encourage responses from organization or individuals with experience and expertise in providing public web-accessible electronic databases and records and document management services to local or federal government agencies particularly in the in the real estate, rental housing regulation, land management, or planning fields. We also encourage responses from individuals or organizations interested in using the information provided by AHRAD. These users may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- real estate developers;
- residential technical assistance providers and counselors;
- investors;
- consultant services;
- research entities;
- title insurance companies;
- realtors; and
- property managers.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The District of Columbia contains considerable rent- and income-restricted residential real estate. These units and properties have the objective of reducing housing instability and the housing cost burden for low- and moderate-income households in the District. Some of this real estate is restricted by covenants or contracts recorded by the District Government or the federal government in return for financing or operating assistance. Others have covenants that have been placed by the District in return for advantageous consideration in the zoning process or in return for the disposition of public property. The District's rent stabilization policies, commonly referred to as rent control, and other private efforts also contribute to this stock of housing.

There are currently numerous sources of information on various aspects of this stock, from recorded legal documents to administrative databases maintained by the government and private entities tracking real estate sales, conditions, and financing. The Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) maintains an Affordable Housing Database that tracks the additions to the stock from the programs it oversees. No single source, however, provides a comprehensive, up-to-date, regular, and reliable understanding of this entire income- and rent-restricted housing stock. Moreover, in the current data environment, the sources of data do not share unique identifiers to facilitate merging and a single reference dataset that can serve as a Rosetta Stone for these data does not exist. This makes it difficult for the public, industry and District government to quickly pull together an accurate picture of the size and composition of this stock, let alone of the people it is serving or the changes it is undergoing.

The result is that the existing data environment generates a variety of responses to questions such as, how much affordable housing does the District have, where does the District need affordable housing, what type of affordable housing does the District need, where is affordable housing needed? The lack of reference data system that provides basic stable data to public and government users can be a hindrance to the efficient production, preservation and allocation of affordable units and effective policy analysis and communications.

The AHRAD project seeks to remedy this current gap in our knowledge by creating both a comprehensive reference dataset that is continually being added to and updated as changes occur in the rent and income restricted housing stock and, within this dataset, providing a unique ID that can be included in other datasets to facilitate creating, sharing and merging data outside of the AHRAD dataset.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- To create an information management system comprised of specific information management processes and a technological solution, to use as a reference source for reporting on the stock of all the rent and income restricted units and properties in the District of Columbia.

- To create a reference database of all the rent and income restricted units and properties in the District of Columbia that can serve as a "golden record" to differentiate each unique property, thus increasing the standardization, matching, and integration of records related to affordable housing across the programs of the District government.

PROJECT APPROACH

If implemented, the AHRAD project will provide a system for collecting, standardizing, and updating records of affordable housing in the District of Columbia. It is meant to build off of rather than replace existing administrative and public sources of data. Though the AHRAD system is not meant to be a working or real-time database for the administration of any specific program or agency it will become the source of basic project information for these systems in starting a new record or in cleaning and confirming the information that they contain on affordable housing projects. The system must be flexible enough to accept data from a range of sources, both those that are currently existing and formats that might be reasonably anticipated in the future. Overtime it is expected that the interaction between the administrative data systems and AHRAD and the public will lead to a much more seamless data environment and increasingly greater and more complex integration of component systems.

As the name implies, the AHRAD will serve as a reference for identifying, tracking, and communicating the recent status of these properties and units in the District of Columbia. In the simplest terms, AHRAD would provide a regularly updated list of unique entries containing identifying and descriptive information of rent and income restricted properties and units in the District of Columbia.

The standardized records in the AHRAD would also be used to standardize records across District of Columbia's administrative data. Eventually, all property related databases in the District would be expected to contain a "unique ID" developed for AHRAD that would identify the record as being associated with an affordable housing program linking that property or unit directly to AHRAD and data on that project across District government data sources.

Project Phases
If implemented, it is anticipated that the project will be conducted in several phases. Input is sought on this proposed phasing:

Process Mapping and Gap Analysis
In this phase the contractor will work with agency staff to assess the current processes for gathering affordable housing information. The contractor will also determine what affordable housing information is not currently being captured. After mapping the current processes, the contractor will assess where technological and process improvements are needed in order to ensure the comprehensiveness and accuracy of administrative data.

Web Application and Database Design
In this phase the contractor will work with DHCD staff, in consultation with DMPED and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO), to develop detailed plans for a relational database management systems (RDBMS) that meets the requirements of the agency and present these plans to senior staff of the agency for final approval.

District of Columbia Government Database and Ongoing Process Implementation
In this phase the contractor will implement the database including beta testing, staff training, and a period of trouble shooting after release.

Administrative Data Standardization
In this phase the District and current contractors managing District data will implement systems to update their records using AHRAD's unique ID and the information contained in the AHRAD system.

Operations and Maintenance
This is the permanent operations phase of the project, in which District staff/ Contractors will maintain the existing records; update the data in AHRAD from existing sources and the input from the public; and proactively add sources and conduct research to add properties currently providing affordable housing to AHRAD that do not currently have records or have insufficient data to complete their AHRAD records using existing sources. While responses to this RFI and any subsequent solicitation must indicate a clear understanding of how this phase of AHRAD will be best implemented, this phase of the project should be considered separate from the initial design and implementation phases that are the subject of this RFI.

Public Web Application Release
In this phase the contractor will implement the public facing web application including beta testing, staff training, and a period of trouble shooting after release.

Database Characteristics
DHCD is willing to entertain any system that meets the objectives discussed above. To facilitate responding to the RFI, respondents may wish to respond in reaction to the system design outlined here.

DHCD currently conceives of AHRAD becoming a data intermediary between end-users and existing or future administrative data systems. Formally, the data in this system would circulate in a one direction from administrative and public data sources to becoming a "golden record" and back to these underlying systems to preserve the integrity of the AHRAD. (Figure 1, next page provides a heuristic illustration).

While it is anticipated that the AHRAD will gather a wide range of data from administrative and public data sources, the golden record that emerges from this data will contain a much more limited set of generally applicable, stable and unambiguous data sufficient to identify and provide a basic description of the property. At bare minimum, the golden records in the AHRAD system would contain:

1. A unique ID
2. A geographic description of the location of the property
3. A geographic description of the individual buildings and parcels associated with the property that provides a direct link to the DC GIS Master Address Repository
4. A description of the units found at the property
5. A listing of the assistance programs, rent or income restrictions associated with the property

As Figure 1 (next page) indicates it is then assumed that the administrative databases will attempt to integrate the standardized data into their data systems by using the unique ID and golden record data when starting new records or by confirming and updating their records with data from the golden record. These new or updated administrative records including any changes to properties or other information that may conflict with the current golden record would then be uploaded to the collector again on a regular schedule and the process would begin again. Similarly, as shown in Figure 1, outside users could communicate changes or concerns they have regarding the data to the AHRAD system.

It is important to note that Figure 1 does not attempt to show all the information flows used in confirming and standardizing the data. It also does not show administrative reporting and data work that will occur outside of AHRAD. The expectation is that public and government users would not be limited to the data in AHRAD for research and accountability efforts but that AHRAD in addition to facilitating the matching of data, would provide a service as a "control" for such efforts in determining the number, location, and characteristics of affordable properties in the District.

Figure 1
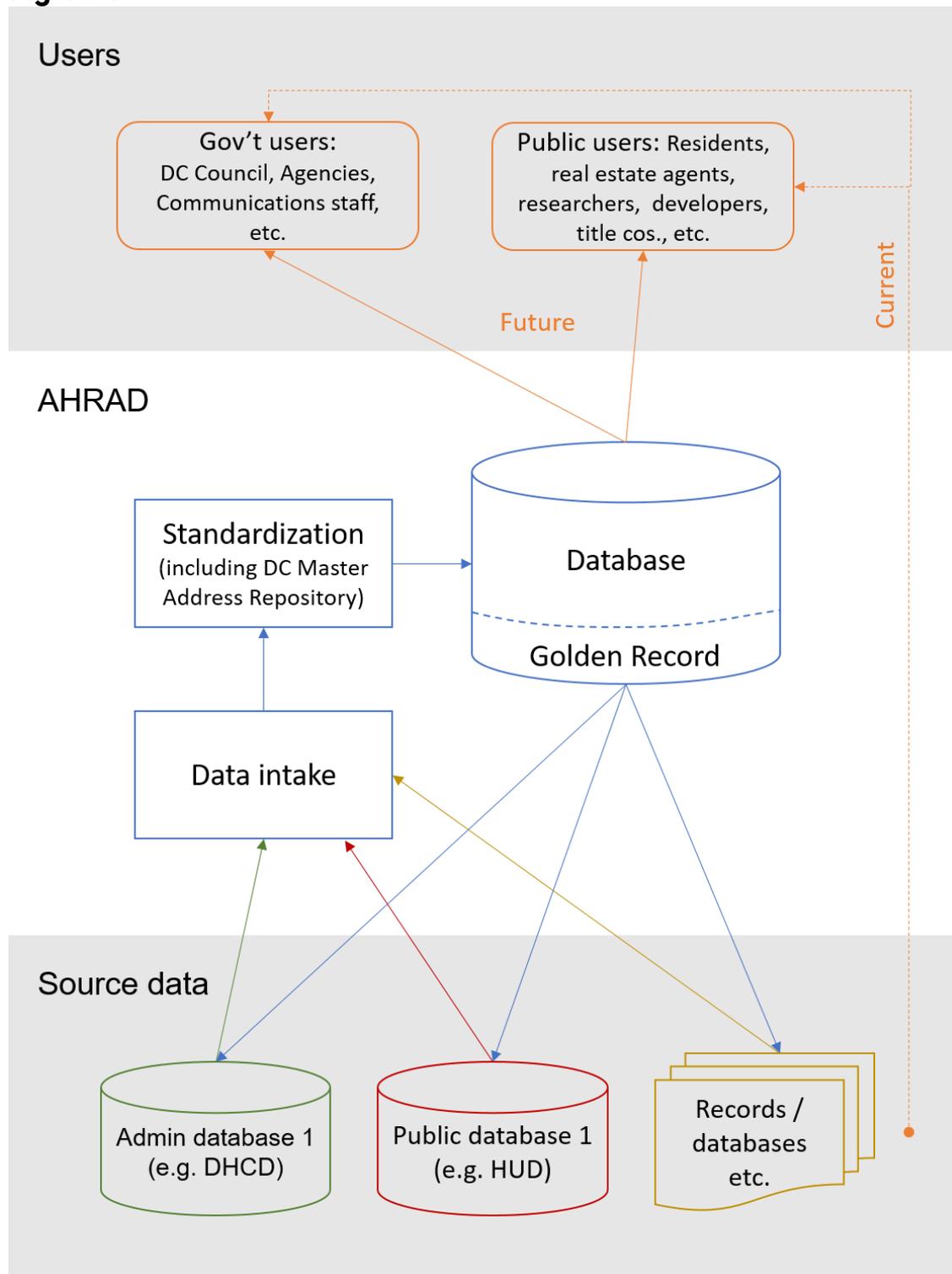
Existing Data Environment and AHRAD Sources
Potential Data Sources (Types of Data) for AHRAD

Department of Housing and Community Development*
- Development Finance Division Application system
- Development Finance Division Pipeline
- Inclusionary Zoning Dashboard
- Property Acquisition and Disposition Division Properties
- DCHousingSearch.org
- Rent Control Clearinghouse Database (Forthcoming)

Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED)*
- DMPED Real Estate Project Pipeline Database
- Affordable Housing Database

Office of Chief Technology Officer
- DC GIS Master Address Repository

Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs
- Business Licensing Online Services
- CorpOnline
- Online Construction Permit Intake (OCPI 2.O)
- Property Information Verification System (PIVS)

Department of Human Services*
- Master leases
- Short-term Family Housing

Department of Behavioral Health*
- Project and tenant based assistance

DC Housing Authority*
- Public Housing and Project Based Vouchers

DC Housing Finance Agency*
- 4-percent Low Income Housing Tax Credits and Bond Projects

DC Office of Tax and Revenue
- Real Property Tax Database
- Tax abatements

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*
- Low Income Housing Credit Data System
- Physical Inspection Scores by State
- Insured Multifamily Mortgages Database
- https://data.hud.gov/data_sets.html
- Picture of Subsidized Housing

Nongovernmental Public Sources
- DC Preservation Catalog
- National Housing Preservation Database (NHPD)

Private Vendors

*Core information providers that directly create/fund affordable housing

As discussed and shown in the figure above, the District foresees AHRAD as complementing the existing data environment, sitting atop current and future administrative and public data systems. A list of the potential sources of information for AHRAD, whether ultimately used as inputs or for verification, is included in the text box.

QUESTIONS FOR RESPONDENTS

Comments and recommendations related to any of elements of the above project objectives, project description and database structure are welcome. Specific areas of interest are below. Respondents need not address all questions.

1. How well would the project approach and database structure described above address the project objectives?

   a. Could the approach or structure be revised to more effectively address the objectives?

   b. What risks or feasibility challenges could threaten success? What revisions to approach or structure would improve feasibility?

2. Is the phasing in of the project described above appropriate or are there other ways that the DHCD should consider splitting up the implementation of the project that would be more efficient or effective?

3. How should we define the properties and units to be included in AHRAD?

   a. Should it be broad to include rent controlled units or others without direct federal or District subsidy?

4. What data sources or other information should be included in an eventual Scope of Work as likely sources for AHRAD?

5. What specific technology, programs or programming languages should the District consider in developing AHRAD?

6. What qualifications, experiences and credentials would be essential and beneficial for the developer of AHRAD? Provide rationale.

7. How should the system be operated and maintained once it is implemented and are there ways in which District should consider operating AHRAD as a Public-Private partnership and should the District consider any structure for AHRAD in which it does not own, directly manage or maintain AHRAD?

8. Are there innovative models that have been implemented elsewhere that offer insights for the District in developing AHRAD?

9. How many staff will be necessary to manage the AHRAD system?

10. What business rules or processes should be used to establish a reference address for a property?

11. What specific data points should be included in the golden record in addition to the Unique ID?

12. What should the District consider in developing a unique ID?

13. How should the system retain historical data on the stock of rent and income restricted housing in the District of Columbia?

Respondent Information Requested

Respondents should include the following information if interested in playing a future role in AHRAD:

- **Team/Company Contact:** company name(s), address(es), contact name, contact information

- **Response Summary:** Describe the company/team's interest; experience/expertise of company/team; overall approach for delivering the program;

- **Project Approach:** Describe how the team would approach the project and, if applicable, describe how and why the approach recommended differs from what is described above.

- **Project Cost:** Describe the likely types of costs associated with the approach the team is proposing and if possible provide in dollars a specific estimate or range of estimates so that DHCD can understand the budget implications of any future solicitation.

- **Roles:** The optimal role of the District Government and any other recommended project partners

- **Respondent's Capabilities:** Describe the history and structure of the organization(s), direct relevant experience on similar projects, and resources available to perform the work suggested in the project approach

All respondents should provide name, company, title and contact information (email, phone, mailing address).

KEY DATES

RFI Released	August 10, 2018
RFI Due	Originally: 2 p.m. EDT on September 3, 2018 Extended to 2 p.m. EDT on September 11, 2018