

# Community Compass RFP

## Frequently Asked Questions

Lohengrin Foundation · June 2026

### COMMUNITY COMPASS OVERVIEW

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#### ***How did the Foundation develop the Community Compass approach?***

Community Compass emerged from the Foundation's ongoing learning and its commitment to centering those most directly impacted by the issues we care about. Between 2024 and 2026, the Foundation piloted this approach through its [Thriving Youth, Stronger Communities Capital Investment Initiative](#), which used community listening to define a grant focus area, convened a Community Advisory Council to make recommendations at each stage of the application process, and held community engagement sessions in finalist communities. Community Compass is the next iteration of that work, now applied more broadly to our grantmaking approach.

#### ***When will grants be distributed — during Phase 1 or 2, or is this process only to develop the strategy for future grantmaking?***

This contract covers strategy development and community engagement only, not grant deployment. Grants will be made after the completion of Phase 2, approximately late 2027, informed by the design, review, and recommendations of the Community Advisory Council. The Foundation's staff will manage the grant deployment process. Consulting support for grant deployment is outside the scope of this work.

### STRATEGY & FOCUS AREA

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#### ***Why did the Foundation select housing as its new funding focus area, and how does it connect to your current priorities?***

Housing was selected as a focus area based on funding requests from community organizations in both Chicago and Massachusetts. The Foundation chose to launch Community Compass in this area precisely because we believe that learning about housing must come from community members, community organizations, and practitioners working on the ground — rather than from assumptions we make internally about what communities need.

For the Foundation, housing means partnering with organizations and collaboratives that advance housing rights for historically marginalized communities. We believe stable, sustained housing is not only a basic need but also a vehicle for generational and community wealth-building and long-term economic mobility. Our work in this area will prioritize support for efforts that address barriers to homeownership, equitable lending, and the intergenerational transfer of housing assets through policy, advocacy, and transformational programming.

### GEOGRAPHIES

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#### ***How were the communities selected, and is the Foundation committed to making grants specifically in these neighborhoods?***

The 14 communities were selected by analyzing housing data, including eviction rates, homeownership rates, building code violations for dwelling units, the number of school-aged children in a community, and existing grantee relationships. All communities are identified in the RFP and are listed below.

Data from listening sessions will be aggregated at the geographic level rather than the neighborhood level. While these communities anchor the engagement process, future funding is not restricted to them. Grants will be made within the broader geographies of Chicago, Boston, and the Massachusetts Gateway Cities.

**Track B — Chicago (8 communities):**

- Englewood
- East Garfield Park
- Humboldt Park
- North Lawndale
- South Lawndale (Little Village)
- South Shore
- West Garfield Park
- Woodlawn

**Track C — Massachusetts (6 communities):**

- Chelsea
- East Boston
- Lynn
- Mattapan
- Roxbury
- Springfield

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## RESEARCH & LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

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***What questions are you seeking to answer through landscape analysis and secondary research?***

The landscape analysis, secondary research, and asset mapping are intended to help contextualize housing challenges and surface the solutions local partners are already working on — providing a foundation for the Community Advisory Council and the Board of Directors as they deliberate. Specifically, we are looking to understand:

- What does government and publicly available data tell us about housing conditions in each geography?
- Who are the organizations and leaders advancing housing solutions in these communities?
- What policy and advocacy agendas are currently moving forward in this space?
- What does the funding landscape look like in each area?

We are looking to the Strategy Consultant and Community Engagement Consultants to recommend appropriate data sources and datasets based on their experience and knowledge of each geography.

***When the RFP references “3–5 priority issues per geography,” does that mean per city or per neighborhood?***

The goal for surfacing 3–5 priority issues is at the geographic level: one set for Chicago and one set for Massachusetts (encompassing both Boston neighborhoods and Gateway Cities). Data from listening sessions in each community will be aggregated for the larger geographic area and not reported as separate issue sets per neighborhood.

***What is the reason for requiring at least 30 participants per listening session?***

The 30-person minimum is intended to ensure breadth of perspective across each community. We are not expecting a statistically representative sample, but we do want multiple cross-sections of community members present at each session. In addition, Engagement Consultants are asked to provide a virtual feedback option for those who cannot attend in person, further expanding the reach of input gathered.

## COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCILS

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***What is the anticipated size and composition of each CAC, and what time commitments are expected?***

Each Community Advisory Council is projected to include between 9 and 14 members per geographic area, for a total of 18 to 28 members across the two councils. Councils will comprise community members, community leaders, organizers, activists, youth, philanthropic leaders, and nonprofit leaders, with lived experience in housing prioritized across groups.

The specific time commitment structure is still being developed in consultation with the Strategy Consultant. Based on the Foundation's prior experience with advisory councils, members have typically met regularly with approximately four hours of review per month. This experience will likely hold most advisory council meetings virtually. Proposals should budget based on this general expectation, with the understanding that the final structure will be finalized during the planning period.

***Who is responsible for identifying, recruiting, and maintaining relationships with CAC members?***

Foundation staff will be responsible for selecting CAC members and maintaining ongoing relationships with the councils. The Strategy Consultant and Engagement Consultants will be looked to for insight and local context in support of that relationship. The Foundation welcomes recommendations from Engagement Consultants, who are well-positioned to identify strong community candidates given their local rootedness. The Engagement Consultants' role during CAC meetings is to provide local context and support note-taking, while the Strategy Consultant will support agenda-setting and the preparation of materials for Council review.

***Has the Foundation facilitated Community Advisory Councils before?***

Yes. The Foundation has prior experience facilitating Community Advisory Councils, including through the Thriving Youth, Stronger Communities Capital Investment Initiative. For Community Compass, the Foundation is seeking support from the Strategy Consultant with agenda-setting and materials development for Council sessions. Engagement Consultants are asked to support local contextualization facilitation and to take notes during meetings.

***What criteria will determine whether the CAC facilitation role continues beyond year one?***

Because Community Compass is launching for the first time in the Housing focus area, the Foundation will need to evaluate what is working and what needs to change at the close of year

one. The CAC facilitation role for the Community Engagement Consultants is scoped for year one and will be reviewed annually by mutual agreement with Foundation staff.

## SCOPE & ROLE CLARITY

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***For firms pursuing both Track A and Track C, how will the Foundation manage for potential bias when the Strategy Consultant is also synthesizing findings from their own geography?***

The Foundation recognizes this as a legitimate concern and takes managing for bias seriously. Consultants applying for more than one track should address this directly in their proposal — for example, by describing how they would assign different staff to manage different areas of work, or by providing examples of how they have navigated similar situations in prior engagements.

***The track structure in the RFP can read as hierarchical. Is the Foundation open to a more collaborative approach, or to a joint application from two firms?***

The three tracks are intended to be collaborative, not hierarchical. The Strategy Consultant's role is to develop the overarching engagement framework in order to generate consistent and comparable findings across both geographies. Engagement Consultants are expected to actively contribute local insights to that framework and adapt it to the specific communities they serve. The Foundation values this as a genuine partnership.

Joint applications, where two firms apply together as a team, are welcome. If applying jointly, proposals should clearly describe how the two organizations will divide responsibilities, coordinate across tracks, and manage the relationship between their respective scopes.

***What role will Foundation staff play throughout this process?***

Foundation staff will be consistent and active partners at every stage. The Strategy Consultant serves as an advisor and framework-builder, developing tools and protocols that Foundation staff will operationalize. Engagement Consultants lead community listening and local implementation within their geography. Foundation staff will participate in joint planning sessions, co-develop the implementation plan during the planning period, support CAC orientation and ongoing engagement, and ultimately carry the CAC recommendation package to the Foundation's Board of Directors for deliberation.

***If a nonprofit organization is selected as a consultant, will it be eligible to receive grants through the Housing program?***

No. If a nonprofit organization is selected as a consultant partner, it will be ineligible to receive grants in this grant cycle due to the inherent conflict of interest in supporting the design of the grant program.

## TIMELINE & CONTRACT

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***What is the length of the contract?***

The contract is expected to run 12–18 months across 2026 and 2027. The planning period begins in August 2026. For Track B and C consultants, the scope concludes upon submission of community validation documentation (Spring–Summer 2027). The Track A contract extends through

Fall 2027 to cover Year One Learning Documentation, with the specific submission date to be negotiated with the selected consultant during the contracting process.

***Are there sensitive dates or external events driving the timeline?***

There are no predetermined external events currently driving the timeline. The Foundation's priority is to move resources to communities as efficiently as possible while taking the time needed to be respectful of community members and CAC participants throughout the process.

***Phase 2 and Community Validation overlap in Spring 2027. How is the Foundation thinking about consultant capacity during that period?***

Community validation is understood as an extension of issue identification: After the CAC has identified priority issues based on listening session findings, Engagement Consultants will return to community to verify that what was heard accurately reflects community priorities. Proposals should address how applicants plan to manage capacity during this period. The Foundation will work with selected consultants to sequence deliverables in a way that is realistic and sustainable.

## **BUDGET**

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***Can the Foundation share any parameters to help firms submit realistic proposals?***

Because Community Compass is a new area of work, the Foundation is seeking competitive proposals to help establish the appropriate budget range, which will be presented to its Board of Directors for approval once proposals are received. Based on similar, though not identical, initiatives the Foundation has completed previously, strategy and engagement consultants have ranged from \$25,000 to \$100,000. We ask that proposals reflect your best competitive bid proportionate to the scope of the track(s) you are applying for, broken out by deliverable and accompanied by a clear budget narrative.

***Will the Foundation cover translation, interpretation, and other inclusive convening costs, or should those be included in the consulting budget?***

The Foundation will cover direct convening costs, including translation and interpretation services, meeting space, food, and CAC member compensation. Proposals should focus on the cost of the work required to produce the contracted deliverables. If you anticipate needing other inclusive convening supports not listed here, please flag them in your budget narrative so we can clarify coverage.

## **PROCESS**

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***Will organizations that apply for multiple tracks be able to increase the page limit?***

Organizations submitting multiple tracks in the RFP must adhere to the specified page limit. However, they are encouraged to include an appendix for additional examples or frameworks. While any organization can use an appendix without a page limit, they should ensure to refer to these materials within their main proposal.

***Will finalist interviews be conducted separately by track or simultaneously for all tracks?***

Finalist interviews will be conducted simultaneously across all tracks during the week of July 13, 2026. This approach allows the Foundation to assess cross-track collaboration and compatibility from the outset. Finalists should prepare the principal proposal team member, three sample documents from similar prior projects, and three references.

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*Questions not addressed here may be submitted to [info@lohengrinfdn.org](mailto:info@lohengrinfdn.org). The recording and slide deck from the May 27 Pre-Proposal Information Session are posted on our website, [Lohengrinfdn.org](https://lohengrinfdn.org).*