**2025 Community Based Organization Interview Questions**

*Criteria for eligibility as a Community Based Organization are found in section 4.5 “Projects that are by and for the community” in the policy document. Each organization seeking to qualify as a CBO, including the Developer/Sponsor Organization if applicable, will be interviewed by staff using the following questions as a guideline. This includes any CBO conducting community engagement.*

*\*For clarification on terms found in this document, please refer to the section entitled “Terms- Definitions and Explanations” at the end of the document.*

***You do not need to submit a written response to these questions as part of your application. Written summaries of information given to staff during the interview process will be included in your application file.***

**QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED PRIOR TO APPLICATION**

*These questions will be used to determine if the organization does or does not qualify as a Community Based Organization for the specific project indicated, according to the policy.*

1. What is/are the **Community(ies) Harmed by housing disparities\*** you are engaging with (identity- and/or geography-based)?
2. Tell us about the leadership (board, paid staff, advisors, etc.) of your organization and their **specific lived experience\*** as part of the community you are engaging with.
3. Tell us about the **proximity\*** of the decision makers (if applicable, those making decisions about this project’s development and management) at the organization (top leadership and board) to on-the-ground work in the community (examples could include but are not limited to):
   1. Currently identifies as a member of the community you are engaging with
   2. Lives in/with the community you are engaging with
   3. Is a displaced member of the community you are engaging with
   4. Has children who attend(ed) school in/with the community you are engaging with
   5. Is an active member of a civic, religious, recreational or advocacy organization within the community you are engaging with
   6. Interacts with members of the community you are engaging with on a weekly or more frequent basis
   7. Volunteers with the community you are engaging with at least 4 hours per month
   8. Is a trusted member known to many within the community you are engaging with
   9. Receives or has received services as a member of the community you are engaging with
4. How do the CBO’s previous activities relate to the identified community(s)? Include all services especially any beyond housing development/management.
5. What was the origin of the CBO in this specific community (may include one or more of the following):
   1. Grew organically from within the community
   2. Filled a need identified by the community
   3. Expanded to include this community, by either broadening the specific identity-based communities this CBO serves, or by extending the geographic footprint of the CBO
   4. Formed a (formal or informal) partnership with an organization within the community, such as a housing developer, a religious, civic, economic development or other community entity.
   5. Established a physical presence in the community, by locating their own office space there; building housing there; or any other commercial enterprise physically located within the community.
6. If 20 members of the community you are engaging with were randomly surveyed, would they know what the CBO is and what it does? Would they say it reflects and represents the members of their community?
7. What is the CBO’s current physical presence in the community? Where do community members find and engage with the CBO?
8. What is the CBO’s anticipated role/relationship with the developer for this project?
9. What are the CBO’s goals for this project? How will the CBO measure success (short-, medium- and long-term)?
10. Do you understand the application process for this resource? Is there anything about the process that you would like to discuss?
11. Do you have the support you need to enter into this process with the developer/sponsor organization?
12. Staff may ask additional follow-up questions.

**TERMS- Definitions and Explanations**

**Community(ies) Harmed by Housing Disparities:** Geographic- and/or identity-based groups who face racial discrimination and economic or historic barriers to participation in the development and displacement process.

There are three steps organizations can use to identify Communities Harmed by housing disparities(s). First, set physical boundaries and identify the geographic space. Second, identify the different communities that exist in that space at present or who have existed there historically, and educate yourself on their history. What cultural ties do they have? What barriers do they face when attempting to fulfill their basic needs? For communities who have been displaced and no longer occupy the same geographic space, what factors contributed to their displacement? Finally, ask which communities have the most "ownership" (who has historically lived in this geographic space) but lack the most "leverage" to respond to issues of interest (who has been or will be displaced because they lack resources to become homeowners? Who has historically lacked negotiating power when responding to development?). These steps should be conducted with a CBO partner who represents the community of interest.

**Lived Experience** Lived experience is personal knowledge about the world gained by identifying as a member of the affected group, either currently or at some point in the past.

A community representative with lived experience should be from the geographic and/or cultural community your development is in, and/or share characteristics such as racial identity, gender identity, class, ability, or sexual orientation. They have ties to the community that you are preparing to enter, and they can serve as a liaison who fairly represents the needs of the community, particularly if that community has been historically marginalized.

**Proximity** How connected organizational decision makers are to the on-the-ground experience of the community.

**Disparities** Housing disparities are a form of economic inequality where the quantity and quality of available housing is insufficient to meet the needs of an entire population. This results in insufficient housing options for low- and extremely low-income populations, disproportionately borne by people of color and other underserved groups, who face additional barriers to accessing basic needs and services.

This economic inequality is compounded by inequitable access to opportunities for developing generational wealth which includes historic discriminatory housing practices such as redlining and racial covenants. These practices were used by private and public institutions to prevent BIPOC communities specifically from acquiring financial assets. The stolen labor and subsequent wealth accumulated in previous generations by BIPOC communities continues to benefit white institutions, which perpetuate racial inequities today.