Friends of the North Country, Inc.

1387 Hardscrabble Road
Cadyville, NY 12918
Email: cnarducci@friendsofthenorthcountry.org
Phone: (518)293-5045 Fax: (518)293-5017

How It Works For Contractors:

This briefing is for contractors who work with or are interested in working with Housing Rehabilitation Programs administered by Friends of the North Country, Inc. It outlines what to expect and what is expected of the contractor.

How to Become an Eligible Contractor:

To participate in programs administered by Friends of the North Country, each contractor must complete the "Eligible Contractor Application". The contractor must also sign the "Affirmative Action Agreement", provide at least three (3) references, and provide proof of at least $1,000,000.00 in commercial general liability insurance coverage. (If work is being performed in the City of Plattsburgh, the contractor's insurance must include a One Million Occurrence/Two Million Aggregate and the City of Plattsburgh must be named as an Additional Insured.) Contractors with employees must carry Worker's Compensation and NYS Disability for all employees. The contractor's sub-contractors must provide evidence of the same coverage. Any contractor/sub-contractor relationship must comply with Internal Revenue Service and NYS Worker's Compensation Board rules.

After the contractor's application and other paperwork are received and reviewed, a determination will be made as to whether the contractor will be placed on Friends' Eligible Contractors List. Friends reviews the Federal Debarment List, Workers Comp filings, Social Media, References, etc. **(If the contractor has previously worked on any programs administered by Friends, their prior experience will also be considered when the final determination is being made.)**

Any contractor, and his/her employee(s), performing Lead Hazard Reduction work must be certified in Safe Work Practices, and/or must be performing that work under the direct supervision of an EPA Certified Lead Abatement Supervisor. Bid requests for projects involving Lead Hazard Reduction work will only be sent to contractors that provide their qualifications to Friends of the North Country, Inc.

How Contractors Are Selected

The Eligible Contractors List is sent to the homeowner(s) for their review and approval before the project moves on to the Sealed Bid process. The homeowner(s) may cross any contractor(s) off the list if they choose to do so.

The proposed Work Write-Up and Bid Proposal Form are then sent to the approved contractors for each project, along with a Memo soliciting Sealed Bids. The Memo has the date and time that the Sealed Bids are due. Contractors are urged to visit the job site prior to submitting a Sealed Bid as the Work Write-Up only gives estimated measurements and dimensions. **(For replacement projects, contractors must visit the job site before submitting a Sealed Bid.)**

A Housing Coordinator will answer any questions that may arise regarding the proposed Work Write-Up before the Sealed Bid due date. Sealed Bid responses must be valid for at least 90 days. Phone bids are NOT accepted.

Sealed Bids will be publicly opened at the date and time specified on the Memo. For each project, it is necessary to have received at least three (3) unqualified bids* (although some funding sources only require two) and the lowest unqualified bid must be within the programmatic allowable variance from an in-house estimate. In-house estimates for each project that is sent out for Sealed Bid are prepared and on file before the Sealed Bid opening and are strictly confidential. Friends of the North Country will not share in-house estimates with any party, other than State or Federal agencies, for compliance.

Projects may be re-bid as written, or revised and re-bid if no bid(s) seem reasonable. Friends of the North Country, Inc. reserves the right to reject any and all bids. Project bid results are reviewed and approved (or disapproved) at monthly board meetings. Bid Comparison Charts, a summary of all contractor bids from the Sealed Bid opening, are prepared and available upon request. (*An *unqualified bid* will have no added qualifying language, conditions, modifications, contingencies, etc.)

Contractors must disclose on the Bid Proposal Form, for each project, if they intend to use a sub-contractor. Sub-contractors may NOT be used on a job without prior approval from Friends of the North Country, Inc.

Contracts and Starting the Project

After a project has been board approved, the contractor (or their insurance company) must provide a certificate of insurance with the Homeowner, Friends, and the specific funding source(s) (ex. NYS HCR, HYS HTFC, etc.) listed as "Certificate Holders". After the contractor's insurance certificate is obtained, contracts are generated outlining the project. The contracts are an agreement between the contractor and the homeowner. They include, among other things, the Work Write-Up, contractors' insurance, and the expected project start by and completion dates. Most projects are scheduled for a 90-day completion period, but allowances may be made for large projects, scheduling conflicts, weather, and on a case-by-case basis.

When the contracts are ready for execution (signing), Friends will contact the contractor and the homeowner. The homeowner will issue the contractor a written Proceed Order after the contracts are signed and the contractor is expected to commence work within the time frame specified in the Contract.

No work may start until all of the contract documents are fully executed and the Proceed Order is issued. Prior to starting work, the contractor must obtain a Building Permit and provide a copy to Friends of the North Country by fax, e-mail, text, USPS mail, or hand-deliver it to our office. **(The first project payment cannot be processed without a copy of the Building Permit.)**

Progress

Friends of the North Country staff will monitor construction milestones for the purpose of payments and quality of work. The local Building Inspector, or Code Enforcement Officer, will occasionally inspect the job and is required to do a final inspection in order to issue a Certificate of Completion/Occupancy. **This Certificate of Completion/Occupancy is required in order to process the final payment requisition.**

Payments

The contractor must contact a Housing Coordinator in order to request a payment for work completed. Friends staff will prepare the payment request documents, review the work progress at the site, and obtain the necessary signatures. Payments are made for completed work only and a 10% retainage is withheld from each payment until the entire job is complete. **(Most programs limit each project to 3 payment requests, however is varies from program to program.)**

All payments are made in the form of two-party checks, payable to both the homeowner and the contractor. Homeowner endorsement is required on each check prior to contractor receipt. Please note that once payment requests are signed, checks are **not** issued instantaneously. Funds can take anywhere from 1-4 weeks to be received from the applicable funding program.

Change Orders

Change Orders will only be issued for items not included in the original Work Write-Up and would not have been able to be seen during the Housing Coordinator's initial assessment; allowance of Change Orders also varies dependent on funding source. Change Orders must be pre-approved by Friends of the North Country, in writing and signed by all applicable parties. **(A contractor cannot be paid for any work not included in the Work Write-Up attached to Contracts without an approved change order signed by all applicable parties.)**

Warranty and Lien Waivers

As of the final payment request for each project, the contractor must certify that there are no liens, including those of sub-contractors and suppliers, on the project. The final payment form will include a contractor certification statement that all vendors, suppliers, etc. have been paid. This form also includes a statement saying the contractor will provide a one-year warranty on all work and provide the homeowner with all other warranties, such as roofing material, water heaters, etc. **(A completed Warranty and Lien Waiver is required in order to process a final payment.)**

Removal from the Eligible Contractor List

A contractor may be removed from the Eligible Contractor List for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, unsatisfactory workmanship, failure to complete work in a timely manner, and failure to correct problems covered by the project warranty.

A contractor may also be temporarily prohibited from receiving bids if they have already been awarded three (3) (moderate to substantial) bids that are being funded by grant programs administered by Friends of the North Country, Inc.

Conflicts of Interest

Contractors must disclose if they have financial or family relationships with staff or Board Members of Friends of the North Country, Inc. Contractors will be excluded from participating in programs administered by Friends of the North Country if a conflict of interest is found to exist.