



## **Invitation to tender:**

### **Feasibility study of shared premises for women's organisations**

#### **Background**

The cost of premises is the second highest expenditure, after staff costs, of most voluntary and community organisations (VCOs). Women's organisations, like many other VCOs, find identifying appropriate, accessible and affordable premises challenging.

The Women's Resource Centre (WRC) is looking at the feasibility of purchasing a building or other appropriate premises within London (zones 1 or 2), in which to house itself, other women's third sector organisations and social enterprise/s. We envisage that the premises will house a mixture of second tier and frontline organisations who could share some back-office functions if feasible. The inclusion of frontline services will also provide benefits to the local community in which the premises are located. The premises would be financially self-sustaining, and eventually a means of generating a small profit, would be accessible to disabled people and environmentally sustainable.

WRC are seeking tenders from suitably qualified individuals or organisations to undertake a feasibility study to assess the needs of women's organisations in relation to premises and back-office functions. We would want the report to cover whether, and if so how, the project will be financially viable, identify support and opportunities for taking the project forward, and provide any additional information to enable the trustees to take a decision on the risks and implications for WRC and what would need to be put in place to enable the project to be viable.

#### **About the Women's Resource Centre**

WRC is a membership-based umbrella body which supports women's VCOs to be more effective and sustainable. We provide training, information, resources and one-to-one support on a range of organisational development issues. We also lobby decision makers on behalf of the women's third sector for improved representation and funding.

WRC provides a host of services both to our membership and the wider women's voluntary and community sector (VCS). Our activities fall into three broad categories: policy and research; development and capacity building; and information dissemination.

WRC has 324 members, 37% of which are black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) organisations and 45% have an annual income of under £100,000. Our members work in a wide range of fields, delivering services to, and campaigning on behalf of, some of the most marginalised communities of women. WRC is a national organisation which is based in London.

### **Our values are:**

- Feminism
- Equality
- Integrity
- Collaboration
- Professionalism
- Environmental sustainability.

### **Objectives of the feasibility study**

1. Establish what the needs of women's organisations are in relation to co-location including back-office functions and types of space needed (e.g. office, storage, private counselling, sessional, meeting spaces etc)
2. Assess the business case for this project and establish whether it is financially viable and the risks involved in taking it on
3. Present the various options with an assessment of costs, possibilities for social enterprise, environmental sustainability, accessibility and the financial viability for each option.
4. Identify what opportunities there are in London for locating an appropriate space
5. Identify appropriate support agencies and potential funding streams that WRC could access to take this project forward
6. Provide any additional information necessary to make a strong business case for different audiences including finance options, the multiple benefits of the project, case studies for referral etc

### **Methodology**

1. Conduct a needs assessment of women's organisations. This would include:

- Identifying the current challenges facing women's organisations in relation to premises and back-office services
  - Whether organisations would consider co-locating with other women's organisations
  - What type of space is needed
  - What back-office and other services women's organisations would consider sharing
  - What other services women's organisations would like to have offered on the premises
2. Research and provide case studies of other co-located spaces and how they work. This would include:
- Photos
  - Plans
  - Any evaluations undertaken
  - Costs
  - Competition and gaps in the market
  - Feedback and comments on how co-location has worked (or not) and the learning
3. Present different options available with associated full costs and potential returns based on different spaces and different models of income generation. For each option, this would include:
- Full costs and potential returns for income generation
  - Financial implications
  - Opportunities and threats
4. Research and present potential opportunities for sourcing such a building in London
5. Research and present potential opportunities for support to help WRC carry the project forward, including support organisations and funding streams
6. Research and present different finance options. This will include:
- Fundraising
  - Loan finance
  - Grants
7. Accessibility issues
8. Research and present any other information that will provide WRC with a strong business case to present to a range of different audiences including independent funders, private finance institutions and government funders.

## **Output**

The successful provider will be required to produce a feasibility report and verbal presentation to WRC staff and trustees.

## **Expertise and experience of provider**

### **Essential**

1. Experience of consultation, particularly with women and women's organisations
2. Experience in conducting research such as needs assessments, feasibility studies etc
3. Familiarity with community hub type buildings
4. Knowledge of co-location and/or property development or management
5. Understanding of accessibility issues within buildings
6. Experience of creating finance models of collocated buildings

### **Desirable**

7. Familiarity with women's organisations and the key issues and challenges they face

## **Budget**

The upper limit for this feasibility study is £10,000 including VAT.

## **Tender guidance**

Tenders should include:

- Details of activities that will be undertaken to meet objectives
- Detailed timetable for completing the feasibility study
- Details of provider's expertise and experience
- Cost
- Contact details for two referees

The closing date for tenders is: **10 March**

Late tenders will not be accepted.

A shortlist of providers will be completed by **17 March**.

Interviews for tender applicants will take place **19 March (PM)**.

Tenders should be marked 'Private and Confidential' and sent to:

Supriya Horn  
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Women's Resource Centre  
Ground Floor East  
London EC1V 0BB

Email: [supriya@wrc.org.uk](mailto:supriya@wrc.org.uk)

For enquiries, please contact Supriya Horn at the email given above or phone 020 7324 3030.

For more information about WRC, visit [www.wrc.org.uk](http://www.wrc.org.uk)

**Enclosed documents**

- Further background information about WRC: see <http://www.wrc.org.uk/moreaboutWRC>