



City of Indianapolis and Marion County

Request for Expressions of Interest

Release Date	June 17, 2026
Request for Expressions of Interest Reference Number	RFEI-13DMD-2026-1
Request for Expressions of Interest Title	Department of Metropolitan Development Request for Expressions of Interest for the Former Indiana Women's Prison
Agency	Department of Metropolitan Development
Agency Contact	Eddie Shei
	Tel: 317.327.8709
	Email: Eddie.Shei@indy.gov
Written Questions Due	Date: Monday, August 31, 2026, at 12:00 noon (EST) by email to Eddie.Shei@indy.gov
Request for Expressions of Interest Submittal Deadline Delivery Due Date and Time (Eastern Time)	This Request for Expressions of Interest will remain open for submissions for a period of sixteen (16) weeks from the date of issuance on June 17, 2026, and ending on Wednesday, September 30, 2026, at 12:00 noon EST. Delivery by email only to Eddie.Shei@indy.gov <u>Electronic Submissions Only</u>



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST



The Former Indiana Women's Prison

RFEI-13DMD-2026-1

RFI ISSUED:

June 17, 2026

RESPONSES DUE:

September 30, 2026

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1. Statement of Need

The City of Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development (DMD) issues this Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) for adaptive reuse, activation and programming of the historic Former Indiana Women's Prison. The site is located at 401 N Randolph St in the Near Eastside of the city and has been vacant for nearly a decade. The Former Indiana Women's Prison needs a new, economically sustainable vision for a vibrant reuse befitting its location and presence.

2. Qualifications and Purpose

This solicitation is an opportunity for the City to gather ideas and concepts, identify priorities and needs, and gauge interest from qualified parties in all, or a portion of, the Former Indiana Women's Prison. With this request, DMD looks to cast a wide net to gather input from interested operators in hopes of unlocking the potential of the site and facility. While the City is offering suggestions for the types of uses, Respondents are not limited to those concepts. Rationale for the proposed use(s), demonstrating demand, impact, sustainability and capacity to execute will be given strong consideration. Concepts should honor and preserve the historic significance of the Former Indiana Women's Prison structure and its legacy. The information gathered will help shape the physical layout, infrastructure planning, tenant mix, activation strategies, and budget priorities for the renovation, ensuring the creation of a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable space.

3. Background

The Indiana Reformatory Institution for Women and Girls, as the Former Indiana Women's Prison was officially known, is a historic landmark located in Indianapolis' Near Eastside, and was the first women's-only prison in the United States when it was constructed in 1873. Originally built to house women incarcerated at the co-ed State Prison located in Clark County, Indiana, the original buildings have since been demolished and the current buildings were built in the late 1930s as a part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. The site represents what is likely the most complete New Deal construction remaining within Indianapolis/Marion County.

After its closure in 2009, it was converted into the Indianapolis Re-entry Education Facility and operated through July 2017. This functioned as a minimum-security state prison where male offenders were prepared to reintegrate with society, focused on education, job skills training and other activities focused on reduction of recidivism. The property was owned and maintained by the State of Indiana Department of Administration until late December 2024,

when it was transferred to the City of Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development as a part of a land swap.

Its redevelopment presents an opportunity for the space to be reimagined. In doing so, DMD seeks to ensure the needs of the Near Eastside are met through construction of mixed-use development and mixed-income single- and multi-family residential, while integrating the historic buildings and green space in the center of the campus.

Historic Preservation

Due to historic covenants placed on the property by the State of Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology (DNR DHPA), all buildings on the property must be preserved and reused. Per the covenants (Exhibit C), the property must be maintained in a way that complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation, which includes maintaining the open greenspace ("quad") in the center of the buildings as greenspace (as depicted in Exhibit G). While new construction, additions to the existing structures and minor alterations to the exterior of the buildings are allowed, the DNR DHPA must be consulted and must approve of such changes, including height, materials, etc.

Environmental Conditions

During various stages of its history, the IWP was home to a laundry and later a dry-cleaning facility. There were also present at different times three underground storage tanks (USTs) for petroleum products, which were removed by the IDOA and for which a No Further Action letter was issued by IDEM in 2015.

In 2025, the City conducted a Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) (included in Exhibit D with the Phase 1 ESA), during which a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey was completed. On-site soil and groundwater contamination was confirmed to be present on the site above certain levels established by the IDEM R2 Risk-Screening guide. The GPR survey did not reveal the presence of subsurface anomalies.

The City received a Comfort Letter from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) in March 2026. A section of the Comfort Letter included an Environmental Restrictive Covenant (ERC) that was required to be recorded on the property deed to address the documented contamination affecting portions of the site. The only land-use restriction contained in the ERC was to prevent use of groundwater on the property for any use other than for environmental investigations. In addition to the ERC, Reasonable Steps required to maintain protections to liability for environmental contamination include

conducting two worst-case indoor air and sub slab sampling events to verify that indoor air is not affected by historical dry-cleaning operations prior to occupancy of existing structures. The first sampling event will be conducted by DMD in Summer 2026.

Structural Conditions

In March 2026, DMD contracted with American Structurepoint to conduct a structural assessment (included in Exhibit B). The assessment concluded that the buildings and tunnels under the buildings are all structurally sound, with no immediate-term repairs or repairs for life safety being required at this time. The medium- to long-term repairs needed are primarily focused on the building envelope where damage has occurred due to vacancy, such as:

- Removal of the gutters, valley caps and other copper flashings from the rooftops
- Damage from trespassing
- Spalling and flaking concrete from exposure to the elements
- Soil washing away from foundations due to gutters being removed

Zoning

This property is currently zoned SU-8 (Correctional or Penal Institution, Diversion Center). The City plans to rezone the site and will work with developers to determine the best fit for the future development and adaptive reuse.

4. Potential Uses of Space

Contemplated uses include, but are not limited to:

- Prepared food vendors/restaurant(s);
- Bar, pub, tavern;
- Specialty retail (e.g., artisan, local goods);
- Fresh produce, butcher, florals, and grocery;
- Breweries, wineries, and distilleries;
- Cultural, arts, and event spaces;
- Residential;
 - o Apartments
 - o Condominiums
 - o Townhomes
 - o Missing middle
 - o Live/Work
- Office, medical and therapeutic uses;
- Community center, educational and workforce development uses;
- Start-up incubation, coworking and maker spaces;
- Commercial uses;

- Youth programming, activity and/or athletics; and
- Other compatible and innovative concepts.

The chapel and boiler house, combined with a portion of the existing green space, could make an ideal location for an events venue/restaurant and food/drink preparation space. Similarly, the existing layouts of the Administration Building, Infirmary and Visitors' Center lend themselves to offices or similar commercial uses. The site plan in Exhibit G includes a brief description of each building and Exhibit H has various photos of the interiors.

5. Activation & Community Outcomes

The City seeks operators and partners who can contribute to making the Former Indiana Women's Prison site a vibrant and inclusive community hub. Respondents are encouraged to outline how their programming and presence will:

- Complement existing, surrounding uses, activities, and amenities;
- Support cultural, arts, and community events;
- Create opportunities for local entrepreneurs, including Minority-, Women-, Veteran- and Disabled-owned Business Enterprises;
- Encourage public engagement, educational programming; and
- Align with the Community Engagement Survey completed in 2025 (Exhibit A).

6. Information Requested and Submission Requirements

Submissions should be no more than 40 pages and include responses to each of the following:

1. Experience and qualifications developing and managing operations relevant to the proposed concept, demonstrating:
 - a. Process for identifying and developing concept(s);
 - b. Collaboration with municipal agencies and community members and building effective partnerships;
 - c. Implementation of new, impactful or transformational concepts, and;
 - d. Achievement of long-term sustainability.
2. Brief bio of key individuals who will be involved in planning, delivery and management of the proposed concept.
3. Project references (up to four (4) cut sheets) for relevant project development or operations including:
 - a. Project summary;
 - b. Role, and;
 - c. Individual point of contact for follow-up.

- i. References **should not** be current City of Indianapolis/Marion County employees.
- 4. Project approach, including:
 - a. Building(s) and vacant land (if desired) response is intended for
 - b. Description of proposed use(s) and operational model;
 - c. Rationale for the proposed use(s), demonstrating how it will meet or create demand, viability;
 - d. Estimated space requirements and location preferences;
 - e. Infrastructure, utility, and fit-out needs;
 - f. Maintenance and upkeep plan, including janitorial services, security, and operational reserves;
 - g. How the use(s) will consider and respond to feedback from the 2025 Community Preference Survey (attached as Exhibit A);
 - h. Any special considerations that could influence design or budget;
 - i. Overview of tenant attraction and retention plan or tenant pipeline.
- 5. Financial Analysis, Capacity and Capability of Respondent:
 - a. Demonstrate access to capital or credit sufficient to finance proposed concept;
 - b. Provide financial statements upon request;
 - c. High level sources and uses;
- 6. Approach or plan for activating community engagement and incorporating participation from local community members, businesses, and organizations.
- 7. MBE/WBE/VBE/DOBE participation plan.
- 8. Respondent contact information.
- 9. Any additional information that would be beneficial to have if and when a Request for Qualifications (RFQual) or Request for Proposals (RFP) would be released.

No responses shall be for solely vacant land. Interest in all vacant, developable land should be paired with the adaptive reuse of at least one of the existing buildings. Responses that include a master plan for the entirety of the property are also welcomed.

Please include any concerns about the feasibility of redeveloping any existing historic structures.

7. Submittal Process and Timeline

Description	Date
RFEI Release Date:	June 17, 2026
Site Tours:	1:00 PM EST, Friday July 24, 2026 1:00 PM EST, Friday, August 7, 2026
Questions Due:	12:00 Noon EST, August 31, 2026
Addendum Issued:	Friday, September 11, 2026
EOI Submission Deadline:	12:00 Noon EST, September 30, 2026

Next Steps: The City may issue a formal Request for Qualifications (RFQual), Request for Proposals (RFP) or use responses solely to inform planning.

- **Questions:** Submit questions concerning this Request for Expressions of Interest no later than 12 PM EST, August 31, 2026, to Eddie.Shei@indy.gov with subject line of “RFEI-13DMD-2026-1 –Former Indiana Women’s Prison”
- **Responses:** Submit responses in a searchable PDF to Eddie.Shei@indy.gov with subject line of “RFEI-13DMD-2026-1 –Former Indiana Women’s Prison” by 12 PM EST, September 30, 2026.
- **Pre-Submittal Conference:** If respondent teams would like to schedule a 1-hour pre-submittal conference with the DMD project team, please contact Eddie Shei at Eddie.Shei@indy.gov. These will be scheduled on a first come basis prior to questions being due on August 31, 2026.
- **Site Tours:** Attendance on only one of the Site Tours is mandatory by at least one member of a respondent team. For those attending, closed toe shoes and long pants must be worn. **Without these, attendees will not be permitted to enter the property.** There are no utilities connected and some areas do not receive natural light, so it is recommended that attendees bring a flashlight with them.
 - o Attendees will meet in the parking lot at 401 N. Randolph St., located on the northeast corner of the intersection of N. Randolph St. and E. New York St. and will be required to sign a Waiver of Liability prior to the tour.

8. Privilege Clause; Right to Alter

Notwithstanding any other provision in this RFEI, the City may, in its sole discretion, elect not to proceed with an RFP or with any transaction contemplated by this RFEI. The City is under no obligation to Respondents to this RFEI.

Further, the City reserves the right to selectively identify on the basis of demonstrated products, qualifications, and some, but perhaps not all, Respondents to this RFEI for participation in the presentation stage of this RFEI process, and/or for further participation

in any RFP and/or bid processes that may be issued. The City reserves the right to alter any of the conditions and criteria outlined in this RFEI, including the deadline for submissions, by posting addenda on the City's website at <https://www.indy.gov/workflow/find-bid-opportunities>.

9. No Contract; Costs and Expenses; Additional Information

This is an inquiry only. By responding to this RFEI with a written submission or otherwise participating in the process as outlined by this RFEI, each submitting party expressly agrees that no contract of any kind is formed under or arises from this RFEI and that no legal obligations as between any one or more proponents and the City will arise.

This RFEI, therefore, does not invite “priced offers” and no pricing information is to be returned as part of a response.

Each Respondent is solely responsible for its own costs and expenses in preparing and submitting a response to this RFEI and participating in the RFEI process, including any provision of any additional information or attendance at meetings or interviews.

The City shall have no monetary obligation to any Respondent to this RFEI. The City will make information available to Respondents via its website at <https://www.indy.gov/workflow/find-bid-opportunities> and will not respond to requests for additional information or make copies of documents as part of this solicitation process.

10. Disclaimer

This RFEI is issued solely for information-gathering purposes and does not constitute a solicitation or offer. The City is under no obligation to proceed with any Respondent. All costs incurred in preparing a submission are the responsibility of the Respondent.

Exhibits

[Click here to view Exhibits](#)

Exhibit A – 2025 Former Indiana Women’s Prison Survey Report

Exhibit B – Structural Assessment

Exhibit C – Recorded Deed Covenants

Exhibit D – Phase 1 and Phase 2 ESA

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