

Request for Proposals: Innovative Homelessness Prevention Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund

Applications Accepted from June 13, 2023, through June 30, 2023.

This Request for Proposals (“RFP”) is directed to organizations engaged in work with households at high risk of homelessness (entering an emergency shelter, sleeping unsheltered on the streets, or fleeing domestic violence) and seeking funding for innovative programs and partnerships within the Hamilton County, Ohio homeless services sector to prevent homelessness. Grants will be awarded to programs with the best potential outcomes, data, and performance measures, and therefore have the highest likelihood of reducing the number of people and households sleeping unsheltered or in emergency shelters within Hamilton County.

Strategies to End Homelessness encourages all eligible organizations (see section D), including those that do not currently receive funding via STEH or Hamilton County, to apply.

A. Funding Opportunity:

On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 was enacted to combat the public health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and, among other programs, established the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund, ALN 21.027 (SLFRF) to provide support to state, local, and tribal governments. Hamilton County, Ohio received \$158.8 million to support Hamilton County’s response to and recovery from the Pandemic. Housing stability services that enable eligible households to maintain or obtain housing and assistance to households experiencing homelessness are eligible uses for these funds.

The Board of County Commissioners- Hamilton County (“Board”), on July 1, 2021, created the Hamilton County American Rescue Act Plan which includes, among other priorities, the provision of grant funding for non-profit organizations located within Hamilton County, Ohio for innovative solutions to prevent homelessness. Subsequently, Hamilton County selected Strategies to End Homelessness, Inc. (STEH), which serves as the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care for the Homeless (CoC) Lead Agency and Unified Funding Agency (UFA) for Cincinnati/Hamilton County to administer SLFRF funds to foster innovative solutions to prevent homelessness within Hamilton County, Ohio.

B. Goal of this RFP:

The Hamilton County Board of Commissioners and Strategies to End Homelessness are committed to reducing the number of families and individuals who experience unsheltered homelessness and/or enter emergency shelters. Therefore, \$1.9 million is being made available through this RFP to support innovative programs and partnerships that will reduce homelessness within Hamilton County, Ohio.

C. Process:

Strategies to End Homelessness, Inc. (STEH) has been designated by the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners as the entity that will implement and administer these funds. In this role, STEH shall:

- Review, verify and evaluate all proposals and documentation received in response to the RFP.
- Provide the Board with a written list of Grants which STEH intends to award funds as a part of the Program
- Enter into written agreements with the project organizations selected to receive a Grant Award
- Review monthly billings for reimbursement and disburse program funds to awardees
- Monitor all awardees and awardee projects for compliance with awardee grant agreement requirements
- Recapture unspent funds and reallocate to other subrecipients

D. Eligible Applicants

Organizations applying for a grant award must, at minimum, meet the following eligibility criteria to be approved for funding:

- Be an existing 501(C)(3) organization with the mission of preventing families and or individuals from experiencing homelessness within Hamilton County, Ohio.
- Be registered and in good standing with the state of Ohio attorney general's office: <https://charitable.ohioago.gov/charity-registration>.
- Have a physical location(s) within the geographical limits of Hamilton County.
- Requested funds have not been accounted for in the organizations most recently approved budget as of January 1, 2023.
- Participate in the homeless management information system as defined in Section F.
- Request a minimum of \$30,000 and a maximum of \$250,000 or 50% of the organization's annual budget, whichever is less.
- Have a unique identification number and is registered with www.sam.gov.
- Have proven demonstrable experience in managing federal, state, and/or local government grants.
- Subrecipient, in the performance of services under this Agreement, shall comply with all applicable statutes, ordinances, regulations and rules of the Federal Government, the State of Ohio, the County of Hamilton, and the City of Cincinnati.
- Grant awards will be issued under subrecipient funding agreements and, as such, subrecipients must comply with all applicable requirements of such designation as set forth in the laws and regulations, including but not limited to Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards 2 CFR 200 and the [ARPA SLFRF Final Rule 31 CFR Part 35 RIN 1505-AC77..](#)

E. Eligible Populations/Program Referral:

In June 2010, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness published Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, in which Federal partners set goals pertaining to ending veteran, chronic, family and youth homelessness. One objective

called for in the plan was the development of a comprehensive crisis response system in each community, including new and innovative types of system coordination, as such efforts are central to Federal government objectives and strategies.

One required strategy is that communities receiving Federal funding to address homelessness must establish and operate a “centralized or coordinated entry process”, with the goal of increasing the efficiency of local crisis response systems and improving fairness and ease of access to resources.

To be eligible for funding to be awarded under this RFP, applicant organizations must be actively engaged in, or willing to engage with the Coordinated Entry system in use within their local Continuum of Care for the Homeless (OH-500: Cincinnati/Hamilton County CoC). Persons to be served must be identified as consistent with the policies/procedures of the CoC’s Coordinated Entry system. Community Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures can be reviewed at strategiestoendhomelessness.org in CoC Program Policies.

F. HMIS Participation and Data Collection

The HEARTH Act, enacted into law on May 20, 2009, requires that all communities have a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) with the capacity to collect unduplicated counts of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. With enactment of the HEARTH Act, HMIS participation became a statutory requirement for recipients and subrecipients of federal funding for homeless services. Participation in the Cincinnati/Hamilton County CoC’s HMIS system (Clarity HMIS by Bitfocus) will be required for receipt of funding available under this RFP.

Required data must be collected, stored, entered into HMIS, and retained in adherence to HMIS Data Quality Standards, Privacy and Security Standards, HMIS Policies and Procedures, HMIS Governance, and all Participation and User agreements. Current HMIS requirements can be reviewed at strategiestoendhomelessness.org.

G. Eligible Expenses:

Assistance provided must:

- Not be available to eligible families through other resources;
- Only include expenses required to stabilize households in permanent housing;
- Include documentation of expense, including documentation that the eligible family is responsible for payment of those expenses to prevent homelessness; and
- Be reasonable in nature and amount, not exceeding the market value for similar goods and services and treated in accordance with Subrecipients established practices and policies for incurring costs, including procurement policies.

If determined necessary to prevent homelessness, eligible expenses may include but are not limited to:

- Rental Assistance
- Internet Access
- Utility Assistance
- Moving costs
- Damages to rental units
- Digital Literacy Assistance

- Employment Assistance
- Medical expenses
- Misc. incidental expenses including, uniforms/trade work clothes or shoes, tools for work, initial move in packages (dishes, cookware, household supplies, etc.).
- Other emergency expenses necessary to reduce the number of people and households sleeping unsheltered or entering emergency shelters as approved in advance by STEH. Please provide a thorough description of such in Exhibit A, Question 2.

H. Eligible Beneficiaries

Eligible beneficiaries include households that have experienced a negative economic impact from the pandemic. In assessing whether a household or population experienced economic harm as a result of the pandemic, an applicant may presume that a household or population that experienced unemployment or increased food or housing insecurity or is low- or moderate-income experienced negative economic impacts resulting from the pandemic.

I. Ineligible Expenses

Expenses never allowable per the federal regulations include: contributions to any pension fund, rainy day funds, financial reserves, or similar funds; payment of interest or principal on outstanding debt instruments; fees or issuance costs associated with the issuance of new debt; and satisfaction of any obligation arising under or pursuant to a settlement agreement, judgment, consent decree, or judicially confirmed debt restructuring plan in a judicial, administrative, or regulatory proceeding, except to the extent the judgment or settlement requires the provision of services that would respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

J. Monitoring:

STEH will conduct remote monitoring on an ongoing basis. Routine remote monitoring activities will include reviewing detailed monthly grant expenditure reports and required source documentation prior to reimbursement. Routine remote monitoring may also include reviewing performance reports, data in HMIS, audited financials, and pace of spending of the project(s).

STEH will conduct an annual in-depth monitoring for each Subrecipient. Annual monitoring plans are created for each Subrecipient based upon the results of an agency Risk Assessment. Annual monitoring includes a review of programmatic, financial, and HMIS requirements.

K. Application Submission Requirements:

- 501(c)(3) determination letter
- Most recent audited financials or independently reviewed financials
- Current fiscal year's organizational budget
- Responses to the questions in Exhibit A
- Program Budget on STEH provided template
- Letters of Support from partner organizations
- Corporate/Board Resolution

L. Application Submission Schedule and Process:

Schedule:

- a. Release Date: May 19, 2023
- b. Registration Deadline: June 2, 2023
- c. Deadline for questions: June 9, 2023
- d. Q&A with all the questions released to registered organizations: June 13, 2023
- e. Application Due Date: June 30, 2023
- f. Notification of Awards: by August 25, 2023
- g. Anticipated Start Date: September 1, 2023

Process:

- a. All communications must be sent to NOFAS@end-homelessness.org including the submission of the applicant's packet on or before the due date.
- b. The applicant's submission must be in one pdf document in the following order:
 - 1) Coversheet – must have name of the organization, name of the RFP, and the submission date
 - 2) Responses to Exhibit A
 - 3) All other Application Submission Requirements listed in Section K

M. Selection Criteria: All applications will be reviewed after the June 30, 2023, deadline has passed based on the criteria outlined below:

- a. Quality of the program plan pertaining to reducing the number of people and households sleeping unsheltered or entering emergency shelters.
- b. Applicants demonstrated ability and willingness to partner with other key stakeholders in Hamilton County; leveraged resources from partners.
- c. Completeness of application, compliance with requirements, and reasonableness of budget.
- d. Readiness to proceed.
- e. Applicant capacity to deliver program as described.
- f. Previous performance with other funding.
- g. Cost effectiveness of the project.
- h. Experience of the organization working with the at-risk and homeless population.
- i. Experience with working with diverse clientele.
- j. Applicants demonstrated commitment to including diverse voices in program development and oversight, including people with lived experience of homelessness.

N. Registration: Organizations interested in applying should fill out the registration form by June 2, 2023. The contact information submitted in the registration form is how Strategies to End Homelessness will communicate with interested applicants.

O. Period of Performance: Allowable costs incurred on or after the start of the award are eligible for reimbursement. The anticipated initial term of the award is September 1, 2023, through August 31, 2025. Project performance and spending evaluation will occur after the first year of the term. Poor performance or underspending may result in recapture and reallocation of funding. Final funding agreements will be issued by December 31, 2024. All program funds must be expended by October 31, 2026.

Exhibit A – Responses

The responses to Exhibit A should be no longer than 5 pages. The pages should have 1-inch margins and 12-point type in an easy-to-read font.

1. Please provide the organization's mission, brief history, and current goals.
2. Please describe why your organization perceives a need for this intervention. What data is available to support this need?
3. What is the program plan? Explain how the program was designed, what the staffing needs of the program are, and how it will reduce the number of people and households experiencing homelessness. Please include how the program will identify households to be served and how their needs will be assessed.
4. What experience does the organization have forming or participating in collaborations and partnerships? What partnerships/collaborations is the organization currently a part of? Who will key partners be in this program?
5. Explain how the program you are proposing is different than other resources already available, is innovative or unique.
6. How will you measure the impact of the program?
7. Please provide short-term and long-term outcomes for the program. And how will you monitor progress towards the outcomes?
8. How does this project fit within the organization's overall strategic goals?
9. If awarded, please explain how the organization plans to get the program started. Include how much planning time is needed.
10. What are the potential barriers to success? Please explain how you will address them.
11. What is the organization's experience working with households at high risk of homelessness and/or experiencing homelessness?
12. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionately negative impact on households and communities that were already experiencing inequality related to race, gender, age, or income before the pandemic. Please describe how your project will impact these households and/or communities.

Exhibit B – Registration Form

Innovative Homeless Prevention Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund

This form and all questions or other inquiries regarding this RFP must be emailed to:

NOFAS@end-homelessness.org

The purpose of this registration form is to have one official contact for each interested organization. As organizations ask questions (send them to the above email address before the deadline outlined in the RFP), they will be compiled into a Question & Answer document and emailed to registered organizations' official contact person. Additionally, if there are any addendums to the RFP or other correspondence, that will be sent to the registered organizations' official contact person.

DATE:	
ORGANIZATION NAME:	
MAILING ADDRESS: CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE:	
OFFICIAL CONTACT PERSON'S INFORMATION	
NAME:	
TITLE:	
EMAIL:	
PHONE NUMBER:	
SIGNATURE:	