

RFA SCOPE OF WORK

I. Introduction

This solicitation seeks qualified Applicants from social service providers in response to this Request for Applications (RFA). Applicants with demonstrated experience providing services using Rapid Rehousing, Homelessness Prevention, and/or Diversion interventions to persons who are experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness in Austin/Travis County are encouraged to submit an application by **June 24, 2020 no later than 12 PM CST**.

This application includes a combination of funding sources; including federal funding sources: Emergency Solutions Grant - Cares Act (ESG-CV) and Community Development Block Grant-Cares Act (CDBG-CV). There are specific allowable costs for each funding source outlined below. Further, the ESG funding will be administered by two different entities. Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) and Austin Public Health (APH) will each be administering a portion of ESG-CV funding. Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department (NHCD) will be administering the CDBG-CV funding.

II. Background & Purpose of Funding

Emergency Solutions Grant

The CARES Act was signed on March 27, 2020 to help the Nation respond to the coronavirus outbreak. The CARES Act made available an additional \$4 billion in ESG-CV funds to supplement the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 ESG funding provided under the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (Public Law 116-94).

ESG-CV funds will be tracked separately from ongoing ESG funding. Funds are to be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to negative effects of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) among individuals and families who are homeless or receiving homeless assistance; and to support additional homeless assistance and homelessness prevention activities to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. The City of Austin and Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) have received notification of ESG funding for Austin.

These funds will be available for Rapid Rehousing programs. Multiple organizations may receive funding.

Community Development Block Grant-CARES Act (CDBG-CV)

CDBG-CV funds are to be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus. The Neighborhood Housing and Community Development department receives this funding. Eligible costs for this funding will be rental assistance and application fees, including security deposits, for households who have experienced homelessness and have been impacted by the economic impacts of COVID-19.

These funds will be awarded to a single organization to administer the homelessness prevention and diversion fund.

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Foundations and Philanthropic Funds

Applicants responding to this solicitation may be recommended as a candidate to receive additional and/or alternative private dollars made available by an array of foundation and philanthropic organizations. These Foundations, working in partnership with community planning around homelessness, are excited to award and bolster innovative homelessness interventions to combat the economic, social, and communal effects of this pandemic. While private funding sources are not a part of this current funding competition, Applicants may be referred to support community needs and bolster program activities which cannot be funded through the current federal funding. Applications selected for recommendations will be decided through the Request for Application evaluation and award determination process.

III. Funding and Timeline

The City of Austin is releasing \$2,937,358 of available one-time funds with this RFA solicitation, and an additional \$1,041,851 in funding recommendations to TDHCA. It is anticipated that multiple Agreements will be awarded for a minimum of a twelve-month term with potential options for renewals.

For Rapid Rehousing Programs there is a minimum request of \$50,000 and a maximum of \$1,000,000.

For the homelessness prevention and diversion fund, the required amount of request must be \$1,000,000, the full grant amount available.

Applicants will submit one application and indicate which project type they are proposing to provide. Applicants may apply for multiple project types but must provide adequate explanation of the proposed services and program design for each service proposed. Applications will be evaluated based on the content of their application and then, an evaluation panel of subject matter experts from the City of Austin, the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO), and the Austin community, will determine Applications to receive funding.

The Agreements will have different start dates depending on the funding agency and funding source, with some programs beginning operations in July 2020. All funding is conditional upon approval from the funders including City Council, Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). ESG-CV and CDBG-CV funding is conditional on approval of the proposed uses of the funding by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

- If recommended for ESG-CV funding by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA), the successful Applicant will submit an application to TDHCA by July 16, 2020.
- If awarded through the City of Austin, APH and NHCD staff will create a contract structured as a reimbursable-based agreement where an agency is reimbursed for expenses incurred and paid through the provision of adequate supporting documentation that verifies all expenses.

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Total Funding Available

Funding Agencies	Grant and Type of Project	Amount Available
City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department (NHCD)	Community Development Block Grant-CARES Act funding (CDBG-CV) for a Centralized Funding Pool for Diversion and Homelessness Prevention	\$1,000,000
City of Austin – Austin Public Health (APH)	Emergency Solutions Grant - CARES Act funding (ESG-CV) for Rapid Rehousing	\$1,937,358
Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs	Emergency Solutions Grant - CARES Act funding (ESG-CV) for Rapid Rehousing	\$1,041,851
Total		\$3,979,209

IV. Program Types Solicited

Project Types

Applicants must propose to offer one of the following three major Project Types described below. Applicants may propose all of the listed eligible activities.

Only the bolded activities are funded by the federal sources listed above. The remaining activities may be funded by community foundations if available.

Please refer to the [Action Plan for Addressing COVID-19 and Homelessness](#).

Project Type	Purpose of the Funding	Eligible Activities
1. Centralized Funding Pool for Diversion and Homelessness Prevention	Diversion: To assist persons experiencing literal homelessness and provide limited services and financial assistance that will prevent entry into shelter or limit time of the homeless episode by assisting participants with identifying their own resources to end their homeless episode.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 Month Rental Assistance (CDBG-CV) ● Application fees, including security deposits (CDBG-CV) ● Broad financial assistance
	Homelessness Prevention: To assist persons at-risk of homelessness and were successfully housed through a program within the local homeless system and are impacted by the economic impacts of COVID-19.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Short-term rental assistance up to 3 months(CDBG-CV) ● Application fees, including security deposits (CDBG-CV) ● Broad financial assistance

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<p>2. Rapid Re-housing</p>	<p>To assist persons who are experiencing literal homeless and impacted by COVID-19 to provide flexible housing services that will expedite a household’s ability to become self-sufficient through time-limited rental assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Housing Location (ESG-CV) ● Housing Stability Case Management (ESG-CV) ● Short-term rental assistance (up to 3 months) (ESG-CV) ● Medium-term rental assistance (up to 12 months) (ESG-CV) ● Other Housing-related financial assistance (ESG-CV) ● Broad financial assistance
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NOTE: Only bolded activities above are eligible for federal funding. However, Applicants may propose other activities that may be funded with community foundation funding.

1. Centralized Funding Pool for Diversion and Homelessness Prevention

Awarded agencies must develop agreements with providers who will work with applicants through existing programs, including the Coordinated Entry system access points. These agreements will include requirements for eligibility, documentation, staff training, and supportive services.

<p>Diversion Component</p>	
<p><u>Project Definition</u></p>	<p>Diversion is a short-term intervention focused on identifying immediate and safe housing arrangements and reconnecting people to their support systems. Diversion offers flexible services that may be coupled with minimal financial assistance when needed.</p>
<p><u>Client Eligibility:</u></p>	<p>Diversion projects serve households experiencing literal homelessness or those who will enter into homelessness and are able to identify safe and stable housing options that are realistic, time-specific, and actionable.</p> <p>Diversion activities should be targeted to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Households who are requesting access to shelter and emergency/crisis services who do not have a safe place to stay that night ● Households who are currently homeless and unsheltered ● Households whose shelter stay is below 60 days except for those being sheltered at the ProLodges
<p><u>Service Duration</u></p>	<p>30 days or less</p>
<p align="center"><u>Eligible Activities</u></p>	

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CDBG-CV Eligible Housing-related Financial Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rent ● Application fees ● Security Deposits
Other Non-federally Funded Broad Financial Assistance Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Moving expenses ● Employment certifications and licenses ● Utility bills ● Background check Interpreter services ● Transportation ● Work supplies ● Housing search ● Creative problem solving ● Mediation or conflict resolution (e.g., landlords, relatives, friends) ● Job search and referral ● Credit repair ● Legal aid

<u>Homelessness Prevention Component</u>	
<u>Project Definition</u>	The purpose of Homelessness Prevention (HP) projects is to prevent individuals and families who are at greatest risk of homelessness from experiencing literal homelessness.
<u>Client Eligibility:</u>	<p>At-Risk of homelessness as defined by HUD in the Guide: Housing Prevention: Criteria for Definition of At-Risk of Homelessness</p> <p>Population of Focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● People who are currently living in permanent supportive housing or rapid rehousing programs and have become unemployed. ● People who have exited permanent supportive housing or rapid rehousing programs over past few years and have become unemployed or otherwise impacted by Covid-19
<u>Service Duration</u>	90 days
<u>Eligible Activities</u>	
CDBG-CV Eligible Financial Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rental Assistance ● Application Fees ● Security Deposit ● Total Assistance may not exceed three (3) months

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<p>Other Non-federally Funded Broad Financial Assistance Options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rental Arrears ● Utility Assistance ● Utility Arrears ● Utility Assistance ● Case Management ● Housing Search and Counseling ● Mediation ● Moving expenses ● Employment certifications and licenses ● Background check Interpreter services ● Transportation ● Work supplies ● Housing search ● Creative problem solving ● Mediation or conflict resolution (e.g., landlords, relatives, friends) ● Job search and referral ● Credit repair ● Legal aid
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2. Rapid Re-Housing

<p><u>Project Definition</u></p>	<p>Rapid Re-housing (RRH) is a type of permanent housing that offers supportive services, and/or short-term (up to three (3) months) or medium-term (4 to 24 months) rental assistance in order to help individuals or families experiencing homelessness move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability. Rapid Rehousing eligible activities include Housing Location, Housing Stability Case Management, Financial Assistance and Rental Assistance.</p>
<p><u>Client Eligibility:</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clients must be Category 1 or Category 4 homeless per HUD definition ● Homeless status must be documented and entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) database ● Clients must provide proof of identity to receive City-funded services ● Residency requirements do not apply for homelessness programs <p>Population of Focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The priority population for the ESG-CV funding will be households who are experiencing literal homelessness and are most impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

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<p><u>Service Duration</u></p>	<p>Program services may provide up to 24 months of rental assistance within a 3-year period. Programs will be evaluated for renewal on an annual basis for ESG-CV funding. Therefore, it is recommended that programs aim to provide up to 12 months of program services using progressive engagement and can exceed 12 months if, and when needed or possible.</p> <p>RRH projects should identify the standard amount of financial and rental assistance provided by the program. RRH Programs must be able to identify the maximum amount of rental assistance provided to each participant and the maximum number of months participants are provided case management.</p>
<p align="center"><u>Eligible Activities</u></p>	
<p>Housing Location</p>	<p>Housing Location duties will include providing housing search and placement services necessary to assist program participants in locating, obtaining, and retaining suitable permanent housing.</p>
<p>Housing Stability Case Management</p>	<p>Housing Stability Case Management duties will include assessing, arranging, coordinating, and monitoring the delivery of individualized services to assist a program participant in overcoming immediate barriers to obtaining housing.</p>
<p>Financial Assistance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rental Application Fees ● Security Deposit/Last Month’s Rent ● Utility Assistance Payments/Deposits ● Utility Arrears ● Rental Arrears (up to 6 months) ● Moving Costs
<p>Medium Term Rental Assistance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Medium-term rental assistance is assistance for more than 3 months but not more than 24 months of rent.
<p>Other Non-federally Funded Broad Financial Assistance Options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Moving expenses ● Employment certifications and licenses ● Background check Interpreter services ● Transportation ● Work supplies ● Creative problem solving ● Mediation or conflict resolution (e.g., landlords, relatives, friends)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Job search and referral ● Credit repair ● Legal aid
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V. Application Evaluation

A total of 100 points may be awarded to the application. All applications will be evaluated as to how the proposed program aligns with the goals of this RFA and whether each question has been adequately addressed.

Section A: Offer Sheet Required	Applicant must print, sign, scan and upload signed form.	No points, but Applicant must submit Offer Sheet in order to submit RFA
Section F: RFA Application		
Section I: Preliminary Questions	Questions 1-10	No points, but Applicant must pass threshold for application to be evaluated
Section II: Program Services, Experience and Administration	Questions 1 - 4	60 points
Section III: Priority Population	Questions 5-6	
Section IV: Data Management and HMIS Reporting	Questions 7-9	
Section V: Racial Equity	Question 10-11	20 points
Section VI: Project Staffing and Budget	Questions 12-17	20 points
		Total: 100 Points

VI. Application Format and Submission Requirements

ALL DOCUMENTS MUST BE UPLOADED INTO PARTNERGRANTS. NO PAPER COPIES WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Section F. Application Instructions:

- 1) **Total word limit in the RFA Application is 7,500 words which includes the questions. Applications that exceed 7,500 words will not be considered.**
- 2) Word automatically counts the number of words in a document and displays it in the status bar at the bottom of the screen. There are about 2,800 words in F-RFA Application, and this is included in the **7,500** word limit.
- 3) Applicants must use this template for the Application and cannot submit an application that does not include the questions and narrative.

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- 4) All questions are boxed and highlighted in green in **Section F. Application**. Editing is restricted in the document except in the answer boxes. For each question, please provide a response or write N/A for not applicable in the boxes provided. It is preferable to be repetitive rather than to leave sections incomplete.
- 5) If using this document, Applicants must type answers into the section that says “Click or tap here to enter text” after each question or in the required tables and select items from the drop-down menus as well as check off any checkboxes with required attachments.
- 6) If compiling responses in a separate document:
 - a. Applicants must include all questions and narrative before their answer, so the Application appears the same as the provided template.
 - b. Make sure to include the exact wording of the drop-down menus.
 - c. Clearly label each question and number, use size 11 Calibri font, double-space the document, use 1” margins on 8 ½ x 11” white paper without page scaling.
- 7) The following documents will not count towards the total word count:
 - a. Attachments submitted to answer a question like staff positions, etc.
 - b. Attachment G. Project Budget Forms
 - c. Attachments A, H, I, J

Required documents: The following documents must be submitted in this RFA.

Note: For the RFA Application, the following information must be submitted by **Noon on June 24, 2020:**

Section No.	Item/Document	Instructions	How to Submit
A	Offer Sheet	Review, sign and scan signed document	Upload into PartnerGrants
F	RFA Application	Complete in Word template provided Save as a PDF	Upload Part 2 into PartnerGrants as well as any Application Attachments
G	Program Budget	Complete in Word template provided Double click on the Excel charts within document to edit Save as PDF	Upload into PartnerGrants
H	Equal Employment/ Fair Housing Office Non-Discrimination Certification	Review, sign and scan signed document	Upload into PartnerGrants
I	Non-Suspension or Debarment Certification	Review, sign and scan signed document	Upload into PartnerGrants
J	Non-Collusion Non-Conflict Anti-Lobbying	Review, sign and scan signed document	Upload into PartnerGrants

VII. Additional Information

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Proposal Acceptance Period: All applications shall remain valid until award, negotiation, and execution of contracts as by appropriate governing entities.

ESG-CV and CDBG-CV funds are subject to approval from HUD.

The successful CDBG-CV subrecipient(s) must adhere to all of the applicable federal regulations found at 2 CFR Part 200 and all of the applicable CDBG regulations found at 24 CFR Part 570. In addition, any CDBG-CV regulations that HUD publishes in the future, must also be adhered to. CDBG funded services must be provided only within the full purpose City Austin limits.

Proprietary Information: All materials submitted to the City become public property and are subject to the Texas Open Records Act upon receipt. If an Applicant does not desire proprietary information in the proposal to be disclosed, each page must be identified and marked proprietary at time of submittal. The City will, to the extent allowed by law, endeavor to protect such information from disclosure. The final decision as to what information must be disclosed, however, lies with the Texas Attorney General. Failure to identify proprietary information will result in all unmarked sections being deemed non-proprietary and available upon public request.

Exceptions: Be advised that exceptions to any portion of the Solicitation may jeopardize acceptance of the application.

Application Preparation Costs: All costs directly or indirectly related to the preparation of a response to the RFA or any oral presentation required to supplement or clarify an application that may be required by the City shall be the sole responsibility of the Applicant.

Agreement Adjustments: The City of Austin reserves the right to adjust the Agreement amount or scope of work over the contract period based on community needs, Applicant's ability to expend funds in a timely manner or any other factor. When the City determines adjustments need to be made, the City will provide at least a 90-day notice to the Grantee.