City of Winston-Salem & Forsyth County

Request for Proposals to Operate a Emergency Rental Assistance Program for Individuals and Families Affected by COVID-19 Pandemic

Community Development Department
City of Winston-Salem
100 East First Street, Suite 423, PO Box 2511
Winston-Salem, NC 27102

January 21, 2021
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

City of Winston- Salem and Forsyth County
COVID-19 Eviction Prevention, Rent and Utility Assistance Program Administration
RFP-ERAP

The City of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County is accepting proposals from qualified program administrators who have sufficient public benefit program administration experience in accordance with the specifications outlined in this Request for Proposal (RFP) to submit a proposal. Program Administrators must have the capacity to operate an Emergency Rental Assistance Program for individuals and families effected by COVID-19. The goal of the program will be to prevent loss of housing due to a household’s inability to pay rent and utilities.

 Deadline for submissions:  January 30th 2021- 5:00pm

Background and Program Requirements:

Coronavirus has had a significant impact on families’ ability to work and have income to pay for rent and basic utilities. The Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) seeks to address a public exigency by assisting households who face a high risk of loss of their housing due to inability to make rent and utility payments.

The ERAP Program will provide rent and utility assistance for households that:

- Have been affected by the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic
- Have a household income that is 80% of the area median income or lower
- Are named in a lease or utility account
- Have occupied the subject property in Winston-Salem and/or Forsyth County as their primary residence for at least three months
- Household or individual qualifies for unemployment
- Household or individual has experienced a reduction in household income (furlough or reduction in hours) due to COVID-19
- Incurred significant costs or financial hardships due to COVID-19
- Are behind in utility or rental payments.

At least one month’s rent, mortgage or utilities must be overdue at the time of application. Assistance for rent, or utility payments may include past due, current and future payments for a total of up to twelve consecutive months, based on an assessment of need by the agency.

Rent and utility assistance will be paid to the landlord or utility company on behalf of the applicant. Households may apply for utility assistance in addition to rent assistance. Utility payments will be limited to essential utilities, such as electricity, water, sewer/wastewater, natural gas, and propane.
services. Households with eviction notifications, 50% AMI or lower or who have been unemployed for 90 days or more due to COVID-19 will be prioritized.

Criteria used for selection of proposals will include the soundness of the proposed approach, organizational experience and capacity, and cost effectiveness.

The Administrator will:

- Oversee all aspects of the program
- Provide services on a County-wide basis
- Create online and mail in application processes using application template provided by the City and County.
- Provide virtual and in-person intake options for prospective clients seeking eviction prevention
- Determine client eligibility
- Assist clients with submission of documentation
- Apply program guidelines in providing payment to landlords and utility companies on behalf of clients
- Maintain records of transactions and clients assisted
- Work closely with partner agencies and referral agencies
- Create and maintain a city and county funding stream, tracking expenditures and payment progress.
- Provide daily progress reports entailing: client demographic information, services rendered for the week, cost of services rendered for the week, number of individuals served, allocation of how many city and county residents were served, allocation of how many county residents were served, allocation of how many individuals were served in each city ward
- Provide regular progress reports/communicate with County staff
- Provide a routine quality assurance process to promote accuracy in eligibility determination.

Agencies selected must have capacity to perform required tasks including intake, eligibility determination, assessments of need for assistance, counseling and case management, payment processing, record-keeping and reporting or provide training to staff to complete these duties. Agencies will need to address how they will manage an initial high volume of applicants. Agencies will need to provide a plan detailing how they will downsize to an optimal level needed for maintaining the program.

Agencies selected for funding must implement procedures to evaluate each household’s needs in comparison to the household’s resources and prevent any duplication of benefits involving the funds available under this RFP. Duplication of benefits occurs when Federal financial assistance is provided to a household which also receives financial assistance for the same costs from another source, and the total amount received exceeds the total need for those costs. Any agency administering assistance under this RFP must have policies and procedures that require any households receiving the assistance to repay it if it is determined to be duplicative.

**FUNDING PROVISIONS**

Approximately $12.7 million in funding is projected to be made available beginning approximately February 1st, 2021. All funds should be expended by December 31st, 2021. This is a competitive application process for limited funding. Applicants that meet the minimum criteria are not guaranteed an award. Also, successful applications may be funded for less than the amount requested. No contracts
can be executed until the selection process has been completed, regulatory requirements have been met and funds have been released.

ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY FOR FUNDING

To be eligible for funding, agencies must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. The agency must have current nonprofit 501(c)(3) tax exempt status and eligibility to receive tax deductible contributions, as confirmed by the Internal Revenue Service.
2. The agency must have “Current-Active” status to conduct business in the State of North Carolina at least one year prior to the date of publication of this Request for Proposals, as confirmed by the N.C. Secretary of State (https://www.sosnc.gov/search/index/corp).
3. The agency has submitted third-party financial review or audited financial statements prepared by a qualified accountant or accounting service covering the organization’s most recent fiscal year. Audit findings may make the applicant ineligible to receive assistance from the City and County.
4. The agency must not be debarred or suspended by any federal agency.
5. The application must be complete and responsive. All questions must be answered completely. The application submission must include all of the following items:
   a) Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest Policy
   b) Latest IRS 990 as submitted to the Internal Revenue Service
   c) Organization By-Laws
   d) Articles of Incorporation
   e) Organization policies including personnel, formal non-discrimination, procurement, accounting
   f) IRS 501(c)3 Designation Letter
   g) Audited financial statements or a third-party review
   h) NC Secretary of State – current and active status
      (https://www.sosnc.gov/search/index/corp)
   i) List of Board Members

SCORING Proposals that meet the minimum requirements will be scored on a 100-point scale:

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<tr>
<th>Rating Factors</th>
<th>Basis of Rating</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<td>Project Overview</td>
<td>The proposal presents a sound approach for delivery of the services and will engage the intended beneficiaries; the proposal establishes the need and benefits; as appropriate, collaboration among agencies will contribute to program success.</td>
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<td>Strategy and Performance</td>
<td>The proposed program is consistent with the City’s Strategic Plan and Forsyth County’s operating and policy goals which is found at <a href="https://www.cityofws.org/216/Strategic-Planning">https://www.cityofws.org/216/Strategic-Planning</a> and <a href="https://www.co.forsyth.nc.us/budget/assets/documents/21_adopted_Budget/FY_21_Adopted_Budget.pdf">https://www.co.forsyth.nc.us/budget/assets/documents/21_adopted_Budget/FY_21_Adopted_Budget.pdf</a> The agency has a record of prior successful performance in the type of activity proposed.</td>
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SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

To submit a proposal, agencies must complete the application through the following website: [https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/winston-salem/participant](https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/winston-salem/participant). Instructions for accessing the Neighborly Software portal and registering an account are provided in the “Getting Started Guide” which accompanies this RFP. This RFP and the Getting Started Guide can both be found at [https://www.cityofws.org/2453/Homelessness](https://www.cityofws.org/2453/Homelessness).

Once in Neighborly Software, applications are to be submitted under the “Community Agency Funding” section. When initiating an application in Neighborly Software, please use the following naming convention for the case: “Agency Name-ERAP”. For example, if a nonprofit organization named “Helping Benefits” is applying for funding, the case name would be “Helping Benefits ERAP”. This naming process will help to identify applications for funding, as ERAP identifies the funding source being used for this funding opportunity.

Applications must be authorized by the Board of Directors of the organization submitting the proposal. Although not required to be submitted, the organization should retain the minutes of the board meeting authorizing the submission of the application. An electronic signature on the application indicates the agency’s representative has authority to submit the application.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions may be emailed to [hcsd@cityofws.org](mailto:hcsd@cityofws.org) and in the subject line include “RFP-ERAP.”