



**State of Rhode Island,  
City of Pawtucket, City of Providence, & City of Woonsocket**

# **Consolidated Homeless Fund Partnership**

## **Request for Proposals**

### **2024-2025 Program Year**

*CONSOLIDATED HOMELESS FUND PARTNERSHIP c/o*

*Rhode Island Department of Housing*

## Table of Contents

I.	INTRODUCTION .....	3
II.	ESTIMATED FUNDING .....	3
III.	DEADLINES AND TIMELINE.....	4
IV.	ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS .....	5
V.	PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE DELIVERY.....	6
VI.	INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES .....	7
VII.	ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES & ELIGIBLE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS .....	8
VIII.	CHF PERFORMANCE MEASURES.....	16
IX.	APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND SUBMISSION.....	18
X.	PROPOSAL SELECTION AND PROJECT APPROVAL PROCESS.....	18
XI.	APPENDIX.....	21
	a. DEFINITIONS	
	b. CHF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS	
	c. CHF RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS	
	d. CHF/ESG ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS	
	e. APPLICABLE RULES AND REGULATIONS	
	f. RFP TERMS AND CONDITIONS	
	g. GMS/eCivis HELPFUL TIPS FOR APPLICANTS	

## I. INTRODUCTION

To increase program performance and efficiency while reducing administrative burden, the State of Rhode Island Department of Housing, Housing Resources Commission, and the Department of Human Services – together with the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Entitlement Cities of Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket – have joined to create the Consolidated Homeless Fund Partnership (CHFP). In accordance with program regulations published relative to the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act, as amended, the CHFP announces the anticipated availability of funding for homeless services through the Consolidated Homeless Fund Partnership (CHFP) competitive grant application process. This Request for Proposals (RFP) seeks proposals for preventing and responding to homelessness in the State of Rhode Island, including through street outreach and engagement, emergency shelters and low-barrier warming centers, housing navigation, housing problem solving, rapid re-housing, system-wide services, and other innovative projects.

The State of Rhode Island is invested in the goal of a homeless crisis response system that prevents homelessness whenever possible, and if homelessness occurs, rapidly exits those impacted to permanent housing solutions. As a person-centered system rooted in evidence-based best practices, the system incorporates a Housing First philosophy that is trauma informed and low barrier. As such, proposals submitted through this RFP should ensure that the voice of those with lived expertise in homelessness and strategies around harm reduction, being trauma informed, eliminating barriers, and being housing focused are incorporated into program/project designs. This RFP also challenges agencies to leverage mainstream resources whenever possible to expand and serve additional households. We realize that all individuals served are not eligible for Medicaid services and that Medicaid cannot cover all aspects of services; however, Medicaid funding should be a component of your budget.

The CHFP and the Department administer many CHF projects and programs in conformance with the ESG regulations set out at 24 CFR §574. For projects proposed for funding other than ESG, and depending on the project type, there may be some variances in requirements directly related to achieving program/project goals consistent with the Principles of Service Delivery.

## II. ESTIMATED FUNDING

The CHFP anticipates approximately \$4.5 million in funds for the program year of October 1, 2024, to September 30, 2025, with approximately \$2.5 million for new projects. **The actual availability and amount of funds are contingent upon Federal and State funding availability.**

The CHFP anticipates the availability of federal and state funding from the following programs/sources:

- City of Pawtucket, Emergency Solutions Grant Program (\$154,000.00) est. (Awards are subject to local City of Pawtucket approval)
- City of Providence, Emergency Solutions Grant Program (\$450,000) est. (Awards are subject to local City of Providence approval)
- City of Woonsocket, Emergency Solutions Grant Program (\$99,000) est. (Awards are subject to local City of Woonsocket approval)
- State of Rhode Island, Emergency Solutions Grant Program (\$711,000) est.
- State of Rhode Island, Title XX Homeless Funds (\$1,272,598) est.
- State of Rhode Island, Housing Resources Commission Homelessness Resources (\$4,500,000) est. - subject to HRC approval.

- Other sources of funds may also become available. These may include, but not be limited to State Fiscal Recovery Funds for Homelessness Infrastructure, State Fiscal Recovery Funds for Homelessness Assistance, and Opioid Settlement Funds.

**Please note that local (Providence, Pawtucket, and Woonsocket) Emergency Solutions Grant Funds contributed to the CHFP must be distributed to projects serving those communities and are subject to local funding approvals.**

Variations from estimated amounts may occur.

**Notes regarding funding:**

1. Emergency Solution Grant and Title XX funds may be used to support emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, street outreach, homeless prevention, and - related supportive services.
2. Housing Resources Commission funds are anticipated to be available to support all program activities.
3. Contracts for funding will be executed with the respective member of the Partnership administering that funding and managing all aspects of contract administration. Final contract execution is subject to compliance with the requirements of the funding entity, including good standing of all applicable audits and monitoring reports.
4. The CHFP may choose to allocate these funds across more than one solicitation.

**III. DEADLINES AND TIMELINE**

The CHFP seeks proposals for various homeless projects in response to this RFP from qualified nonprofit organizations or government entities (Vendors) for the following project types/programs:

- **Emergency Shelters**
- **Street Outreach including CES Navigation**
- **Rapid Re-Housing**
- **Supportive Services Only**
- **System-wide and systems projects including Housing Problem Solving**
- **Warming Centers** (contract term anticipated to be from November 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025)
- **Temporary Seasonal Shelters** (contract term anticipated to be November 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025)
- **New Permanent Emergency Shelters** (contract term depends on shelter timeline)

Please see program descriptions in *Section VII, under A. Eligible projects* for more information.

Vendors may apply for multiple projects (e.g., rapid rehousing, street outreach, and/or emergency shelter) but must submit unique proposals for each project they are applying for. The CHFP strongly encourages providers to think about innovative ways to run the most effective projects possible, including partnering with other agencies, utilizing Medicaid funding, or other approaches that strengthen the homeless response system overall.

Please note that the Department may provide supplemental information or guidance and/or schedule additional meetings/information sessions with potential vendors and community stakeholders to engage in conversations, including on a regional basis. Such information and conversations may aim to identify potential locations for warming centers or other facilities. Supplemental information will be posted at <https://ohcd.ri.gov/homelessness>.

**The deadline to submit proposals is Friday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, at noon through eCIVIS.**

The program year for projects selected is anticipated to be October 1, 2024, to September 30, 2025, with the exception of seasonal emergency shelters and warming centers. The initial contract term is anticipated to be for up to 12 months, with the possibility of extensions. Extension terms are at the discretion of the CHFP or the relevant funder and may be contingent upon the Department of Housing and/or Entitlement City budget approval, project performance, contract compliance, and other factors.

**TIMELINE**

Wednesday, July 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	RFP released and application becomes available on eCivis platform
Monday, July 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2024 at 9:30 am	Information Session #1
Thursday, July 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2024, at 2:00 pm	Information Session #2
Thursday, July 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2024, at 4:00 pm	Deadline to Submit Questions. Submit questions via email: Housing.CDBG@housing.ri.gov
Monday, July 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2024	Answers to submitted questions will be posted at <a href="http://ohcd.ri.gov">http://ohcd.ri.gov</a>
Friday, August 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2024, noon	Applications Due
On or about the week of September 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Awards Announced

Proposals will not be reviewed if the applicant fails to demonstrate that these requirements have been met. Applicants are encouraged to pool resources and collaborate on projects whenever possible. The group shall elect a lead applicant to apply for funds and serve as the fiscal agent when collaborations occur.

**IV. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

Applicants must meet the following criteria in order to be considered:

- Is a nonprofit organization (defined as tax-exempt secular or religious organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code), a governmental or quasi-governmental agency, a Public Housing Authority (PHA) or a Community Action Agency (CAP).
- Has no part of its net earnings inuring to the benefit of any member, founder, contributor, or individual.
- Does not have any findings from the State of Rhode Island or HUD that have not been addressed or resolved.
- Has standards of financial accountability that conform to 2 CFR 200.302, 'Financial Management' and 2 CFR 200.303, 'Internal Controls,' which includes systems and software that allow for effective control over, and accountability for, all funds, property, and other assets.
- Has a functioning accounting system that is operated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, or has designated a fiscal agent that will maintain such an accounting system; and

- Has experience administering projects and services that assist people experiencing homelessness and/or housing instability.

Proposals will not be reviewed if the applicant fails to demonstrate that these requirements have been met. Applicants are encouraged to pool resources and collaborate on projects whenever possible. The group shall elect a lead applicant to apply for funds and serve as the fiscal agent when collaborations occur.

#### V. PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE DELIVERY

In selecting vendors, the Department of Housing and the CHFP will evaluate proposals based on the extent they demonstrate alignment with the following principles:

1. **Reducing unsheltered homelessness:** the CHFP seeks partnership from communities and vendors in reducing unsheltered homelessness and for addressing the needs of vulnerable and special populations as they are identified. The CHFP acknowledges that there are multiple ways communities and vendors can partner in addressing unsheltered homelessness, including for example:
  - a. Expanding availability of housing, emergency shelter, and warming/seasonal center resources.
  - b. Boosting the number of clients who secure positive housing outcomes. For example, quality improvement efforts – together with data monitoring to track effectiveness of interventions – to reduce time from referral to housing, promote housing stability, and promote high likelihood of exits from services to positive exit destinations.
  - c. Reducing barriers – and perception of barriers – to emergency shelter and housing. As part of this solicitation, additional points will be awarded to projects that reduce barriers to emergency shelter and permanent housing.
  - d. Preventing homelessness and encouraging housing stability.
  - e. Pursuing individualized solutions through a combination of case conferencing, data-driven analysis and decision making, and collaboration/problem solving.
  - f. Collaborating to advance progress within the broader system.

**We encourage all communities and vendors to consider what steps they can take to continue advancing the important goal of decreasing unsheltered homelessness – with an additional emphasis on reducing unsheltered homelessness as the winter approaches and during the coldest months of the year.**

2. **Emphasizing housing-oriented and permanent solutions:** where possible, the CHFP encourages partners to prioritize housing-oriented and permanent solutions. Such solutions may include approaches that involve emergency measures such as shelter and warming centers that are designed to evolve into permanent housing or to be co-developed with permanent housing.
3. **High quality, client-oriented approaches:** The CHFP seeks service providers with a strong understanding of the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness and a demonstrated history of client-centered care and culturally competent service delivery. For instance, we seek vendors who will:
  - a. Incorporate Housing First principles of service delivery and project design.
  - b. Deploy supportive services that emphasize engagement and problem-solving strategies
  - c. Provide ongoing, robust trauma-informed case management to clients
  - d. Proactively engage with community organizations to strengthen client support. Examples include collaborating with local organizations to offer educational and employment services to clients.

- e. Stay current with available resources and share them with other partners to help strengthen the work performed by those working with the homeless population.
  - f. Partner to address the needs of special populations and other vulnerable populations where gaps in services are identified.
  - g. Engage clients in non-judgmental communication while regularly offering education and resources. Offer services that are informed by a harm-reduction philosophy.
  - h. Prioritize the safety of clients in the program while respecting individual client choices and actions.
  - i. Pursue equity and more equitable outcomes, including across racial, ethnic, and other demographic categories.
  - j. Engage and learn from individuals with lived experience.
4. ***Sustainability, cost effectiveness, and responsible stewardship of resources.*** It is more important than ever to be responsible stewards of the precious resources and to emphasize solutions that not only respond to the immediate needs we are seeing but do so in cost effective ways that continue to pay dividends in the future. Specifically, we'd like to highlight the following strategies:
- a. Leveraging mainstream or matching resources. As part of this solicitation, vendors **must** indicate how they will leverage other funding sources. This includes sources such as Medicaid billing to support their proposed project(s).
  - b. Considering site acquisitions over short-term leasing or hotel costs.
  - c. Identifying real estate options that have the potential for conversion to permanent housing.
  - d. Collaborating with partners including the Continuum of Care (as appropriate and required) to prioritize high-need and hard-to-serve Rhode Islanders (e.g., by accepting referrals from the Coordinated Entry System, without establishing any additional subpopulation requirements or priorities.)
  - e. Efficient and accurate budgeting. Proposed budgets should be realistic and demonstrate cost effective program implementation and service delivery. For instance, if a project is new and will require a start-up period, please be sure to incorporate those assumptions into your budget.
  - f. Leveraging private funding within program budgets and agency operations.
  - e. Adhering to state and federal compliance requirements.
  - f. Communicating with key stakeholders including host communities.
5. ***Data-driven decision making and systems approaches:***
- a. Transparency and performance: Vendors must record all participant information in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or the comparable database for domestic violence vendors.
  - b. Data sharing and collaboration: Within appropriate parameters regarding the preservation of individual client confidentiality as necessary, vendors must agree to participate in case conferencing and share data in service of our collective clients and in support of our common mission – for example, in the context of dialogue regarding best practices and brainstorming regarding community solutions as well as for the purpose of case conferencing.

## VI. INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The following costs and activities **are not eligible** for funding under the CHFP:

- Depreciation, bad debts, interest, and late fees.

- Public relations or fundraising.
- Entertainment, conferences, and retreats not specifically related to the goals of the CHFP funded project.
- Payment of client credit card or another consumer debt.
- Payment of client mortgage costs and mortgage arrears.
- Cash assistance paid directly to participants.

## VII. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES & ELIGIBLE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

### A. Eligible projects

Proposal submissions are being encouraged through this RFP process for service provision through: Emergency Shelter, Street Outreach, Rapid Rehousing, Housing Problem Solving, Services only when paired with a housing project, and Systems projects. Eligible activities for each project type are explained below:

#### 1. Emergency Shelter:

Emergency shelters provide temporary shelter for individuals, families, and/or specific populations experiencing homelessness where the occupants are not required to sign leases or occupancy agreements and where occupants are connected to resources and services to help end their homelessness. The CHFP is committed to ensuring that all Emergency Shelter projects are housing focused in service delivery, in alignment with the overall system approach of Housing First philosophy in housing plans. As such Emergency Shelters focus on helping households access and sustain permanent housing as quickly as possible.

- Have few pre-requisites to project/program entry
  - No requirement of income for project/program entry
  - No requirement of “housing-readiness” for project/program entry
  - No drug and alcohol testing for project/program entry
  - No criminal background checks to get in (except as required by law)
- Staffing model that includes housing focused case management and services such as connection to CES housing queue, creation of housing plans, and **housing navigation** to aid households in applying to public and private housing waitlists (Centralized Waitlist, LIHTC, etc.) and completing landlord engagement, outreach, and unit searches
- Ensure that supportive services are voluntary
- Emergency shelter intakes/referrals will be made in compliance with guidance and protocols established by the CoC (e.g., by accepting clients through the Coordinated Entry system.)

Proposals that commit to operating a low-barrier shelter will receive additional points. A low-barrier shelter may have rules or expectations; however, policies and procedures should focus on supporting clients to maintain shelter unless a person is an immediate threat to themselves or others. Emergency shelters should have rules and safety protocols ensuring safety and that households are treated with dignity and respect. Low-barrier access means not excluding any population from Emergency Shelter due to their service needs and includes a low-barrier admissions policy with a focus on **screening people IN, not out**. With this, providers should have a plan to either offer or connect to appropriate services with harm reduction principles, accommodate and support special needs, and manage personal possessions.



**Eligible expenses:** Funds may be used for costs of providing essential services to homeless families and individuals in emergency shelters, renovating buildings to be used as emergency shelter for homeless families and individuals, and operating emergency shelters. Each of these are described as follows:

- a. Shelter Operations – Eligible costs are the costs of maintenance, including (minor or routine repairs) rent, security, fuel, equipment, insurance, utilities, food, furnishings, and supplies necessary for the operation of the emergency shelter.
- b. Essential Services – CHFP or leveraged funds may be used to provide essential services to individuals and families who are in an emergency shelter, as follows: housing navigation, case management, childcare, education services, employment assistance and job training, outpatient health services, legal services, life skills training, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, transportation and services for special populations.
- c. Shelter Renovations – Eligible costs include labor, materials, tools, and other costs for renovation (including major rehabilitation of an emergency shelter or conversion of a building into an emergency shelter).

**Household Eligibility:** Individuals and families defined as homeless under the following categories are eligible for assistance under Emergency Shelter:

- Category 1-Literally Homeless
- Category 2-Imminent Risk of Homeless
- Category 3 –Homeless Under Other Federal Statutes
- Category 4- Fleeing/Attempting to Flee DV

## 2. Street Outreach:

Street Outreach projects are designed to assess the immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness in unsheltered locations, connect them with emergency shelter, housing, and human services, and offer them urgent non-facility-based care.

Through this RFP, we are challenging applicants to think beyond meeting traditional street outreach goals by emphasizing the need to work with people experiencing homelessness to develop and implement a housing plan. For street outreach providers, this means strengthening the link between outreach and Coordinated Entry, recording data and tracking outcomes to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of projects, and working with the CHF and CoC to adapt to local constraints to solve implementation issues and be as effective as possible. As part of the CES regionalization strategy, applicants are encouraged to build CES Navigation duties into their Street Outreach project design and budget.

**Eligible expenses:** Funds may be used for costs of providing essential services necessary to reach out to the unsheltered homeless population for the purposes of connecting them with emergency shelter, housing, or critical services; and provide urgent, non-facility-based care to unsheltered homeless people who are unwilling or unable to access emergency shelter, housing, or an appropriate health facility. The eligible costs and requirements for essential services consist of:

- a. client engagement including CES navigation
- b. case management
- c. emergency health and mental health services (services that are typically paid for with Medicaid funds are not eligible for funding)
- d. transportation and services for special populations

**Household Eligibility:** Unsheltered homeless population. According to HUD, a person is considered an unsheltered homeless person when they reside in a place not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned building (on the street).

### 3. Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)

Rapid Rehousing projects are designed to help those who are homeless quickly transition out of homelessness into permanent housing. The primary goal is to address the barriers and challenges that cause individuals and families to be literally homeless, while also working to stabilize project participants in housing through the provision of wrap around services after the family or individual obtains housing. RRH projects must offer participants supportive services to help them achieve long-term housing stability. Project/program participants are required to meet with a case manager at least once a month and should have access to a broad array of additional services to help them maintain housing. In addition, services may be provided for up to 6 months after the rental assistance ends.

#### **Eligible expenses include:**

- a) Financial Assistance- Subject to specific funding source requirements, CHF funds may be used for:
  - **Security Deposits** - CHF funds may pay for a security deposit that is equal to no more than 1 months' rent.
  - **Moving Costs** - CHF funds may pay for reasonable moving costs, such as truck rental or hiring a moving company.
  - **Rental assistance** - CHF funds may be used to provide up to 24 months of rapid rehousing during any three-year period. Project based rental assistance is allowed, provided that the property is not owned by the Sub recipient/Contractor.
  - **Landlord Risk Mitigation Funds** - Funds to reimburse landlords for damages to a unit beyond the amounts covered by a security deposit. No more than an incidental amount should be set aside for landlord risk reduction funds. Only certain funding sources may be used for landlord mitigation services.
- b) Services Costs - Subject to specific funding source requirements, CHF funds may be used to pay the costs of providing the following services:
  - **Housing Search and Placement/Housing Navigators** - Services or activities necessary to assist project participants in locating, obtaining, and retaining suitable permanent housing.
  - **Housing Plans and Housing Stability Case Management**-CHF funds may be used to pay cost of assessing, arranging, coordinating, and monitoring the delivery of individualized services to facilitate housing stability for a program participant who resides in permanent housing or to assist a program participant in overcoming immediate barriers to obtaining housing. This assistance cannot exceed 30 days during the period the program participant is seeking permanent housing and cannot exceed 24 months during the period the program participant is living in permanent housing.
  - **Financial Literacy/Credit Repair**-CHF funds may pay for credit counseling and other services

necessary to assist program participants with critical skills related to household budgeting, managing money, accessing a free personal credit report, and resolving personal credit problems. This assistance does not include the payment or modification of a debt.

**Household Eligibility:** Rapid Rehousing assistance may be provided to program participants who meet the criteria Category 1-Literally Homeless and Category 4- Fleeing/Attempting to Flee DV. Applicants applying for Rapid Rehousing funds must utilize the coordinated entry system as required under 576.400 to evaluate individuals and families applying for or receiving rapid rehousing.

#### **4. Housing Problem Solving Projects: (Diversion, Homeless Prevention, Rapid Exit)**

Housing Problem Solving is a person-centered, housing-focused approach to explore creative, safe, and cost-effective solutions to quickly resolve a housing crisis. It is an approach for households experiencing homelessness that is not dependent on the same standardized assessment used for other housing resources, screening, eligibility, or prioritization and does not require significant financial resources. The goal of this group of interventions is to assist households by preventing housing loss and helping households who have lost their housing regain stability quickly without utilizing longer-term mainstream homeless assistance resources.

**Diversion:** For people without safe housing tonight, at the front door of our homelessness service system. Diversion is an intervention designed to immediately address the needs of someone who has just lost their housing and become homeless. The goal of diversion is to help the household find safe alternative housing immediately, rather than entering emergency shelter or experiencing unsheltered homelessness. It is intended to ensure that the homelessness experience is as brief as possible, to prevent unsheltered homelessness, and to avert stays in emergency shelter. Diversion conversations should happen before households go through the coordinated entry process for emergency shelter prioritization.

- Diversion is not meant to be a barrier to emergency shelter, but to creatively problem-solve with households to see if a positive alternative to entering emergency shelter or being unsheltered is possible. Alternatives may include a negotiated return to a household's previous housing, short-term non-emergency shelter accommodation, returns to family, apartments, or homes (including shared housing), etc.

**Homelessness Prevention:** For people at risk of homelessness who currently have a safe place to stay but are at imminent risk of homelessness. Homeless Prevention projects are focused on strategies that stop households from becoming homeless in the first place. Generally, these strategies can include short-term financial assistance, tenant-landlord mediation services, connection to legal services to avoid eviction, housing navigation services, security deposits and first month's rent, and other innovative approaches. Housing relocation and stabilization services and short-and/or medium-term rental assistance as necessary to prevent the individual or family from entering homelessness.

**Rapid Exit/Rapid Resolution:** For people experiencing literal homelessness, sheltered or unsheltered. Rapid exit strategies are appropriate immediately after a household has entered emergency shelter or stayed in an unsheltered setting and serves to help them move as quickly as possible back into housing with the support of services and a minimal level of financial assistance. A focus on rapid exit approaches is built upon the recognition that many people who experience homelessness can effectively resolve their own homelessness independently or with very limited help.

- By utilizing strengths-based, housing-focused case management, rapid exits can be facilitated for households that would not likely be prioritized for a housing intervention such as rapid re-housing or permanent supportive housing, both of which involve deeper and longer-term rental subsidies.
- Rapid exit services can happen before households go through the Coordinated Entry process, but right after they have entered our homeless crisis response system.
- Rapid exit services can also be targeted to people who are waiting for housing resources but only need limited assistance.

**Eligible expenses for housing problem solving projects:** The costs of diversion, homelessness prevention, and rapid exit are only eligible to the extent that the assistance is necessary to help the program participant regain stability in their current permanent housing or move into other housing and achieve stability in that housing. All payments made on behalf of program participants will be paid directly to the landlord and/or other eligible vendor. Eligible costs include:

- a) Financial Assistance: Subject to specific funding source requirements, CHF funds may be used to pay the costs of providing the following services: **Rental Application Fees** - funds may pay for the rental housing application fee that is charged by the owner to all applicants.
  - **Security Deposits**- funds may pay for a security deposit that is equal to 1 months' rent.
  - **Moving Costs** – funds may be used to pay for moving costs, such as truck rental or hiring a moving company.
  - **Client assistance**—funds may be used for bus passes, securing IDs for clients, background checks needed for housing applications.
  - **Flex Funding**-- Funding intended to reduce barriers to quickly resolve homelessness such as transportation to a safe destination out of state and utility assistance provided that the funding provided directly results in the temporary or permanent end to the client's homelessness.
  - **Rental Assistance/Rental Arrears** – The recipient may provide a program participant with up to 12 months of rental assistance and 6 months of rental arrears assistance. Providers are expected to propose the minimum duration of assistance necessary to achieve the project goals and meet client needs. Assistance may be tenant-based or project-based (project-based rental assistance is only available for units not owned by the contractor).
  - **Financial Literacy/Credit Repair** - CHF funds may pay for credit counseling and other services necessary to assist program participants with critical skills related to household budgeting, managing money, accessing a free personal credit report, and resolving personal credit problems. This assistance does not include the payment or modification of a debt.
  - **Eviction Prevention/Mediation Programs** - funds may be used to design projects that are designed to bridge gaps between landlords and tenants and result in landlords and tenants coming to agreement/resolution before eviction takes place.
  
- b) Services: Subject to specific funding source requirements, CHF funds may be used to pay the costs of providing the following services:
  - **Housing Search and Placement/Housing Navigators** - Services or activities necessary to assist program participants in locating, obtaining, and retaining suitable permanent housing.
  - **Housing Stability Case Management**-CHF funds may be used to pay cost of assessing, arranging,

coordinating, and monitoring the delivery of individualized services to facilitate housing stability for a program participant who resides in permanent housing or to assist a program participant in overcoming immediate barriers to obtaining housing. This assistance cannot exceed 30 days during the period the program participant is seeking permanent housing and cannot exceed 24 months during the period the program participant is living in permanent housing.

- **Credit Repair**-CHF funds may pay for credit counseling and other services necessary to assist program participants with critical skills related to household budgeting, managing money, accessing a free personal credit report, and resolving personal credit problems. This assistance does not include the payment or modification of a debt.

**Household eligibility for housing problem solving projects:** For ESG, COC, and other HUD-funded projects, HUD's Category 2 Definition of imminent risk determines eligibility. For projects with other funding sources, eligibility will be based on requirements of the specific funding source.

This is a systems project in the application within eCIVIS.

#### **5. Supportive services only projects:**

Supportive Services Only (SSO) projects allow recipients to provide supportive services to families and individuals experiencing homelessness. Examples of SSO projects include operating a Day Center (found in the systems area of the application in eCIVIS) or providing ONLY the supportive services component of permanent supportive housing (PSH), rapid rehousing (RRH), and/or joint-transitional housing-rapid rehousing (TH-RRH) projects. Vendors including supportive services as part of other project applications/program design should not submit a separate application for SSO projects related to those applications.

#### **6. System-wide and systems projects**

In addition to programs historically funded through the CHF, we seek proposals that decrease the number of people experiencing homelessness and the length of time people spend homeless.

**Innovative system-wide and systems projects need to meet one or more of the goals listed below:**

- Increase the supply and access to affordable permanent housing for very low-income households.
- Retool Homeless Crisis Response System to be more effective in preventing/ending homelessness.
- Increase economic security for people experiencing homelessness or those at risk of becoming homeless.
- Improve health and housing stability.
- Increase leadership, collaboration, and civic engagement.

**Examples of System-wide and Systems projects include:**

- **System-wide landlord outreach and incentives**
- **System-wide landlord mitigation**
- **System-wide Housing Problem Solving** – A vendor to provide effective rapid exit and diversion services that prevents homelessness for people seeking shelter by helping them identify immediate alternative housing arrangements, and if necessary, connecting them with services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing. For the purposes of this RFP, diversion services may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Provide diversion and referral services to ensure that individuals and families can stabilize without entering shelter, whenever possible.
  - b. Provide “light touch” financial assistance, when appropriate, to stabilize individuals and families to help them avoid entering emergency shelter
  - c. Manage a protocol/referral list (to be shared systemwide) of appropriate diversion resources to prevent admission to emergency shelter or non-permanent housing; and
  - d. Help providers system-wide to understand housing problem solving techniques and strategies.
- **System-wide Housing Navigation Services** – The CHFP, through this RFP, is seeking an agency/organization that will employ 2-3 Systemwide Housing Navigators who will work with the Coordinated Entry System to provide housing relocation services (search and placement) for homeless individuals and families. To accomplish this, the Housing Navigator agency shall:
    - a. Continually research and identify available rental housing opportunities in RI that are suitable for individuals and families transitioning out of homelessness
    - b. Develop and maintain a statewide inventory of affordable rental housing units to be shared
    - c. Identify units that meet the needs of clients on the Coordinated Entry Prioritization list.
    - d. Conduct outreach to and negotiation with landlords & property managers to ensure the availability of units.
    - e. Assess housing units for compliance with permanent housing standards as required
    - f. Work with CHF and CoC funded agency staff to make units available to clients who qualify for designated units.
    - g. Assist case management staff and other providers in making housing placements for shelter residents; and
    - h. Provide other services and guidance to support successful tenancies.
  - **Bridge Housing (RRH/State Rental Assistance):** Within the Rapid Re-Housing/State Rental Assistance project type, providers may apply to provide Bridge Housing. Bridge Housing is a model that is designed, in conjunction with Coordinated Entry, to identify households who are prioritized for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), and house them and provide wraparound services while they wait on PSH placement. The program model is designed to serve households that are more vulnerable than traditional Rapid Re-Housing projects, the goal of which is to help facilitate the movement of the system’s most vulnerable households into permanent housing resources as quickly as possible. There are many benefits to this model, two of which are: (1) it facilitates the movement of those prioritized for limited PSH resources into permanent housing and (2) it provides progressive engagement to the system’s most vulnerable households, aiding in the transition into Permanent Supportive Housing.

## **B. Low-Barrier Warming Centers**

A warming center is a short-term facility that operates when temperatures or combination of precipitation, wind chill, wind, and temperature become dangerously inclement. The purpose of a warming center is to prevent death or injury related to exposure to the elements. Warming centers can operate during the day, night, or 24/7. Through this RFP, warming centers are anticipated to operate between November and April. Selected vendors will be responsible

for operating all aspects of the projects and are encouraged to seek and pursue multiple funding sources. Additionally, warming centers must be low-barrier and provide harm reduction services.

- **Low-Barrier Temporary Seasonal Shelters**

Temporary seasonal shelters are defined as a facility offering temporary over night or 24/7 accommodation to homeless individuals and households while they access other services and seek housing solutions. Temporary seasonal shelters will increase shelter bed capacity by adding temporary shelter beds to the State's shelter system. These temporary shelters are anticipated to operate on a time-limited basis between November and April. Additionally, temporary shelters must be low-barrier and adhere to a housing focused model.

- **New Permanent Emergency Shelters**

The Department of Housing is seeking proposals that will expand shelter capacity by adding NEW permanent (yearlong) shelter beds to the State's shelter system. The primary purpose of an Emergency Shelter is to provide a temporary emergency shelter for people experiencing homelessness, either in general or for more specific populations. Emergency shelters do not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements. The CHFP is committed to ensuring that all emergency shelter projects are housing focused with a Housing First philosophy.

**Scope of services:**

Warming centers, temporary seasonal shelters, and new permanent shelters must adhere to ALL expectations listed under "Low-Barrier Emergency Shelter" in Section VII: ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES & ELIGIBLE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS.

**Examples of eligible activities for funding may include, but are not limited to, the following:**

- Purchase of equipment, including furniture or mobile air filters.
- Daily maintenance and upkeep of the property location
- As-needed property maintenance upon acceptance by the vendor. Any damage will be the responsibility of the vendor to repair within a timely manner, but in no instance more than 30 days, and immediately for any health/safety repairs.
- Expanded warming center/shelter services (such as security).
- Leasing of equipment, such as portable showers, portable toilets, and hygiene products.
- Rent, utilities, maintenance, and security.
- Storage needs and supplies for personal items.
- Technology for the warming center, such as phones, laptops/tablets, Wi-Fi, and charging stations, upon written, approved justification.
- Supplies and food (it's recommended that vendors partner with local organizations to provide meals and other services to clients).
- Transportation to the warming center/shelter.
- Staffing, including the hiring of additional staff to expand warming center and serve more clients.
- HMIS or a comparable database license.
- Case management to support new clients at the warming center/shelter.
- Client supports (transportation, birth certificate fees, etc.).

- Acquisition and renovations of building(s) not currently operating as a shelter OR expansion of an existing shelter such that it can provide new shelter bed capacity to the facility. For the purposes of this RFP, acquisition is defined as purchasing property such as a building for expanding shelter capacity. Renovations may include cleaning, repairing, or altering a building to operate or expand shelter capacity. Renovations to a shelter could include ventilation or fire code improvements allowing an unutilized space in a building to be used as shelter.

### VIII. CHF PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The resources available in the CHFP are designed to help prevent, reduce, and respond to homelessness. To assess progress towards these goals, agencies who are awarded funds under this grant will be evaluated based upon the performance standards outlined below.

**The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) will be used to track these outcomes, so the capacity to collect and enter data into HMIS (or the comparable database for survivors of domestic violence) is very important for any prospective applicant.** If an agency repeatedly fails to meet their performance objectives current and/or future funding may be jeopardized. Applicants awarded funds through the CHFP that: 1) do not comply with the CHFP Requirements; and 2) do not meet performance measures and outcomes through periodic monitoring and reporting mechanisms may be subject to termination of contract.

**The CHFP is committed to moving beyond measuring how many people received services, to focus on whether Rhode Islanders are better off after receiving services.** As part of this outcome-oriented approach, CHFP will use metrics to guide how the department measures, reports on, and reviews its priorities and outcome goals, and use them to drive contracting, decision-making, and greater collaboration with providers. The CHFP seeks to actively and regularly collaborate with providers to enhance contract management, improve results, and adjust program delivery and policy based on learning what works.

CHFP will monitor a set of performance indicators that may include, but is not limited to, the following measures:

<b>All projects:</b>	
Performance Standard	Description
Persons Served	The number of people served.
Data Quality	The project maintains adequate data quality in HMIS.
Project Exits	
<b>Street Outreach Projects:</b>	
Performance Standard	Description
Persons Served	The number of unduplicated persons contacted each period (and compare to the data from last period)
Client engagement	Number and percent of clients that have a date of engagement, monthly Current living Situation (CLS), at least one service transaction per month
Crisis Assessment	The number and percent of participants that have completed a crisis assessment.
Housing Assessment	The number and percent of participants that have completed a housing assessment
Exits to Positive Destination	The number and percent of persons who exit to positive destinations. Positive destinations include: -Emergency Shelter



	-Temporary Destinations -Permanent Destinations
<b>Emergency Shelter Projects:</b>	
<b>Performance Standard</b>	<b>Description</b>
Referrals from CES	The number and percent of referrals that come from CES
Denied Referrals	The number and percent of denied referrals AND The number and percent of denials that were denied correctly in HMIS.
Low Barrier	The number and percent of denials by provider referrals AND the number and percent of denials by client referrals.
Bed Utilization	The number and percent of beds utilized (bed utilization rate).
Housing Assessment	The number and percent of participants that have completed a housing assessment
Length of Stay	The number and percent of persons who exit before 60 days. Average, median, and other statistics regarding length of stay.
Exits to Positive Destinations	The number and percent of persons who exit to positive destinations. Positive destinations include: -Temporary Destinations -Permanent Destinations
Increase in Income Participants gain or maintain cash and/or non-cash benefits	The number and percent of persons served who gained or maintained cash and/or non-cash benefits.
Recidivism	The number and percentage of persons who return to homelessness within specified durations from exit (e.g., after 3 months or 1 year).
<b>Housing Problem Solving (Homeless Prevention, Diversion, &amp; Rapid Exit)</b>	
<b>Performance Standard</b>	<b>Description</b>
Positive exits	The number and percent of people with positive exits (temporary and/or permanent) within specified durations (e.g., 30, 60, 90 days).
Housing Stability (as applicable, for homelessness prevention)	The number and percent of households who were able to maintain the housing they had at project entry.
Recidivism	Number and percentage of households who entered homelessness within specified durations (e.g., after 365 days of assistance).
Participants gain or maintain cash and/or non-cash benefits	The number and percent of persons served who gained or maintained cash and/or non-cash benefits.
<b>Rapid ReHousing</b>	
<b>Performance Standard</b>	<b>Description</b>
Utilization	Percent of available beds/units that are being utilized
Referrals from CES	The number and percent of referrals that come from CES
Denied Referrals	The number and percent of denied referrals AND The number and percent of denials that were denied correctly in HMIS.
Low barrier	The number and percent of denials by provider referrals AND the number and percent of denials by client referrals.
Length of Time Between Enrollment and Move In	The number and percent that average less than 60 Days. Average, median, and other statistics regarding length of stay.

	The number and percent of people who have a move in day of less than 90 days
Exits to Positive Destinations	The number and percent of persons who exit to positive destinations. Positive destinations include: Permanent Destinations Only
Participants gain or maintain cash and/or non-cash benefits	The number and percent of persons served who gained or maintained cash and/or non-cash benefits.
Recidivism	Number and percentage of households who re-enter homelessness within specified durations (e.g., after 365 days of assistance).

**IX. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND SUBMISSION**

Applications must be submitted through Rhode Island’s Grants Management System (eCivis). You can access the CHF RFP application by visiting this [link](#). A complete application will consist of the following items:

- Organization profile
- Agency capacity and certification form
- CHF application (required for each project)
- Budget and Budget Narrative (required for each project)
- Authorized official form

For more information on creating an account in eCivis please click on the following [link](#). We have also included helpful tips in the Appendix section of this RFP to help potential vendors navigate the eCivis portal.

**X. PROPOSAL SELECTION AND PROJECT APPROVAL PROCESS**

The proposal selection and project approval process shall consist of a three-step process as described below:

**Step 1: Threshold evaluation.** The CHF Partnership staff will conduct a threshold review of all applications. The threshold review will determine the following:

- Application Completeness
  - Proposal(s) submitted on time
  - All required fields and forms were complete and signed where necessary
- Applicant Eligibility
  - Vendor must be a governmental agency or non-profit organization and able to conduct business in the State of RI, and legally able to contract with the Department of Housing.
- Applicant Agrees to Comply with CHF Requirements

Applications found to be technically or substantially non-responsive at any point in the evaluation process will be rejected and not receive further consideration.

**Step 2: Technical scoring.** All applications that meet the threshold criteria listed above will be forwarded to the CHF/CoC Recipient Evaluation and Approval Committee. The review committee will thoroughly review and evaluate the applications against the following rating criteria:

- **Proposal Evaluation and Scoring (100 points)**
  - Agency Experience and Capacity: (20 points)
    - Agency's experience and past performance conducting the type of work proposed in the application
    - Agency's capacity to carry out proposed project
    - Staff experience and qualifications
  - Project design: (25 points)
    - Demonstrated need for project
    - Scope of work
    - Proposed outcomes and project impact
    - Extent proposed project aligns with principles of service delivery
    - Project staffing and project timeline including staff to client ratio
    - Plan to successfully transition individuals and families out of homelessness and into permanent housing
  - Data: (25 points)
    - Experience with reporting and data management
    - Extent proposed project aligns with principles of service delivery
    - Performance in project implementation. For renewals, this will be based on previous year's data. For new projects, providers will be evaluated on performance outcomes of a similar project type.
  - Readiness to proceed: (5 points)
    - Ability to launch and/or deliver project as proposed.
  - Cost effectiveness: (25 points)
    - Proposed cost per client/household
    - For emergency shelters, proposed cost per bed
    - Sustainability of project funding
    - Budget is reasonable compared to similar projects
    - Extent additional funding sources are used
    - Extent proposed project aligns with principle of service delivery
- **Additional points for leveraging healthcare funding: (up to 12 additional points)**
  - Please note that applicable requirements may be satisfied by billing healthcare sources through a fiscal agent or proposed subcontractor.
  - Additional points will be allocated as follows:
    - Billing Medicaid (Up to 5 points):
      - Vendor has submitted required paperwork to be able to bill Medicaid and application is pending. (2.5 point)
      - Vendor has successfully billed Medicaid or an alternative healthcare source for eligible services costs (5 points)
    - Proposed budget includes services funded by Medicaid or an alternative healthcare source (Up to 7 points)
      - More than 15% of the proposed services budget for the entire program year and beyond is funded by Medicaid or an alternative healthcare source (7 points)

- More than 15% of the proposed services budget for the second quarter of the program year and beyond is funded by Medicaid or an alternative healthcare source (5 points)
  - Between 10 and 15% of the proposed services budget for the second quarter of the program year and beyond is funded by Medicaid or an alternative healthcare source (2.5 points).
- **Additional points for committing to offering low-barrier and harm reduction services (up to 10 additional points)**

**Step 3: Final scoring and selection by CHF partners.** The Department and the CHFP may select proposals for funding based solely upon the Technical Scoring (highest to lowest) or may separate proposals into categories and select the highest scoring proposals within each category. Categories may include, for example, funding source, geography served, population served and/or project type.

## **XI. APPENDIX:**

### **A. DEFINITIONS:**

#### ***Administrative Costs***

Costs associated with the general management (some percentage of the Executive Director and accounting staff, the annual audit and other accounting fees, general liability and director's and officer's insurance), oversight, and coordination on project/program activities. Administrative cost limits depend on the specific funding sources involved and generally range from zero to 10 percent. CHF recipients are not allowed to charge more than 10 percent in administrative expenses. Allowable administrative costs must be charged to the grant based on a cost allocation plan:

- Non-Direct Service Personnel (personnel not serving clients directly).
- Other Operation Expenses that cannot be directly charged to the grant

#### ***Chronically Homeless***

(1) An individual who:

- i. Is homeless and lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and
- ii. Has been homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter continuously for at least one year or on at least four separate occasions in the last 3 years, where each homeless occasion was at least 15 days; and
- iii. Can be diagnosed with one or more of the following conditions: substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability (as defined in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15002)), posttraumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability.

(2) An individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility, including a jail, substance abuse or mental health treatment facility, hospital, or other similar facility, for fewer than 90 days and met all of the criteria in paragraph (1) before entering that facility; or

A family with an adult head of household (or if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all of the criteria in paragraph (1), including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.

#### ***Continuum of Care***

The group composed of representatives of relevant organizations and content experts, which generally includes nonprofit homeless providers; victim service providers; faith-based organizations; governments; businesses; advocates; public housing agencies; school districts; social service providers; mental health agencies; hospitals; universities; affordable housing developers; law enforcement; organizations that serve homeless and formerly homeless veterans, and homeless and formerly homeless persons that are organized to plan for and provide, as necessary, a system of outreach, engagement, and assessment; emergency shelter; rapid re-housing; transitional housing; permanent housing; and prevention strategies to address the various needs of homeless persons and persons at risk of homelessness for a specific geographic area. Rhode Island has a single Statewide Continuum of Care, The Rhode Island Continuum of Care.

#### ***Coordinated Entry System:***

The Coordinated Entry System (CES) is a system that allows for coordinated entry into the State's homeless services system, as well as coordinated movement within and ultimately exit from the system. Coordinated Entry increases the efficiency of a homeless assistance system by standardizing access to homeless services and coordinating project referrals.

### ***Direct Project/Program Costs***

Costs that can be identified specifically with a particular project, service, or other direct activity whose benefit can be specifically identified within the project/program and directly serve/benefit the clients served (including the following sub-categories of expenses).

- Direct Service Personnel
- Direct Other Operation Expenses
- Client Assistance/Programming Costs

### ***Harm Reduction:***

Harm reduction is an approach or strategy aimed at reducing the risks and harmful effects associated with substance use and addictive behaviors for the individual, the community and society. It is deemed a realistic, pragmatic, humane and successful approach to addressing issues of substance use. Recognizing that abstinence may be neither a realistic or a desirable goal for some users (especially in the short term), the use of substances is accepted as a fact and the focus is placed on reducing harm while use continues.

### ***Homeless Individual or Family***

- (1) Category 1: An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
  - i. An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.
  - ii. An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately-operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals); or
  - iii. An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.
- (2) Category 2: An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:
  - i. The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance.
  - ii. No subsequent residence has been identified; and
  - iii. The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, needed to obtain other permanent housing.
- (3) Category 3: Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:
  - i. Are defined as homeless under section 387 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5732a), section 637 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832), section 41403 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2), section 330(h) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b(h)), section 3 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012), section 17(b) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786(b)) or section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a);

- ii. Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing at any time during the 60 days immediately preceding the date of application for homeless assistance.
- iii. Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the 60-day period immediately preceding the date of applying for homeless assistance: and
- iv. Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse (including neglect), the presence of a child or youth with a disability, or two or more barriers to employment, which include the lack of a high school degree or General Education Development (GED), illiteracy, low English proficiency, a history of incarceration or detention for criminal activity, and a history of unstable employment; or ;

(4) Category 4: Any individual or family who:

- i. Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence.
- ii. Has no other residence; and
- iii. Lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith based or other social networks, to obtain other permanent housing.

***Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)***

Means the information system designated by the Continuum of Care to comply with the HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards and used to collect sub recipient level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness.

***Housing First***

- **Housing First Focus:** Housing First is a homeless assistance approach that quickly and successfully connects individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment, or service participation requirements. Supportive services are offered to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness as opposed to addressing predetermined treatment goals prior to permanent housing entry. Provision of wraparound services through comprehensive partnerships with Federally Qualified Health Centers, Community Mental Health Centers, Home Stabilization Providers, Medical Professionals, Health Equity Zones, and other Systems of Care are encouraged.

***Low-Barrier Shelter***

Low Barrier Shelter means an Emergency Shelter that does not require any of the following for a client to stay at the shelter: (i) criminal background checks, (ii) credit checks or income verification, (iii) program participation, (iv) sobriety, or (v) identification. Low Barrier Shelters may, however, enforce safety requirements for self, staff, place, and others.

***Major Rehabilitation***

Rehabilitation that involves costs **in excess of 75% of the value** of the building before rehabilitation. Buildings assisted at this level must be maintained as a shelter for the homeless for not less than a ten-year period.

### ***Permanent housing is defined as***

- Rental house or apartment (no subsidy)
- Public Housing
- Section 8 Housing
- Permanent Supportive Housing subsidy
- Rapid Re-Housing subsidy
- HOME Subsidized house or apartment
- Other Subsidized house or apartment
- Homeownership
- Moved in with family or friends (non-temporary basis – more than 90 days)

### ***Private Nonprofit Organization***

Means a private nonprofit organization that is a secular or religious organization described in section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and which is exempt from taxation under subtitle A of the Code, has an accounting system and a voluntary board, and practices nondiscrimination in the provision of assistance. A private nonprofit organization does not include a governmental organization, such as a public housing agency or housing finance agency.

## **B. CHF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

### **a. All Projects**

#### **1. Policies and Procedures**

Sub-recipients/Contractors must have policies and procedures in place to ensure that CHFP requirements are met, including those required by 2 CFR part 200. The policies and procedures must be established in writing and implemented to ensure that CHF/ESG funds are used in accordance with these requirements. In addition, sufficient records must be established and maintained to enable the CHFP and HUD to determine whether CHF/ESG requirements are being met.

#### **2. Homeless Status**

Sub-Recipients/Contractors must maintain and follow written intake procedures to ensure compliance with the homeless definition in § 576.2. The procedures must require **documentation at intake of the evidence** (see Appendix 3, Reference Table 2 for additional information regarding documenting homeless status) **relied upon to establish and verify homeless status. The procedures must establish the order of priority for obtaining evidence as third-party documentation first, intake worker observations second, and certification from the person seeking assistance third.** However, lack of third-party documentation must not prevent an individual or family from being immediately admitted to emergency shelter, receiving street outreach services, or being immediately admitted to shelter or receiving services provided by a victim service provider. Records contained in an HMIS or comparable database used by victim service or legal service providers are acceptable evidence of third-party documentation and intake worker observations if the HMIS retains an auditable history of all entries, including the person who entered the data, the date of entry, and the change made; and if the HMIS prevents overrides or changes of the dates on which entries are made.

#### **3. Program Participant Records**

In addition to evidence of homeless status or “at risk of homelessness” status, as applicable, records must be kept for each program participant that document:

- a. The services and assistance provided to that program participant, including, as applicable, the security deposit and rental assistance payments made on behalf of the program participant;



- b. Compliance with the applicable requirements for providing services and assistance to that program participant under the program components and eligible activities provisions at § 576.101 through § 576.106, the provision on determining eligibility and amount and type of assistance at § 576.401(a) and (b), and the provision on using appropriate assistance and services at § 576.401(d) and (e); and
- c. Where applicable, compliance with the termination of assistance requirement in § 576.402.

4. Centralized or Coordinated Assessment Systems and Procedures

As applicable based on funding source, CHF Sub-Recipients/Contractors must keep documentation evidencing the use of, and written intake procedures for, the centralized or coordinated assessment system(s) developed by the Continuum of Care in accordance with the requirements established by HUD.

5. Shelter and Housing Standards

The records must include documentation of compliance with the shelter and housing standards in § 576.403, including inspection reports.

6. Services and Assistance Provided

The recipient must keep records of the types of essential services, rental assistance, and housing stabilization and relocation services provided under the recipient's program and the amounts spent on these services and assistance. The recipient and its sub-recipients that are units of general purpose local government must keep records to demonstrate compliance with the maintenance of effort requirement, including records of the unit of the general purpose local government's annual budgets and sources of funding for street outreach and emergency shelter services.

7. HMIS

The recipient must keep records of the participation in HMIS or a comparable database (for DV providers) by all projects of the recipient and its sub-recipients.

8. Conflicts of Interest

The recipient and its sub-recipients must keep records to show compliance with the organizational conflicts-of-interest requirements in § 576.404(a), a copy of the personal conflicts of interest policy or codes of conduct developed and implemented to comply with the requirements in § 576.404(b), and records supporting exceptions to the personal conflicts of interest prohibitions.

9. Homeless Participation

The recipient must document its compliance with the homeless participation requirements under § 576.405.

10. Faith-Based Activities

Sub-recipients must document their compliance with the faith-based activities requirements under § 576.406.

11. Other Federal, State, Local and Private Assistance – CHF funded programs must assist each program participant, as needed, to obtain other Federal, State, local and private assistance available to assist program participants in obtaining housing stability including, but not limited to:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Federal-State Unemployment Insurance Program
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

12. Confidentiality of Records -All CHF Funded projects/programs must uphold all privacy protection standards established by the Consolidated Homeless Fund.

13. Termination Policies – If a program participant violates program requirements or no longer meets minimum eligibility requirements for program assistance (i.e., income change), the subrecipient may terminate assistance. To terminate assistance, the minimum required process must consist of:

- A written notice to the program participant containing a clear statement of the reasons for

- termination; and
  - A review of the decision, in which the program participant is given the opportunity to present written or oral objections before a person other than the person (or a subordinate of that person) who made or approved the termination decision; and
  - Prompt written notice of the final decision to the program participant.
  - Termination does not bar the subrecipient from providing further assistance later to the same family or individual.
14. Grievance Procedure - Each CHF funded program shall have a grievance procedure and shall implement the procedure when applicable.
  15. Areawide Systems Coordination Requirements- Subrecipients must coordinate and integrate to the maximum extent practicable CHF funded activities with other programs targeted to the homeless people in the area covered by the continuum of care to prevent and end homelessness in that area.
  16. Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Outreach – CHF funded projects/programs shall comply with the requirements for non-discrimination, equal opportunity and affirmative outreach identified in 576.407.
  17. Faith-Based Activities – CHF funded providers shall not require program participants to engage in inherently religious activities as part of the CHF funded program and/or services.
  18. Take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other information that the Department of Housing or HUD designates as sensitive or the Sub-Recipient considers sensitive consistent with applicable Federal, state, local, and tribal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality.
  19. Sub-recipients must retain and ensure access to financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other records related to the CHFP award for a period of **four (4) years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report or closeout of the grant, whichever is occurs later**. HUD, Inspectors General, the Comptroller General of the United States, and the Department of Housing, or any of their authorized representatives or sub-contractors, must have the right of access to any documents, papers, or other records of the applicant to the CHFP award.

#### **b. Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing**

1. Documentation of Income Determination- For each program participant who receives rapid re-housing assistance for longer than one year, the following documentation of annual income must be maintained:
  - a. Income evaluation form containing the minimum requirements specified by HUD and completed by the sub-recipient; and
  - b. Source documents for the assets held by the program participant and income received over the most recent period for which representative data is available before the date of the evaluation (e.g., wage statement, unemployment compensation statement, public benefits statement, bank statement, see Appendix 3, Reference Table 3 for additional information regarding documenting income and expenses);
  - c. To the extent that source documents are unobtainable, a written statement by the relevant third party (e.g., employer, government benefits administrator) or the written certification by the recipient's or sub-recipient's intake staff of the oral verification by the relevant third party of the income the program participant received over the most recent period for which representative data is available; or
  - d. To the extent that source documents and third party verification are unobtainable, the written certification by the program participant of the amount of income the program participant received for the most recent period representative of the income that the program participant is reasonably expected to receive over the 3-month period following the evaluation.
2. Rental Assistance Agreements and Payments - The records must include copies of all leases and rental

assistance agreements for the provision of rental assistance, documentation of payments made to owners for the provision of rental assistance, and supporting documentation for these payments, including dates of occupancy by program participants.

3. Fair Market Rent (FMR) Requirement - HUD establishes FMRs annually to determine rent ceilings. HUD FMRs can be found at <https://hud.user.gov/portal/datasets/fmr.html>. Depending on the funding source, gross rent for units supported by CHF may exceed fair market rent established for the area, provided that the unit meets cost reasonableness requirements.
4. Cost Reasonableness Survey- A cost reasonableness survey must be completed for each unit supported by CHF funds. The cost reasonableness survey must include at least three units in the same, general location, condition, and size as the subject unit. A copy of the cost reasonableness survey must be included in the program participant's case file/folder.
5. Utility Allowance Guidelines- The sub-recipient must determine the amount of utility allowance to be used in the calculation of gross rent. The local public housing authority maintains a utility allowance chart which considers the number of bedrooms and types of utilities in a unit (e.g.; gas and/or Calculating Gross Rent- whether a household is seeking to maintain its current housing or relocate to another unit to avoid homelessness, or exiting homelessness into new permanent housing, the process for determining acceptable rent amounts is the same, the gross rent (rent plus appropriate utility allowance- a utility allowance is a projection of the cost of utilities the client will pay monthly while renting their unit.)
6. Use with Other Subsidies - Financial assistance under paragraph 24 CFR 576.105 cannot be provided to a program sub recipient who is receiving the same type of assistance through other public sources or to a program sub recipient who has been provided with replacement housing payments under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act (URA), during the period covered by the URA payments.
7. Lease - Each program participant receiving rental assistance must have a legally binding, written lease for the rental unit. The lease must be between the owner and the program participant.
8. Unit inspections are required for any household receiving either short-term or long-term rental assistance.

### C. CHF RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS

Sub-recipients must document their compliance with the Federal requirements in § 576.407 and § 576.409, as applicable, and any other requirements established by the Department or the CHFP, including:

- a. Documentation of Homeless Status.
- b. Records demonstrating compliance with the **nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements** under § 576.407(a) and the affirmative outreach requirements in § 576.407(b), including: (i) Data concerning race, ethnicity, disability status, sex, and family characteristics of persons and households who are applicants for, or program participants in, any project/program or activity funded in whole or in part with ESG funds; and
- c. Documentation required under 24 CFR 5.168 in regard to the recipient's **Assessment of Fair Housing** and the certification that the recipient will affirmatively further fair housing.
- d. Records demonstrating compliance with the **uniform administrative requirements in 2 CFR part 200.**
- e. Certifications and disclosure forms required under the **lobbying and disclosure requirements in 24 CFR part 87.**
- f. **Data on emergency transfers requested under § 576.409**, pertaining to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including data on the outcomes of such requests.
- g. Sub-recipients must keep documentation showing that ESG grant funds were spent on **allowable costs in**

**accordance with the requirements for eligible activities under “ §§ 576.101 through 576.109, financial management in 2 CFR 200.302, and the cost principles in 2 CFR part 200, subpart E.**

- h. Sub-recipients must retain records of the **receipt and use of project/program income**.
- i. Sub-recipients must document its compliance with the homeless participation requirements under § 576.405.
- j. Sub-recipients must document their compliance with the faith-based activities requirements under § 576.406.
- k. Verification of rent reasonableness.
- l. Verification that the housing meets Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and Lead standards.
- m. Housing assessment and plan
- n. Copy of lease agreement; and
- o. Documentation of need for supportive service assistance.

#### **D. CHF/ESG ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS**

All agencies that receive awards under the CHFP will be required to:

- Send applicable staff to periodic workshops and training provided by and/or supported by the CHF and the CoC, as deemed appropriate.
- Adhere to all applicable regulations and policies set forth by the federal government and the CHFP Policies and Procedures Manual.
- Establish and maintain effective internal control over funds that provides reasonable assurance that the Sub-Recipient is managing funds in compliance with applicable state and/or federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the funding.
- Take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other information that OHCD or HUD designates as sensitive or the Sub-Recipient considers sensitive consistent with applicable Federal, state, local, and tribal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality.
- **Sub-recipients must ensure access to financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other records related to the CHFP award for a period of four (4) years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report or closeout of the grant, whichever is occurs later.** HUD, Inspectors General, the Comptroller General of the United States, and OHCD, or any of their authorized representatives or sub-contractors, must have the right of access to any documents, papers, or other records of the applicant to the CHFP award.
- A Sub-Recipient will be required to complete a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) for certain funding sources such as Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG).

#### **E. APPLICABLE RULES AND REGULATIONS**

The CHFP and the Department administer many CHF projects and programs in conformance with the ESG regulations set out at 24 CFR §574. For projects proposed for funding other than ESG, and depending on the project type, there may be some variances in requirements directly related to achieving program/project goals consistent with the Principles of Service Delivery.

Sub-recipients must also comply with other applicable state and federal policies, which may include, but not be limited to:

- [American Rescue Plan Act 2021 \(Public Law No: 117-2\)](#)
- The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009 (S. 896)
- 24 CFR part 576: [Emergency Solutions Grant Program](#)
- 24 CFR part 121: [Homeless Management Information System \(HMIS\)](#)
- [2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements](#)
- [24 CFR 5.609: Annual Income](#)
- [Annual Median Income: https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il16](#)
- The Fair Housing Act 42 U.S.C. 3601-3607
- 24 CFR part 982: [Fair Market Rent and Rent Reasonableness](#)
- HUD Fair Market Rents: <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr.html>
- Lead-Based Paint: <http://www2.epa.gov/leadand> 24 CFR part 35
- Lead-Based Paint pamphlet: [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=DOC\\_11875.pdf](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=DOC_11875.pdf) CFRs cited are amended from time to time and can be found at: <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=%2Findex.tpl>
- Social Service Block Grant Regulations (CFR 45.96.1 - 45.96.74)
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Requirements for HUD Programs: <https://www.hudexchange.infor/resource/4718/federal-register-notice-proposed-rule-violence-against-women-act-2013-vawa-2013/>

#### **F. RFP TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

This RFP is issued subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. This RFP is a request for proposals but is not itself an offer and shall under no circumstances be construed as an offer.
2. CHFP expressly reserves the right to modify or withdraw this request at any time, whether before or after any qualifications have been submitted or received.
3. CHFP reserves the right to ask questions or require follow-up information of any applicant prior to funding decisions.
4. CHFP reserves the right to reject and not consider any or all respondents that do not meet the requirements of this RFP, including but not limited to incomplete qualifications and/or qualifications offering alternate or non-requested services.
5. CHFP reserves the right to consider or grant partial funding.
6. CHFP reserves the right to reject any or all companies, to waive any informality in the RFP process, or to terminate the RFP process at any time, if deemed to be in its best interest.
7. In the event the party selected does not enter into the required agreement to carry out the purposes described in this request, CHFP may, in addition to any other rights or remedies available at law or in equity, commence negotiations with another person or entity.
8. In no event shall any obligations of any kind be enforceable against CHFP unless and until a written agreement is entered.

9. The applicant agrees to bear all costs and expenses of its response and there shall be no reimbursement for any costs and expenses relating to the preparation of responses of qualifications submitted hereunder or for any costs or expenses incurred during negotiations.
10. By submitting a response to this request, the applicant waives all rights to protest or seek any remedies whatsoever regarding any aspect of this request, the selection of another respondent or respondents with whom to negotiate, the rejection of any or all offers to negotiate, or a decision to terminate negotiations.
11. CHFP reserves the right not to award a contract pursuant to the RFP.
12. All items become the property of CHFP upon submission and will not be returned to the applicant.
13. CHFP reserves the right to split the award between multiple applicants and make the award on a category-by-category basis and/or remove categories from the award. Categories may include, for example, funding source, geography served, population served and/or project type.
14. CHFP reserves the right to revise budgets submitted with proposals to create more cost efficient projects and/or amend applicable expenses.
15. The applicant certifies that neither it nor its principals, contractors, or agents are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from utilizing federal funds by any federal or state department or agency.

## G. GMS/eCivis HELPFUL TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

There is guidance on the website for consultants assisting applicants: <https://controller.admin.ri.gov/grants-management/grant-management-system-gms/subrecipients/state-rhode-island-grant-funding>

### HOW TO APPLY:

**To Apply:** Eligible applicants can apply to programs directly, via the links below. New users will be asked to create an eCivis account in the [eCivis Portal](#).

<https://controller.admin.ri.gov/grants-management/state-rhode-island-grant-funding-opportunities>

- **TIPS FOR APPLICANTS:**

- Applications must be submitted by the *Application End Date*, located in the *Overview Tab*. You can save and return to an application until the deadline.
- Check the *Eligibility Tab* for any restrictions.
- You can find required attachments and application questions/answers in the *Files Tab*, if applicable.
- No other members of your organization can access your application. If awarded, you can invite other members of your entity to join the subrecipient workspace.
- New and returning users should login at the [eCivis Portal](#) well in advance of an application deadline.

### TIPS FOR CONSULTANTS ASSISTING APPLICANTS:

A 3<sup>rd</sup> party consultant **cannot** apply to the same program on behalf of multiple entities using the **same** eCivis Portal account/email address. The options for entities using consultants to assist with grant applications are:

1. The consultant creates eCivis account to view application forms directly. Consultant provides content to applicant. Applicant fills out application in eCivis Portal. Recommended because applicant will be able to directly review/accept the subaward, if selected for funding.
  2. Applicant creates an eCivis Portal account (including email) for temporary use by consultant. Consultant completes application. If selected for award, account is transitioned back to applicant.
  3. The consultant creates an eCivis account, completes and submits the application. If selected for funding, the consultant would go through the award review/acceptance process, including upload of documents signed by the applicant's Authorized Representative. Once awarded, the consultant adds the applicant to the project team. *Note: This is not an option if the consultant is applying to the same program on behalf of different entities.*
- User guide: [Resources for Applicants & Subrecipients - Rhode Island Grants Management \(ri.gov\)](#)
  - GMS User Support: [Submit a User Support Ticket - Grants Management | Rhode Island \(ri.gov\)](#)
  - Here is a link to watch an applicant training: <https://youtu.be/JBYbmr96-zo>

If you are selected for an award, you will need to complete the following steps. These steps are NOT required to apply, but are necessary to receive grant funds.

- Register in Ocean State Procures (OSP) on the website by clicking [here](#) for no cost. If your entity has done business with the state in the past, you are likely already registered. This is a one-time requirement.
- Complete/update your [GMS Organization Registration](#), including a self-risk assessment. This is an annual requirement.