

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL:

Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP) 3.0 Service Provider
Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission

PURPOSE OF WORK:

Since 2020, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development has been administering the Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP) grant program. The purpose of VERP is to demonstrate effective approaches to reducing evictions through systems-level changes that make eviction rare, brief, and humane while also providing flexible financial assistance to households at risk of an eviction. In July 2022, a new round of VERP funding became available. The organization selected through this request for proposals will work with TJPDC staff and a series of local housing-related stakeholders to apply for and manage an eviction reduction program that provides direct financial and court navigation services to families and individuals at risk of eviction in the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County.

PROCESS AND DEADLINES:

Submission:

- Proposal submissions should be sent via email to: ibaxter@tjpd.com
- Phone: (434) 422-4082
- *Note:* The TJPDC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals wherever it is in the best interest of the Planning District Commission. The TJPDC is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Minority and Women-owned businesses are encouraged to submit a proposal.
- The TJPDC, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.
- Proposals will be received until 4:00 pm, August 15, 2022.
Late Proposals: Proposals received after the stated closing time and date will not be considered.

Decision:

- Proposals will be reviewed within **six** business days of the closing date and notification of a decision will be made by August 22, 2022.

Proposals must include the following:

- Cover letter introducing the programming team;
- Qualifications to include a brief history of the organization's history and services, team members and relevant experience, and the identification and contact

information for the primary point of contact A minimum of three (3) references from clients for whom you have completed similar work products in the past, including the time period services were provided. Please provide a summary of the work performed and client contact information;

- A work plan that specifically addresses all elements in the Scope of Work described below including a project schedule of required and recommended tasks and milestones

Period of Performance:

- The time period for the work described in the scope is approximately 12-24 months from issuance of Notice to Proceed. DHCD has indicated that this grant has a 1-year period of performance with a possible renewal for an additional 12 months.

BACKGROUND:

The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) was formed in 1972 to provide a forum for discussion of issues localities have in common, or on which there is disagreement; to work to decrease fragmentation in government; to plan cooperatively for the future; and to provide planning services to local governments as requested. The TJPDC is guided by a locally appointed, twelve-member Commission, of which at least 51% are local elected officials. Member localities include the City of Charlottesville and the Counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson.

Since 2020, the Commonwealth of Virginia and the rest of the country have faced high levels of housing insecurity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Virginia responded to this crisis, in part, by providing rental assistance through the Virginia Rent Relief Program (RRP) which stopped accepting new applications in May 2022. Localities also utilized federal, state, and local funds to create rental relief efforts administered locally and focused on pandemic response. While RRP and local efforts sought to address housing insecurity due to the COVID pandemic on a household-by-household basis, the goal of VERP is to address systemic issues impacting the rate of evictions in Virginia.

The first round of VERP funding (VERP 1.0) focused on stabilizing individual households through a variety of housing supports including financial assistance, transportation costs, childcare costs, case management and housing counseling. The second round of VERP funding (VERP 2.0) built on VERP 1.0 to address evictions from a systemic level through requiring coordination with the courts, incentivizing regional cooperation, and setting aside funds for optional court navigation pilot programs. VERP 3.0 similarly requires grantees to reduce evictions at the systemic level. This includes working with stakeholders involved in the eviction process (i.e. landlords, courts, Legal Aid and schools) with the goal of creating local and statewide coordinated eviction prevention and diversion systems.

In 2021, the TJPDC was awarded a VERP planning grant to fund the development of a comprehensive eviction needs assessment and court record database as well as the development of a comprehensive work plan to address immediate eviction needs and outreach efforts. As a

part of the planning grant, the TJPDC regularly convened a local VERP advisory committee. The planning grant efforts created the source materials for a successful VERP 2.0 implementation grant managed by the TJPDC with Piedmont Housing Alliance (PHA) as the program's implementation partner. The current programming has allowed PHA to establish a Landlord Outreach and Negotiation program, as well as an Eviction Prevention Case Management program, which provides direct financial assistance to those at risk of eviction.

GENERAL ASSURANCE

In accordance with the Acts, the Regulations, and other pertinent directives, circulars, policy, memoranda, and/or guidance, the Recipient hereby gives assurance that it will promptly take any measures necessary to ensure that:

"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity," for which the Recipient receives Federal financial assistance from DOT, including the Federal Highway Administration.

The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 clarified the original intent of Congress, with respect to Title VI and other Nondiscrimination requirements (The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973), by restoring the broad, institutional-wide scope and coverage of these nondiscrimination statutes and requirements to include all programs and activities of the Recipient, so long as any portion of the program is Federally assisted.

The recipient will comply with the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's VERP 3.0 Program Guidelines, Calendar Year 2023-2024. (Appendix A)

SCOPE OF WORK:

The successful organization should have experience working with low-wealth individuals, individuals at risk of eviction, and affordable housing stakeholders in the region. The scope of work includes:

- Managing an eviction prevention program that includes financial assistance and stabilization support services available before a pay or quit notice is filed.
- Managing an eviction diversion program that includes housing financial assistance and stabilization support services available after an unlawful detainer is filed.
- Developing and managing a court navigation program to increase communication between judges and eviction prevention and diversion staff, assist tenants with navigating the court system, inform tenants about other resources, and inform tenants about their legal rights and encourage mediation between tenants and landlords
- Planning and conducting successful outreach initiatives to reach households at risk of eviction.
- Coordinating with service providers to ensure tenants and landlords have accessible and timely entry points.
- Developing referral protocols with local Department of Social Services (DSS) offices

to refer eligible applicants to benefits such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and Medicaid.

DELIVERABLES:

1. Development, management, and implementation of required VERP components (eviction prevention, diversion, court navigation, and stakeholder coordination).
2. Collection of data from intake process to share with DHCD through biannual reports.
3. Timely and responsible financial processes that successfully deliver VERP funds to qualified households and individuals.
4. Coordination with the TJPDC, advisory committee stakeholders, and state partners for the duration of the grant period.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Each proposal will be evaluated based upon the following published criteria, including compliance with the RFP instructions and the mandatory terms and conditions set forth within the RFP document. The objective of the evaluation will be to select the consultants who, in the sole discretion of the TJPDC, offers the best value and fit for the needs of the program. Each proposal will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Project Understanding: The proposal demonstrates that the consultants understand the needs of individuals and families at risk of eviction in the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County.
2. Approach and Methodology: The proposal demonstrates that the consultant team has a well-developed plan to satisfy all items in the Scope of Work.
3. Experience and Qualifications: The members of the consultant team and any sub-contractors possess the necessary skills and experience to successfully complete the Scope of Work.
4. References: The consultant team is able to demonstrate that it has successfully completed similar projects for previous clients.
5. Cost: The proposal includes reasonable details of cost estimates broken out by project task and deliverables.