



Homework Starts with Home
Responses to questions posed by potential applicants
Questions and responses as of May 25, 2018

Minnesota Housing received the following questions from potential applicants about the [Homework Starts with Home Request for Proposals](#). These questions were posed by May 25, 2018 at 4:30 p.m. central time. No additional questions will be added to this document. The first group of questions (through question 24) were previously posted. This document represents the final answers to questions for this Request for Proposals.

1. What is a quasi-governmental agency?

A quasi-governmental agency is an organization established by a government entity for a public purpose that is managed privately. Such organizations usually have at least partial government funding and are organized specifically to carry out a public good on behalf of the government.

2. Would a Community Development Agency (CDA) qualify for the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP), or do you consider a CDA quasi-government?

In the seven-county, Twin Cities, metro area, only counties and tribal nations are eligible applicants for FHPAP. Whether a CDA is a part of a county government varies by CDA.

In Greater Minnesota, a county, a group of contiguous counties, a tribal nation and non-profit agencies with a county board resolution for each county in their service area are eligible applicants for FHPAP. Thus, if the CDA is a nonprofit or if the CDA is considered a department of the county, they could apply for FHPAP funding.

If you have questions about eligibility for a specific entity, please contact Diane Elias at diane.elias@state.mn.us or 651.284.3176.

3. If more than one school is participating, does each school have to have the minimum 25 students?

No. The total number of students experiencing homelessness identified for the enrollment count on October 1, 2017 among all Participating School(s) included in the Application must be at least 25 students. That count is based on [student enrollment data](#) published by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). Counts are published by school, by school district, by county and statewide for all public and charter schools. For student data reports and analytics, select "Enrollment" as the category, "2018" as the year and "Special Populations" as the subcategory. The "HMLEC12" field represents the number of students experiencing homelessness who were enrolled on October 1, 2017 in pre-K through 12th grade. For more information about this data, consult MDE's [help file](#).

Please note that this requirement does not dictate how many students and families the applicant proposes to serve.

4. Is the 25 student number per school or across all participating schools?

Refer to question #3. The 25 homeless student threshold applies to the total number of homeless students identified by all Participating Schools.

5. Will you be explaining more about funding as it relates to school social workers or school liaisons?

This question is ambiguous. We invite additional clarification about this question, which can be directed to Diane Elias at diane.elias@state.mn.us or 651.284.3176.

FHPAP could be utilized to pay for school social workers or school liaisons if the service provided by these staff leads to stable housing. Philanthropic funds may be utilized for school staff to provide innovative services that stabilize households in housing and increase school attendance.

6. Will MDE/MHFA/DHS be actively supporting sites in their pursuit of 2-Gen practices?

Yes. We will be providing a series of information sessions during the RFP period. A session on 2-Gen approaches occurred on May 3. Presentation materials from that session will be posted soon and [a handout is available now](#) that has references to other online resources, which may help applicants consider how they apply 2-Gen approaches to their work.

7. What age range constitutes pre-K? Do those children have to be enrolled in programming?

A prekindergarten or “pre-K” program is a program designed for children younger than five years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year commences that prepares them to enter kindergarten the following school year. For the second question, the answer is no. Children must be eligible for an academic program but do not have to be enrolled.

8. Will you send out the slides and the other RFP Information Session materials?

Yes. The RFP Information Session materials will be posted on the Homework Starts with Home webpage at [Minnesota Housing](#) and [the Minnesota Department of Education](#).

9. Can you talk a little bit more about the Rental Assistance pilot and how it led to this RFP?

Several initiatives informed Homework Starts with Home, including the Rental Assistance Pilot for Homeless and Highly Mobile Families with School-Age Children (HHM Pilot), Hennepin County’s Stable Families Initiative, and other efforts in Minnesota and across the country. An evaluation of the HHM Pilot demonstrated that rental assistance helped families achieve stable housing, improved student attendance and increased parent income. That [evaluation is available online](#).

10. If we are applying for all three sources, should we present our budget as a grid?

There is not a required template for budgets. Applicants have flexibility in how they present their budgets provided that every expense is clearly listed, the funding source that will pay for each expense is stated, the organization in the collaborative Application that will expend those resources is identified, and the program year in which those resources will be spent is outlined.

11. Will separate applications from the same geographic areas (e.g., one from Minneapolis and another from Hennepin County) be allowed?

Yes. There are no requirements or limits on the number of applications for any particular geographic area.

12. Can you pick just one of the funding streams or do you have to do all three?

Applicants do not have to request funding from all three sources. Applicants may apply for only a single source, for two of the three sources, or for all three. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to identify local resources that would contribute to successful implementation of their proposed interventions.

13. Do housing programs have to have 25 students in their housing to be eligible?

This question is ambiguous. We invite additional clarification about this question, which can be directed to Diane Elias at diane.elias@state.mn.us or 651.284.3176. The requirements for 25 students pertain to the Participating School(s) identified in the Application. Refer to the answers to questions #3 and #4.

14. Is there a state geographic breakdown (e.g., 50% metro/50% Greater Minnesota)?

No. The Partners will assess each Application based on its demonstrated ability to ensure geographic distribution and foster diversity among the selected applications, but they have not set a specific geographic target for the distribution of resources.

15. Will the evaluation be parallel or specific to each applicant?

The evaluation of Homework Starts with Home conducted by the Grand Challenge Research Partnership will consider common elements, approaches and outcomes across all selected Homework Starts with Home grantees, which also attend to important differences in context or intervention. In addition, there may be grantee-specific aspects to the evaluation, which will be determined in consultation with the selected grantees.

16. Are families in shelter a priority population?

Families in shelter overlap significantly with the priority populations identified in the RFP but are not themselves a priority population.

17. Are those with lived experience involved in the evaluation development partnership?

Yes. The Grand Challenge Research Partnership anticipates that people with lived experience will contribute to designing and implementing the evaluation in a number of ways, including participating as key informants and as advisory group members.

18. Do you only have to work with 25 students?

No. Applicants may propose how many students and families they will support. The 25 student threshold applies to Participating School(s) included in the Application. Please refer to the answers to questions #3 and #4.

19. Has FHPAP ever gone into a school district to pay for a social worker?

FHPAP could be utilized to pay for school social workers if the service provided by these staff leads to stable housing. For a school district to receive FHPAP funds directly, the school district would need to be an eligible

entity to receive FHPAP funds as an FHPAP Grantee. Otherwise, a school district could serve as a subgrantee of an eligible FHPAP Grantee. Refer to question #5 as well.

20. How does this interact with the Coordinated Entry system?

The answer to this question may vary significantly by applicant and geographic area. Applicants are welcomed and encouraged to describe in their proposal how they envision their intervention interacting with Coordinated Entry.

21. I have been searching for the “by district numbers” for children experiencing homelessness. Is it the HMLK12 code on the special populations report?

The HMLK12 field identifies the number of homeless students identified by schools from kindergarten through 12th grade. The HMLEC12 column includes students identified in pre-K programs as well. Refer to the answer to question #3 for more detail about accessing the Special Populations [student enrollment report](#). There is also a [help file](#) available to explain what each field means.

22. If a nonprofit is the lead applicant in the metro area, how will it work to access FHPAP?

In the seven-county, Twin Cities, metro area, by statute, only counties are eligible to receive FHPAP funding. If a Lead Applicant in the metro area was not a county but had a partnership with a metro county, the Lead Applicant would apply for funding, designating the metro county as the FHPAP Grantee in the Application. If awarded funding, Minnesota Housing will execute an agreement with the county for the FHPAP portion of the funds. A county may distribute funds via a subgrantee agreement to other organizations. If a county chooses this option, the county will execute an agreement with the subgrantee. The agreement will include the same obligations as the agreement between the county and Minnesota Housing such as requiring a certificate of insurance demonstrating coverage for employee theft, participation in HMIS and so on.

23. Are students or families living in permanent supportive housing considered homeless?

No, they are not considered homeless.

24. Do I need to submit all of the required Application materials listed under the heading “Application Checklist” in the RFP Instructions document?

Yes, the applicant must submit all the materials in the Application Checklist to Minnesota Housing by June 4th at 4:30 p.m. The Application Checklist includes:

1. Application for Funding
2. Applicant Financial Information – nongovernmental organization applying for \$25,000 or more must supply the following financial documentation, depending on their total gross revenue:

Documentation	Total Gross Revenue
Board-Review Financial Statements	Under \$50,000 (or not in existence long enough to have completed IRS Form 990 or an audit)
IRS Form 990 and Aging Schedule	\$50,000-\$750,000
Certified Financial Audit	Over \$750,000

3. Affirmative Action Certification (include certificate and additional documentation if required)
4. Signed Letters of Support from each collaborator affirming their intent to play the role(s) described in the Application

If Housing Trust Fund resources are being requested:

5. Local Payment Standards and Utilities for each proposed coverage area
6. 216A Qualification Form for Rental Assistance Administrator

In addition, the following threshold criteria must be satisfied for the Application to be considered:

- The Application identifies the specific entities that are eligible to serve in their assigned role for all required roles listed above.
- The total number of students enrolled in an academic program on October 1, 2017 and flagged by the Participating School(s) as homeless according to student enrollment data published by the Minnesota Department of Education is at least 25 students. (Applicants are encouraged to include a sufficient number of Participating Schools to satisfy this requirement. The total number of homeless students enrolled in the identified Participating School will also serve as a competitive factor, below, in the review of Applications.)
- The proposed budget includes sufficient detail about the proposed expenditures and the rationale for those expenditures for reviewers to determine whether the proposed budget is feasible and appropriate. For example, if an applicant proposes funding to hire a housing navigator, the Application and budget must clearly describe the role of that housing navigator in the intervention and the services that position will deliver. Failure to provide sufficiently clear detail in the budget may disqualify an Application. The Partners reserve the right to request any additional details from Lead Applicants to clarify budgets.
- The Application includes all required components, including a budget with sufficient detail to be evaluated and scored by reviewers, and is submitted by the published deadline.

Applications that do not include all of the application materials or do not meet the threshold criteria may be rejected.

Additional questions and responses received through May 25, 2018

25. For Housing Trust Fund (HTF), will funds pay for ongoing utilities?

A utility allowance is part of the gross rent used in calculating the subsidy and household portion of rent. For more information, please see the [Housing Trust Fund Program and Ending Long-Term Homelessness Initiative Fund Rental Assistance Program Guide](#).

26. For HTF, is there a cap on rent assistance?

The maximum rental subsidy available through the HTF program is the difference between 30 percent of the household's gross monthly income and the gross rent or area payment standard – whichever is less. For more information, please see the [Housing Trust Fund Program and Ending Long-Term Homelessness Initiative Fund Rental Assistance Program Guide](#).

27. For HTF, is there a cap on administrative expenses?

An administrative fee of \$60 per month will be paid for each household receiving an HTF rental assistance subsidy. For more information, please see the [Housing Trust Fund Program and Ending Long-Term Homelessness Initiative Fund Rental Assistance Program Guide](#).

28. For the Homework Starts with Home grant, are administrative costs (“admin”) capped at 10 percent or can it exceed 10 percent?

Limits for administrative costs differ by funding source. For FHPAP, admin is limited to 10 percent of the total request. HTF allows an administrative fee of \$60 per month for each household receiving rent assistance. For philanthropic funds, the Funders Collaborative will consider support of administrative costs in excess of 10 percent of the total project budget. All proposed expenses should have corresponding narrative descriptions.

29. Are all of the program operations costs listed in the table on page two of the Request for Proposals (RFP) Instructions considered administration costs?

The categories on this table are intended to be illustrative rather than prescriptive. The costs under program operations could be considered administrative costs. If you have questions about how a particular cost could be listed as a service cost or direct assistance, please contact Diane Elias to discuss at 651-284-3176.

30. On page two of the RFP Instructions what is the definition of Training and Technical Assistance versus the definition of Other Organizational Capacity Building in the budget table?

The categories on this table are intended to be illustrative rather than prescriptive, and the inclusion of these categories is intended to emphasize which funds can be used for training, technical assistance, or other capacity building activities. All proposed expenditures should be clearly explained and justified in the budget and budget narrative.

31. In the budget table on page two of the RFP Instructions, what is meant by “Management and Leadership Support (beyond admin)”? Would this be considered an administrative expense or could this be a services expense?

Applicants may choose to define more substantial roles for management or leadership staff than the supervisory and oversight roles typically covered through admin. These roles could be included as personnel costs.

32. In the budget table on page two of the RFP Instructions, what types of personnel costs would be included in the “other personnel costs” line item?

The categories on this table are intended to be illustrative rather than prescriptive, so the inclusion of this category is intended to convey that applicants may propose other personnel costs than those explicitly identified in the table. Proposed expenditures should be clearly explained and justified in the budget and budget narrative.

33. Will all funded partners be expected to participate in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), or just those partners receiving Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) funds or HTF?

Which partners participate in HMIS should be determined based on the operational roles of those partners and whether access to personally-identified information about people served by the collaboration is necessary and

appropriate for that role. In addition, FHPAP grantees and HTF administrators will be expected to participate in HMIS.

34. Will partners who are not utilizing the funds (i.e. may have their own funding and using as leverage) be required to participate in HMIS?

See the answer to question #33. Which partners participate in HMIS should be determined based on the roles those partners play and whether access to personally-identified information about people being served is necessary and appropriate for that role. In addition, FHPAP grantees and HTF administrators will be expected to participate in HMIS.

35. Will there be a separate HMIS provider for the Homework Starts with Home program?

We understand an “HMIS provider” in this context to mean the organizational unit created in HMIS as part of a “provider tree” hierarchy to capture and manage information entered into HMIS for service delivery, compliance, and reporting purposes. These details have not been finalized, but it is likely that there will be separate HMIS providers for the partners using HMIS for Homework Starts with Home, even if those same entities already have one or more HMIS provider for other activities. If applicants apply for FHPAP and HTF, they may have two separate providers in HMIS specific to Homework Starts with Home for each funding stream. These details will be resolved through contract negotiations with selected applicants.

36. Will there be one provider in HMIS for the entire Homework Starts with Home program or separate providers for FHPAP and HTF?

See the answer for question #35. There are likely to be separate HMIS providers set up for Homework Starts with Home, and these may differ for FHPAP and HTF. However, the final details have not been determined and will be resolved with selected applications through contract negotiations.

37. Will all collaborative partners, including those who are not receiving funds, be required to participate in the evaluation process/Grand Challenge?

In general, yes, although what this participation may mean will be determined in consultation with selected applicants, both to maximize the utility of the Grand Challenge research partnership for applicants and to tune specific requirements to the identified roles that each partner will play. Generally, any partner with a role that will support homeless students and families should be prepared to participate in evaluation activities.

38. What types of transportation costs are allowable, for example, bus tokens, car repair, car insurance?

Bus tokens and car repair are eligible costs under FHPAP if they can be directly tied to helping the household keep or secure their housing. Car insurance is not typically an allowable expense for FHPAP. The philanthropic funds can generally cover the broadest range of potential costs. All proposed expenditures should be explained and justified in the budget and budget narrative.

39. What types of costs are allowable under “other undesignated financial support?”

The categories on the table on page two of the RFP are intended to be illustrative rather than prescriptive, and the inclusion of this category is intended to emphasize that funds can be used for financial support for program participants that does not fit the specific categories listed in the table. In addition, both FHPAP and philanthropic funds may be used for direct participant support costs training that are not known at the time of application, provided that these costs are budgeted (e.g., as “undesignated participant financial support”) and necessary to achieve the goals and outcomes. All proposed expenditures should be clearly explained and justified in the

budget and budget narrative. Generally speaking, because it is difficult to evaluate the proposed funding allocated to undesignated financial support, applicants are encouraged to provide clear explanations for how proposed amounts were determined and would be used, and/or use more specific financial assistance categories (e.g., rent, transportation assistance, etc.) to the greatest extent possible for the program design.

40. What is the definition of Temporary Rent Assistance compared to Rapid Rehousing?

Temporary Rent Assistance would be provided through HTF, and rapid re-housing rental assistance would be provided through FHPAP.

41. Are the philanthropic funds available equitably statewide? In other words, all of the philanthropic funds are eligible throughout the state and not restricted to a geographic area?

All three funding sources, including philanthropic funds, are not restricted or allocated to any specific geographic area within the state.

42. Regarding the Application Checklist in the RFP Instructions, is it only required for the Lead Applicant to fill out the Affirmative Action form?

The Affirmative Action form is required from the Lead Applicant and all entities that will receive funding (i.e., HTF, FHPAP, and philanthropic funds).

43. Regarding the Application Checklist in the RFP Instructions, is it only required for the Lead Applicant to provide the financial information?

The requirement to submit financial information only applies to non-government entities that request \$25,000 or more in funding from any source available through this RFP. If you have questions about whether a particular partner in your application should submit financial information, please contact Diane Elias to discuss at 651-284-3176.

44. Are there specific things we want to see in the letter(s) of support from the local government entity or county?

As described in the RFP, letters of support should affirm each entity's intent to play the role(s) described in the Application. The letters should provide sufficient detail about that role to convey clear alignment and agreement to serve in the capacity described in the application.

45. What is the role that the local government entity should play?

There is no general answer to this question. Applicants are encouraged to consider the role that local government entities can play in helping to implement the preliminary practice model, especially the opportunity to leverage mainstream programs and resources.

46. If the Lead Applicant is utilizing another agency to administer HTF and FHPAP funds, will the contract be with the Lead Applicant or with the agency administering the funds?

While there may be particular collaborations which require unanticipated contractual structures, in general the funding partners anticipate having at least one contract for each entity administering HTF and FHPAP, at least one contract for philanthropic funds, and possibly additional contract with the Lead Applicant if that Lead Applicant does not perform any of the preceding roles.

47. If the Lead Applicant is utilizing another agency to administer the philanthropic funds, will the contract be with the Lead Applicant or with the agency administering the funds?

The grant agreement for philanthropic support awarded will be with the organization(s) responsible for receiving and administering the philanthropic funds.

48. Is it possible to fund a school-based youth support group for youth who have experienced trauma as part of the application?

Yes, however, it is important to be clear how proposed activities will support the initiative's goals and outcomes and to clarify the impact of proposed activities for students experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

49. Is it possible to fund a Two-Generational program for households in shelter that provides both support to adults as well as Pre-K programming to their children?

Yes, however, proposed activities should be justified on the basis of the goals and outcomes described in the RFP. E.g., for this specific example, it would be important to document how this program would help prevent or end homelessness and improve the educational outcomes for children. Given the initiative's focus on housing outcomes, proposals that do not address housing outcomes are unlikely to be competitive.

50. Is a certificate of consistency with the Continuum of Care required for Homework Starts with Home?

No. A certificate of consistency with a Continuum of Care is not required. Partnership and collaboration with Continuums of Care is strongly encouraged, however.

51. I am a current grantee of FHPAP. If applying for funds, do I need to serve all schools in my district or can I serve a specific area within our region, such as one school district?

Applicants can propose to serve any combination of schools and/or districts as long as the threshold criteria of 25 homeless students is met. (See answer to question #3.) There is no minimum or required number of schools or districts, other than this 25-student requirement.

52. If we were awarded the grant, is there a sample Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the data collection/evaluation part of the project? It would be helpful to have these details to share with our school evaluation team to determine our capacity.

We do not have a sample MOU but thank you for the suggestion.

53. For the "typical award amounts per grantee," do those figures refer to the total amount that may be awarded, or the amount per year? So, for example, should we be aiming to keep our FHPAP costs up to \$133,333 over the term of the grant, or each year?

The typical award amounts reflect the entire term of the grant. They are not "per year" amounts. They are also only intended to be illustrative (presenting a range showing the total funding divided by the lower and upper bound on anticipated applications that will be selected for funding). Applicants should consider these figures as for information purposes only.

54. Are evaluation costs eligible expenses?

Yes, evaluation costs can be included as an administrative expense. Please do keep in mind that the University of Minnesota Grand Challenge Research Partnership will also be evaluating the initiative.

55. Did the result of the 2018 Legislative session alter the funding for Homework Starts with Home?

Governor Dayton proposed an additional \$4 million in funding for Homework Starts with Home as part of the State Fiscal Year 2019 supplemental budget proposal. That additional funding was not included in the final spending bills, which means that funding for Homework Starts with Home remains at \$4.15 million (as described in the RFP).

56. Can an entity participate in more than one application?

Yes, any applicant or any partner in an application may participate in multiple applications. There is no requirement that an entity participate in only a single application.

57. Besides HTF rental assistance, what assistance will trigger a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection?

Other than Housing Trust Fund, no other funding provided through this RFP requires an HQS inspection, but such inspections could be a requirement for other funds leveraged by an applicant, such as mainstream Housing Choice Vouchers.