MINNESOTA HOUSING

Homework Starts with Home
Request for Proposals Frequently Asked Questions

2-Year Grant Period: October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2027
4-Year Grant Period: October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2029

Application Deadline: Friday, January 17, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. Central Time

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The information in this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document addresses questions regarding the Homework Starts with Home (HSWH) Program Request for Proposals (RFP) that were received through Friday, December 5, 2024.

Updates to this FAQ are identified and dated accordingly.

Program Planning

Q1. **UPDATED: Clarified required collaborative partners/eligible applicants.** Can you provide more detail about how the collaborations will work? Will we be working together to figure out how each "group of similar organizations" can collaborate? **(Updated 12/5/2024)**

A. On the application, applicants should demonstrate that they have planned and engaged with identified collaborative partners which, at a minimum, must include the applicant (existing Housing Trust Fund [HTF] administrator or eligible Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program [FHPAP] applicant), local government entity, and participating school(s). Roles and responsibilities of the collaborative partners, eligibility criteria, and more must be outlined on the draft Memorandum of Understanding that is submitted as part of the application. Refer to the Memorandum of Understanding section of the HSWH Application Instructions for more information.

Q2. **UPDATED: Clarified that Housing Navigation is an eligible expense.** Aside from rental assistance, are we able to budget for wraparound services or help with mental health counseling, etc.? **(Updated 12/5/2024)**

A. Mental health counseling and wraparound services in general are not an eligible expense. However, coordinating related services can be an eligible expense. Section 6.04 (Supportive

Services Activities) of the [FHPAP Program Guide](#) outlines the required activities of case management which include:

- Assessment
- Plan Development
- Connection to services, treatments, and supports
- Coordination of services which can include connecting the household to wraparound services
- Monitor household progress and needs
- Personal advocacy on behalf of the household

Housing Navigation, which is an eligible expense, is also commonly provided to households to assist with housing search, application assistance, and move-in assistance.

Q3. If we are applying for a 4-year grant term, will the budget be $11 million, or does it remain at $5.5 million?

A. The legislative appropriation for the HSWH Program for the 2026-2027 biennium is $5.5 million; Minnesota Housing anticipates awarding up to that amount over that period of time based on its scoring of the applications it receives.

Q4. UPDATED: Added clarity regarding overlapping HSWH projects. Can a county be the grantee of more than one HSWH Project? **(Updated 12/5/2024)**

A. Yes, if they're serving different schools. If there are two projects that desire to serve the same school(s) and the applicant is in support of both, they should consider combining both projects into one application.

Q5. NEW. We are a current HSWH grantee with funding that runs through 9/30/27. Does this mean we cannot submit an application to expand our existing project? Would we simply remove the target schools from our service/referral area for the new HSWH program proposed? **(Added 12/5/2024)**

A. Current HSWH grantees can propose expanding their existing project. Examples may include proposing to serve additional households or adding new participating schools to the project.

Q6. NEW. We are interested in applying and were funded for a contract in 2018 as the lead applicant. In comparing that RFP to this RFP, the lead applicant in this round needs to be an "eligible applicant under HTF or FHPAP." In 2018, the lead applicant did not have this restriction. **(Added 12/5/2024)**

A. The eligible applicant for HSWH has changed since 2018. To be eligible to apply for this HSWH RFP, applicants must be a current [HTF administrator](#) or an eligible FHPAP applicant which includes:

- Tribal Nations
- Twin Cities metropolitan counties, which include Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties
- Non-metropolitan areas, which include a county, a group of contiguous counties jointly acting together, or a community-based nonprofit organization.

If you are an agency located in the metropolitan area, you will need to work with the county in your geographic area to ask about being a part of an application for funding.

If an organization is not a current HTF administrator and wishes to learn more about becoming an HTF administrator for future grant opportunities, contact Deran Cadotte at deran.cadotte@state.mn.us or 651.297.5230.

Q7. **NEW.** Are county-run Continuum of Care (CoC) entities an eligible government entity, which is one of the required roles? **(Added 12/5/2024)**

A. No, CoCs do not meet the definition of a Local Government Entity. Participating Local Government Entities may include county, Tribal, municipal, or regional governments, or public housing agencies, which are responsible for one or more "mainstream" housing, human services, or economic assistance programs that can serve people facing housing crises.

Q8. **NEW.** Our agency which is located in the metro, receives FHPAP funds, but we receive them through a participating county. Does this mean that if we wanted to receive FHPAP funds, we'd have to be a subgrantee of the county, who could receive those funds? **(Added 12/5/2024)**

A. Yes. In the metropolitan area, only counties are eligible applicants for the FHPAP funds operated through the HSWH program. If the county chooses to submit an application, they can operate the program on their own or choose to include subgrantees. If you are an agency located in the metropolitan area, you will need to connect with the county in your geographic area to ask about being a part of an application for funding. In this circumstance, your agency would be a proposed FHPAP subgrantee on the HSWH application that is submitted by the county. Refer to the Eligible Applicants and Roles section of the HSWH Application Instructions for more information.

Q9. **NEW.** To apply as an HTF administrator, are service providers of HTF funds qualified, or just the administrator entities themselves? Our agency currently administers HTF funds as a service provider for a named HTF administrator. Does this mean we could apply as an agency, or do we have to connect with the HTF administrator to apply as lead applicant and name our agency as a subgrantee? **(Added 12/5/2024)**

A.   Current HTF administrators are eligible HSWH applicants, and this includes HTF administrators who are service providers.

Q10.   **NEW.** Can there be two proposals from Ramsey County for the HSWH RFP, one for our urban school districts and one for suburban school districts? **(Added 12/5/2024)**

A.   Yes.

Q11.   **NEW.** Our organization is an enrolled provider with the Minnesota Department of Human Services; would we be eligible to apply for this grant? We offer housing services currently for people suffering with homelessness. **(Added 12/5/2024)**

A.   To be eligible to apply for this HSWH RFP, applicants must be a current HTF administrator (this includes HTF administrators who are service providers) or an eligible FHPAP applicant.

If you are not an eligible applicant, you can reach out to an eligible FHPAP applicant or current HTF administrator and make a request to partner with them on an application.

Q12.   **NEW.** We are a current HSWH grantee with funding through 9/30/27. Do you think there will be an RFP issued in 2026 for funding that will start 10/1/27? If so, and we applied and were awarded funding, is it true that we would not experience a funding gap if we did not apply for this HSWH RFP? **(Added 12/5/2024)**

A.   We anticipate issuing an RFP in 2026 with a start date of 10/1/2027. However, availability of funds is contingent upon legislative approval and program appropriations may increase or decrease. It is our hope that contracts would be executed as quickly as possible after funds are awarded but that is dependent on a number of factors, including due diligence by the grantee.

Q13.   **NEW.** We are a current HSWH grantee with funding through 9/30/27. If we don't apply for this round and another applicant is funded, would that work against us when we apply for a future round? **(Added 12/5/2024)**

A.   The scoring criteria for this RFP does not consider whether an applicant applied for a previous round of HSWH funding nor if there are existing Homework Starts with Home projects in a particular service area. In addition to scores, however, final funding recommendations may also be based on geographic distribution.

Q14.   **NEW.** Where do I find a list of HTF administrators? **(Added 12/5/2024)**

A.   A list of current HTF administrators can be found on the Housing Trust Fund Program Rental Assistance webpage.

Q15.   **NEW.** Are there any other HTF administrators in Ramsey County that we are unaware of outside of Neighborhood House and LSS? **(Added 12/5/2024)**

A. There are additional HTF administrators serving Ramsey County. Please refer to the list of current HTF administrators located on the [Housing Trust Fund Program Rental Assistance](#) webpage.

Q16. **NEW.** Can more than one provider assist with a specific school district? For example, if we apply for metro and suburban Ramsey County, and another provider is helping with some of the same school districts we plan on working with, is this acceptable, or do we need to provide services to only different school districts? **(Added 12/5/2024)**

A. If there are two projects that desire to serve the same school district, they should consider coordinating with an applicant for the submission of one application. If separate applications are submitted and eligible for review, each one will be reviewed and scored independent of other applications. In addition to scores, final funding recommendations may also be based on geographic distribution.

Q17. **NEW.** We are an HTF grantee and have been an FHPAP grantee. Do we need to work with the county, or can we be the applicant, HTF Administrator, and FHPAP grantee? Do we need to have a direct appropriation at the time of the start of HSWH, or would a past direct appropriation work in this case? **(Added 12/5/2024)**

A. If your agency currently receives a direct allocation of FHPAP funds but does not meet the definition of an eligible FHPAP Applicant as described in the response to Q.6, you are not an eligible HSWH Applicant and will need to connect with Ramsey County to inquire about being a part of an application for FHPAP funding. In this circumstance, Ramsey County would be the FHPAP Grantee and your agency the subgrantee. If you are a current HTF administrator, you could be the applicant and/or HTF administrator. Refer to the Eligible Applicants and Roles section of the [HSWH Application Instructions](#) for more information.

In the past, we have seen applications with joint applicants that include both an FHPAP administrator, such as a county, and an HTF administrator applying together to operate a program with both funding sources and that is allowable. However, one administrator would act as the lead contact for the application.

Q18. **NEW.** We are a small provider. Can we apply for this as a stand-alone, or can we partner? **(Added 12/5/2024)**

A. If you are not an eligible applicant for FHPAP or HTF as defined in Question 6, you can reach out to a current FHPAP or HTF administrator and make a request to partner with them on an application. Refer to the response in Q. 6 which provides more information on eligible applicants.

Q19. **NEW.** Are staff hiring/retention bonuses eligible? **(Added 12/5/2024)**

A. Section 6.02 (Eligible Expenses: Administration) of the [FHPAP Program Guide](#) notes that staff hiring/retention bonuses are an eligible FHPAP administration expense as long as this is included in the initial FHPAP application.

Pre-Award Risk Assessment

Q20. On the pre-award risk assessment for counties, what is required for the list of state grant funds administered during the past three years? Can we provide the funds received by our department, or does it need to be county wide?

A. Include a list of state grants received over the past three years only for the county unit/department that is applying for funds.

Q21. Which staff are required to be listed as principals?

A. Any staff (paid or volunteer) who have the authority to access funds or determine how funds are used should be included. Please also include public officials that meet either or both of those criteria and a list of your board members.

Q22. If there is a change occurring with board members shortly after the RFP submission date, should the new board member's information be included?

A. If the new board member is confirmed, please include him or her on the list of principals for whom you are attesting and certifying. If not confirmed, list only existing board members for the attestation and certification.

Q23. For the political subdivisions, do principals include elected officials that serve as the board for the county? Or only paid staff that work for the organization?

A. Both are principals.

Q24. For pre-award risk assessments, do we also have subgrantees (all nonprofits) fill out the Risk Assessment Form for their individual organizations?

A. The pre-award risk assessment is a state requirement only for potential grantees. Applicants should follow the processes and procedures of their own organization to assess the risk of contracting with subgrantees.

Q25. Please clarify what departments that counties would need to provide to be compliant with Mandatory Organizational Review for Political Subdivisions, "1) List any state grants from the past three years that your organization has administered, including name of awarding agency, program, and dates of the grant." Can we submit information limited to our department?

A.   Yes. Include a list of state grants received over the past three years for the county unit/department that is applying for funds.

Q26.   **NEW.** I have not yet submitted our organization's Risk Assessment Form and accompanying documents to Minnesota Housing. Do I do this through the web portal, or do I submit with each grant proposal? **(Added 12/5/2024)**

A.   All application materials must be submitted to the online [Multifamily Secure Upload Tool](). Refer to the Submission Instructions section of the [HSWH Application Instructions]() for more information. If you are applying for other Minnesota Housing RFPs, a separate pre-award risk assessment will be required for each application.