

Homework Starts with Home (HSWH) Request for Proposals (RFP) Frequently Asked Questions

Updated March 9, 2023

Q1: In the HSWH Request for Proposals (RFP) instructions, it was written that the RFP following this one will be in 2026, but it's also been said that it will be in 2025. Therefore, should current grantees that have a contract that ends in 2024 consider applying now to not have a gap in in funds? Or will there be a potential amendment to their contract so there isn't a gap year?

A. The current Request for Proposals represents State Fiscal Year 2024 and 2025 with a program start date of October 1, 2023. When we issue the next Request for Proposals, it would represent State Fiscal Year 2026 and 2027 with a start date of October 1, 2025.

Current grant administrators for HSWH, regardless of their contract end date, are eligible to apply for the current RFP. We do not plan to issue amendments for contracts ending on September 30, 2024.

Q2: (REVISED- reformatted bullets, added clarity about becoming a Housing Trust Fund administrator) How does an organization become a Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance (FHPAP) or Housing Trust Fund (HTF) administrator?

A. Applicants must be either 1) a current Housing Trust Fund administrator or 2) eligible to be a FHPAP administrator. The following are eligible to become FHPAP administrators:

- Tribal Nation
- Twin Cities metropolitan area: Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties*
- Non-metropolitan area (Greater Minnesota): A county, a group of contiguous counties jointly acting together, or a community-based nonprofit organization with a sponsoring resolution from each of the county boards located within the operating jurisdiction

* 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.

Q3: (REVISED-added clarity that this option is allowable) Scott and Carver Counties have a collaborative FHPAP program. Since Carver is technically the administrator, does that exempt Scott County's eligibility to pursue the administrator role for this program? Conceivably, we could partner with our HTF administrator?

A. Yes, this is allowable. Twin Cities metropolitan counties, which include Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties, are eligible to be FHPAP administrators, therefore, are eligible to apply for Homework Starts with Home.

Q4: Does St. Cloud have an opportunity to apply to this grant as well?

A. Please see question 2 for the definition of eligible applicants. If you need additional information, please contact Diane Elias at diane.elias@state.mn.us or Nancy Urbanski at nancy.urbanski@state.mn.us.

Q5: (REVISED-added clarity that this option is allowable) It says Tribes are eligible to apply, but the only administrator is the Minnesota Tribal Collaborative. What if a Tribe wants to submit a standalone application?

A. Yes, a single Tribe would be eligible to apply for HSWH using FHPAP funds to operate the HWSH project.

Yes, a single Tribe would be able to apply for HSWH using HTF funds if the Tribe is a current HTF administrator and is in good standing with Minnesota Housing and the Tribe has the demonstrated capacity to deliver rental assistance effectively and efficiently.

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

Q6: We are a small provider. Can we apply for this as a stand-alone, or can we partner?

A. If you are not an eligible applicant for FHPAP or HTF as defined in Question 2, you can reach out to a current FHPAP or HTF administrator and make a request to partner with them on an application.

You can find a list of current grant administrators under the grantees by Service Area on our [Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program \(FHPAP\) webpage](#).

Refer to the [contact list for HTF administrators](#).

Q7: Is there an administrator in Ramsey County? How do we become one?

A. Ramsey County is the only eligible applicant for HSWH if using FHPAP funds.

Refer to the [contact list for HTF administrators](#).

Q8: (REVISED-added clarity by removing additional language regarding Tribes) We are not a metro-area administrator. How can we get involved? Do I need to issue a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) draft?

- A. If your organization is a county, a group of contiguous counties jointly acting together, or a community-based nonprofit organization with a sponsoring resolution from each of the county boards located within the operating jurisdiction, your organization is able to apply for HSWH using FHPAP funds.

If your organization is a current HTF administrator, your organization is able to apply for HSWH using HTF funds if in good standing with Minnesota Housing and has the demonstrated capacity to deliver rental assistance effectively and efficiently.

A draft MOU must be submitted with the application materials. The MOU does not need to be signed at the time application materials are submitted.

Q9: Is there a list of organizations that are interested in expanding HSWH in a certain geographic location?

- A. There is a list of current Homework Starts with Home grantees on our [Homework Starts with Home webpage](#).

Q10: Do you have a sense of how the funding awards will split between existing programs and new programs?

- A. There is not a predetermined formula. After the grant review committee has met and the scores have been finalized, Minnesota Housing staff will calculate the final scores and determine funding recommendations that may also be based on geographic distribution, past performance, and services to special populations.

For the past two grant cycles, approximately half of the awards were for new programs and half were for existing or expanded programs.

Q11: If all grant requests cannot be funded with the \$3.5 million dollars, and later more funds are allocated to HSWH, is it possible that applicants who were denied could then be offered funding?

- A. In the event increased funding is available, Minnesota Housing may make additional awards. Eligibility for these funds cannot be determined until the source and amount of funding is determined. Any additional funding would be made at the sole discretion of Minnesota Housing.

Q12: Do we need to include HSWH RFP and FHPAP RFP on the same application since they are due on the same date?

- A. Although the HSWH and FHPAP Request for Proposals were issued at the same time and are due on the same date, they are separate applications and must be submitted separately.

It may be helpful for applicants who are applying for both funds to acknowledge that they are applying for both projects in each application, especially if there will be any coordination between the two projects.

Q13: Can we apply for supportive services if we only want to leverage another funding source for direct assistance, such as local aid to counties?

A. Yes. Please provide a detailed description in the application.

Q14: What percent of funds can be used for supportive services?

A. Only FHPAP funds may be used for supportive services. There is no limit to the amount utilized for supportive services, provided the project will also have direct assistance available through FHPAP, HTF, or another funding source identified by the project.

Q15: Can you give an overview on how an HTF administrator can be compensated under HSWH? Are they eligible for an administrative fee as well, in addition to \$68 per household per month?

A. Housing Trust Fund (HTF) administrators are eligible for a maximum of \$68 per month per household. There are no other administrative funds for HTF. Refer also to Section 7.01 of the Housing Trust Fund Rental Assistance Program Guide.

Q16: (REVISED-added language re: Q25) Are the administration funds (10% of the total FHPAP funds) combined with HTF administration funds?

A. No. FHPAP allows for up to 10% of the total FHPAP funds to be used for administration.

HTF allows for a maximum of \$68 per household to be used for administration of HTF dollars.

It is possible that an applicant using both funding sources could receive 10% in administrative funds for FHPAP and a maximum of \$68 per household from HTF dollars and serve the same clients. As an example, if FHPAP was used for services and HTF dollars were used for direct assistance, such as rent, the applicant could receive 10% of the total FHPAP grant for administration and a maximum of \$68 per household for HTF.

Please see Q25 for an update regarding the maximum for administrative funds.

Q17: What happens if we apply for a 2-year grant or 4-year grant and expend all of the funds before the end of the contract period? Is there a penalty?

A. We expect grant administrators to monitor utilization of the funds so that the funds will last through the contract period. Grant administrators often set up mechanisms, such as a tracking spreadsheet or financial system, to support spreading the funds across the months of the contract period.

Q18: Can we cap rents? Can we reflect and assess what amount of rent is appropriate?

A. Grant administrators are allowed to increase or decrease the amount of rent paid in comparison to household income or need. For FHPAP, we recommend assessing income at least every six months.

For HTF, capped program structures should be proposed at the time of application and are subject to Minnesota Housing approval. For example, an administrator could propose a subsidy cap program in which the maximum rental assistance is based on the unit size.

Q19: (REVISED-added clarity on duplication of services) Washington County is collaborating with Solid Ground on the RFP for Homework Starts with Home, and one of our school districts with a large number of homeless and highly mobile students has its headquarters in Ramsey County, but spans both Ramsey County and Washington County, ISD 622. Washington County supports ISD 622 in our Local Homeless Prevention Aid allocation, and we're wondering if it would be appropriate to count ISD 622's Oakdale data in our project design.

A. Yes; however in situations where a proposed school district(s) overlaps with a different FHPAP and/or HTF service area, you will want to articulate in your application how you will coordinate with the other FHPAP and/or HTF administrator so that you do not duplicate services to households if the other administrator is also applying for HSWH funds for the same school district. If there is no duplication of services, it is allowable to serve households in multiple FHPAP and/HTF service areas due to the school district's geography.

Q20: Are HSWH program funds able to help first-time homebuyers? Or with down payment assistance?

A. Down payment assistance is not an eligible expense for Homework Starts with Home. More information for first-time home buyers can be found on [Minnesota Housing's Homeownership Programs](#) webpage.

Newly Added Questions

Q21: Please verify the maximum timeline for services under FHPAP – is it limited to 24 months like traditional FHPAP services, or does it align with the 5-year max under HTF (or somewhere in between)?

A. The School Stability subdivision of the FHPAP statute, [Minnesota Statute 462A.204, Subdivision 8](#), indicates that for school stability projects, such as Homework Starts with Home, the provision of FHPAP rental assistance may exceed 24 months.

Note, however, that HSWH grantees cannot guarantee direct assistance or supportive services to HSWH households beyond the length of the grant term, regardless of the length of time allowed by the HTF or FHPAP statute and/or outlined in the HTF and FHPAP Program Guides. Grantees would only be able to extend assistance to households if they applied for and were awarded funds in subsequent RFPs where there would be no gap in the operation of their HSWH project. Keep in mind, however, that continued funding is not guaranteed.

Q22: In the webinar, you indicated that new projects may want to apply for a 4-year grant period to allow for a longer ramp-up period, while more experienced programs/partnerships may want to apply for a 2-year grant period. Is this correct? Can you please share your reasoning so that we can make the best decision for our partnership?

A. All applicants are eligible to apply for a 2-year or 4-year grant term. Factors to consider include, but are not limited to:

- Experience of the applicant in executing a HSWH project, including if the applicant is currently operating a HSWH project

- The length of time it would take to “ramp up” their HSWH project, including
 - Hiring and/or training additional administrative and/or program staff needed
 - Having financial reporting and tracking systems in place
 - Projected amount of time needed for the project to be operating at full capacity, etc.
- The extent to which collaborative partnerships have been established and the length of time those partnerships have been in place
- The length of time households may need to obtain housing stability prior to exiting the program by the end of the grant term

Q23: Do school districts need to be part of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as signers, or simply named as part of the partnership?

- A. A partnering school(s) is a required collaborative partner in the proposed Homework Starts with Home project, and therefore must be included on the MOU. Signatures from authorized representatives of the collaborative partners will be required during the due diligence phase, including signatures from the participating school(s). However, signatures are not required on the draft MOU that is submitted with the application.

Q24: We are interested in proposing an expansion of our current HSWH program where there would be one HTF administrator and two metropolitan counties would administer a portion of the FHPAP funds. Assuming the counties are in support of this, if we were selected for funding, is it possible to utilize two FHPAP administrators for one HSWH program?

- A. Yes, it is possible for there to be more than one FHPAP administrator in a HSWH project. One of the two metropolitan counties would have to be willing to be the FHPAP grantee and take on the responsibilities of executing a Grant Contract Agreement with Minnesota Housing as well as overall administration and oversight, including monitoring, reporting and other requirements outlined in the Grant Contract Agreement.

Q25: We are applying for HSWH and will be requesting HTF funding. The HTF Program Rental Assistance Guide, which will take effect on 10/1/23, was approved by Minnesota Housing’s board and reflects some changes regarding administrative fees. How much should we request for an administrative fee on the application budget?

- A. Per the 2024-25 HTF Program Rental Assistance Guide, which goes into effect October 1, 2023, HSWH applicants requesting HTF funding can request administrative fees that range from \$62 per household per month to \$76 per household per month. At the time of selection of funding, Minnesota Housing will approve administrative fees based on the target number of households, the amount of the grant, the geography of the service area, and the population served. The applicant's proposed monthly administrative fee may not exceed the fee paid by HUD to administrators of the Section 8 housing assistance program in the same jurisdiction, as described in [Code of Federal Regulations, title 24, section 982.152](#).

You are able to view the 2024-2025 HTF Program Rental Assistance Guide in “track changes” by going to our Minnesota Housing’s [Board Meetings and Materials webpage](#). On this page, open

the link to the February 23 board meeting; refer to the screenshot below. The 2024-2025 HTF Program Guide, which was approved by the Minnesota Housing board at the February 23 meeting, begins on page 57 of the board packet.

[Home](#) > [About Us](#) > [Board Meetings](#)

Board Meetings and Materials

+ [How to contact board members](#)

2023 Schedule of Minnesota Housing Board Meetings

All meetings are at 1:00 p.m. and available to attend in person or virtual unless otherwise noted.

Click the meeting date to download materials. For page numbers to print, you must choose to print in the Adobe print dialog box.

[January 26](#) - UPDATED 1/26/23

[February 23](#) - Finance and Audit Committee Meeting - 11:30 a.m. ***MEETING IS VIRTUAL***

[February 23](#) - ***MEETING IS VIRTUAL***

Q26: Does an organization need to partner with schools to apply for HSWH, or can it collaborate with other nonprofit organizations that assist the homeless population?

A. Every application must identify one or more Participating School. Participating Schools must include one or more public, charter, or Tribal school. Participating Schools may also include private schools, but only when the application also includes a public, charter, or Tribal school.

Q28: Can my organization still apply for the HSWH if it is not a current grantee receiving Housing Trust Fund or FHPAP funding?

A. Applicants must be either a current Housing Trust Fund administrator or eligible to become a FHPAP administrator. The following are eligible to become FHPAP administrators:

- Tribal Nation
- Twin Cities metropolitan area: Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties*
- Non-metropolitan area (Greater Minnesota): A county, a group of contiguous counties jointly acting together, or a community-based nonprofit organization with a sponsoring resolution from each of the county boards located within the operating jurisdiction

*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.

Q29: Does an applicant have to be in the Continuum of Care to apply for either of these grants?

- A. Applicants do not need to be currently participating in their local Continuum of Care (CoC); however, if the applicant were selected for funding, they would need to coordinate with their CoC if receiving referrals through Coordinated Entry. As part of the homeless response system, HSWH grantees should plan for alignment and coordination with the CoC or Tribes, where possible.