

HomeHelpMN COVID-19 Homeowner Assistance Fund

Community Connector RFP FAQ

FAQ – October 11, 2021

Question: Will renters be included this outreach and information?

Answer: The HomeHelpMN Community Connector program is specifically funding engagement and outreach to homeowners (including manufactured housing homeowners). Outreach and engagement for renters is funded through the RentHelpMN program.

Question: If we have the 501(c)(3), the DUNS Number and have long-trusted genuine relationship with the community served and need help with the application due to language, can we get that help from a representative for this allocation?

Answer: Minnesota Housing will consider how it can provide language access. Please email HomeHelpMN@state.mn.us or we will email you to get more information about the type of assistance and language needed.

Question: If our agency is already doing homeowner counseling, can our nonprofit apply?

Answer: Organizations currently funded by Minnesota Housing through the Enhanced Financial Homeownership Capacity program and/or the Homeownership Education Counseling and Training program are not eligible to apply for funding through this RFP. Grantees or subgrantees eligible to apply for separate Professional/Technical contracts for HomeHelpMN housing and financial counseling are also ineligible. Minnesota Housing wants organizations funded through these programs to be able to focus on financial education and foreclosure prevention counseling services.

Question: Will HomeHelpMN Community Connector RFP get specific information about the HomeHelpMN application and program or will someone at HomeHelpMN work with the Community Connectors to provide that info?

Answer: Minnesota Housing will provide marketing and informational materials to the HomeHelpMN Community Connectors so that they are equipped to share enough information to homeowners so that they feel comfortable taking the next step to access the HomeHelpMN program.

Question: Is the HomeHelpMN Community Connector RFP for vendors to distribute these funds to Socially Disadvantaged Individuals?

Answer: No. The HomeHelpMN Community Connector program does not involve distributing funds or administering the HomeHelpMN program. The HomeHelpMN Community Connector program is primarily focused on community engagement and information sharing. Please see the [application](#) for a full description of grant activities.

Question: Would a faith-based organization such as a church, mosque, or synagogue qualify for the HomeHelpMN Community Connector RFP?

Answer: If the faith-based organization has 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, they are eligible to apply, but the funding may not support “inherently religious” activities.

Question: I represent a 13-partner collective that is working together to share language capacity. Would the \$60,000 cap apply to an application submitted on behalf of up to 13 organizations?

Answer: The HomeHelpMN Community Connector program does not allow for sub-grantee or partner applications. \$60,000 is the maximum award.

Question: Can individuals apply for this grant? Sometimes individuals can be more productive, serviceable, and corruption-free than some organizations.

Answer: No. Eligible entities must have 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.

Question: Will the work involved be same as what it was for RentHelpMN such as uploading clients' applications and documents?

Answer: No. The scope of work is different than the Field Partners grantees with RentHelpMN. The HomeHelpMN Community Connector program is primarily focused on community engagement and information sharing. HomeHelpMN Community Connectors will have no role in the administration of the HomeHelpMN program. Please see the [application](#) for a full description of grant activities.

Question: The RFP mentioned a minimum of 5 community meetings to be held. Can these be virtual meetings?

Answer: Minnesota Housing is looking to grantees to identify the most effective ways they can reach community members that are least likely to apply. Virtual meetings may achieve this goal, but they may leave out people that have limited or no access to technology. We also recognize the safety considerations of the pandemic, so it may be appropriate to describe a few scenarios.

Question: If the grantee exhausts the grant money before the end of HomeHelpMN, would you want grantees to not assist any further people that may approach them?

Answer: Grantees are asked to create a budget and work plan that allows them to have funding throughout the grant contract.

Question: Can government entities apply?

Answer: No, government entities are not eligible to apply.

Question: Can Minnesota Housing provide assistance or suggest where applicants can seek assistance to complete the grant?

Answer: Unfortunately, Minnesota Housing is unable to provide grant application assistance or is aware of those than can. If a potential applicant has specific questions about any part of the application or process, we are available to answer those questions.

Question: If a potential applicant has funding from other jurisdictions are they still eligible to apply?

Answer: As long as the applicant meets the eligibility requirements, it is eligible to apply. Funding by other jurisdictions does not make an applicant ineligible to apply.

Question: Where do we send the completed HomeHelpMN Community Connectors application?

Answer: The completed application and attachments must be submitted through email to homehelpmn@state.mn.us. The subject line of the email should be "COMMUNITY CONNECTORS."

Financial documents (if required) must be uploaded to <https://mnhousing.leapfile.net/> by selecting "Secure Upload." In the "Recipient Email" field use this email: homeownershipcapacity@state.mn.us, then hit "Start" and follow the directions from there. Do not send financial documents via email.

Question: Will Minnesota Housing have contractors or staff in place to provide support to homeowners in need of services?

Answer: Homeowners who need immediate assistance should contact your loan servicer or a foreclosure prevention counselor [here](#). Housing and foreclosure counseling is available for Minnesota homeowners free of charge.

Question: Does an applicant need to have an office located in Minnesota in order to apply for the Community Connectors grant?

Answer: While it is not a formal requirement for an applicant to have an office located in Minnesota at time of application, all applicants are required to provide a copy of their Organization Certificate of Good Standing (current through 2020), via the Minnesota Secretary of State Business and Lien System.

Successful applicants will be able to demonstrate deep, longstanding, and trusting relationships within Minnesota communities that are least likely to know about and/or access the HomeHelpMN program. Applicants past experience with community engagement, existing community networks and relationships will be evaluated during application scoring.

Question: How do I find my community connectors?

Answer: Minnesota Housing will widely publicize the selected Community Connectors and their contact information after the RFP process has been completed.

Question: You mentioned something about a Counseling RFP that will be released, what is it?

Answer: Minnesota Housing released an RFP for Housing Counseling and Legal Services on September 9, 2021 with responses due on September 30, 2021. The RFP is now closed.

Question: What are examples of financial documents required if the request is over \$25,000?

Answer: If your organization is a nonprofit and is requesting \$25,000 or more from the HomeHelpMN Community Connectors, please submit the following based on your organization's annual income:

- Under \$50,000 (or not in existence long enough to have completed IRS Form 990 or an audit): Submit most recent board-reviewed financial statements
- \$50,000-\$750,000: Submit most recent IRS Form 990
- Over \$750,000: Submit most recent certified financial audit

Question: Will marketing material be provided in different languages?

Answer: Yes, Minnesota Housing will provide marketing and informational materials in a variety of different languages to the HomeHelpMN Community Connectors. We want HomeHelpMN Community Connectors to be equipped to share information to homeowners, no matter the language spoken.

Question: I'm a single family homeowner. Can I apply individually for the HomeHelpMN Community Connectors RFP? How can I get the application for Homeowner Assistance?

Answer: The HomeHelpMN Community Connectors RFP is for community based organizations, not individual homeowners. The HomeHelpMN COVID-19 Homeowner Assistance Fund program is still going through the approval process, and not yet open to the public.

If you are in danger of losing your home due to foreclosure or have other urgent issues to address, contact a certified foreclosure prevention counselor in your area:

https://www.hocmn.org/search-foreclosure-advisor/?fwp_audience_services=foreclosure-prevention-advice

Sign up using the link below to receive future program updates as the HomeHelpMN program is implemented: <https://signup.e2ma.net/signup/1943363/25709/>

Question: Will Minnesota Housing use a similar system as RentHelpMN for payments and eligibility?

Answer: No, HomeHelpMN will use a different system with different processes and different eligibility requirements.

Question: We are a 501c3 place of worship, so don't deal with IRS documents. Our annual budget is between \$50,000 and 750,000, what financial documents should we submit?

Answer: Please submit:

- A letter or certificate that documents official status as a religious organization
- The latest fiscal year end Balance Sheet and Income Statement, certified by the President and Treasurer of their Council or Board, stating that to the best of their knowledge the numbers represented on the balance sheet and income statement are correct and accurate.

Question: Do I apply for funds through the USDA?

Answer: No. If you are a homeowner in need of assistance and have a USDA loan, contact your loan servicer.

Question: Do we type directly into the PDF? The mission and activities section cuts off ability to type after 50 words.

Answer: Yes, type directly into the PDF. Different answer fields have different word limits. The "organization's mission and activities" field, within the Applicant Contact Information section is limited to 50 words; applicants should summarize their general mission and activities. There are questions throughout the application where applicants can provide more detailed information on their mission and activities.

Question: To clarify, the HomeHelpMN Community Connectors RFP is primarily to provide outreach and engagement to connect homeowners with the HomeHelpMN homeowner assistance program, yes?

Answer: Yes, that is correct.

Question: If our organization has a fiscal agent, are we able to apply?

Answer: Yes, an organization with a fiscal agent is able to apply. The fiscal agent should be listed as a co-applicant on the application and the DUNS number for the fiscal agent must be listed. Please include information within the application about the relationship between the organization and the fiscal agent.