



Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) Program Request for Proposals (RFP) Application Instructions

Grant Term: March 2024 – February 2025

Application Deadline: Monday, December 4, 2023, at noon Central Time

10/30/2023

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Overview

Minnesota Housing is accepting applications for the Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) State of Minnesota formula funds, appropriated annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HOPWA funds are distributed under a federal [statutory formula](#) that is based on AIDS surveillance information (number of people living with HIV/AIDS) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as other factors, including the share of the state's population in poverty and local housing costs.

State HOPWA funds serve individuals and their families at or below 80% of area median income (AMI) who are living with HIV/AIDS in Greater Minnesota outside of the 15-county eligible metropolitan statistical area (EMSA). Funds are made available to eligible households as emergency assistance for Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, and Utility (STRMU) payments.

Up to \$651,000 in one-time funding is available to support eligible households by helping them remain in their homes, and when utilized with other efforts, such as helping households access health care services, case management, benefits counseling, and employment or vocational services, works to stabilize assisted households. This one-time funding opportunity is available from March 2024 through February 2025. Contracts awarded under this RFP have the potential for a one year extension and additional funding contingent on future federal program appropriations and Minnesota Housing board approval.

The goal of these grant funds is to help eligible households maintain affordable and stable housing and reduce their risk of homelessness in Greater Minnesota. HOPWA is governed by specific federal regulations that can be found at the following links:

- AIDS Housing Opportunity Act: [United States Code, Title 42, Chapter 131](#)
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS: [Code of Federal Regulations, Title 24, Subtitle B, Chapter V, Subchapter C, Part 574](#)

The Minnesota Housing HOPWA Program Guide can be accessed on Minnesota Housing's [HOPWA webpage](#).

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants to administer HOPWA funds include the following entities:

- An Indian Tribe or Tribal housing corporation
- A nonprofit organization, as defined in [Minnesota Statutes, section 462A.03, subdivision 22](#)

- A city, as defined in [Minnesota Statutes, section 462A.03, subdivision 21](#)
- A unit of general local government that does not qualify for formula grants, as described in [24 C.F.R. 574.100 \(2023\)](#)

Applicants must demonstrate experience and ability in the administration of housing assistance payments or must partner or contract with an organization that has experience and ability in the administration of housing assistance payments.

Subrecipients

The Project Sponsor (Applicant) may enter into an agreement with another organization (Subrecipient) for paid or leveraged services. When there is a Subrecipient, the Project Sponsor must have a written agreement with the Subrecipient(s).

Written agreements between Project Sponsors and any Subrecipients shall outline terms for spending HOPWA funds, specify activities that will be undertaken (rent, mortgage or utility payments) and describe how performance will be measured. The written agreement must explicitly outline project goals and the scope of work and must conform with federal subgranting requirements as outlined in 24 CFR 200.332 and HOPWA specific requirements described in 24 CFR 574.500.

Project Sponsors are solely responsible for the work performed with funds provided by Minnesota Housing and must have policies and procedures in place to provide risk management, programmatic and financial oversight, and monitoring to any Subrecipient(s). As part of Subrecipient oversight, Project Sponsors are required to conduct site visits and other required monitoring of Subrecipient(s) during the contract period, and to share the results of any monitoring with Minnesota Housing if requested.

In addition, Project Sponsors are responsible for ensuring that communication received from Minnesota Housing is relayed to Subrecipient(s).

Please note, the use of Subrecipients is one possible program design, and is not required for submission of a successful application under this RFP.

Eligible Uses

The funds must be used for:

- Direct STRMU assistance:
 - Rent payments
 - Mortgage payments

- Utility payments

NOTE: The assistance is available for up to 21 weeks in a 52-week period to prevent the homelessness of the renter or mortgagor.

- Service delivery costs include personnel, travel, equipment, and supplies. **Costs must be necessary, reasonable, allowable, documented, and allocable to STRMU.** STRMU service delivery activities may include:
 - Assessing housing status and needs
 - Collecting program eligibility documentation and qualifying households for services
 - Collecting evidence of the emergency/need for services and inability to pay housing costs
 - Performing initial eligibility certifications and annual and interim eligibility recertifications
 - Referring to other housing assistance services if ineligible for the program or unqualified for services
 - Collecting supporting documentation and attaching it to program forms when required or applicable
 - Traveling to proposed units to complete habitability inspections (if necessary)
 - Communicating with owners and mortgage and utility companies about program requirements
 - Requesting, issuing, and documenting payments
 - Documenting housing assistance and supportive service outcomes
 - Recordkeeping, logging time and effort, and maintaining case notes
- Administrative Costs:
 - Project Sponsors are allowed to spend up to 7% of the total direct assistance expended under the Grant Contract Agreement on administrative activities. As defined in [24 CFR 574.3](#), administrative activities include general management, oversight, coordination, evaluation, and reporting on eligible activities.

Ineligible costs

- Supportive services are not an eligible expense under the Program.
- STRMU assistance cannot be provided to a household that is homeless. STRMU may not be provided to assist households in moving into a new housing arrangement. STRMU may not be used for moving assistance, security, and utility deposits, or first month's rent.
- STRMU cannot be provided to households receiving rental assistance for the same period from another federal, state, or local housing assistance program. For example, STRMU cannot pay

the portion of rent that a household is responsible for if they are enrolled in the Housing Choice Voucher program (HCV) or receiving another type of rental assistance.

- See section 2.03 of the HOPWA Program Guide for additional ineligible costs.

Applicants are encouraged but not required to identify additional local resources (including existing programs, capacity, or financial resources) that will be leveraged through their proposed program.

Program Expectations

Financial and Programmatic Reporting

Project Sponsors will be required to submit monthly expenditure reports. Funding reimbursement will occur upon Minnesota Housing's approval of submitted reports and will be at Minnesota Housing's sole discretion. Project Sponsors are required to maintain records and substantiating documentation for all expenditure reports, and may be required by Minnesota Housing to produce those records at any time during the contract period.

Project Sponsors must also work with Minnesota Housing to complete the Consolidated Annual Progress Report/Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (APR/CAPER). Minnesota Housing will provide technical assistance to Project Sponsors in order to complete the APR/CAPER.

Monitoring

Minnesota Housing will conduct ongoing evaluations of the financial reports and household files submitted by Project Sponsors. Per [24 CFR 574.500](#), Minnesota Housing is responsible for helping ensure that Project Sponsors carry out activities in compliance with all applicable requirements. Minnesota Housing is required to conduct site visits and comprehensive monitoring for all Project Sponsors with contracts over \$50,000 at least once during the contract period. Project Sponsors may also be subject to on-site visits or desk monitoring directly from HUD's Community Planning and Development (CPD) Office. Monitoring is enforced by HUD pursuant to [2 CFR 200](#).

If the Project Sponsor works with Subrecipients, the Project Sponsors must review program files to help ensure that the written agreements are in place, contain the required language, and are fully executed, meaning that authorized persons at both organizations have dated and signed them. The written agreement between Project Sponsors and their Subrecipient(s) is the foundation for monitoring, and Project Sponsors are required to conduct ongoing reviews of Subrecipient financial and programmatic files related to the implementation of the HOPWA program, in accordance with the terms of their agreement. Project Sponsors are required to conduct site visits and comprehensive monitoring of each subrecipient according to their own internal policies. Minnesota Housing may ask for Subrecipient monitoring plans or monitoring results at any time during the contract period.

Program Activities

HUD HOPWA assistance is not intended to provide “stand alone” funding. The program comes with requirements that the Project Sponsor provide an appropriate level of supportive services designed to meet HUD HOPWA program objectives for maintaining housing stability, avoiding homelessness, and helping ensure access to care and support. Because STRMU is temporary, Project Sponsors and Subrecipients are required to design their programs with household transition goals in mind. For information on program services expectations, refer to section 3.01 of the HOPWA Program Guide.

Contractual Obligations

Minnesota Housing reserves the right to withhold funds or discontinue funding disbursements if a Project Sponsor fails to submit required reports, accomplish the contracted activities or fails to comply with the stipulations outlined in the Grant Contract Agreement.

Equity

All Project Sponsors must serve diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities. Minnesota Housing expects Project Sponsors to work toward decreasing barriers in how populations access services in their regions and to work toward increasing positive outcomes for diverse populations, especially people more likely to be impacted by housing instability. Project Sponsors will also be required to engage diverse populations and people whose income is at or below 80% AMI and living with HIV/AIDS in their planning and decision-making processes. This includes clear and well-developed processes related to governance, data collection and decision making.

Diverse populations include:

- Cultural, racial, and ethnic communities
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, and Two-Spirit+ (LGBTQIA2S+) communities
- People with disabilities
- Veterans
- Other populations who are identified by the region

Review Criteria

This is a competitive application process. Applications will be reviewed and scored by a review committee comprised of Minnesota Housing staff, other state agency staff, and community reviewers with knowledge of housing stability programs. Recommendations will be presented to the Minnesota Housing board for approval. Minnesota Housing’s award decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

The application must be completed properly and submitted by the deadline via the submission method noted below; late applications will not be reviewed. The following **threshold criteria** must be satisfied for an application to be considered:

- The applicant must be an eligible applicant as defined in the Eligible Applicants section.
- The application must include all required application checklist items, be properly completed and submitted by the published deadline via the specified submission method (refer to the Submission Instructions section of this document). **NOTE:** All required application items must be provided either before or no later than the application deadline. **Any application that does not include all properly completed and required items (threshold criteria) will not be eligible for funding consideration.**

The following **competitive criteria** will be used to score only those applications that satisfy the threshold criteria as stated in the Application Checklist section of this document.

Capacity and Project Design – 60 Points

A competitively written application will clearly:

- Describe the organization’s overall mission and experience in providing STRMU assistance to eligible HOPWA households.
- Demonstrate the organization’s knowledge of the eligible populations’ needs and identify barriers for carrying out the HOPWA assistance in the proposed geographic areas. The application should include descriptions on how the organization will address these barriers.
- Describe the assistance(s) to be offered (rental, mortgage, or utility).
- Describe the organization’s proposed process for collecting and reporting data and its ability to administer housing assistance payments.
- Describe the organization’s involvement in HIV/AIDS care and support. This should include any coordination and collaboration with other providers.
- Outline the role of subrecipients in providing STRMU assistance (if applicable), and how the Project Sponsor will monitor and evaluate their performance.

Equity – 30 Points

A competitively written application will clearly:

- Explain how people living with HIV/AIDS will be included in the program improvement and evaluation process, including governance, data collection and decision making.
- Identify the organization’s intentional outreach strategies to serve particular populations who may be experiencing housing instability at disproportionate levels (i.e., cultural, racial, and

ethnic communities, LGBTQIA2S+ communities, people with disabilities, veterans, and others who are identified by the applicant).

NOTE: Recognizing and honoring sovereignty, Tribal Nations will receive automatic points for the Equity section.

Budget – 10 Points

- The budget is clear, reasonable, detailed and well-developed.
- The narratives support and explain budget activities.

Selections

Table 1: Competitive Criteria Scoring

Category	Maximum Score
Capacity and Project Design	60
Equity	30
Budget	10
Total	100

Funding selections will consider past performance of current Project Sponsors and will not be based solely on the application score. Minnesota Housing may also consider geographic distribution and services specific to identified local needs. Final funding amounts will be dependent on the amount requested, the number of applicants, and the funding amount available to distribute.

All decisions are at Minnesota Housing’s sole discretion and are not subject to appeal. Additionally, Minnesota Housing reserves the right to request proposal revisions during the due diligence phase, which is after Minnesota Housing board approval but before the Grant Contract Agreement is executed.

Application Timeline

Table 2: Application Timeline

Date	Activity
Monday, October 30, 2023	RFP posted via the Minnesota Housing website, eNews, and State Register

Date	Activity
Monday, November 6, 2023	Minnesota Housing holds an RFP information session (more information below)
Monday, December 4, 2023	Applications due by noon Central Time (refer to the Submission Instructions section below)
Thursday, January 25, 2024	Minnesota Housing staff recommends selections to Minnesota Housing’s board
Friday, January 26, 2024	Selected grantees notified; due diligence phase begins
Tuesday, February 1, 2024	Mandatory due diligence training for all selected grantees
Friday, February 16, 2024	Due diligence items due date
Friday, March 1, 2024	Upon Grant Contracts Agreements being fully executed, Grant Contract Agreement term begins.
Saturday, February 28, 2025	Grant Contract Agreement term ends

Minnesota Housing will hold an RFP information session on **Monday, November 6, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. Central Time** via GoToWebinar. Register [here](#). After registering, a confirmation email will be sent with information about how to join the webinar.

The information session will provide an overview of RFP content and allow time for questions. Frequently asked questions (FAQs) from the session along with other questions will be posted on or around Monday, November 20, 2023, and Thursday, November 30, 2023, with a deadline for submission of final questions to Minnesota Housing on Thursday, November 23, 2023, at noon Central Time.

Application Checklist

Applicants must use the required application form and include all the required information/documentation. Applicants are encouraged to be clear and concise in the presentation of information. Do not submit materials that are not requested (letter of support, photos, brochures, etc.). Unrequested materials will not be reviewed.

All of the following checklist items must be completed properly and submitted to meet the threshold criteria. Only applications meeting the threshold criteria will be considered for funding:

1. [Application \(Word version\)](#) | [PDF version](#) | [RTF version](#)

2. [Application Signature Page](#) (wet, digital, or electronic signatures will be accepted)
3. [Budget](#)
4. [Project Sponsor Form](#) - If the applicant is using subrecipients, this form should be submitted for each subrecipient along with the applicant.
5. Applicant current financial information (does not apply to any governmental organizations or Tribal Nations) – all nongovernmental organizations applying for \$25,000 or more must supply the following financial documentation depending on their gross revenue:

Table 3: Required Financial Documentation

Documentation	Total Gross Revenue
Board-Reviewed 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

NOTE: Applicants must understand the application components and what types of submission materials are required to satisfy each required component. Applications that do not contain all required components (completed and submitted properly) will be noted as incomplete and not eligible for further review, including scoring. Minnesota Housing is unable to contact applicants to alert them to their application’s incompleteness.

If you have questions regarding checklist items listed above, contact the designated point of contact found at the end of this document. Allow enough time for staff to respond and help resolve issues so that a complete application can be submitted prior to the application submission deadline. Also note that technical assistance does not guarantee that an applicant will submit a complete application.

If an applicant is selected for funding, Minnesota Housing will request the following due diligence items be submitted by **Friday, February 16, 2024**:

- **Signed Grant Contract Agreement** (provided by Minnesota Housing).
- **Board Resolution:** A signed original, or signed and certified copy specific to the Grant Contract Agreement that designates authorized signatories, authority to enter into a contract and that references the requested and/or awarded amount.
- **Certificate of Insurance with Employee Dishonesty/Crime Coverage** (*cannot accept “Employee Theft” or “Crime and Employee Theft”*) in the amount of at least one-eighth of the total amount of the funding amount.
- [Electronic Funds Transfer \(EFT\) Authorization Form](#) for a new applicant that has been selected, or if the current EFT on file needs updates.

- **Certificate of Good Standing** issued by the [Minnesota Secretary of State Office](#) with a renewal date after the start of the grant term (a screenshot is also an acceptable form of evidence). This does not apply to any governmental organizations or Tribal Nations.
- **Proof of active System for Award Management ([SAM.gov](#)) registration.** A screenshot or print-out from [SAM.gov](#) reflecting the applicant organization's Unique Entity Identifier and active status is an acceptable form of evidence.
- **Indirect Cost Rate documentation from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).**
- **Final approved Work Plan:** The selected applicant will be required to complete and submit an updated work plan on a template provided by Minnesota Housing. The purpose of the updated work plan is to describe changes since application submittal and as a result of the final award amount and requirements. Minnesota Housing will approve all work plans.
- **Final approved Budget:** A final budget reflecting the awarded amount and any allocation or changes to the amount(s) related to the Project Sponsor and Subrecipient(s).

Applicants awarded funding must have all due diligence items submitted and approved, and the Grant Contract Agreement fully executed, which includes both the applicant's and Minnesota Housing's signatures, before costs can be incurred and reimbursed or grant funds can be expended. Minnesota Housing will not reimburse costs incurred prior to the execution of the Grant Contract Agreement. Minnesota Housing will initiate the execution of the Grant Contract Agreement, including required signatures.

Submission Instructions

Upload application materials to the online [Multifamily Secure Upload Tool](#) **no later than noon Central Time on Monday, December 4, 2023**, to be considered for funding. Within the Secure Upload Tool, submit items to mhfa.app@state.mn.us. Upload required documents in the original format; do not convert the documents to PDF or other formats except for the signature page of the application. Review the [Upload Tool Instructions](#) for more information. Do not email or otherwise provide an application to Minnesota Housing staff email or other address.

NOTE: Submitted applications are considered final; late applications will not be accepted. Minnesota Housing may request additional information or clarification. The applicant will be responsible for all costs incurred related to applying for this RFP. Award decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

Per the [Minnesota Government Data Practices Act](#), responses submitted by a grantee are private or nonpublic until the responses are opened. Once the responses are opened, the name and address of the grantee and the amount requested is public. All other data in a response is private or nonpublic data until completion of the evaluation process, which for the purposes of this grant, is when all Grant

Contract Agreements have been fully executed. After a granting agency has completed the evaluation process, all remaining data in the responses is public with the exception of trade secret data as defined and classified in [Section 13.37 of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act](#). A statement by a grantee that the response is copyrighted or otherwise protected does not prevent public access to the response.

Contractual Requirements

An applicant awarded funding under this proposal will be required to:

- Complete a Grant Contract Agreement with Minnesota Housing outlining the scope of services to be provided. The selected applicants will also be responsible for completing proposal revisions (as applicable), a work plan, and/or other exhibits that will become an attachment(s) to the Grant Contract Agreement.
- Maintain financial records for a minimum of six years after the Grant Contract Agreement has ended that document the use of all grant funds. Minnesota Housing, at its sole discretion, may request to review the accounting and documentation of such records at site visits or at other times.
- Complete and submit by required due dates all interim and final reports in a template provided by Minnesota Housing.
- Have a Conflict of Interest policy and take necessary steps to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interests. All suspected, disclosed, or discovered conflicts of interest must be [reported to Minnesota Housing](#) in a timely manner.
- Comply with applicable contracting and bidding requirements noted in the Grant Contract Agreement.
- Comply with all affirmative action and non-discrimination requirements noted in the Grant Contract Agreement.
- Comply with [Minn. Stat. §201.162](#) by providing voter registration services for employees and for the public served by the Project Sponsor.
- Maintain an active System for Award Management (SAM.gov) registration, [per 2 CFR 25 and 200.300](#).

Be in compliance with the state and federal requirements related to suspension/debarment and limited denial of participation. Questions

Questions can be directed to the designated points of contact for this RFP:

- Ji-Young Choi at 651.296.9839 or ji-young.choi@state.mn.us

- Deran Cadotte at 651.297.5230 or deran.cadotte@state.mn.us

No other staff are authorized to respond to questions from potential applicants. All questions and answers about the RFP will be posted to Minnesota Housing's [HOPWA webpage](#).