



Homework Starts with Home Program Request for Proposals Selection Framework and Final Scores

Fiscal Year 2026-2027

Overview

The Homework Starts with Home (HSWH) Program is an initiative comprising multiple community-based partners to help students succeed academically by obtaining and/or maintaining stable housing. In 2019, the legislature established HSWH as an ongoing program with a base appropriation of \$3.5 million each biennium. The base appropriation was increased to \$5.5 million in 2023.

The HSWH Program is its own grant program with its own appropriation; However HSWH Program rules derive from the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) requirements in [Minn. Stat. 462A.204](#) and Housing Trust Fund (HTF) requirements in [Minn. Stat. 462A.201](#), as both FHPAP and HTF funds may be used to secure stable housing for eligible households that include families with school-age children. HSWH brings programs' eligible grantees, uses, and other key features under one umbrella to focus on that shared program activity with additional funds for families with young children.

HTF Program administrators are eligible to apply for HTF Program funds. Eligible FHPAP applicants include Tribal Nations, Twin Cities metropolitan counties (which include Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties), and non-metropolitan areas (which include a county, a group of contiguous counties jointly acting together, or a community-based nonprofit organization). In Fiscal Year 2024, the HSWH Program served 238 households and 71% were Black, Indigenous, and/or persons of color.

Selection Framework and Awards

Available funding for the HSWH Program requests for proposals (RFP) was \$5,831,577. Minnesota Housing issued a competitive RFP on November 4, 2024, with a due date of January 17, 2025. The grant period began on October 1, 2025, with an end date of either September 30, 2027, or September 30, 2029, as applicants were given a choice of a two- or four-year grant period.

The selection process for the program involved a multi-phased evaluation. Applications not passing the requirements of a particular phase would not proceed to the next stage in the review process.

Ten applications were submitted in response to the RFP. The eight eligible applicants that passed the initial threshold review and pre-award risk assessment requested a total of \$15,395,688.

Threshold Review and Pre-Award Risk Assessment

Initially, all ten of the submitted applications were assessed for completeness. Incomplete applications were not considered. The next phase evaluated applications to ensure applicants were eligible, as detailed in the RFP materials. Two of the applicants were not eligible to be considered for funding as they were not eligible FHPAP and/or HTF applicants:

- Community Economic Empowerment Network
- St. Louis Park Schools

One of the eight eligible applicants requested both FHPAP and HTF funding; however, only the eligible FHPAP portion of their request was considered as their partnership group did not include a current HTF administrator making that part of the application ineligible for HTF funding.

Per [Minn. Stat. 16B.981](#) and the Department of Administration Office of Grants Management [Policy 08-06](#), Minnesota Housing conducts a pre-award risk assessment of potential grantees requesting grant awards of \$50,000 or more to ensure that organizations are operationally and financially capable of performing the duties required of the grant. All eligible applicants, as well as any named partners whose proposed role included administering FHPAP and/or HTF Program funds, passed the pre-award risk assessment.

Application Scoring

A total of 11 reviewers, including 10 state staff representing Minnesota Housing, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, and the Minnesota Department of Human Services and one community reviewer representing a nonprofit organization, participated in the competitive review and application scoring process.

The applicants could score up to a total of 100 possible points in the following categories:

- Project Design (30 points)
- Equity (30 points)
- Capacity (30 points)
- Budget (10 points)

The applications were scored to determine the final score out of 100 and ranked accordingly. Table 1 outlines the application scoring criteria.

Table 1: Application Scoring Criteria

Category	Criteria	Maximum Score
Project Design	<p>Applicant identified recent data sources and provided an analysis that clearly describes a significant need in the participating school(s).</p> <p>Project description is detailed, will address the needs identified and could significantly reduce student homelessness within participating schools.</p> <p>Role of the provider and role of the household are clearly described and do not add unnecessary barriers upon the household.</p> <p>Applicant describes how they will assist households in creating a transition plan to move to a permanent housing option and how they will ensure transition planning is ongoing. Examples of what may be included in a transition plan are provided.</p>	30 points
Equity	<p>Applicant has description of plan to include persons with lived expertise in their project.</p> <p>Applicant demonstrates ability to serve vulnerable households with patience and empathy.</p> <p>Applicant described strategies that have the potential to significantly increase access for populations disparately impacted by homelessness or housing instability.</p> <p>Recognizing and honoring sovereignty, Tribal Nations will receive automatic points for the Equity section.</p>	30 points
Capacity	<p>Applicant describes concrete examples that demonstrate their ability to successfully carry out the project.</p> <p>Applicant provides clear plan to address barriers to communication that are culturally and linguistically appropriate.</p> <p>Application demonstrates the capacity or experience to provide technical assistance to subgrantees, especially new or emerging partners, including sensitivity to cultural needs, identifies roles and responsibilities of the grantee, and how non-performance will be addressed.</p> <p>Collaborative roles and responsibilities are clearly defined in the MOU.</p>	30 points
Budget	<p>The budget appears reasonable, aligns with the project design, and FHPAP administrative costs are reasonable.</p> <p>The narrative clearly justifies the applicant's budget and ability to manage the rate of expenditures through the duration of the grant period.</p>	10 points

Other Considerations

Funding recommendation considerations included:

- Applicant score

- Geographic distribution of funds to Tribal Nations, Greater Minnesota, and the metropolitan area
- Sufficient funding for viable program operations and staffing

Final Selections

The recommendation included the top five scoring applicants, including three from greater Minnesota (56% of funding) and two from the metro (44% of funding). The remaining three applicants, Center for African Immigrants & Refugees Organization (CAIRO), Neighborhood House, and Lakes and Pines Community Action Council, Inc., were not recommended for funding primarily because there wasn't sufficient funding.

Minnesota Housing approved selection and commitment of \$5,831,577 in HSWH Program funds to five administrators including Anoka County. However, Anoka County chose not to accept the award. Funds were subsequently reallocated to two of the four remaining selected administrators, as the other two were already fully funded under the initial award. As a result, 74% of the funds were awarded to applicants in greater Minnesota and 26% to one applicant in the metro area. HSWH Program funds will serve an estimated 423 households.

Table 2: HSWH Funding Awards

Applicant	FHPAP	HTF	Total	Score
Anoka County	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	90.67
Center for African Immigrants & Refugees Organization (CAIRO)	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	67.00
Family Rise Together	\$ 376,220	\$ 241,360	\$ 617,580	92.67
Hennepin County	\$ 1,500,000	–	\$ 1,500,000	95.67
Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Clay County	\$ 1,228,000	\$ 874,000	\$ 2,102,000	89.67
Lakes and Pines Community Action Council, Inc.	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	72.00
Neighborhood House	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	85.33
Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.	\$ 1,210,000	\$ 401,997	\$ 1,611,997	91.33
Total	\$ 4,314,220	\$ 1,517,357	\$ 5,831,577	N/A