



Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA)

Request for Proposal for Grantees Neighborhood Emergency Housing Support Program

Supporting Community Based Organizations in Preventing Evictions & Foreclosures

- Release Date: October 13, 2021
- Response Deadline: November 1st, 5:00 pm
- Program Timeline: November 2021 – April 2022
- Available Funding: \$360,000 in grants; up to \$40,000 per organization
- Send responses & questions to: Maritza Crossen at mcrossen@chapa.org

Introduction

Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA), a non-profit umbrella organization for affordable housing and community development activities throughout Massachusetts, has created a pilot program to support community-based organizations (CBOs) in our shared goal of preventing evictions and foreclosures due to the COVID-19 pandemic in low-income communities in Massachusetts. As various eviction and foreclosure moratoriums have come to an end, and notwithstanding the protections contained in Chapter 257 of the Acts of 2020, thousands of Massachusetts households are at risk of losing their homes. State and Federal governments have made [resources](#) available to assist households with emergency housing payment assistance, including help with rent, mortgage, and utility costs. However, households who need help may be unaware of the assistance, need help in applying, or have questions. Cognizant of the dire need to reach those households, CHAPA's Board of Directors' approved accessing funds from CHAPA's reserves to support CBOs, who are trusted as reliable resources within their communities, in their efforts to help people apply for financial assistance to stay in their homes.

Program Goals

The primary objective of the Neighborhood Emergency Housing Support Program is to prevent unnecessary foreclosures, evictions, and homelessness to the greatest extent possible in communities most impacted by the current health and economic crisis. CHAPA's intention is to provide a program that directly leverages and supports the robust work of community based organizations and their vital connections to homeowners and tenants at risk of losing their homes in coordination with and to supplement work being done by the Regional Administering Agencies.

Program goals include achieving the following:

- CBOs connect with and submit complete housing assistance applications from households who may not seek help through current outreach methods or have not yet

been successful in attaining financial assistance to stay in their homes. [Programs](#) the households may apply for include RAFT, ERMA, ERAP, HAF and SHERA as well as various municipal assistance programs available.

- Document outreach methods, nature of assistance, and time it takes to assist households.
- Document challenges that people face in applying for programs, including language access, living situations, clarity of application questions, and concerns of applicants in order to inform and shape current and future federal, state, and municipal programs.

In funding this program, it is CHAPA's intention to reach those residents in need of financial assistance to maintain their home while also gathering essential information about how to best reach people about available housing resources. This data will help drive the goals and design of future programs aimed at assisting Massachusetts residents who have low and extremely low incomes.

The Opportunity

Grant recipients will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with CHAPA and perform the following activities:

- Marketing and outreach efforts to inform people in their service area about the various federal, state, and municipal financial assistance programs available to homeowners and tenants.
- Provide assistance to prepare and submit complete applications for financial assistance using existing tools and processes.
- Coordinate directly with the CBO's local [Regional Administrating Agency](#) to ensure applications are completed and submitted in accordance with the program's requirements.
- Accept and track all referrals, including maintaining data on every client served, documenting outreach methods, nature of assistance (including every application submitted), and time it takes to assist households. **No personal information will be collected by CHAPA.**
- Document challenges clients face in applying for programs including reasons why they may not have applied previously.
- Make referrals to anti-poverty agencies, housing counseling agencies, legal services, and/or social or mental health services as needed.
- Report to CHAPA on a monthly basis.

Selection Criteria and Qualifications

Criteria for the selection of Grantees will include:

- Community Based Organizations based in communities most disproportionately impacted by the pandemic;
- CBOs that primarily serve people with low and extremely low incomes based on the area median income in the region where the CBO is located; exceptions can be made for organizations that serve a broad range of households, such as faith based, cultural, and education organizations;
- Ability to serve people who do not speak English; and

- Willingness to notify and coordinate with their local Regional Administering Agency regarding the preparation and submission of applications

Qualifications and expectations for Grantees will include:

- Proven track record in providing similar services efficiently and effectively
- Proven ability to connect with people who may not typically apply for government programs
- Commitment to mission of the program and sensitivity to issues faced by low- and extremely low-income tenants and homeowners
- Ability to attend virtual trainings covering the most up to date requirements for a complete housing assistance application
- Capacity to manage and supervise the staff working on this program
- Strong interpersonal, organizational and client service skills
- Preference given to those who speak and understand multiple languages spoken within the CBOs' communities
- Commitment to increase submission of complete applications for housing assistance as a result of funding available through this program

Application Process

Community Based Organizations meeting the above criteria are invited to complete the brief application attached, describing their interest, experience, and proposed activities under this grant. To apply, please submit the following:

- A brief summary of the CBO's experience working in this area of housing assistance.
- Brief summary on the demographics of the CBO's target population. Please include how your community has been impacted by COVID-19.
- Current and proposed methods of outreach, including but not limited to offering assistance in multiple languages.
- Name(s) and years of experience of staff working under this grant. If staff speak multiple languages, please include that as well.
- Amount of funding you are requesting under this grant.
- Primary contact person at your organization for this grant, including email and phone number.

Allowable Funding Uses:

- Staff time
- Case Management
- Marketing and outreach
- Stipends for volunteers or language interpreters
- Community events for application completion and submission (staff, laptops, cell phones, portable chargers, tents, heaters, PPE, etc.)

Please reach out if you have any questions, contact Maritza Crossen at mcrossen@chapa.org.