



2024 Request for Proposals: Projects Serving Families Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

OPPORTUNITY & SCOPE

Is there a certain number of awards being awarded under this RFP? The other WYFF RFP quoted 2-4 awards. Is it the same for this RFP?

Similarly to the other WYFF RFP (for Projects Serving Youth & Young Adults), our goal is to support a cohort of two to four organizations through this funding opportunity. To allow for this, we have asked that budget requests be no more than \$550,000 for the entire three-year cycle of the grant.

Are projects not to exceed \$550,000 total, or per year?

We are asking for applications to build proposals budgeted at \$550,000 for the entire three-year cycle of the grant. This would allow us to support a cohort of two to four organizations and is in alignment with prioritizing innovative services that may typically go unfunded, as well as incubating organizations growing their capacity and services.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY & SELECTION PRIORITIES

Does an organization exclusively need to serve BIPOGM to qualify, as long as funding is directly targeted towards partnering with BIPOGM experiencing housing instability and homelessness?

Will organizations only be considered that primarily serve immigrant and refugee families? My org is in line with the housing, healing, by & for BIPOGM focus but does not primarily serve immigrants and refugees.

The strategy in the current RFP is intended to specifically—but not exclusively—focus on BIPOGM families who are refugees and/or immigrants. Our goal is to award funding to two to four organizations that accurately reflect the myriad of communities in this landscape. All applications will be accepted for consideration and review.

My nonprofit serves a large number of newly arrived Ukrainian humanitarian parolees that don't fall within the BIPOGM definition. Would they still be eligible to be served under this grant?

The primary purpose of this funding is to assist families with accessing safe and stable housing so that they can avoid homelessness. While the strategy in the current RFP emphasizes services for Black, Indigenous People of the Global Majority (BIPOGM) refugees and/or immigrants, all applications for projects serving families with housing assistance are welcomed for consideration.

The RFP also references tribes, but you noted that the strategy highlights BIPOGM families who are refugees and/or immigrants. If we submit an application, we are hoping to partner with the Duwamish Tribe who unfortunately are not federally recognized. Would such an application be seriously considered for funding?

As stated in the RFP, "Nonprofit community or neighborhood-based organizations, regional and statewide nonprofit housing assistance organizations, federally recognized Indian Tribes, local housing authorities, and public development authorities are invited to apply." If the Duwamish Tribe is recognized as a 501(c)3 nonprofit, they would be eligible to receive funding. If the Duwamish Tribe is not a 501(c)3 nonprofit but they partner on a project with an applicant that is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, that would be fine, and we would consider that application for funding.

Will small organizations be considered in this statewide process considering there will only be 2-4 organizations selected?

All applications will be accepted for consideration and review. Geographic diversity will be considered in the application review process, with the goal of promoting resources and services across the state, including rural, suburban, and urban communities. We are asking for applications to build proposals budgeted at \$550,000 for the entire three-year cycle of the grant. This would allow us to support a cohort of two to four organizations and is in alignment with prioritizing innovative services that may typically go unfunded, as well as incubating organizations growing their capacity and services. The strategy in the current RFP specifically focuses on organizations that are led by and serve Black, Indigenous, and People of the Global Majority (BIPOGM) communities, particularly immigrants and refugees. Building Changes offers amplification, capacity building, and technical assistance to our grantee partners, and we would do the same with smaller organizations.

When you say "strive for statewide geographic diversity," does this mean that projects must serve statewide? Or is Building Changes striving to fund projects representing geographic diversity statewide?

Projects are not expected to provide services statewide. Building Changes strives to fund projects representing geographic diversity statewide, including rural, suburban, and urban communities. Most of our grantees serve one county, with some extending services across multiple counties, but it is not a requirement unless deemed by strategy and/or community needs.

As a faith-based organization, we operate with certain hiring preferences that align with our core values and mission. I want to ensure alignment and transparency from the outset: Could you please share more about the inclusivity and non-discrimination criteria for grant eligibility?

The review panel for applications will be made up of people with lived experience. We anticipate 15-18 reviewers. They will score applications based on whether the questions were answered, responsiveness to community, and clarity of vision in how applicants will carry out the project. Building Changes has worked with faith-based organizations in the past. We have a standard code of conduct that we expect people to adhere to. We expect applicant organizations to be in alignment with non-discriminatory practices, as well.

If an organization is working on a pilot with OHY directly, can we apply for funding to enhance the program through this RFP?

Yes. There are current Washington Youth & Families Fund grantees that also receive OHY funding. Grantees must submit financial reports that are specific to WYFF-funded activities. We can work with grantees on how to do this reporting.

If an organization has multiple offices in the state that work mostly independently under the same 501(c)3 number, would more than one application be considered?

Organizations are welcome to apply to both Washington Youth & Families Fund opportunities but can submit only one application for Projects Serving Families and one application for Projects Serving Youth & Young Adults.

Can we co-write the grant with two orgs partnering together?

Yes, two organizations can partner on a proposal. However, only one organization can submit the proposal for a specific project. If organizations have multiple programs that are applicable to the two current Washington Youth & Families Fund opportunities, they are welcome to apply under both opportunities but can submit only one application for Projects Serving Families and one application for Projects Serving Youth & Young Adults.

Can one org submit multiple applications?

Organizations are welcome to apply to both Washington Youth & Families Fund opportunities but can submit only one application for Projects Serving Families and one application for Projects Serving Youth & Young Adults.

PROGRAM FOCUS & REQUIRED ACTIVITIES

Does this RFP use a specific definition or guideline to define experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness (i.e., HUD) for its target population? If so, could you please share that? Is "doubled up" considered to be at risk of homelessness per this RFP?

Building Changes uses the more inclusive McKinney Vento definition of homelessness:

- *"Unsheltered or living in a place not meant for human habitation (including streets or in their car), OR*
- *Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and who lack resources and support networks to obtain other permanent housing, OR*
- *Lacking an adequate, fixed, or safe nighttime residence; this includes couch surfing or doubled up due to hardship."*

Funding from the Washington Youth & Families Fund can be used to serve families experiencing homelessness and families experiencing housing instability. "Doubled-up" and/or couch-surfing is included in that definition.

Can we serve people who only need homelessness prevention/housing stabilization services, or do all folks have to be homeless when we enroll them, and only provide homelessness prevention services after we've helped them secure new housing? Families at risk of homelessness are listed as a target population, but in other places there are references only to Rapid Rehousing, Diversion, and hotel stays—not homelessness prevention.

Building Changes uses the more inclusive McKinney Vento definition of homelessness, and funding from the Washington Youth & Families Fund can be used to serve families experiencing homelessness and families experiencing housing instability. "Doubled-up" and/or couch-surfing is included in that definition.

Regarding the use of the McKinney Vento definition for homelessness, does that mean that we could only assist people who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence/are currently experiencing homelessness? In some places the RFP references people at risk of homelessness but not in others, which is why we seek clarification around this.

No, services are NOT restricted only to people who are currently experiencing homelessness or who are literally homeless. Building Changes uses the more inclusive McKinney Vento definition of homelessness:

- "Unsheltered or living in a place not meant for human habitation (including streets or in their car), OR
- Fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and who lack resources and support networks to obtain other permanent housing, OR
- Lacking an adequate, fixed, or safe nighttime residence; this includes couch surfing or doubled up due to hardship."

My organization is a by and for organization that provides nearly all of our housing and services to immigrants and refugees and other BIPOGM. Some of these are people who are homeless or recently were experiencing homelessness. Many others experience or experienced housing instability or community instability. Are services for both communities eligible and competitive, or just for the BIPOGM folks who are or very recently experienced homelessness?

We recognize that homelessness looks different in every community. Building Changes uses the more inclusive McKinney Vento definition of homelessness. Funding from the Washington Youth & Families Fund can be used to serve families experiencing homelessness and families experiencing housing instability. "Doubled-up" and/or couch-surfing is included in that definition.

Is unable to pay rent or having large amounts of unpaid back pay considered at risk of homelessness?

If community members have communicated and expressed the need for rental assistance in order to pay arrears and this is a recognized strategy by the applicant leading the work, Building Changes will support this prevention plan.

The RFP repeatedly refers to "immigrants and refugees who are Black, Indigenous, and People of the Global Majority (BIPOGM)." Is this intention of this funding ONLY to be for immigrant and refugee families, or for all/any BIPOGM families, with a special emphasis on immigrant and refugee families?

The strategy in the current RFP is intended to specifically—but not exclusively—focus on BIPOGM families who are refugees and/or immigrants. All applications will be accepted for consideration and review.

You said that the focus is primarily on immigrants & refugees however, what if the community we serve are Black (American descendants of slavery)?

Our understanding of slavery is that people were trafficked from where they were originally from and taken somewhere else for the exploitation of their labor and life, so that would fall into the category of what the strategy in the current RFP seeks.

Would an innovative, culturally relevant food bank be eligible? This food bank is bringing innovative food lockers to various locations where customers can order food in multiple languages and pick up the food in food lockers 24/7. The first off-site locker will be at a Pierce County library.

Such a project would be eligible if it were part of a housing assistance program for families and the organization had Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) access.

Of the five strategic objectives listed in the RFP, is there an expectation that proposals will address all five? If not, will proposals that address more of the objectives typically be considered of more interest than proposals that only focus on one objective? Proposal that focuses on 2-3 stronger than 1, or are they equal?

It is up to the community and community organization and how they are being informed to identify the needs in their community. A proposal does not have to meet all five strategic objectives. Those are guidelines to present what is possible. The most important aspect is that services are being accessed by the community and clearly carried out by the applicant.

Based on your comments at the beginning, and the emphasis on emerging healing services, are you only looking to fund innovations, new programs, and expansions? Or, are you open to sustaining long-running, successful programs without funding?

If there is a new iteration and/or body of work, we encourage you to apply. If there is existing work being done in a community and it is working, we encourage you to apply.

What kind of COVID services are you imagining? The community we serve was hit very hard (1 in 3 impacted)—are you looking for connections to medical care related to Long COVID? Ongoing social services needs deepened by COVID?

If your strategy and how services are delivered are informed by community, then that is what we are seeking to fund.

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES & ASSISTANCE

Can you speak more about the flexible funds mentioned in the grant?

This grant does allow for the use of flexible funds to support families. Building Changes recognizes that maintaining housing stability requires more than access to safe and immediate housing. We support organizations to determine how best to holistically support safe and sustained housing for families.

Under “Flexible Funds” on page 7, the RFP says that funds can be used for “any reasonable cost associated with acquiring, securing, or maintaining safe housing.” But on the next page under “what does success look like,” it states, “flexible funding can be used toward Rapid Re-Housing, Diversion, or motel and hotel assistance.” Can the funds be used for rental assistance/eviction prevention/homelessness prevention (“maintaining safe housing”) or not? Or only for families that were first served with RRH or Diversion?

Community needs are best understood by the providers that serve them. We look towards community providers to identify where and how to use flexible funds to best serve families.

Are rental assistance and bill payment considered to be a part of homelessness prevention?

If rental assistance and bill payment is built into your strategy of keeping families housed, then it would be supported.

Can the grant be used for rental assistance and bill payment?

If that has been outlined as a key strategy in your proposal, yes. If the need for rental assistance and bill payment is determined later, after the award is made, the strategy can be modified and budget amendments submitted.

Would direct payments to families so they can pay rent/rent arrearages be an eligible use of this funding?

Yes, that is an allowable expense via flex funds. The important consideration would be if payments are going directly to a family, the applicant/grantee organization would be responsible for maintaining records of such payments, and payments beyond \$600 per family would be considered "income" for the household.

If we were interested in providing eviction prevention rent assistance to BIPOGM households who are rent burdened and/or have received eviction notices, would the expectation be that the "healing activities" component be provided to *all* households receiving financial assistance? Or would it be possible to provide financial assistance to those who choose not to participate in those activities?

There is some flexibility here, as this would be determined by community needs and the applicant organization.

Is there allowance for a portion of funding to go to capital? We are working on securing one of our longest standing transitional houses that would help us to better serve families. Especially if that house were to support longer stays for our Spanish-speaking families that need additional on-site services and longer stays in our program while they seek legal status.

No. According to legislative statute, funding from the Washington Youth & Families Fund cannot be used for capital.

If agencies have an approved federal indirect rate, would that be accepted or is there a cap?

Indirect rate is capped at 15%.

APPLICATION/GRANT GUIDELINES

I am wondering how the funds will be dispersed? Is this a reimbursement grant?

These are three-year grants, and funding will be dispersed to grantees at the start of each grant year. So, there will be three (3) payments in all. This is not a reimbursement grant.

Will there be guidelines provided for this funding that state the differences from CHG?

CHG is the Consolidated Homeless Grant, the primary funding source our state accesses for homeless stability supports. Building Changes is a helpful team and as the Washington Youth & Families Fund is unique, we assist organizations in navigating the differences between funding streams.

Could you clarify whether there is a word count I am not seeing, whether it is applied to the individual questions, and whether you have any spacing requirement?

There is no word count requirement. However (as per the instructions on page 15 of the RFP), for written responses to the Application Narrative we ask that you use 12-point font and keep responses to a maximum of 10 pages.