2025 Request for Proposals: Projects Serving Youth & Young Adults

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

OPPORTUNITY & SCOPE

When are applications due? Will late materials or edits be accepted past the due date?

Applications are due on Monday, January 12, at 11:49 PM. Unfortunately, we cannot accept edits or late materials as application reviews and scoring will begin immediately following the due date.

What is the scope and scale of this funding?

A total of $1 million will be shared between two to four organizations over the course of three years.

Is the maximum request amount of $500,000 per year, or for the entire grant cycle? Can the funding be spent down before the end of the grant cycle?

We are asking for initial applications to build proposals budgeted at no more than $500,000 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.

Funds may be spent down and projects may be completed before the end of the three-year grant cycle. Participation in reporting, research and evaluation activities, and the cohort for the duration of the three-year grant cycle will still be an expectation.

My organization is currently funded through the Office of Homeless Youth as a grantee for the Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Fund. Are we eligible for this resource as well?

Yes, organizations already acting in the fiscal administrator role in their community are also eligible for this funding opportunity to further strengthen the diversion efforts locally.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY & SELECTION PRIORITIES

Who can apply and does the organization have to have provided "traditional" homeless services in the past?

Nonprofit community or neighborhood-based organizations, regional and statewide nonprofit housing assistance organizations, federally recognized Indian tribes, local housing authorities, and public development authorities in Washington State that are focused on providing housing-based services and financial assistance for young people experiencing housing instability are invited to apply.

Our homeless response system is complex and encompasses a diverse range of work and services. We encourage applications from organizations that have not provided homeless and housing stability services—

or have been historically unrecognized in providing those services—but are confident in their ability to fulfill the strategic objectives and meet the needs of their community.

Are audited financial statements required?

During the contracting process, we ask that grantees complete a financial risk assessment to help us understand more about their organization's financial profile and to adequately plan for our partnership. Recent audited financial statements are a part of that assessment, along with an updated Form 990 and year-to-date (YTD) financial statements.

In lieu of audited financial statements, an organization may submit:

- *Certificate of Incorporation from Washington State;*
- *501(c)3 Letter from the IRS;*
- *Documentation of internal controls and infrastructure; and*
- *Supporting YTD financials*

Will priority be given to any geographic regions?

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. Applicants should make every effort to describe the need in their community and how they intend to implement services that are in alignment with the strategy to improve transitions from juvenile detention facilities.

How are "culturally-specific" and "BIPOC-led and -serving organizations" defined?

Applicants are invited to apply their own standard/definition in determining whether their organization identifies as a culturally-specific and/or BIPOC-led and -serving organization.

PROGRAM FOCUS & REQUIRED ACTIVITIES

What is the eligible population that this funding can serve?

Funding from the Washington Youth & Families Fund can be used to serve young people between the ages of 12 and 24 who are experiencing housing instability/homelessness. "Doubled-up" and/or couch-surfing is included in that definition.

The strategy in the current RFP is intended to specifically focus on unaccompanied youth 12-17 and young adults 18-24 who are living in a situation meeting the homelessness definition described above, have had a creative housing conversation with a community partner certified to access the community funds, and are not already enrolled in a housing program where homelessness is an eligibility requirement.

Can we use these diversion funds to serve young people we are already working with? What does it mean to be a "fiscal administrator?"

Yes, if staff within your organization are connecting with young people in their primary role, then they can submit requests to access these dollars.

That said, the goal of the strategy in the current RFP is to distribute flex funds supporting the housing plans of young people in your community within a median timeline of 72 hours. The role of this fiscal administrator position is to ensure that partners connecting with young people from wherever they may be identifying themselves as experiencing a housing crisis. The ability to distribute funds to a diverse group of providers is necessary for an application to be considered competitive. If staff within your organization are connecting with young people, then they can submit requests to access these dollars.

What does data collection and reporting look like? How will community partners communicate fund requests to our organization?

Building Changes facilitates a regular financial and program reporting schedule with grantees. We provide templates and set up systems to make it easy for grantees to understand what needs to be reported periodically.

Building Changes has a strong research and evaluation team that manages a platform that community partners will be connected to upon certification that they have been trained in the model and project. An organization selected to act in this fiscal administration role for their community will also access this platform and receive notifications when requests come in. This allows the requests to be processed within the timeline we expect from our grantees.

Is it required to participate in HMIS? If an organization currently has access to HMIS, can they use the same set-up?

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a nationwide electronic record system that enables information-gathering about people accessing services and tracks case management across a community.

Participation in HMIS is required for grantees upon program implementation. This requirement is in alignment with best practices within our homeless response system, and is used to capture demographics, services, and outcomes of the project.

Funded organizations will be supported to gain access and training on using HMIS.

What are the expectations for tracking how young people use flex funds?

According to this strategy, payments will be made to remove the financial barriers to housing plans identified by the young people. The primary objective of this program is to create a funding resource for providers working with young people regardless of the system, organization, or agency where they are employed.

Grantees will be required to track this spending in financial reporting and collect W-9s and other documents used as receipts through the request process.

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES & ASSISTANCE

What are the allowable uses for the housing assistance dollars? Can they be used for prevention and temporary housing?

Funding from the Washington Youth & Families Fund is intended for housing-based services and financial assistance tied to a housing outcome. Prevention and temporary housing are both allowable uses for assistance dollars (as long as the recipients meet eligibility), and flexible funding is a reported spending category.

That said, all of these uses should be in alignment with implementation and programmatic considerations, such as whether assistance is intended to be long- or short-term, service delivery, level of impact over the life of the grant, etc. It is also recommended that applicants consider how these flexible dollars will interact with other funding sources and requirements.

Here is an overview of the allowable areas of direct client assistance:

- *Rent and utility assistance*
- *Move-in costs*

- *Interpreter fees*
- *Legal fees resulting from an eviction*
- *Transportation costs (including relocation, employment, childcare, or education)*

What are the allowable indirect expenses and is there a cap to those costs?

Allowable expenses:

- *Personnel (all direct personnel costs, including benefits)*
- *Travel (direct travel expenses for service delivery)*
- *Equipment/Supplies*
- *Occupancy costs*
- *Staff training*

Distributing flexible funding to activate the housing plans of young people is the primary function of this strategy. In honor of that priority, we recommend that applicants apply a 15% cap to their initial program proposal. However, you should structure your budget per your program's needs. Personnel costs should be focused on organizational capacity to approve funding requests and support the community engagement strategy outlined in the RFP, not for staff within the organization to facilitate diversion conversations directly with young people.

Building Changes wants to meet applicants where they are at. We do not want an applicant to dismiss an important expense or cost, or to decide not to apply because of an indirect cost that is important for their capacity. We use the contract development phase to talk with new grantees about their budget, which allows us to have real-time discussions.