



# **HOME-ARP FUND**

## **NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY (NOFA)**



# Prevention of Homelessness Program

2023-24 FUNDING ROUND

RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 13, 2023



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#### **I. Services Sought**

Applications are being sought from nonprofit agencies to provide prevention and diversion services within the City of Bellingham. This announcement provides information and instructions for organizations and agencies interested in applying for these funds. The City will consider proposals from nonprofit and/or public agencies.

This NOFA is for a period of up to seven (7) years, expiring on September 15, 2030. The City would contract for services for up to seven years, subject to funding available, and limited by an annual appropriation of funds (federal and City).

#### **II. Funds Available**

The primary source of funding is federal funds appropriated under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 ("ARP") for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) to provide homelessness assistance and supportive services. This is a new funding source awarded by the City of Bellingham, and as such, there is no precedent for how many applications will be funded during this funding cycle or what a typical amount of grant award is expected to be. However, approximately \$260,000 will be available annually in total to all agencies awarded funds over a seven-year period. Applicants may request multiple years of funding. Additional sources of funding may include local City of Bellingham funds. This funding is anticipated to be awarded for programming beginning January 1, 2024.

Multiple applications from a single organization will only be accepted for distinct programs with separate project budgets that have no more than 20% shared staff, with outcomes and results that are entirely differentiated.

#### **III. Program Requirements**

##### **a. Program Details**

This funding opportunity is limited to programming that provides either (1) Community Education Program about housing insecurity, prevention and diversion; (2) Prevention and/or Diversion Program for low-income households; or (3) a combination of any of the preceding program concepts. Please see a detail description below of all program concepts:

##### **(1) Community Education Program**

The City of Bellingham seeks a train-the-trainer approach to educating the broadest array of community members who interact with households experiencing severe housing instability and/or homelessness. Respondents are encouraged to highlight the relationships they have with trusted community networks, and summarize their interest in implementation of a train-the-trainer program to these networks that provides accurate and consistent information about:

- Housing and referral services that do and don't exist in Bellingham to serve housing insecure households;



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- Factors that contribute to homelessness, and resources available to address those factors;
- Data-informed intervention strategies, including prevention and diversion services;
- Engaging with households in prevention and/or diversion conversations, including practical 'how-to' training based on research and best practice.

Programming developed under this concept can either provide training broadly, or provide it specifically to the four qualifying populations described in Section III, subsection (b). (Either are allowed, just be explicit about the proposed program.) If training is provided specifically to the QPs, an intake and referral plan will need to be submitted along with this application to understand how educational services will be delivered directly to beneficiaries.

#### (2) Prevention and/or Diversion Program Implementation

The City of Bellingham seeks Prevention and Diversion programs targeted to households facing severe housing instability, inclusive of any supportive services offered through the programming and/or financial assistance to support households meet their emergent needs related to housing. Respondents are encouraged to be specific about whether their program concept falls under prevention or diversion, as described earlier, and to what degree they intend to offer supportive services and/or financial assistance.

Respondents are also encouraged to highlight the specific populations they have existing relationships with as an agency or group that is part of their trusted community network, including the general demographics and population type of those to be served, and whether they reflect marginalized communities disproportionately impacted by housing insecurity.

#### **b. Populations Served**

Access to programming supported by this funding must not exclude any qualifying populations described in [HUD Notice CPD-21-10](#), which includes:

1. Homeless as defined in 24 CFR 91.5. *Homeless (1),(2), or (3)*
2. At-risk of Homelessness as defined in 24 CFR 91.5.
3. Persons fleeing Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault/Trafficking.
4. Other populations who do not qualify under any of the populations above but meet one of the following criteria:
  - a. Other families requiring services or housing assistance to prevent homelessness.
  - b. Those at greatest risk of housing instability (households at or below 50% of the area median income AND at risk of homelessness defined at 24 CFR 91.5)

The City has outlined a preference to serve "Other populations" (as defined in #4 "Populations Served" above) in our HOME-ARP Allocation Plan (approved on September 8, 2022). The need to provide more robust prevention and diversion services to vulnerable households (including



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especially families with children and seniors) is supported by community data. Severe housing cost burden among low-income renters is high, with about 3 in 4 (74%) of very low-income renter households paying over half of their income towards housing. Our community's Housing Pool (which tracks and manages people experiencing homelessness and awaiting a referral) averaged 56 households per month in 2022. The number of households with children on the Housing Interest Pool has increased by 67%, from an average of 48 households per month in 2019 to an average of 145 households per month in 2022. Senior households have increased by 5.5%, from an average of 75 households per month in 2019 to an average of 79 households per month in 2022, with an all-time high of 114 senior households awaiting a program referral in November 2022.

Proposed programs must serve low-income households earning under 50% of the area median income (AMI), and in many cases under 30% of the AMI<sup>1</sup>, within the City of Bellingham's city limits. Programs serving victims of violence or trafficking can presume low-income beneficiary status. The City will consider applications for programming that serves and supports all qualifying populations listed above, with a preference for families with children, and for seniors and veterans, as reflected in the scoring.

#### **c. Intakes and Referrals**

It is a requirement that programs awarded funding under HOME-ARP funding have a compliant intake and referral process in place. Referrals of beneficiaries' into programming must include the following distinct steps:

- Intake of individual and/or household into program
- Assessment of individual and/or household to determine appropriateness for program services
- Prioritization of individual and/or household (if applicable)
- Documentation of qualifying population status

For the purposes of services sought under this NOFA, an applicant is allowed to complete referrals into services via a combination of Coordinated Entry ("CE") and Other Referral Methods ("ORM") that serve qualifying populations not traditionally captured by the CE system. ORM's must include either an already established process for identifying qualifying populations, or a program-specific admission process approved by City staff and detailed in your application. This may include a program-specific waitlist or an existing referral system. An example of existing referral system that can qualify as an ORM includes but is not limited to the following (provided these are consistent with Populations Served, see above):

- Referral systems through local schools
- Referral systems targeted to families with children

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://cob.org/wp-content/uploads/hud-income-rent.pdf> for specific income limits by household size.



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- Referral systems targeted to individuals or households fleeing domestic violence and/or human trafficking
- Referral systems targeted to elderly persons
- Referral systems based on engagement with case management in existing shelter or housing programs where additional services offering diversion and prevention are needed

Applicants must include the following information outlining how grantees will conduct intakes and refer beneficiaries into their programming. The following information will need to be outlined in applications:

1. Description of beneficiary intake, assessment, prioritization, and documentation, as outlined above;
2. Description of qualifying populations served by programming, including who will be referred through CE (including those qualifying populations whom programming will be unable to serve due to program design and capacity);
3. Description of qualifying populations served by ORM, as well as a detailed description of what the ORM will entail, including but not limited to:
  - a. Description of ORM (will ORM be a waiting list, will it entail direct referrals from providers serving qualifying populations not served by standard CE, etc.)
  - b. Identify and describe waiting list management responsibilities, if applicable
4. Detail how all four QP's will have access to program, and how preferences will be applied

The City will endeavor to provide technical assistance to grantees after funding awards are announced, to ensure that intake and referral plans are in alignment with funding requirements. Once approved, the accepted intake and referral methods plan will be incorporated into the final program contract.

#### **d. Eligible Costs**

The City will only reimburse for the following costs, provided they are directly related to program delivery (with the exception of indirect costs):

- Personnel (salary and benefits),
- Consultants, contractors, or subcontractors,
- Program costs (directly associated with authorized activities, such as travel, printing, and communications),
- Indirect or administrative costs are limited to no more than 10% of personnel-only direct costs paid by City (or an approved indirect cost rate from a cognizant federal agency).

All expenses must be directly related to carrying out the eligible service within the City limits. All funds are distributed on a reimbursement basis. Indirect rates over 10% are allowed only if the applicant has an approved indirect cost rate from a cognizant federal agency. Supporting



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documentation must be submitted with requests for reimbursement, and all records are subject to field audits to verify expenses.

#### **e. Ineligible Costs**

Grant funds may not be used for income payments, fundraising, political activities, equipment or furnishings, or repair and maintenance of facilities. Income payments are payments made to an individual or family to provide basic levels of food, shelter, or clothing. Grant funds must be directly attributable to the service being delivered, except as otherwise allowed through an approved administrative budget for the project.

#### **f. Quarterly and Annual Reports**

The City will require quarterly and annual reports which document the number of persons and households served, income of persons and households, total number of persons benefited, race and ethnicity, and location of the services. Agencies must be committed to collecting and reporting this data accurately to the City. The City also requires housing services providers to send any Whatcom County-required reporting to the City and receives access to related Homeless Management Intake System reports.

#### **g. Project Location**

All services funded in this program must be provided/delivered within the City of Bellingham.

#### **h. Funding Recognition**

All projects must acknowledge the City's funding contributions in project or annual reports.

#### **i. Insurance Requirements**

Agencies receiving City funding must agree to defend the City, hold it harmless, and indemnify it as to all claims, suits, costs, fees and liability arising out of the acts or work of the agency, its employees, subcontractors, or agents pursuant to the funding agreement, where such liability is incurred as a result of the actions or omissions of such parties. The insurance of the Agency must be primary and noncontributory with any insurance for which the City is named insured, and include a waiver of subrogation against the City for losses arising from work performed by the Agency. The City must be named as an additional insured, and be provided with a certificate and endorsement showing such coverage. The following minimum insurance coverage will be expected:

A. Workers Compensation	Statutory Amount
B. Professional Liability	\$1,000,000
C. Automobile Liability	\$1,000,000
D. Broad Form Comprehensive Liability	\$1,000,000/occurrence
	\$2,000,000 aggregate

#### **j. Faith-Based Organizations**





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Organizations that are religious or faith-based are eligible, on the same basis as any other organization, to participate in the program.

However, organizations may not engage in explicitly religious activities, such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization, as a part of the programs or services funded by the City. If the organization conducts such activities, the activities must be offered separately, in time or location, from the programs or services funded by the City, and participation must be voluntary for the beneficiaries of the City-funded programs or services. Faith-based organizations may use space in their facilities to provide City-funded services without removing religious art, icons, scriptures, or other religious symbols.

An organization receiving City funding shall not, in providing the service, discriminate on the basis of religion or religious belief.

A religious organization's exemption from the federal prohibition on employment discrimination on the basis of religion, set forth in section 702(a) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is not forfeited when the organization receives City funding. Notwithstanding the foregoing, non-discrimination requirements imposed by statute on all City grantees shall apply to religious and faith-based organizations.

### **k. Non-discrimination and Equal Opportunity**

Agencies receiving City funding may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, families with children, and disability in employment or the provision of services.

### **l. Compliance with Laws**

Recipients must be licensed and comply with all applicable laws, ordinances, and codes of the local, state, and federal governments, and must submit, within two weeks of the City's request for information, any and all information required to demonstrate compliance. All persons or businesses which do any work or perform services to the City of Bellingham are required to register their business. Go to <http://bls.dor.wa.gov/>. In addition, the Recipient agrees to adhere to other policies and guidelines established by the City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department

### **m. Child Safety Policy**

Agencies seeking funds for services that benefit or interact with children or youth (age 17 or below) are required to have an adult, youth, and child safety policy in place prior to contract execution that is in compliance with national standards. See <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/developing/>.

## **IV. Application Instructions**



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A successful proposal will include a detailed description of each of the following items. Please address all the following questions within your application.

#### **a. Program Concept**

Please indicate in your proposal whether your proposed programming will be either (1) a Community Education Program about housing insecurity, prevention and diversion; (2) a Prevention and/or Diversion Program for low-income households; or (3) a combination of any of the preceding program concepts. Please see Section III, subsection (a) for a description of these programs.

Please also include an operational overview of how these functions will be implemented, including numbers and roles (supervisory, service, etc.) of staff needed to carry out the program functions. The Program must be approved by your agency's board or other appropriate governing body before final contracting.

Inclusive in your program concept should be the following:

#### **b. Budget Proposal and Expected Beneficiaries Served**

Applications should include a budget proposal specifying how much financial support will be requested from the City of Bellingham to deliver the services described in your Program Concept proposal, as well as any other financial support that is expected as part of the overall program. This budget should be outlined within the City's standard budgetary template (Exhibit B) in Excel ([available here](#)).

Please estimate a number of beneficiaries you will be able to serve with your proposed programming. Please use the separate beneficiary template (Exhibit C) in Excel ([available here](#)).

#### **c. Intakes and Referrals**

Please indicate in your proposal a detailed plan for intake of individuals and/or households into your program, how assessment of individual and/or household to determine appropriateness for program services will occur, how (if applicable) individuals or households will be prioritized for program services, and how your program will document the qualifying population status of program beneficiaries. A full description of intake and referral requirements under HOME-ARP funding is detailed above in Section III, subsection (c).

#### **d. Population Served**

Please indicate in your proposal which of the populations indicated above, in Section III, subsection (b) you intend to support with this programming. Please include any details regarding any subpopulation program focus.





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The Competitive Selection Criteria will give additional points for program focus on priority subpopulations (families with children, seniors, and veterans); while a program may serve multiple subpopulations, you must choose one primary subpopulation for the purposes of scoring, if relevant.

#### **e. Equity and Social Justice**

The city supports the [Healthy Whatcom](#) goal to elevate and activate principles of anti-racism in participating organizations and increase the representation of client and BIPOC voices within and across agencies for program/process design and review. Evidence of this could include using data to proactively target racial or ethnic disparities in the community, working to ensure the program's employees represent the clients they are serving, and encouraging historically underrepresented populations and/or clients to take leadership roles. To receive the maximum number of points, responses must be specific, and related to the program activities for which funding is being sought.

#### **f. Collaboration**

The City identifies coordination of funding and delivery of services amongst agencies as a priority. Activities that demonstrate active partnerships and/or regular collaboration with other relevant public, nonprofit and private entities that support similar goals or related activities will receive preference. Examples include regularly sharing data and soliciting input from relevant stakeholders, participating in community task forces/advisory groups, having an established community outreach and engagement plan, and regularly recruiting volunteers and/or soliciting donations from the community. To receive the maximum number of points, responses must be specific, and related to the program activities for which funding is being sought.

#### **g. Agency Experience and References**

Please include an overview of your agency's readiness to implement a program as detailed in your application. Please include details about your agency's service delivery experience and training experience. Please provide two references that can speak to your/your agency's ability to manage a Community Education, Prevention and/or Diversion or related programs. References should include name, organization, title, and contact information (email or phone).

## **V. Submission Instructions**

To qualify for consideration, applicants must submit the following as a response to this NOFA:

1. Application in provided online form template, inclusive of the information detailed above
2. Attachments B. Budget. Available at [Exhibit B – Project Budget \(cob.org\)](#)
3. Attachment C. Goals, Outcomes & Beneficiaries. Available at [Exhibit C – Goals and Outcomes \(cob.org\)](#)

Applicants will be required to be submitted online. Submittal will be made at <https://cob.org/services/housing/funding-opportunities/partnerships-funding>. The City of



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Bellingham is not responsible for technical issues with technology delays. Late applications will not be accepted.

File attachments to the online application should be named as follows:

B-[name of agency]-[name of program]-budget

C-[name of agency]-[name of program]-beneficiaries

Please note that all proposals are public records and all responses to this NOFA become the property of the City of Bellingham.

## VI. Competitive Selection Criteria

### a. Evaluation Criteria

The City intends to enter a contract with the operator whose qualifications, in the opinion of the City, meets all the required elements as outlined in this NOFA, and who best meets the below listed evaluation criteria (receives the highest evaluated score) as determined by the City.

Selection Criteria	Weight
Program Concept (35 pts max)	
Program Concept (Prevention & Diversion or Community Education) including Description of Program, Core Activities, and Anticipated Staff Needed to Support Programming (clarity, completeness, nexus with needs & gaps)	15 pts
Budget Proposal (clarity, efficiency)	10 pts
Expected Impact (number of beneficiaries served)	10 pts
Intake and Referral Plan (30 pts max)	
Clarity and completeness	5 pts
Predominantly serve Families with Children	25 pts
Predominantly serve Seniors	12 pts
Predominantly serve Veterans	5 pts
Equity and Social Justice	15 pts
Collaboration	15 pts
References	5 pts
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 pts</b>

### b. Evaluation Process

The City will review and evaluate the applications as submitted. The City reserves the right to award a contract solely on the written submittal.

The City also reserves the right to request oral interviews with the highest ranked organizations. The purpose of the interviews is to allow the program operator to expand upon the written



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responses. The same evaluation criteria will be used for the interviews. The final selection will be based on the evaluator rankings and City recommendation.

The City has final decision-making authority and reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, and/or to withdraw or subsequently modify or review the terms contained within this NOFA. Contracts are subject to negotiation between parties and budget authority from the City Council.

#### c. Application Schedule

NOFA released –	September 13, 2023
Last day for questions –	October 10, 2023
Applications due –	October 24, 2023
Initial review and screening –	November 1, 2023
Notification of award –	November 17, 2023

#### d. Questions

Please contact Katy Sullivan at (360) 778-8390 or email [krsullivan@cob.org](mailto:krsullivan@cob.org) with any questions about the application process. All questions must be received before October 10, 2023 at 5:00 pm. Answers will be posted online at <https://cob.org/services/housing/funding-opportunities/partnerships-funding> by October 13, 2023 at 5:00pm so that all applicants can benefit from the responses. Questions received after that time may not receive a response.

## V. Other Information

#### a. City's Rights to Limit Funding

The decision to reserve and allocate funding rests with the Mayor and Council of the City of Bellingham, with advice provided by City staff and the Community Development Advisory Board.

#### b. Disclosure of Documents

All proposals and related materials become the property of the City upon delivery to the City. State law, RCW Ch. 42.17, provides that public records are subject to public inspection and copying unless specifically exempted. RCW Ch. 42.17 enumerates limited exemptions a public agency's obligation to disclose public records. If the applicant believes that portions of its proposal are exempt from disclosure to third parties, the applicant must clearly label the specific portions sought to be kept confidential and specify the exemption the applicant is relying on. However, acceptance of an application containing such designations by the City is not an agreement that such material is legally confidential, and the City cannot guarantee that such information will not be disclosed. Marking all or substantially all of an application as confidential may result in the application being rejected.



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The applicant recognizes and agrees that the City will not be responsible or liable in any way for any losses that the applicant may suffer from the disclosure of information or materials to third parties, nor for any use of information or materials by third parties. Materials submitted by unsuccessful applicants are subject to disposal unless picked up promptly by the applicant, except that the City will maintain one copy in compliance with public record laws.

### **c. Interpreter Services**

Interpreter services for the deaf and materials in alternative formats are available upon advance request. TTY users please the Washington State Relay Service at 1-800-833-6388 and ask to be connected with the City of Bellingham, Housing & Services Program Manager at (360) 778-8385.

*The City of Bellingham does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identify, religion, age, families with children, and disability in employment or the provision of services. With five business days' notice, special accommodations will be provided. Refer any inquiries or complaints related to HUD regulations implementing Section 504 to the Housing & Services Program Manager. Contact 778-8385 (voice) or 711 (TTY)*