

**RFP 2023-001 ARPA Homelessness Prevention
Official Questions and Answers**

All questions should be directed to the RFP Authorized Contact Person: Angela Baucom at APHCompetitions@austintexas.gov or in the PartnerGrants database by no later than Thursday, March 9, 2023 by 3PM CST.

Last Updated March 14, 2023:

Question No.	Questions	Answers
1	Is each contract \$2 million or does \$2 million have to be shared by the 8 awardees?	Per Exhibit C – Scope of Work, Section III. Funding and Timeline, there is a total of up to \$2,000,000 available, which may be distributed among as many as 8 awardees, but may be distributed among fewer as deemed appropriate by evaluators and Austin Public Health (APH) staff.
2	Service Duration – if clients are long-term (such as Meals on Wheels), would those receiving financial/rent assistance, case management, or other supportive services still be able to continue receiving meals, etc. after the 1-month timeframe as indicated in the RFP? Or would we be required to close those clients?	Per Exhibit C – Scope of Work, Section IV. Services Solicited, "Duration of Assistance: Eligible participants can receive rental assistance for up to 6 months, with the option for a 3-month extension and alignment with the program contract term. Recognizing the utilization of Progressive Engagement, Homelessness Prevention projects should only provide participants with the minimum amount of monthly rental assistance and services/case management to maintain maximum housing stability. Doing so allows for financial and staff resources to be provided to as many households as possible. Participants may continue to receive direct client assistance and supportive services, such as case management, for up to 1 month after rental assistance ends." Additionally, the client may receive services, financial assistance, and case management from the Homelessness Prevention program while enrolled within the program, so long as the client is not receiving the same service from another source. So, if this existing client is receiving meals from a different source, either the existing source or the HP project could fund meals while the client is enrolled, but not both.
3	Will there be any opportunity for renewal after the term? Or is the expectation for there to be 8 awards for 1 year at \$250k each?	Per Exhibit C – Scope of Work, Section III. Funding and Timeline, the intention of the funding is to be awarded to up to 8 projects for a one-time term of 12 months, but the City reserves the right to determine the availability of funds for advances and/or extensions on payments on an individual basis pending expressed need and negotiation with each awardee.
4	Are we allowed to incorporate behavioral health as a supportive service?	Given the short nature of Homelessness Prevention projects, out-patient behavioral health services are not an eligible cost, though housing stability case management services should connect participants to

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		long term housing stability resources guided by the client’s identified needs.
5	Imminent Risk of Homelessness includes "an individual or family who— a. will imminently lose their housing, including...rooms in hotels or motels not paid for by charitable organizations." So if our nonprofit is paying for a hotel on a time-limited basis, like 1-14 days, with an exit plan that will require some direct client aid to successfully exit, is this not considered At Imminent Risk of Homelessness?	Participants who do not meet the eligibility requirements of the program are ineligible for services. Households assessed for eligibility while residing in a hotel or motel paid for by an agency would meet the definition of experiencing homelessness and should be referred to programs and services serving households experiencing homelessness. Such households would be ineligible for Homelessness Prevention programs funded under this RFP.
6	Is client referral from Coordinated Intake required like in earlier ARPA-funded grants?	As the current local Coordinated Entry system does not assess or refer participants meeting the criteria of At Imminent Risk of Homelessness or At Risk of Homelessness, Homelessness Prevention programs funded under this RFP are not required to accept referrals from the Coordinated Entry System. Projects must implement and utilize a participant needs assessment as a condition of determining who receives services as outlined in Section VII. Participant Selection and Eligibility. Be advised that, per Exhibit C – Scope of Work, awardees will be required to enter client data into HMIS and participate in any future community planning activities and initiatives that are launched during their contract term to design and implement coordinated processes related to homelessness prevention programming.
7	Are there an indirect cost rate allowed or administrative costs rate?	There are no indirect costs allowed under this funding. APH expects that any costs associated with the administration of this program be included in the Form 3 – Program Budget and Funding Summary and justified in the proposal. Please see the Instructions tab of Form 3 for allowable administrative cost examples.
8	Is there a maximum amount a client can receive in financial assistance. Is the poverty threshold still 200% and below?	No maximum amount of rental assistance, though projects can impose a “cap” if they desire. Projects will be required to adhere to rent reasonableness and habitability standards for all rental costs. If maximums are applied to assistance, reasoning must be described in the RFP application. The poverty threshold is still 200% and below Federal Poverty Level per household.

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9	The City’s livable wage refers only to one parent with one infant. 1) What is the living wage for a single adult or adult with employed partner? 2) The Scope of Work says a living wage is recommended. I thought earlier in this meeting it was said it is required. Will you please clarify?	The livable wage is a goal, not required. However, applicants are expected to express how they have considered this in their proposal.
10	Public Health Department recently conducted surveys for an upcoming basic needs solicitation. How has this proposal been informed by community feedback, local data, and input from providers?	That survey process is for a different RFP and does not inform this one. The Homeless Strategy Division (HSD) of Austin Public Health staff recently researched current Homelessness Prevention activities in the community, discussed project implementation with current recipients, analyzed current system data, and incorporated national best practices into that initiative.
11	Does the funding awarded include the rental assistance too or is that funding for direct assistance separate?	All activities outlined in Section IV. Services Solicited, including rental assistance, are eligible costs under this RFP.
12	HUD has a category 2 for at imminent risk of homelessness, when we see exhibit D, does at risk count as homeless clients and would require homeless eligibility forms or not?	No . Programs would not use the COA homeless eligibility form for this program since it is designated as a homeless prevention program. Following Exhibit D APH Client Eligibility form, participants eligible for this RFP (HUD’s Homelessness Category 2 At Imminent Risk of Homelessness and HUD’s At Risk of Homelessness) would not meet the APH definition of homeless. Therefore, Homelessness Prevention project recipients through this RFP must establish Austin/Travis County Residency and income verification of under 200% Federal Poverty Level.
13	Does the City’s definition of at risk/imminent homelessness count as “Category 2” HUD definition of homelessness? If so, what eligibility requirements would be required (re: Exhibit D)?	Program participants served through this funding source must demonstrate Austin/Travis County Residency and income verification of under 200% Federal Poverty Level.
14	Is there any flexibility on the Outcome 1 metric requirement language to change it from “maintain housing” to “obtain and maintain housing?” For example, if the client is paying for a motel (rather than it being paid for by an agency), but may be	For the purpose of this RFP and subsequent awards, criteria generally follow HUD’s HMIS Data Standards Manual Appendix A . For this outcome, “maintain housing” means that, at the time that program services end, housing destination(s) meet criteria for destinations defined as “Permanent” though HUD’s System Performance Measure Housing Destination will be used for this metric.

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	<p>limited to 14 days or fewer, is that in alignment with the definition of Imminent Risk of Homelessness definition for client eligibility within this program?</p>	<p>For example, a participant who is assessed as eligible for Homelessness Prevention and enrolled as meeting the definition of At Imminent Risk of Homelessness while paying for a hotel themselves which they have to leave in 7 days, having no subsequent residence identified, and lacking the resources or support network needed to obtain other permanent housing, would be included in the denominator of Outcome 1: “Total number of households receiving services” once services end.</p> <p>If the participant’s exit destination is a “Temporary” destination, they would NOT be included in the Numerator of Outcome 1: “The number of households at risk of homelessness that maintain housing”.</p> <p>If the participant’s exit destination is a “Permanent” destination, they WOULD BE include in the Numerator of Outcome 1: “The number of households at risk of homelessness that maintain housing”.</p>
<p>15</p>	<p>Can this funding support clients with Family Unification Program or Foster Youth to Independence Vouchers who are at risk of losing housing? Some of those clients will be receiving other services. Would this funding be used to support them with direct client assistance and case management to prevent them losing the voucher/housing?</p>	<p>The participant may be eligible to receive services under Homelessness Prevention projects funded through this solicitation if they meet the eligibility requirements of the Scope of Work in Section XI Definition and the income and residency requirement of Exhibit D APH Client Eligibility at the time of eligibility assessment. Participants may at no time receive services or assistance of the same type from two different sources.</p> <p>For example, participants enrolled in a Homelessness Prevention Project and utilizing a housing voucher may receive financial assistance to address one-time rental arrears but would be unable to receive ongoing rental assistance unless not receiving rental assistance from the housing voucher for the same month. If those participants are also enrolled with a service provider elsewhere, the Homeless Prevention services could not overlap/duplicate efforts.</p>
<p>16</p>	<p>In the scope of work, if COA determines an assessment tool that should be used, that awardees would have to use that tool. Is the City in talks to create an assessment tool right now? Is there a timeline for creating a preferred assessment tool?</p>	<p>There is no COA endorsed Homelessness Prevention assessment tool developed at this time within our local system. Awardees are expected to participate in any future community planning activities and initiatives to design and implement a coordinated, centralized access, assessment, prioritization, and referral process for homelessness prevention eligible participants. If such a process is created and endorsed</p>

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		by the City of Austin, awardees will be required to work with their contract manager to develop a timeline to integrate the community process into the awardee’s enrollment and eligibility process. .
17	The RFP focuses on households/people who are at-risk of homelessness. Is it a correct reading of the RFP that the funds are not available for people who are chronically homeless even if such a use of funds would enable us to find housing for them?	Households served with this funding must meet the criteria of “At Risk of Homelessness” and “At Imminent Risk of Homelessness.” Persons experiencing homelessness, including chronic homelessness, should be referred to appropriate permanent housing interventions. Eligibility criteria are described in Sections VII and XI of Exhibit C – Scope of Work.
18	Our workforce contains a mix of at-risk and unhoused participants. We provide housing for some people who were chronically prior to working for us but are now 'at-risk'. Are they eligible for support under this grant?	Households served with this funding must meet the criteria of “At Risk of Homelessness” and “At Imminent Risk of Homelessness.” Eligibility criteria are described in Sections VII and XI of Exhibit C – Scope of Work. Any individuals and/or households meeting these criteria are eligible for support under this funding.
19	Although the "I belong in Austin" grant is not coordinated with this grant, does its existence change the types of programs that APH plans to prioritize with this grant? For example, will programs that are not focused on direct rent assistance score higher, all else being equal?	Please see Exhibit I – Scoring Rubric Detail for more information about scoring criteria and what programs or services may be prioritized through point allocations. Unless otherwise specified in the rubric, no program or service type will be given priority over others.
20	The RFP says that employment assistance is intended to be supplemental. Can APH quantify what this means?	The intent of this RFP is to solicit for Homelessness Prevention Programs which provide a range of service options and/or connections to resolve housing instability, usually with case management as the backbone. Employment Assistance may be one of the types of services offered, however it may not be the primary or only service offered by Homelessness Prevention projects awarded by this RFP.
21	HQS and rent reasonableness are traditionally required for those on voucher programs. Is this the only intended recipient prevention services? Many clients that need help with past due rent will not have proof of HQS or Rent reasonableness. This	Habitability standards and rent reasonableness are required to be completed if paying for a participant’s current housing unit or future housing unit. Households served with this funding must meet the criteria of “At Risk of Homelessness” and “At Imminent Risk of Homelessness.” Eligibility criteria are described in Sections VII and XI of Exhibit C – Scope of Work. Any

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	<p>will be a barrier to non-voucher holders having access to the funds. Rent reasonableness reports also have an administrative cost for the report, will this be an allowable expense?</p>	<p>individuals and/or households meeting these criteria are eligible for support under this funding.</p> <p>Recipients of APH funds are expected to assist participants in collecting all necessary documentation for service provision, including documentation to determine eligibility and financial assistance disbursement. Furthermore, supporting participants in units which fail housing quality inspections and could result in health or safety issues for participants, or units requiring exorbitant and unsustainable rental payments for properties which do not meet rent reasonability.</p> <p>Per the Instructions tab in Form 3 – Program Budget Narrative and Funding Summary, administrative costs such as staff salaries and benefits, and general operating costs may be allowable to support necessary program function. Please review allowable costs and include anticipated costs in the Narrative column of the Budget and Narrative tab to propose expenses you deem necessary and allowable. Actual allowable costs may be subject to negotiation upon award.</p>
<p>22</p>	<p>Can an agency submitting a bid for this RFP focus only on Case Management and not provide the funds for rental assistance? And if they focus only on the Case Management side could they refer qualifying clients to the agency that provides the actual funds for the rental assistance?</p>	<p>An agency can propose to provide any of the services that align with Exhibit C – Scope of Work.</p> <p>Additionally, please bear in mind that Exhibit I – Scoring Rubric, Section 2 states, “Offerors must describe the full scope of the proposed homelessness prevention program services, including supportive services, program activities and financial assistance, and collaborative structures, if applicable. Offerors will explain how they address both policy and practical barriers to services and ensure accessibility, and offerors will clearly identify how the program operations will resolve a participant’s immediate housing crisis and prevent near term episodes of homelessness after services end.”</p>
<p>23</p>	<p>When I read through the homeless prevention materials, I got the impression that the intended beneficiaries are people who are housed but at risk of becoming homeless, not those who are already in some shelter or</p>	<p>Households served with this funding must meet the criteria of “At Risk of Homelessness” and “At Imminent Risk of Homelessness.” Eligibility criteria are described in Sections VII and XI of Exhibit C – Scope of Work. Any individuals and/or households meeting these criteria are eligible for support under this funding. In general, we would agree with your impression.</p>

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	residential program. Is that true?	
24	Is this new RFP intended to replace HP funds from now on or will we (fingers crossed) continue to get HP funds from the City and this RFP is just supplemental?	<p>The funds for this solicitation are new funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and is time-limited. Existing housing or financial stability programs may be competed with the Basic Needs Issue Area solicitation out right now. APH notified existing programs that would be included in that solicitation at the beginning of the year and recently from the APH Competitions email.</p> <p>The City recognizes that homelessness prevention is a necessary component of a high functioning homeless response system and anticipates continuing the support for this activity through future solicitations.</p>
25	What is the time frame on this new RFP? Is it through FY23 or end of calendar year?	Per Exhibit C - Scope of Work, "Awards are expected to be made for a term of 12 months, beginning August 1, 2023"
26	Would we be able to operate a program funded through this RFP such that we can move funds around to other collaborating agencies if we do not use what we budgeted for?	Offerors may propose any program design but it should address the principles identified in Exhibit C - Scope of Work. If proposing a collaborative, please be sure to include information on the structure in Form 2 – RFP Proposal, and information on the budget on the SubGrantee tab of Form 3 – Program Budget Narrative and Funding Summary. Once awarded, awardees may be able to move funds between line items or sub-contractors, but changes are subject to negotiation with APH and may require contract amendments.
27	My understanding from the document is that hotel vouchers covering any amount of time would not be eligible for funding under this grant, because leaving their abuser's residence to stay in a hotel for any amount of time would then define them as experiencing homelessness, nor could we provide rental/financial assistance to obtain permanent housing through this grant if they are currently housed in a hotel. Is that accurate?	<p>If the participant is living in a hotel or motel paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, and local government programs, the participant would meet the definition of experiencing homelessness. Participants fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence would also meet the definition of homelessness. In both instances, these participants should be referred to programs designed to assist individuals experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>Households served with this funding must meet the criteria of "At Risk of Homelessness" and "At Imminent Risk of Homelessness." Eligibility criteria are described in Sections VII and XI of Exhibit C – Scope of Work. Any individuals and/or households meeting these criteria are eligible for support under this funding.</p>

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28	<p>I read in the 42 US Code 11302 that the definition of homelessness, regarding hotel stays, specifies "rooms in hotels or motels not paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations," and wondered if individuals/families in rooms that are paid for by charitable organizations might then be excluded from this definition of homelessness? If they could be excluded from this definition, could hotel rooms paid for by charitable organizations be considered a form of safe residence for victims attempting to flee domestic violence?</p>	<p>If the participant is living in a hotel or motel paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, and local government programs, the participant would meet the definition of experiencing homelessness. Participants fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence would also meet the definition of homelessness. In both instances, these participants should be referred to programs designed to assist individuals experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>Households served with this funding must meet the criteria of "At Risk of Homelessness" and "At Imminent Risk of Homelessness." Eligibility criteria are described in Sections VII and XI of Exhibit C – Scope of Work. Any individuals and/or households meeting these criteria are eligible for support under this funding.</p>
29	<p>Can you tell me a little bit more about how HMIS is to be used? It seems to be a system exclusively for folks experiencing homelessness, and the eligibility for this proposal focuses on households that are at-risk of homelessness, which to me seem like two different things.</p>	<p>The Homeless Information Management System is a federally required database used to record and document a region's services to persons experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness. APH is requiring the use of HMIS to: ensure that services offered to participants are not duplicated by other providers in the region; assist programs with finding and leveraging already established connections to providers; and, among other benefits, to improve our region's understanding of the scope of housing insecurity experienced across our community and the effectiveness of homelessness prevention programs in preventing homelessness.</p>
30	<p>A major part of our proposal includes hiring legal staff, but they will be hired through a different organization. Should they be listed under salary and fringe under personnel? Or Operations - outsourced professional services? The comment about not contributing to the unduplicated client count confuses me.</p>	<p>If the legal staff is directly related to the homelessness prevention services being offered then the use of staff hired through a separate organization would fall under the category of outsourced professional services under the budget and narrative and those clients assisted through the program would be part of the overall unduplicated client count.</p>

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31	<p>Exhibit D describes residency as “Residence must be documented by proof of address that includes client name (e.g. City utility bill, lease, letter from landlord, etc.)” For some community members in specific circumstances (aging out of child welfare, aging out of juvenile justice facilities, residing in physically or emotionally unsafe settings “in the house of another”, etc.) documentation of residency could be challenging. Could you please provide guidance on how clients who fall in the target populations outlined in the RFP can meet residency documentation requirements?</p>	<p>Households served with this funding must meet the criteria of “At Risk of Homelessness” and “At Imminent Risk of Homelessness.” Eligibility criteria are described in Sections VII and XI of Exhibit C – Scope of Work. Any individuals and/or households meeting these criteria are eligible for support under this funding.</p> <p>In a situation where obtaining residency documentation is challenging, for instance, where the applicant is residing in the house of another, the applicant could verify residency through documentation from a landlord, head of household or leaseholder.</p> <p>Community members “residing in physically or emotionally unsafe settings “in the house of another”” may be fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence and should be directed to appropriate services to protect the applicant’s safety.</p>
32	<p>Can dollars from this grant be used exclusively for OTFA (One time financial assistance)? Or is providing case management services required as well?</p>	<p>In alignment with Progressive Engagement, each participant’s service experience should be based on each individual or household’s unique situation and needs. Please see Section VI. Principles of Service Delivery for more information.</p>
33	<p>Would we put the amount of DCA on line 19 or line 23 of the budget if only the subgrantee is providing DCA?</p>	<p>Expenses incurred by the subgrantee should be placed in the SubGrantee tab of Form 3 – Program Budget Narrative and Funding Summary. Those will then automatically populate in the correct place in the Budget and Narrative tab.</p>