

**WilliamPennFoundation**

Request for Proposals

# Prevent Homelessness for Families with Young Children

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Due January 29, 2026

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# Introduction

The William Penn Foundation (WPF) has a long history of investing in efforts to improve the lives of young children in Philadelphia. The Foundation's Children and Families program was created to expand access to programs and resources that support the healthy development and academic success of young children, ages 0 to 8, in Philadelphia. A full description of the Children and Families program, its goal, and its objectives can be found on the Foundation's website. This specific Request for Proposals (RFP) was created to help organizations to advance the following objective:

**By 2035, WPF-funded efforts will prevent homelessness for 10,000 families with young children.**

Many Philadelphia families face persistent housing instability, lacking safe and consistent places to live. This instability has profound and lasting effects on children's health, development, and educational achievement. Stable housing is the foundation for family well-being and supports physical health, emotional security, and long-term economic stability. Promoting housing stability requires coordinated supports that address urgent, holistic, and systemic needs. These include flexible funding for emergency repairs, home preservation, rental and utility assistance, as well as access to legal services that prevent eviction, remedy unsafe housing conditions, and combat discriminatory practices. Through this RFP, we aim to invest in programs that ensure families with young children have stable housing and are protected from the harms of homelessness.

The Foundation recognizes that there are many ways that organizations and communities can contribute to preventing homelessness for Philadelphia's young children and caregivers. These efforts may include initiatives that seek to coordinate services, provide direct supports, or help families maintain their existing housing. We are seeking to support projects and programs that organizations in Philadelphia believe will be most effective in making progress on the objective above. Proposals may have a small geographic focus or may seek to make change on a citywide scale.

Regardless of the approach, all applicants should describe a compelling explanation for how their proposed work will make tangible improvements in the quality of life for residents of Philadelphia. The specific criteria that will be used to assess all proposals can be found on pages 7 and 8 of this document.

**This RFP seeks projects that connect families with young children to programs and resources that prevent homelessness.**

### **Why is the Foundation using a Request for Proposals to advance this objective?**

The Foundation has chosen to advance this objective using a Request for Proposals for several reasons. First, we believe that stakeholders across the region have a great deal of expertise and experience that can be supported to make progress on an objective that we heard was important to communities in our region. We want to hear about the impactful projects that are underway or could get underway and need funding. Second, we want to be as transparent as possible about the opportunity for non-profit organizations in the region to secure funding for work to advance this objective.



# Background

Research shows that when families have safe, consistent places to live, children experience better health, stronger development, and improved school outcomes. In contrast, frequent moves, eviction threats, or periods of homelessness increase stress, disrupt routines, and raise the risk of illness and developmental delays. Housing instability affects children's ability to grow, learn, and thrive.

Recognizing the importance of housing security, the City of Philadelphia has taken significant steps to address housing instability including but not limited to, the Eviction Diversion program, Foreclosure Prevention Grant program, and Mayor Cherelle Parker's HOME initiative. While these efforts hold promise, many families still struggle to find and keep affordable housing. Rising rents, stagnant wages, and a shortage of low-cost homes have created significant pressure, especially for households with young children. Many families spend a large share of their income on rent, leaving little for essentials like food, transportation, and childcare. When families lose their housing or live in unsafe or overcrowded conditions, children's health and learning suffer. Addressing these challenges requires both short-term supports to keep families housed and long-term investments to make housing affordable and stable for all.

**50,030 children and youth experienced homelessness in Pennsylvania in the 2023-2024 school year, an all-time high.<sup>1</sup>**



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<sup>1</sup> [Pennsylvania Department of Education, \(2025\). Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program 2023-24 State Evaluation Report.](#)

# Opportunity Overview

The Foundation seeks to support efforts that increase access to interventions that prevent homelessness for families with young children. Funding will be limited to projects that will positively impact families with young children, ages 0-8.

Funding may be directed to efforts that provide critical, in-time supports that help stabilize a family's housing in the short-term and/or strategies that promote long-term stability. Examples of projects eligible for this funding include but are not limited to: providing eviction diversion, foreclosure prevention, home repair services, and projects that seek to make change on a systems level.

Please note, under this RFP, the Foundation will only consider proposals to support interventions focused on **preventing** homelessness. Programs focused on services to people who are already experiencing homelessness, new housing development, and/or first-time home buyer programs are **not** eligible for this opportunity. We will also **not** consider programs focused on providing access to mental and behavioral health supports, public benefits and tax credits, and job training or placement, although applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how they collaborate with programs that support these activities. We encourage applications to include how this project would support or enhance other services the organization, and its partners, provide.

We are requesting proposals for **up to three years of funding**. After reviewing proposals, WPF will conduct site visits and gather additional information from a limited number of organizations.

Organizations that propose projects in partnership with other applicants will be considered on their individual merits. However, the Foundation recognizes that making significant progress on the objective is difficult and encourages organizations to include partnerships that leverage complementary strengths, resources, and expertise to reach proposed goals.

The Foundation recognizes that there are many different tactics or approaches that could be used to advance the objective stated above. All proposals that meet the review criteria described below are encouraged.

WPF has **\$4 million available** to advance this objective through this RFP. The grant amount requested should be commensurate with the contribution that the project will make to the overall objective. The maximum amount of funding that organizations may request for direct expenses is \$800,000 over three years. (This does not include the overhead amount that will be added to project budgets, based on a formula described on the "How to Apply" section of our website).

At least \$500,000 of the total amount awarded under this RFP will be reserved for grants to organizations that have budgets under \$2 million per year and/or are led by individuals who are members of groups with a history of discrimination or exclusion.

Eligibility

Applicants must be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as 501(c)3 public charities or operate under a public charity fiduciary. Public charities include community-based organizations, schools and educational institutions, and other types of public-serving groups. Government entities are also eligible to apply.

Proposed projects must occur in Philadelphia and serve families who are residents of Philadelphia.

Existing grantees currently receiving funding to advance this objective cannot request additional funds for their current projects.

**Before you apply**, please review the questions below. If you can confidently answer “yes” to the questions, this funding opportunity may be relevant to you. If you respond “no” to any of the questions, this opportunity is not a good match for your project, and you should not apply.

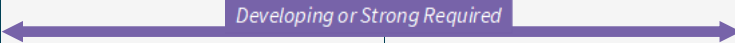
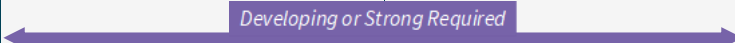
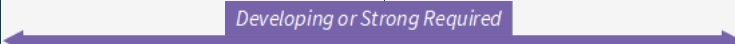
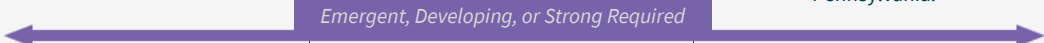
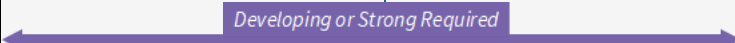
Key Questions:

|   | YES                      | NO                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Will this project serve families who are permanent residents of Philadelphia?               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your proposed project serve families with children 0-8?                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is your proposed project solely focused on helping families to stay in their homes?         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does your organization have a successful track record preventing homelessness for families? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please also review all of the criteria below and make sure that your program aligns with those.

# Review Criteria

Proposals will be judged on the criteria below. **Applicants should address these criteria in their narrative responses to the application questions.**

| Alignment with Objective  |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| Absent  | Emergent  | Developing  | Strong  |
| Project conveys no meaningful connection to the objective.  | Project would make a marginal and/or uncertain contribution to advancing the objective.   | Project would make a clear contribution to advancing the objective.   | Project would make a clear and significant contribution to advancing the objective.   |
|                                     |   |   |   |
| Program Design and Feasibility  |   |   |   |
| Absent  | Emergent  | Developing  | Strong  |
| Proposal does not provide a clear approach to the work. Anticipated outcomes and success are not well-defined.        | Proposal describes an approach to the work, but some aspects are vague, difficult to understand or seem unrealistic. Anticipated outcomes are defined, but are of uncertain achievability, based on the details provided. | Proposal provides a clear approach but could be more specific. Anticipated outcomes require further clarification to assess feasibility.                      | Proposal provides a clear and feasible plan to implement the work and includes a solid justification for anticipated outcomes.                                      |
|                                     |   |   |   |
| Partnerships and Collaboration  |   |   |   |
| Absent  | Emergent  | Developing  | Strong  |
| No potential partners or plans for collaboration.   | Potential partners relevant to the project are identified but there are no clear commitments.   | Some committed partnerships relevant to the project, a plan to build any necessary new partnerships, and a description of each partner's role.                | Sufficient committed partnerships relevant to the project, a description of each partner's role, and a track record of successful collaboration.                    |
|                                   |   |   |   |
| Organizational Experience   |   |   |   |
| Absent  | Emergent  | Developing  | Strong  |
| No implementation experience and no track record of success.  | Less than three years of experience with advancing the specified objective and a limited track record of success.   | Three to five years of experience advancing the specified objective and success in Philadelphia or other relevant cities or regions.                          | More than five years of experience advancing the specified objective and an extensive track record of success in Philadelphia and/or Pennsylvania.                  |
|                                   |   |   |   |
| Community Knowledge and Engagement  |   |   |   |
| Absent  | Emergent  | Developing  | Strong  |
| No evidence of familiarity with the intended beneficiaries of the proposed project and no plan for future engagement. | Minimal evidence of familiarity with intended beneficiaries of the proposed project, but there is a commitment to develop a stakeholder engagement plan during implementation.  | Evidence of familiarity with the intended beneficiaries of the proposed project and there is a plan for ongoing stakeholder engagement during implementation. | Key components of the project were informed by the intended beneficiaries of the proposed project and there is a plan for ongoing engagement during implementation. |
|                                   |   |   |   |

## Additional expectations:

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Coordination</b>        | Proposal clearly describes efforts that increase coordination of services between organizations to improve outcomes for population served.  |
| <b>Supportive Services</b> | Proposal clearly describes additional supportive services, internal or external, with a documented referral pathway that enhances homelessness prevention work.   |
| <b>Focus Population</b>    | Proposal should focus on providing supports for traditionally marginalized communities including low-income, people of color, and non-English language speakers.  |
| <b>Service Quality</b>     | Interventions should employ a model that has been shown to be effective and culturally and linguistically relevant for the population being served. Mechanisms for tracking impact of interventions over time should be included. |
| <b>Accessibility</b>       | For a proposal that includes direct services, planned services should take place in accessible locations, during convenient times, with consistently available language supports for non-English speaking individuals.            |
| <b>Budget</b>              | The requested budget is reasonable for the proposed activities, number of families being served, and the stated results.  |



# Learning and Insights

Grantees will be expected to complete a brief written report each year describing how they have made progress toward the objective above and what they have learned during the year.

In addition, organizations funded through this RFP will be convened in a Learning Community to build networks among those advancing a common objective, to share learning and best practices, and to identify ways in which progress could be enhanced. Grantees will help to determine the frequency, content, and specific goals of the Learning Community. The overhead funding included with any awarded grants is, in part, meant to help subsidize staff participation in the Learning Community.



## Webinar

Interested organizations are invited to participate in an optional informational webinar on **December 17, 2025 at 3:00PM ET.**

Register for the webinar at <https://lu.ma/william penn foundation>

# Budget

Project budgets should cover up to three years of funding and may include up to three months for planning. Organizations are encouraged to build on their existing programs, using WPF funding to supplement or enhance those efforts.

Project budgets should be all-inclusive, including any fees to partner organizations or consultants. This information can be provided in the proposal narrative.

Except in rare circumstances, total funding from WPF should not exceed 25% of a participating organization's operating budget.

All aspects of project development and execution, including planning, design, materials, community engagement, staffing, professional development, and implementation are eligible for funding.

In rare cases, it is possible that *everything* an organization does is focused on advancing the specific objective stated above. If that is the case, an organization may be eligible for general operating, rather than project support. If you believe that to be the case, please email the Program Officer listed at the end of this document to discuss further.

## Proposals that Include Advocacy and Lobbying

The Foundation recognizes that advocacy can sometimes be a useful tactic to advance certain objectives. Advocacy takes many forms and sometimes includes activities that the Internal Revenue Service defines as lobbying. (See [Application Guidelines for Advocacy Projects](#) for general information on the IRS lobbying rules.) The Foundation is open to proposals that include advocacy and/or lobbying as part of the project and may fund projects that include lobbying so long as certain requirements are met.

Applications that include advocacy or lobbying must:

1. Show in the budget submitted by the applicant that the amount requested from the Foundation is less than 80% of the total project budget.
2. Identify the proportion of the total project budget, if any, that may support activities defined as lobbying under the IRS rules (the “lobbying percentage”). (You will see a specific question about this on the budget template.)
3. Show that the applicant has funding commitments that will cover a minimum of 20% of the total project budget for at least the first year of the proposed grant period. In-kind contributions cannot be counted toward this portion of the budget. (Organizations will be expected to demonstrate funding commitments for at least 20% of the budget for all years of the grant period, but we recognize that it may take additional time to secure those commitments.)
4. If the lobbying percentage is more than 20% of the project budget, the applicant must show that they have committed funds that exceed that lobbying percentage.

In no cases can WPF earmark funds for lobbying activities, nor can Foundation funds be used to support or oppose any candidate for public office, for voter registration efforts, or for any partisan purposes.

# Application Process

If you answered “yes” to all of the questions in the eligibility section above and meet the stated criteria, the application process begins by completing a proposal on our online system at <https://wpf.my.site.com/grantee>.

Submit your application by 5:00PM ET on **January 29, 2026**. A WPF team will review all proposals and will notify applicants if they have been selected to move forward in the review process. **To download a working copy of the application to draft responses, please [click here](#).**

**Selected organizations** will take part in a site visit with WPF staff so that the Foundation can learn more about applicants’ work. Site visits will be approximately two hours in duration. We ask that organizations use this time to introduce key staff working on the proposed project, to show WPF staff where the work will take place, and to elevate the voices of the potential beneficiaries of the proposed project. Based on a combination of the written materials and the learning from the site visit, **a final slate of organizations** will be recommended to the WPF Board for consideration of their proposals.

*This request or any subsequent response does not commit William Penn Foundation or the responding organization to any future funding or engagement. If you have any questions, contact Aly Tooher at [atooher@williampennfoundation.org](mailto:atooher@williampennfoundation.org).*

# Timeline

## December 10, 2025

Proposal submission period opens.

## December 17, 2025

Informational Webinar (see page 9)

## January 29, 2026

Proposals due by 5:00PM ET

## February 19-20, 2026

Select applicants notified that their proposals have been chosen for further consideration and a site visit. Other applicants will be notified that their proposals are not advancing in the process.

## February 20-March 13, 2026

Site visits conducted by WPF staff with selected applicants.

## April 24, 2026

WPF Board review selected proposals.

## May 2026

Project implementation can begin.