William Penn Foundation

Request for Proposals

Prevent Homelessness for Families with Young Children

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Photo: Philadelphia city skyline

Purpose of this Request for Proposals

The William Penn Foundation (WPF) has a long history of investing in efforts to improve quality of life for residents of the Philadelphia region. The Foundation's Children and Families program seeks to support the healthy development and academic success of young Philadelphians. A full description of the Children and Families program, its goals, and all of 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, Foundation funded efforts will prevent homelessness for 10,000 families with young children.

Why is WPF prioritizing this objective?

Many Philadelphia families face persistent housing instability, without safe and consistent places to live. Research shows that stable housing is the foundation of family well-being: When families have secure homes, children experience better health, stronger development, and improved school outcomes.[1] Frequent moves, eviction threats, or periods of homelessness increase stress, disrupt routines, and raise the risk of illness and developmental delays, with lasting effects on children's ability to grow, learn, and thrive. For this reason, this objective is focused on families with children 0-8 to prioritize providing young children with the stability they need to 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 have demonstrated success, 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.

Through this RFP, WPF aims to invest in programs that ensure families with young children have stable housing and are protected from the harms of homelessness.

WPF seeks to prevent homelessness for families with young children through critical, in-time supports that help stabilize a family's housing and that promote long-term stability.

What types of projects will get funded?

WPF seeks to prevent homelessness for families with young children through critical, in-time supports that help stabilize a family's housing and that promote long-term stability. Examples of projects eligible for this funding include but are not limited to: providing eviction diversion or foreclosure prevention services, home repair services, and projects that seek to strengthen programs that families use to maintain their housing. The Foundation recognizes that there are many different tactics or approaches that could be used to advance the objective stated above. These efforts may include initiatives that seek to coordinate services, provide direct supports, build the capacity of existing programs or services, or help families navigate programs and benefits to keep them in their existing homes or connect them to stable housing.

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.

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[1] Charlotte Bruce et al., A Foundation for Every Child: Housing Stability and Health Equity, Children's HealthWatch, Sept. 2026.

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. The Foundation provides support for these activities through other RFPs released each year. However, applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how they collaborate with programs that support these activities to promote housing stability.

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

What has to be in my proposal?

We are requesting proposals for **up to 36 months of funding**. All proposals should clearly address the criteria listed on pages 6-7 of this RFP. In addition, the proposal narrative should include:

- A clear description of how additional internal or external programs and services will support family well-being beyond the homelessness prevention work.
- A demonstration of the current housing stability needs of families with children 0-8 in your program or proposed project including how this data will be tracked moving forward.
- A description of how your project interacts with citywide programs and services to prevent homelessness.

Organizations that propose projects in partnership with other applicants will be considered on their individual merits. However, the Foundation recognizes that the work necessary to make significant progress on the objective will be complex and encourages organizations to include partnerships that leverage complementary strengths, resources, and expertise.

All proposals that meet the criteria described on pages 6-7 are encouraged. After reviewing proposals, WPF will conduct site visits and gather additional information from a limited number of organizations.

Examples of Eligible Projects

Examples of projects eligible for this funding include but are not limited to: providing eviction diversion or foreclosure prevention services, home repair services, and projects that seek to strengthen programs that families use to maintain their housing



Quick Check: Is This Opportunity a Good Fit?

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.

	Yes	No
1. Will this project serve families who are permanent residents of Philadelphia?	☐	☐
2. Does your proposed project primarily serve families with children 0-8?	☐	☐
3. Is your proposed project focused on helping families to remain in their homes?	☐	☐
4. Does your organization have a successful track record preventing homelessness for families?	☐	☐

! Also review **all** the criteria on the following pages to make sure your program aligns with those before you apply.

What types of organizations are eligible for funding?

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.

Proposal Review

! Applicants must address these criteria in their responses within the Project Narrative section of the application. Proposals will be judged on the criteria and additional expectations below.

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.
		Developing or Strong Required	

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.
		Developing or Strong Required	

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.
		Developing or Strong Required	

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.
	Emergent, Developing, or Strong Required		

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.
		Developing or Strong Required	

What else will be expected in my proposal?

Supportive Services	Proposal clearly describes additional supportive services that help families thrive (e.g., workforce development, case management, financial education, or other related services), internal or external to the applying organization, with a documented referral pathway that enhances homelessness prevention work.
Service Quality	Interventions should employ a model that has been shown to be effective and culturally and linguistically relevant for the population being served.
Data Tracking	Mechanisms for tracking the impact of interventions over time should be included.
Referral Pathways	Proposals from organizations that do not primarily work with families with young children should demonstrate partnerships and referral pathways from programs and/or organizations that serve young children.
Accessibility	For proposals that include direct services, planned services should take place in accessible locations, during convenient times, with consistently available language supports for non-English-speaking individuals.
Budget	The requested budget is reasonable for the proposed activities, number of families being served, and the stated results.

Budget

How much money is available?

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**. WPF has allocated $3 million to advance this objective through this RFP.

What should I include in my proposed budget?

Project budgets should cover up to 36 months of funding. Project budgets should be all-inclusive, including any regrants to partner organizations or fees to 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.

What if my proposal includes any advocacy or lobbying activities?

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:

- Show in the budget submitted by the applicant that the amount requested from the Foundation is less than 80% of the total project budget.
- 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.)
- 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.)
- 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.

Anything else I should know?

If you are awarded funding, you will be expected to complete a brief written report each year describing how you have made progress toward the objective above and what you have learned during the year.

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.

If awarded funding through a WPF grant, an organization agrees to not unlawfully discriminate in their employment practices, volunteer opportunities, or programs and services based on any characteristic or class that is protected by law.

How to Apply

If you answered “yes” to all the questions in the “Quick Check” on page 5 and meet all the review criteria on pages 6–7, the application process begins by completing a proposal on our online submission system at https://wpf.my.site.com/grantee.

Submit your application by **5:00 PM ET on Thursday, January 21, 2027**. 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 us 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.

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 **Program Officer Aly Tooher at atooher@williampennfoundation.org.**

Webinar

Interested organizations are invited to participate in an optional informational webinar on **Tuesday, December 1, 2026, at 1:00PM ET.**

Register for the webinar at https://lu.ma/williampennfoundation.

Timeline

November 18, 2026

Proposal submission period opens.

December 1, 2026

Informational Webinar (see bottom of this page)

January 21, 2027

Proposals due by 5:00PM ET

February 12-17, 2027

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 16-March 15, 2027

Site visits conducted by WPF staff with selected applicants.

April 30, 2027

WPF Board review selected proposals.

May 2027

Project implementation can begin.