



Governor
Philip Murphy

**Lt. Governor &
Commissioner, DCA**
Sheila Y. Oliver

OFFICE OF HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION (OHP):
DOCUMENT ACCESS AND SUPPORT FOR HOUSING
(DASH)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS - FY23

RFP Due Completed in SAGE: No later than 11:59pm on 5/26/2023

I. Name of the grant program

DOCUMENT ACCESS AND SUPPORT FOR HOUSING - FY23

II. DCA contact information

Michael Callahan, Director, OHP, Michael.Callahan@dca.nj.gov

Tina McGill, Programs Manager, OHP, Tina.McGill@dca.nj.gov

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III. Purpose of the grant program

To provide:

1. Application completion and documentation assistance for DCA administered Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) lottery selectees that indicated a homelessness or other preference on their pre-application.
2. Housing preparation case management, creation of a housing stabilization plan (HSP) to include identification of barriers to tenancy, identification of credit and criminal histories, monthly budgeting, linkages to housing adjacent systems of care and mainstream benefits and entitlements.
3. Facilitation, coaching, and collaboration for HCV applicants working with DCA Field Offices from application preparation, issuance of RFTA materials, applicant briefing, and connection with DCA Field Office Housing Navigation staff.
4. Support of DCA Field Office housing navigation services and assistance, as necessary, for participants with complex housing histories and/or multiple barriers to successful tenancy.

IV. RFP Due Date

RFP Due Completed in SAGE: No later than 11:59pm on 5/26/2023

Award Notification Date: On or about 7/1/2023

V. Available funding

<i>Total DCA Funds</i>	<i>\$3,000,000.00</i>
<u>Total Funds Available for this RFP</u>	\$3,000,000.00

VI. Amount of award

The minimum amount awarded to a single project grantee is \$115,000 and a minimum of 16 projects will be funded through this program.

Awards will be distributed using the following scheme:

Region #	Counties	Per Region Award Amount Maximum
1	Essex	\$613,414
2	Hudson	\$240,898
3	Passaic	\$239,296
4	Camden	\$202,580
5	Middlesex	\$176,204
6	Union	\$161,368
7	Burlington	\$156,872
8	Monmouth	\$156,572
9	Mercer	\$155,149
10	Atlantic	\$150,953
11	Ocean	\$143,759
12	Bergen	\$142,935
13	Gloucester & Salem	\$115,000
14	Morris & Somerset	\$115,000
15	Cape May & Cumberland	\$115,000
16	Hunterdon, Sussex, & Warren	\$115,000
<i>Total Funding to be Awarded: \$3,000,000.00</i>		

VII. Eligible entities

Nonprofit organizations servicing Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Salem, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren Counties that have at least three (3) years of experience successfully administering and operating housing navigation, tenancy services, homelessness prevention, rapid re-housing programs, housing stabilization programs and initiatives.

Agencies selected must service the entire region and agencies may collaborate to deliver components of services (with an executed memorandum of understanding [MOU] outlining the collaboration or partnership). However, in partnership or collaborative Document Assistance & Supports for Housing projects, no more than one agency may be selected as the lead agency in a region and the maximum grant awarded will not exceed the chart above.

All applicants and sub-applicants must demonstrate:

1. **Organizational Portfolio Alignment:** An existing housing and homelessness program portfolio and demonstrable experience in serving individuals and families experiencing homelessness, those imminently homeless, those recently exited from homelessness, and those coming from situations and circumstances that make obtaining and maintaining suitable and stable housing a challenge.
2. **Resource Network:** A diverse compilation of resources and partnerships to support and assist households to both obtain and maintain sustainable and appropriate housing.
3. **Commitment to Partnership & Collaboration:** The willingness and capacity to partner with the DCA and all DHCR offices, other state agencies (e.g., DHS & NJ HMFA), the service area's correspondent Continuum-of-Care (CoC), public services (e.g., libraries), regional and local health care providers, and any consulting and contracted entities working with or aligned with OHP, DHCR, DCA, and/or other state entity.
4. **A Publicly Affirmed Commitment to Housing First:**
 - a. Housing First is an approach to quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry.
 - b. All programs and projects funded through OHP must publicly affirm Housing First principles, which include but are not limited to:
 - i. Ensuring low-barrier, easily accessible assistance to all people, including, but not limited to, people with no income or income history, and people with active substance abuse or mental health issues;
 - ii. Helping participants quickly identify and resolve barriers to obtaining and maintaining housing;

- iii. Seeking to quickly resolve the housing crisis before focusing on other non-housing related services;
- iv. Allowing participants to choose the services and housing that meets their needs, within practical and funding limitations;
- v. Connecting participants to appropriate support and services available in the community that foster long-term housing stability.

5. A Commitment to the Inclusion of & Incorporation of Feedback from Persons with Lived Experience & Expertise (PWLEE):

- a. OHP is committed to incorporating the perspectives and insights of persons with lived experience and expertise (PWLEE) of homelessness and housing instability in feedback and program evaluation processes.
 - i. OHP regularly receives this feedback through the DCA Statewide PWLEE Advisory Board, which meets on a monthly basis with OHP and a quarterly basis with DHCR and DCA leadership.
- b. As this feedback is critical to promoting inclusion, equity, diversity, and access in the homelessness prevention and services ecosystem (HPSE), all OHP grantees must affirm and provide proof of organizational alignment with (or the good faith effort of development of alignment with) the following key principles for ensuring the inclusion of PWLEE in feedback in their programs and organization:
 - i. Centering the voices of PWLEE: PWLEE have a unique perspective on the experience of homelessness and offer valuable insights into the challenges and barriers they face. It is essential to center their voices in feedback processes to ensure that their experiences and needs are accurately represented.
 - ii. Creation of a safe and supportive environment: PWLEE may have experienced trauma or marginalization related to their experiences of homelessness. It is important to create a safe and supportive environment for them to share their feedback, where they feel heard and respected.
 - iii. Using inclusive language and communication: Feedback processes should use language and communication that is inclusive and accessible to all. This includes using plain language, avoiding jargon or technical terms, and ensuring that all communication is available in formats that are accessible to individuals with disabilities.
 - iv. Providing opportunities for meaningful engagement: PWLEE should have opportunities to provide feedback in ways that are meaningful and accessible to them. This may include one-on-one conversations, focus

groups, surveys, or other methods of engagement that suit their preferences and needs.

- v. **Recognition of power imbalances:** Power imbalances can and often do exist between PWLEE and those collecting feedback, which can lead to a lack of representation or influence. It is important to recognize and address these imbalances to ensure that the perspectives and experiences of PWLEE are fully represented and considered in feedback processes.

VIII. Ineligible entities

1. Entities listed on the DCA list of High-Risk grantees and, as applicable, the current audit submission is not overdue.
2. Entities listed on the State Debarment list, located at www.state.nj.us/cgi-bin/treas/revenue/debarcheck.pl

IX. Target populations

Households issued a HCV or EHV through DCA's PHA.

NB: All participants in this program **must** be referred directly via DCA & DHCR channels.

X. Eligible Activities

This program provides assistance through the following two (2) activity categories:

1. **Documentation & Application assistance**
2. **Pre-tenancy services and supports**

The following summarizes each service category's allowable and expected activities:

Category 1. Documentation & Application assistance

Personnel providing services in Category I will use the title DASH Specialist. DASH specialist duties should consist of, at a minimum, the following eligible activities:

- I. **Conducting outreach to referred individuals from DCA:**
 - A. Engaging in outreach and engagement to connect with selected households who may be living on the streets or in other public spaces, local shelters, in soup kitchens, and connecting with other service

providers to identify and reach out to selected individuals that are ready to move from the pre-application to the application phase of the HCV process.

- II. Providing case management services to help individuals identify and obtain necessary documents, such as birth certificates, identification cards, proof of veteran status [if applicable], and social security cards:**
 - A. Conducting an initial assessment using DCA HCV document checklist to identify which documents each individual needs to obtain.
 - B. Developing an individualized plan for each client that outlines the steps needed to obtain the necessary documents.
 - C. Providing support and guidance throughout the document acquisition process, including assistance with filling out forms and making appointments.
 - D. Offering translation services or other accommodations for individuals who have limited English proficiency or other disabilities.

- III. Providing transportation assistance to help individuals travel to necessary appointments or agencies to obtain documents:**
 - A. Offering bus passes or other transportation vouchers to help clients travel to appointments and agencies.
 - B. Partnering with local transportation providers to offer reduced-cost or free transportation services to clients.
 - C. Coordinating ride shares or other carpooling arrangements for clients who have limited transportation options.

- IV. In cases of financial hardship, offering financial assistance to help individuals pay for necessary fees, such as those associated with obtaining a birth certificate or identification card:**
 - A. Providing small grants to help clients cover the cost of necessary fees.
 - B. Coordinating with other service providers or government agencies to waive or reduce fees for clients, where the client is eligible for a fee waiver (e.g., through Vital Statistics, etc.).

- V. Case Coordination with DCA, DHCR Field Office, & OHP**
 - A. Submission of completed application in partnership with the household to DCA Field Office.
 - B. Daily electronic collaboration with DCA Field Office caseworkers assigned to clients for status updates.
 - C. Weekly case collaboration and client deconfliction huddles with OHP

D. Utilization of case collaboration platform identified by OHP/DHCR

Category 2. Pre-tenancy services and support

Eligible costs for pre-tenancy services and support include providing essential services necessary to ensure that participants are able to successfully apply for housing, search for housing, maintain their tenancy (including budgeting and financial counseling, employment services, and case management). Personnel conducting pre-tenancy services under this project will hold the title of Housing Specialist.

Once a successful application has been submitted, program participants should be immediately transitioned from DASH Specialists to Housing Specialists.

Services in this component consist of budgeting and financial counseling, employment and income sustainment, case management, counseling and legal support, educational support, and transportation.

Time frame for delivery of services shall not exceed 30 days post-lease execution.

Specific requirements and eligible costs include:

- I. **Housing readiness and stabilization assessments:**
 - A. Conducting an initial assessment to identify each client's housing needs and preferences, aligned with requirements of the HCV program.
 - B. Developing an individualized housing plan that outlines the steps needed to obtain and maintain housing.
 - C. Providing referrals to other housing providers and resources.
- II. **Budgeting and financial counseling:**
 - A. Services to help clients develop and maintain a budget, access financial resources, and improve their financial literacy to ensure that they are able to pay rent and other housing-related expenses.
 - B. Conducting financial literacy workshops and training sessions for clients.
 - C. Offering one-on-one financial coaching and counseling to help clients develop budgets, set financial goals, and manage their finances.
 - D. Providing access to financial resources and tools, such as budgeting software or online financial calculators.
- III. **Employment services:**
 - A. Services to help clients access job training and employment opportunities, to increase their income and improve their ability to maintain their housing.
- IV. **Case management:**
 - A. Ongoing case management to help clients address any prior identified tenancy challenges (e.g., conflicts with landlords, maintenance issues, legal or disability issues, or other housing-related concerns).

- B. Conducting regular check-ins with clients to assess their housing search process, connecting with DCA Housing Navigation staff, and identification of any issues that arise in housing search.
- C. Offering support and guidance with lease compliance, budgeting, and other skills necessary for maintaining housing stability.
- D. Providing referrals to other services and resources as needed to help clients address any issues that may threaten their housing stability upon lease-up.

V. Housing educational support:

- A. Services providing educational support to help clients improve their housing skills and knowledge, such as workshops on tenant rights and responsibilities, health and safety, and other topics related to housing stability.

VI. Data collection and evaluation: operating a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Eligible costs include:

- i. HMFA HMIS fee for participating agencies (\$1000)

VII. Transportation: The costs of travel by tenancy services case managers during the provision of services, including:

- A. The costs of transporting clients to housing or other service appointments/facilities
- B. The costs of a participant's travel on public transit
- C. Mileage allowance for service workers to visit program participants
- D. Costs of staff to accompany or assist participants to use public transportation

VIII. Special Service Populations: The costs of otherwise eligible tenancy services that have been tailored to address the needs of the special needs of formerly homeless youth, disabled persons, victims of domestic violence and related crimes/threats, older persons (62 years of age and older), and/or people living with HIV/AIDS who were once homeless.

XI. Ineligible activities

Activities not specifically approved through this application or subsequently approved in writing by DCA.

XII. Grant term

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

XIII. Application process

The proposal must be submitted electronically via SAGE. All applicants must submit in SAGE a written narrative that describes the following:

1. Agency's mission, staff capacity, experience (to include outcomes) in housing and homeless services, rental assistance/supportive services, and financial management/grant operations.
2. Identification of project type and service area.
3. Statement of agency's affirming Housing First principles.
4. Statement of commitment to the Inclusion of & Incorporation of Feedback from Persons with Lived Experience & Expertise (PWLEE).
5. Contact information for executive team and project personnel.
6. Number of unduplicated households and distinct individuals assisted with prior housing and homelessness services funds (whether funded by DCA or another entity).
7. Program services and linkages with other community-based agencies and type of relationship (e.g., MOU or informal).
8. Data Collection and Management Processes.
9. Identification and qualifications of staff that will participate in the project and in the administration of the grant.
10. Consultant listing.
11. Proposed Project Budget (see example, below).

Example Budget: DOCUMENT ASSISTANCE & SUPPORTS FOR HOUSING PROJECT (Minimum Award - \$115,000)	
<i>Category</i>	<i>Amount (\$)</i>
Administration (Capped @ \$25k)	\$20,000.00
<i>Personnel</i>	
Salaries/Wages	
Fringe	
<i>Operating</i>	
Audit	
Other	
Trainings	
Program	\$95,000.00
<i>Direct Expenses</i>	
Housing Specialist Wages (P/T – 500 hr. Contract/Per Diem - \$35.00/hr)	\$17,500.00
DASH Specialist Salary	\$52,250.00
DASH Fringe (capped @ 37%)	\$19,332.50
<i>Operational Expenses</i>	
Client Transportation Services/Ride Share/Mass Transit Tickets	\$2,500.00
Miscellaneous (client documentation fees [if waiver required or not eligible], etc.)	\$2,415.00
NJ HMIS	\$1,000.00
Total	\$114,997.50
<i>Remaining</i>	<i>\$2.50</i>

Table I: Example Budget

XIV. Required attachments

1. Certification regarding debarment and suspension.
2. Certification regarding lobbying.
3. Staff resumes, to include the applicant's executive team.
4. Job descriptions of positions created via project.
5. Resolution from the applicant's Board of Trustees.
6. Letter of Support from the County/Regional Continuum-of-Care (CoC):
 - a. This letter must include a description of the applicant's participation in CoC processes and programs (to include Coordinated Entry [if applicable]).
7. Partnership listing and a list of services provided by/facilitated through these partnerships.
8. List of all services, funding sources, and amounts for agency initiatives.
9. Process map of project (from initial client contact through discharge/follow-up) that is inclusive of and aligned with DCA Field Office HCV processes.
10. Marketing plan that will be used to socialize program to community stakeholders
 - a. Slide deck/PowerPoint
11. Executed application cover page.

XV. Reporting and monitoring requirements

1. Weekly DHCR/OHP collaborative huddles (via Teams)
2. Monthly peer-to-peer coaching sessions (via Teams)
3. Monthly leadership meetings (Executive-level) (via Teams)
4. Quarterly reporting via SAGE
5. Semi-annual site visitation/file review
6. Recording encounter and case note data no later than 24 hours post-encounter in AWARDS.

XVI. Training requirements

Each grantee agrees that staff will participate in all mandatory training and meetings according to a schedule provided by the Office of Homelessness Prevention (see below). Training and meetings are to increase understanding of integrated services delivery and its interplay with other aspects of case management and as part of a larger housing problem-solving approach to preventing homelessness that is person-centered and affirming of Housing First principles.

Direct staff, Supervisors and Leadership staff must agree to the following mandatory training participation as part of this program:

1. Harm reduction
2. Landlord collaborations

3. Housing First
4. Eviction Prevention
5. Reporting, including the use of the Homelessness Management Information
6. System database (HMIS), also known as AWARDS, report building, and uploading options through NJ HMFA.
7. Racial equity
8. Trauma-Informed Service Delivery
9. Project Service Delivery Coaching & Peer-to-Peers
10. Persons with Lived Experience and Expertise (PWLEE) feedback sessions

In addition, the entity must participate in and make presentations to various audiences during required training and meetings according to the schedule designated by the Office of Homelessness Prevention. The entity must also work in collaboration with other DCA grantees to achieve this initiative's objectives.

XVII. Grantee performance expectations & requirements

1. Project is operationalized and running no later than 60 days post award notification.
2. Project's corresponding CoC executive body is made aware of award and project no later than 24 hours after notice.
3. Presentation and referral process is socialized to CoC's general body at the first available meeting post operationalization of the project.
4. Notification to partner agencies, with client consent, of services to client and admission into program.
5. Attendance at all training and OHP peer-to-peer activities.
6. Project staff meaningfully participate in NJ Counts (PIT Count).
7. Maintenance of 95% data quality in AWARDS (to include discharge destination/outcome capture).
8. All program participants actively in-program for Tenancy Support receive a minimum of two case management sessions (~30 mins per session) a month.
9. Housing stabilization plans (HSP) are updated on a monthly basis.
10. Any changes in participant status or circumstances are updated in HMIS no later than 24 hours of notice.
11. All service costs and payments made on behalf of or to participants are updated in HMIS no later than 24 hours post-disbursement.
12. **For all project components:**
 - a. 50% of admitted project households complete HCV application no later than 7 days post-DCA Field Office referral.
 - b. 70% of admitted project households complete HCV application no later than 14 days post-DCA Field Office referral.
 - c. 95% of admitted project households complete HCV application no later than 21 days post-DCA Field Office referral.
13. **For pre-tenancy services project components:**

- a. 90% of admitted project households admitted into services less than 48 hours post-HCV application submission.

XVIII. Threshold requirements

Only applications that meet all the following threshold requirements will be scored; **applications missing any documents identified in numbers 6-11 will be provided 5 days to upload same.**

1. Minimum of three years of experience in providing homelessness prevention and housing services such as financial assistance, housing relocation and stabilization services to the target population.
2. Attend a mandatory technical assistance workshop.
3. Be an active participant in the local Continuum of Care.
4. Be an active participant in HMIS.
5. Agree to attend a HMIS training workshop.
6. Submit the last 3 years of audits [to include statement cash flows [or equivalent]] and latest IRS Form 990.
 - a. Applicant's submissions **must demonstrably show** that they have sufficient cash flows to sustain staff and effectively administer the grant.
7. Submit Bylaws.
8. Submit Articles of Incorporation.
9. Submit staff resumes and current organizational chart.
10. Submit verification of current SAM registration.
11. Complete all certification sheets.

XIX. Rating criteria & scoring rubric

Rating Criteria: A review panel will thoroughly review and evaluate all applications against the three rating criteria listed below. Maximum Evaluation = 100 Points

1. ***Applicant's Capacity and Experience:*** Does the applicant have the capacity to successfully administer the program? (Maximum 30 Points)
 - a. Appropriate staff and financial structure
 - b. Sufficient revenue from multiple sources and cost controls to sustain staff and operate the proposed project
 - c. Prior experience providing proposed activities
 - d. Demonstrated effective grant management
 - e. Demonstrated achievement grant objectives with the established time frame
 - f. Expended previous grant awards correctly and in a timely manner
 - g. Produced and submitted prior grant's performance and financial reports correctly and on-time.

Please note that any applicant who has had funds recaptured by DCA in the last two fiscal years will lose 10 points

Marginal Response 1-5 Points	Acceptable Response Maximum 20 Points	Excellent Response Maximum 30 Points
The applicant's response was incomplete, lacks clarity and does not provide assurance as to their ability to perform the work proposed.	The applicant's response was clear, thorough and provides reasonable assurance as to their capacity to perform the work proposed. In addition, the applicant has enough income to sustain staff and effectively administer the grant.	The applicant's response provides significant assurance as to their capacity to perform the work proposed – the answers provided demonstrate a high level of expertise and capability. In addition, the applicant has enough income to sustain staff and effectively administer the grant.

Rubric: Criterion 1

2. **Proposed Program Design:** Clear description of activities and budget line items. (Maximum 40 Points)
- a. Participant housing planning & marketing materials
 - b. Description of document sourcing strategies, housing case management activities, and direct client services
 - c. Linkages to other mainstream resources
 - d. Clear description of how the proposed activities will help the agency achieve their performance goals.
 - e. Project budget: proposed costs are eligible, reasonable and are proportionate to the number of households to be served. Has a formula been identified to substantiate the cost per household?

Scoring Criteria

Marginal Response 1-5 Points	Acceptable Response Maximum 30 Points	Excellent Response Maximum 40 Points
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OHP: DOCUMENT ASSISTANCE & SUPPORTS FOR HOUSING (DASH) - FY23 - RFP

<p>The applicant’s response was incomplete and did not provide a clear description of activities and budget</p>	<p>The applicant’s response provided a clear description of outreach and case management activities and identified mainstream resources. The description also described how the proposed activities will help the agency achieve their performance goals. In addition, all budget items were eligible, reasonable and substantiated.</p>	<p>The applicant’s response provided a clear, detailed description of outreach and case management activities including how they will link participants up with mainstream benefits. The description also described how the proposed activities will help the agency achieve their performance goals. In addition, all budget items were eligible, reasonable and substantiated.</p>
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Rubric: Criterion 2

3. **Project Need:** The proposed project meets the needs of the region’s residents based on NJCounts data, OHP data, descriptive population statistics from the NJ Homeless Management Information Systems (NJ HMIS) or the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR). Both regional and agency data are supportive of level of case management practices and activities allowable and expected in grant. (Maximum 10 Points)

Scoring Criteria

<p align="center">Marginal Response 1-4 Points</p>	<p align="center">Acceptable Response Maximum 5 Points</p>	<p align="center">Excellent Response Maximum 10 Points</p>
<p>The applicant’s response was incomplete and did not provide sufficient data to document need</p>	<p>The applicant’s response provided current Point in Time Count data to document need. The documented level of need was low to medium.</p>	<p>The applicant’s response provided current Point in Time Count data and other statistics that document the level of homelessness. The documented level of need was high.</p>

4. **Data Practices:** The organization is actively participating in the NJ Homeless Management Information System (NJ HMIS) and committed to accurate reporting and using data to inform programming. Data is leveraged by the organization to inform program decisions and management processes (Maximum 10 points)

Scoring Criteria

Unacceptable Response 0 Points	Acceptable Response 5 Points	Excellent Response Maximum 10 Points
The applicant is not actively participating in the NJ Homeless Management Information System (NJ HMIS).	The applicant is actively participating in the NJ Homeless Management Information System (NJ HMIS) – entering data on a weekly basis.	The applicant is actively participating in the NJ Homeless Management Information System (NJ HMIS); entering data on a daily basis and leveraging data to inform agency and CoC service delivery.