



Department of Public Safety
Minnesota Office of Justice Programs

2024 – 2025 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOUSING FIRST PILOT PROJECT

GRANT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

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Request for Proposals (RFP) Part 1: Overview

1.1 General Information

- Grant Name: Domestic Violence Housing First (DVHF)
- [Minnesota Office of Justice Programs \(OJP\) Website](#)
- Open for Applications: November 28, 2023
- Application Due Date: January 16, 2024

1.2 Program Description

The purpose of this request for proposals is to fund community-based nonprofit or Tribal Nation based domestic violence programs for pilot projects to implement an agency-wide Domestic Violence Housing First approach to assist survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence experiencing housing instability.

“Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children. The Domestic Violence Housing First approach focuses on getting survivors of domestic violence into stable housing as quickly as possible and then providing the necessary support as they rebuild their lives. This approach has been shown to promote long-term stability, safety and well-being for survivors and their children.”

(Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence)

The program design includes survivor-driven, trauma-informed mobile advocacy, flexible financial assistance, and community engagement. Programs will be provided technical assistance as they work through implementing the *agency-wide approach*.

Organizations serving communities who have been historically oppressed and excluded including, but not limited to, Black, brown and people of color, poor/low income, LGBTQIA2S+, people with disabilities, Indigenous people, older adults, foreign-born, people who have faced homelessness, and Tribal Nations are strongly encouraged to apply.

1.3 Minnesota’s Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

It is State of Minnesota policy to ensure equity, diversity, and inclusion in making competitive grant awards. See Executive Order [19.01](#).

The Policy on Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities. See [OGM Policy 08-02](#).

1.4 Funding and Program Dates

Funding

Funds are authorized by Minnesota Session Laws of 2023, Chapter 52, Article 2, Section 3, Subdivision 8.

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Up to \$2,137,500 is available for application for a 22-month grant period. Final award amounts may be lower than requested. OJP anticipates award amounts will range between \$150,000 - \$400,000 for the 22-month grant period. This is a cost reimbursement grant. An advance structure may be requested but is subject to DPS review and approval. This is one-time special project funding. Subsequent funding will be issued through competitive RFP processes.

Program Dates

This is a 22-month grant period, from March 1, 2024 through December 31, 2025.

1.5 Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are community-based non-profit organizations and Tribal Nation domestic violence service providers currently providing domestic violence services to survivors. Nonprofit applicants must be registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State.

1.6 Questions, Technical Assistance, and Information Sessions

Please submit any questions regarding this RFP by email to danielle.lindner@state.mn.us. Answers will be posted on the DVHF Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the [OJP website](#) within 7 days of receipt.

RFP Information Sessions

OJP will offer two online information sessions that include time for questions and answers. In each session staff will provide a brief overview of the Domestic Violence Housing First Program, walk through the Request for Proposals and application requirements, give an overview of the application review process, and address any questions. While not required, prospective applicants are encouraged to participate in at least one information session. Questions and answers from both webinars will be posted on a Frequently-Asked-Questions (FAQ) section on the OJP Website.

Session I: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 10:00-11:30am- [Registration Required](#) via Zoom

Session II: Thursday, December 7, 2023 2:00-3:30pm [Registration Required](#) via Zoom

To request a reasonable accommodation for the information session, please email Danielle.lindner@state.mn.us.

RFP Part 2: Program Activities and Requirements

2.1 Required Program Activities

The following program activities are required for funded Domestic Violence Housing First programs:

- Survivor-driven, trauma-informed mobile advocacy.
- Flexible financial assistance for survivors.
- Community engagement activities.
- Staffing (minimum 0.5 FTE) to lead program implementation.

- Existing staff to support survivors as the program transitions to the Domestic Violence Housing First approach.
- Provide voluntary support services to survivors, including follow up services.

2.2 Program Requirements

Commitment to Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Provide an accessible, welcoming, and respectful service environment. Provide services in a culturally sensitive and respectful way that honors and values diverse life experiences for those seeking services, and for program staff, leadership, and advisory boards. OJP asks programs to make efforts to diversify their leadership, staff, and board membership to include persons from diverse communities and populations, including people who have been impacted by crime.

Commitment to Using a Trauma-informed Approach

Provide services in a way that recognizes, understands, and responds to the effects of trauma experienced by survivors. A trauma-informed approach emphasizes physical, mental, and emotional health and safety, and helps survivors rebuild a sense of control and empowerment. Services need to be flexible to respond to the impact of different types of traumas and on meeting survivors' self-defined needs toward recovery and healing. For more information:

<https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/4-supporting-victims/41-using-a-trauma-informed-approach/>

Confidentiality

Programs are prohibited from disclosing, revealing, or releasing personally identifying information or information collection in connection with services utilized, requested, or denied unless: (1) the service participant has signed a release of information, (2) a law mandates disclosure, or (3) a court has ordered disclosure. Releases must be unique to the individual survivor and circumstances, be voluntary, and cannot be presented as routine practice.

Voluntary Services

Participation in supportive services must not be required of survivors, but funded programs must ensure services are offered, available, and accessible.

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation will be a part of the pilot projects. Applicants will be provided guidance through cohort meetings.

2.3 Program Design

The information in the Program Design section is from the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence ([WSCADV](#)) Domestic Violence Housing First (DVHF) Toolkit. Please review this toolkit to learn more about DVHF.

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To fully implement DVHF, programs must be utilizing and offering all [three components \(pillars\)](#), with safe and stable housing at its core. The three pillars are:

1. **Survivor-Driven, Trauma-Informed Mobile Advocacy:** Working in partnership with survivors with advocacy focused on safety and supporting survivors to rebuild control over their lives. Survivors lead the process, choose their own goals, and define what is going to be safer for themselves.
2. **Flexible Financial Assistance:** Funds without limits, conditions, or restrictions used to support survivors to become stably housed.
3. **Community Engagement:** Advocates working in the community to build lasting connections with the goal of engaging community members in supporting survivors' safety, independence, and housing stability.

For organizations to achieve full implementation of DVHF, their mission and values must align with the following fundamentals:

- DVHF is not a separate program, but rather an advocacy approach that is woven into the fabric of all the agency's work.
- Housing is a right, not a privilege.
- Housing is often the beginning of a survivor's path toward stability, not the end.
- Survivors are the experts in their own lives and know what is best for themselves and their children.
- Advocates and survivors are partners. Critical thinking, exploration of services, and problem solving is shared between the survivor and advocate.
- Advocacy is free-flowing and flexible to address the changing and evolving needs of survivors and their children.
- Advocacy is focused on a survivor, not on domestic violence.

2.4 Additional Requirements for Awarded Applicants

Through the course of the grant period, the following will be required of awarded programs:

1. **Monthly cohort meetings with awarded applicants.** We will be utilizing the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence Domestic Violence Housing First Toolkit as a guide for implementation. Funded programs will be required to:
 - Share Domestic Violence Housing First implementation challenges and successes on a regular basis.
 - Engage in evaluation efforts to align the Domestic Violence Housing First approach in Minnesota with the goal to broaden Domestic Violence Housing First implementation across programs.
 - Review awarded agency's mission and values and make any necessary updates to fully align with the Domestic Violence Housing First approach.
2. **Completion of Violence Free Minnesota (VFMN) Housing 101 Training series (to be launched fall 2023).**

3. Additional Housing Specialist training, as opportunities arise.

In addition to TA, monthly cohort meetings may include discussion and support on the following activities:

- Engaging people with lived experience to inform program implementation.
- Developing relationship/participation in local Continuum of Care (CoC) to include information on coordinated entry (CE) and comparable database requirements.
- Other topics identified by cohort participants, as needed.

RFP Part 3: Application Process and Instructions

3.1 Application Deadline

Applications must be submitted using the [e-grants](#) web-based system by 4:00 pm on January 16, 2024. See the [e-grants Application Completion Guide](#) for assistance navigating e-grants. Applications cannot be submitted after this time. No paper submissions will be accepted.

3.2 Application Submission Instructions

Applications must be submitted via e-grants, the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) online grants management system. [E-grants](#) can also be accessed via the [Office of Justice Programs](#) website.

If you have never applied for a grant with the Office of Justice Programs, create a user account by clicking on the purple “New User” option in the login box in the upper right corner of the e-grants website and follow instructions to fill out the profile. Contact the e-grants Helpdesk at 1-800-820-1890 if you have login issues.

3.3 Terms and Conditions, Grant Program Guidelines, OJP Grant Manual

As part of submitting this application in e-grants the applicant agency agrees to the applicable Terms and Conditions of OJP Grantees for applicants as well as the [Grant Program Guidelines](#). These address federal and state requirements such as worker’s compensation, civil rights, affirmative action, and data privacy. By agreeing to these in e-grants the applicant is confirming that they can make these commitments. Applicants are encouraged to print and review these documents with the appropriate agency staff prior to submitting the application in e-grants. If selected for funding, the grantee will need to submit required certifications. Grantees agree to follow the [OJP Grant Manual](#), which provides basic information on policies and procedures for grant administration. These documents become, by reference, part of the formal grant contract agreement.

3.4 Application Content

The application consists of the following required parts; any missing part will prevent the application from submission. Applications that do not answer all questions will not score well in the review process.

Project Information Form

Input this information directly into the form in e-grants and it will be used as the cover sheet for the application. You will need:

- Contact information for the Fiscal Agent. (This is the agency named in the grant contract and responsible for the administration of the grant.)
- The fiscal agent's federal and state identification numbers.
- Contact information for the person/s responsible for programming, financials, and contracts.
- Brief program description and geographic information.

Narrative (70 points)

Address the following questions in a 5-6 page maximum Word or PDF document with $\frac{3}{4}$ " margins, single-spaced and with a 12-point font size. Proposals are scored based on your responses to these questions. Organize your proposal by labeling and numbering responses; providing an answer for each topic and answer in the order they are asked. **Please note:** Narrative documents that do not follow this format do not score well in this review process. Do not include any additional pages or supplemental materials; these will not be provided to reviewers. When ready to submit, **upload the narrative as an attachment in e-grants.**

1. Organizational Overview (20 Points)

- a. Provide a brief description of agency's mission and history as a domestic violence service provider.
- b. State the service area your program covers.
- c. Describe how a Domestic Violence Housing First program would fit with your agency's overall programming.
- d. Share your agency's experience with current or past grant management.
- e. State the percentage of leadership staff, board of directors and staff who represent communities who have been historically oppressed and excluded including, but not limited to, Black, brown and people of color, poor/low income, LGBTQIA2S+, people with disabilities, Indigenous people, older adults, foreign-born, people who have faced homelessness and Tribal Nations are strongly encouraged to apply. Explain how the percentage is or is not proportional to the clients served by the agency.

2. Housing Stability (15 points)

- a. Describe your agency's current housing advocacy activities.

- b. DV providers face multiple barriers in housing survivors – describe specific barriers your agency faces with housing and how Domestic Violence Housing First funding will assist your agency in overcoming those barriers.

3. Domestic Violence Housing First Implementation Plan (30 points)

- a. Describe your agency’s readiness to implement Domestic Violence Housing First. Use the [self-assessment readiness tool](#) to help you answer this question.
- b. Describe the role of the required Domestic Violence Housing First funded position and how the position will build the Domestic Violence Housing First approach agency wide. Include your plan for training staff.
- c. Describe your agency’s plan to provide supportive services to victims of domestic violence. Include what those services will be and how they will be made available to survivors. Include follow-up supportive services after a survivor has secured permanent housing.
- d. Describe the population you will serve and if targeting services for a traditionally underserved population(s), describe relevant experience your agency has working with this target population(s).
- e. Describe how survivors with lived experience with housing instability have been consulted in the development of and/or will be consulted as the program is implemented.
- f. Explain how you will ensure services provided will be survivor-centered, trauma informed, and based in harm reduction.

4. Evaluation (5 Points)

Program evaluation helps programs understand, verify, or increase the effectiveness of programming. It can also provide data to highlight the program’s impact. Additionally, it will build capacity to evaluate programs and/or projects in the future.

- a. Describe your experience with program evaluation including tools used.
- b. Describe your willingness to commit to cohort wide evaluation efforts.

Work Plan/Outcomes (20 Points)

Applicants must complete a work plan **with at least 3 goals**. Use the [self-assessment readiness tool](#) to identify the most impactful goals in implementing DVHF in your agency. The work plan allows you to describe activities as you work toward DVHF implementation. **Download the work plan template from the Work Plan form in e-grants and make a copy of the template for each goal.**

The plan will outline specific activities to achieve the goals, activities, timelines, and who will be responsible to carry out the activities. You will also include intended outcomes and how you will measure the success of the each. **Upload the completed work plan into the Work Plan form within the e-grants application.**

Budget (10 Points):

Your budget should be consistent with your narrative and work plan, making it clear how each of the activities will be funded. The budget will cover a 22-month period and all expenses must be listed and directly chargeable to the grant. When estimating costs, please show your calculations by including quantities, unit costs and other details. Only include grant funded expenses in the budget descriptions.

Enter budget information directly into e-grants. Directions for navigating e-grants to enter your budget are in the [e-grants Application Completion Guide](#) on pages 5 and 6. Additionally, the [Domestic Violence Housing First Program Budget Development Guidelines](#) will show you examples and specific requirements for each of the line items. See the [Domestic Violence Housing First Program Budget Allocation Guide](#) for allowable expenses under this RFP. **Budget line items may include:** Personnel, Payroll Taxes & Fringe, Contract Services, Travel & Training, Office & Program Expenses, Indirect Costs, and Flexible Financial Assistance. Not all line items need to be used.

Staffing considerations:

- Staff positions identified in budget must be clearly linked to activities in the work plan.
- Grant staff funded at less than 100% FTE with Domestic Violence Housing First funds must keep detailed time tracking records of hours worked on grant activities.

Organizational Financial Information Form

This Information will be entered into e-grants form.

1. *OJP Grantee Status (active grant in last 12 months or not)*

2. *Fiscal Information*

- A. Accounting basis.
- B. Organization's Fiscal year time-period.
- C. Total revenue last completed fiscal year.
- D. Total federal expenditures (only from federal sources) last completed fiscal year.
- E. How often financial document are produced.
- F. Nonprofits only: Most Recent IRS Form 990.
- G. Date and status of annual financial filing
- H. Nonprofits only: Upload evidence of good standing with the Secretary of State
- I. Allocation method document (if applicable)

3. *Financial Document*

Upload the financial document(s) applicable to your organization:

- Agency with annual revenue under \$50,000
 - Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)
 - Statement of Activity (Income and Expense Statement)
- Agency with total annual revenue of over \$750,000, but with federal expenditures less than \$750,000
 - Certified Financial Audit
 - Certified Financial Audit Management Letter
 - Corrective Action Plan (if applicable)

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- Agency that spent \$750,000 or more in federal funds during fiscal year
 - Single Audit
 - Single Audit Management Letter
 - Corrective Action Plan (if applicable)
- Audit Information
 - Name of Auditors
 - Type of Audit
 - Description of Audit Findings

4. *Administrative Systems*

Answer yes or no to the following statements:

- Our organization has had an instance of misuse or fraud in the past 36 months.
- Our organization has current or pending lawsuit against the organization.
- Our organization is currently designated as a high risk grant recipient by the federal government.
- Current principals (defined as a public official, a board member or staff with the authority to access funds provided by this agency or determine how funds are used) have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.
- We have separate accounts for different programs/revenue sources to prevent co-mingling of funds.
- Our organization uses a daily time tracking log for each position being paid using multiple sources of funding.
- Our organization has a paid bookkeeper.
- Our organization has an approval process that requires multiple approvals before funds can be expended.
- Our organization has written policies and procedures for accounting, purchasing and payroll.
- Our organization's accounting system can identify and track grant program-related income and expenses separate from all other income and expenses.
- We can easily retrieve original receipts for expenses that are reimbursed by the grant.
- Our Board of Directors meets at least every month.
- Our organization has a Conflict-of-Interest Policy.

5. *Grant Management Experience*

- We have had more than one administrative turnover in the past 12 months (defined as anyone involved in working on or managing grants)
- Select an option that applies to your organization:
 - Monitored funding and completed reporting for non-federal and/or only federal grants
 - Monitored funding and completed reporting for only non-federal grants
 - Monitored funding and completed reporting for contracts but not grants
 - No prior experience monitoring and reporting for contracts and/or grants

Application Checklist

An application must include the following to be reviewed:

(e-grants will not let the application be submitted if any of these are missing)

1. **Project Information form**
2. **Narrative** - Addressing questions listed above must be uploaded
3. **Work Plan** - Addressing the items requested must be uploaded
4. **Budget** - Calculations must be included
5. **Indirect Documentation Form** (if including indirect costs in budget)
6. **Organization Financial Information**

RFP Part 4: Application Review Process

This is a competitive application process. A review committee made up of community members will read and rate applications using a 100-point scale. The reviewers will meet and discuss the proposals and then put forth their recommendations. A copy of the review form will be on the OJP grants page.

A final staff review will consider geographic locations, coordination with other federal, state, and local funding and past grantee performance. Timeliness and completeness of past grant financial and progress reporting is also considered. The Commissioner of Public Safety will make the final funding decisions and award notification will be by email to applicants.

RFP Part 5: Post Award Requirements

- **Pre-Award Risk Assessment and Financial Review.** In accordance with state and federal grant management policies it is required to consider a grant applicant's past performance before awarding subsequent grants to them. State policy requires states to conduct a financial review prior to a grant award made of \$25,000 and higher to any organization. The necessary information for these is provided in the financial information form in the application.
- **Minnesota's Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion in Procurement.** The State of Minnesota is committed to diversity and inclusion in its public procurement process. The goal is to ensure that those providing goods and services to the State are representative of our Minnesota communities and include businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and those with substantial physical disabilities. Creating broader opportunities for historically under-represented groups provides for additional options and greater competition in the marketplace, creates stronger relationships and engagement within our communities, and fosters economic development and equality.

To further this commitment, the Department of Administration operates a program for

Minnesota-based small businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and those with substantial physical disabilities. For additional information on this program, or to determine eligibility, please call 651-296-2600 or go to the [OEP website](#).

- **Grant Contract Process.** After being selected for funding, OJP staff will work with the applicant to negotiate a final budget. The formal grant contract consists of the Grant Agreement, the Terms and Conditions, the Program Guidelines, as well as the work plan and budget. The Grant Agreement will be initiated, signed by grantee and OJP, and once fully executed it is then a legally binding agreement. Grant agreements not signed within 30 days of receipt may be canceled.
- **Progress Reporting.** Grantees will be required to submit data and narrative progress reports in a prescribed manner with every request for payment. Generally requests for payment and progress reports are submitted quarterly. Requests may be made to request payment more frequently and are subject to DPS and OJP approval.
- **Grant Payments.** This is a cost reimbursement grant. An advance structure may be requested but is subject to DPS review and approval. Grantees will only be paid for eligible expenses (after the grant contract is fully executed) that are incurred and are consistent with the negotiated budget.
- **OJP Grant Manual.** Grantees, grantee subgrants and contracts agree to follow the OJP Grant Manual as part of the application process. The manual is a resource for how our office manages grants and covers topics such as grant administration policies, program modification policies, general accounting requirements, etc. [OJP Grant Manual](#)
- **Expiring Grant Funds.** A portion of the total grant award will expire on June 30, 2025. See the Special Conditions page of the grant contract for details.
- **Grantee Orientation.** Grant award recipients will be required to have a representative, or representatives of the organization receiving the award, attend a future OJP grantee orientation session.

RFP Part 6: Right of Cancellation

The State reserves the right to cancel this solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest. The State reserves the right to negotiate modifications to the application or to reject any and all applications received as a result of this Request for Proposals. The State does not intend to award a grant contract solely on the basis of any response made to this request or pay for information solicited or obtained.