



# Blue Earth County Individual Assistance Grants



## Housing Assistance Grant

Issued August 31, 2020 – Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Funding

# Request for Proposal

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# Individual Assistance Grants Overview

The Blue Earth County Human Services Department was asked to submit a plan which supports qualifying individuals and families in our county who have experienced specific hardship directly due to the impact of COVID-19. These targeted supports use one-time and short-term resources dedicated to this defined purpose.

On August 11<sup>th</sup> the County Board Authorized a plan for 6 targeted areas of service which includes issuing 5 Request for Proposals.

The summary of the 6 focus areas are as follows:

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Grant Recipient or Fund Administrator</b>	<b>Approved Amount</b>
A1: Emergency Assistance	BEC Financial Assistance	\$314,081
*A2: Housing Assistance Grants	Current Housing Assistance Administrators	\$100,000
*A3: Housing Provider Grants	Housing Providers	\$200,000
*B: Community Food Provider Grants	Food Support Entities	\$100,000
*C: Transportation Access Grants	Transportation Provider	\$8,000
*D: Mental/Emotional Health Support Grants	Long Term Care Facilities	\$100,000

\*Indicates RFP to be issued

- Each of the 5 RFP's will be individually outlined for community responses.
- Criteria for scoring will be established before the RFP's are formally published.
- Responses will be reviewed and scored by a committee.
- Awards will be announced as soon as possible after the posted deadline for each RFP has passed.
- The county reserves the right to repost any RFP if initial responses do not appropriately or adequately address the core goals of each published RFP.
- The county also reserves the right to proactively adjust the allocation of CARES money if necessary, based on the course of the pandemic and the priority of needs in the community before the end of the year.
- Our goal is to distribute all the funds within the 5 dedicated areas approved by the Blue Earth County Board of Commissioners.

# Housing Assistance Grant Summary

Some residents of Blue Earth County have experienced housing instability as a result of the economic and health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Blue Earth County Board of Commissioners is dedicating a portion of local Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) funding to address this important community need.

Eligible administrators seeking to apply for Minnesota's COVID-19 Housing Assistance Program (CHAP) funds did so through an application process to Minnesota Housing that was due in July 2020. The purpose of these state-issued funds was to "provide housing assistance to prevent homelessness and help maintain housing stability of individuals and families impacted by the public health-related emergency." State officials have indicated the \$100 million dollars being awarded are necessary, however it will not likely fully meet the community need across the state.

This strategy allows Blue Earth County to create local CHAP funding to assist eligible administrators of the state program by awarding funds to entities that did not receive an award or to supplement the CHAP funding received.

The benefit of focusing in on entities who already have an existing housing assistance program is that these short term, one-time funds are likely to be issued rapidly, without delay, due to the existence of an already operational assistance program that is integrated with the larger, local housing network.

## Application and Technical Requirements

Proposals may be submitted in writing in a format at the discretion of the applicant. Applicants may follow closely the CHAP proposal format used for the state funding process. Proposals are due 5pm on Monday, September 14, 2020. ~~Review and subsequent award notice will occur by the week of September 21, 2020.~~ **Deadline Extended: Applications will be accepted until midnight on Sunday, September 27<sup>th</sup> with award notices given the following week.**

### Eligible applicants:

Eligible administrators for Minnesota Housing's CHAP funds, who would also be eligible for Blue Earth County include:

- Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) grantees or subgrantees
- Federally recognized tribes in Minnesota

- Local units of government (cities, counties, PHAs, HRAs)
- Nonprofit/community-based organizations with the ability to administer rental or mortgage assistance
- The principal place of business is located in/very near Blue Earth County, with services rendered to a significant number of Blue Earth County residents
- Provides essential services to Blue Earth County residents
- Has the ability to demonstrate and document that from March 15, 2020 to November 1, 2020, it has incurred increased costs or will incur increased costs due to the COVID-19 public health emergency
- Will not use Blue Earth County CARES funding in place or instead of local, state, federal or other funds already designated for that expense or activity
- Can provide independently reviewed or audited financial statements, if requested
- Has been in operation and provided essential services since at least January 2020
- Has prior experience in successfully managing federal, state, or local financial assistance and/or grant funding
- Will not use any funds awarded under this grant for purposes outside of the approved request

## Funding amounts and requirements:

- One-time grants may be used to provide housing assistance to resides of Blue Earth County who are currently experiencing housing instability as a direct result of COVID-19. Housing assistance is defined as:
  - Mortgage payments (including escrowed property taxes and insurance in the case of foreclosure prevention)
  - Contract for deed payments
  - Manufactured home park lot rents
  - Manufactured home payments
  - Utility payments
  - Homeowners Association fees
  - Homeowners insurance
  - Additional housing related costs approved by Blue Earth County Human Services
- If the applicant organization provides housing assistance on a regional basis, funding received under this grant shall not supplant other funding, nor should it result in a redistribution of regional funds. These funds should be considered in excess of the share of funding that was already attributed to Blue Earth County residents.
- Applicant must fully demonstrate the need for additional funding and provide rationale for funding need and how the funding will be distributed.
- The total amount available for responding to this community need is \$100,000. Established grant amount requests are as follows:
  - Minimum - \$5,000 per entity
  - Maximum - \$100,000 per entity
- Expenses must be a necessary expenditure incurred as a direct result of the COVID-19 response.

- Any proposed expense request must not have been accounted for in your organization's most recent budget or may not be funded through another means.
- All expenses must be incurred after March 15, 2020 or prior to November 1, 2020 and documentation for proof of expenses incurred made available upon request for auditing purposes.
- All unused/unexpended funds shall be returned to Blue Earth County by November 15, 2020, without need for demand by Blue Earth County.

## Ineligible expenses:

- Revenue replacement
- Construction costs
- Overhead costs
- Costs for political activity, including lobbying
- All costs which are ineligible per the most recent U.S. Treasury guidance <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Coronavirus-Relief-Fund-Frequently-Asked-Questions.pdf>

# Submission Instructions

## Responses

All responses to this Request for Proposal must include the following essential items, and will be scored based on the criteria defined below:

- Project Name
- Applicant Information
  - Legal entity name
  - Address
  - Phone number
  - Contact name, phone number and email address
  - Brief introduction of your organization
- Project Summary
  - Summary of the project
  - Anticipated community benefit from the project
- Problem Statement
  - Problems that will be addressed with your project
  - Applicable data and statistics, including anticipated number of individuals served
- Target Population
  - Definition of the population and level of need for services in the community
  - Plan for marketing or referral systems
- Objective and Outcomes

- Specific, measurable project objectives
- Key anticipated outcomes
- Project Activities and Implementation
  - Describe how you will fulfill the objectives and anticipated outcomes
  - Timetable to describe when activities are expected to be complete
- Budget
  - Identified resource(s) to be funded with corresponding budget amounts
  - Total project budget
  - In-kind, or match funding should be noted

## Proposal Review Process

*Proposals must be submitted via email to Tacie Schwartz at [tacie.schwartz@blueearthcountymn.gov](mailto:tacie.schwartz@blueearthcountymn.gov)*

All proposals that meet the deadline will be reviewed for completeness and compliance with eligibility and submission requirements. Complete proposals that meet the requirements will be reviewed and scored relative to the application review criteria outlined below.

The review team will include internal Blue Earth County Human Services staff, including select management personnel and program staff. Additionally, the review team will include at least one community representative from the Human Services Advisory Committee. In order to ensure that conflicts of interest do not interfere with the proposal review process, the review teams for each grant will be comprised of members who do not have relationships with any applicant organization/entity.

The review team reserves the right to request additional information or documentation to support and validate information submitted in proposals. The team will make their recommendations to the BEC Director of Human Services who will provide a final review. Upon approval, the grant award will be made in accordance with the Blue Earth County Procurement Policy and the Director will either approve the grant at the departmental level or request approval through the Blue Earth County Board of Commissioners, depending on the award amount and other relevant factors according to policy. Decisions on grant awards will be final; there will be no appeal process.

Grant award decisions will be made on a rolling basis every two weeks as noted above. Applicants will be notified by e-mail whether their applications were funded. Blue Earth County reserves the right to negotiate changes to the proposed budgets and/or activities.

# Rating Scale

Proposals will be scored based on the following criteria:

## *Prior Experience (5 points)*

- The applicant has shown evidence of successful prior experience working on issues related to selected strategies.

## *Readiness (40 points)*

- The applicant has completed an action plan that is reasonable and realistic.
- The applicant has designated appropriate activities that flow logically from one step to the next.
- The applicant has specified an amount of work that can be done in the designated time frame and with the designated resources.
- The action plan includes milestones designed to assess progress towards completion of grant activities.
- The applicant has included enough detail in the action plan to illustrate the grantee is likely to successfully complete grant activities.

## *Priority Populations and Health Equity (20 points)*

- The applicant has identified priority populations within its service area and described the needs of these populations as it relates to the intention of the specific grant.
- The applicant has identified the scope of the priority population and has provided a realistic estimated number of people impacted by the action plan.
- The applicant has considered and addressed the interest and input of priority populations in intervention planning.
- The applicant has planned to implement change in such a way that it addresses the needs of the priority populations.

## *Staff Capacity (10 points)*

- The applicant has existing staff capacity to implement the action plan as written or is planning to recruit staff or dedicated volunteers with expertise in the areas necessary to meet the desired outcome.
- The applicant has existing staff or is planning to recruit and hire staff that has expertise in the areas necessary to meet the desired outcome.

## *Budget (10 points)*

- The requested level of funding is appropriate for the proposed activities.
- The budget includes a clear and reasonable description of the proposed allocation of funds.
- The proposed expenditures are clearly related to the proposed activities.

*Geographic and/or Site Distribution (5 points)*

- The applicant has identified a specific service area(s) within Blue Earth County.
- The grant activities, interventions, and/or impact are distributed geographically within the County.

*Community Partnerships (10 points)*

- The applicant has identified existing partnerships and/or new partnerships within the community(ies) that support this request.