

William Penn Foundation

Request for Proposals

**Prevent
Homelessness for
Families with Young
Children**

Published December 9, 2024

Due January 31, 2025

William Penn Foundation
Two Logan Square, Suite 1100
100 North 18th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
williampennfoundation.org



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

Many Philadelphians face housing instability—defined as poor-quality housing, overcrowded housing, and homelessness. During a recent community engagement process undertaken by the Foundation, local stakeholders and practitioners identified housing insecurity as the greatest challenge facing families in Philadelphia. Providers and families recommended promoting housing stability through supports including coordinated funds for urgent needs (e.g., home repairs/housing preservation, rental and utilities assistance) and legal services to assist with housing related matters such as eviction prevention, unsafe housing conditions, and discriminatory practices. Additionally, they recommended offering centralized navigation services for families to access such supports conveniently. This RFP seeks to address these challenges by funding projects that will ensure that families with young children do not become homeless.

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 navigate programs and benefits to keep them in their existing homes. 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 6 and 7 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. Third, we heard from applicants and grantees in the past that our grant application process was overly burdensome, had unpredictable timelines, and did not provide sufficient information about the funding availability or the criteria used in selecting grantees. Fourth, we heard that applicants wanted an opportunity to show Foundation staff their work, not just tell them about it. The RFP process, including site visits as described below, is part of our effort to address this important feedback and to align with the Foundation’s grantmaking values (as detailed on our website).

Background

Research from Children’s HealthWatch found that unstable housing among families with children will cost the U.S. \$111 billion in avoidable health and education expenditures over the next ten years.¹

There is a clear connection between housing stability and well-being. As summarized by Children’s HealthWatch, “children living in stable homes have better physical and mental health outcomes, better educational achievement, decreased risk of hospitalization, and are less likely to experience other economic hardships. On the other hand, housing instability (i.e. being behind on rent, multiple moves, past or present experience of homelessness) harms the health of children and families and is associated with increased risk of other hardships, including food and energy insecurity.”

Philadelphia faces significant challenges related to affordable housing, a lack of sufficient supply, and housing instability. The city's housing market has seen rising demand, but wages have not kept pace with housing costs, leading to affordability issues for many residents. Helping families stay in their homes requires a multifaceted approach that addresses immediate needs and long-term sustainability.

During the 2022 school year, 8,383 children and youth in Philadelphia experienced homelessness, and of those, 2,782 were children under age six.²



¹ [Children's HealthWatch. *Stable Homes Make Healthy Families.*](#)

² [HopePHL, \(2023\). *Children Cannot Wait.*](#)

Opportunity Overview

WPF 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 provide holistic supports that promote long-term stability.

Please note, under this RFP, the Foundation will only consider proposals to support interventions focused on **preventing** homelessness. Programs focused on services to people 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 welcome to demonstrate how they collaborate with programs that support these activities.

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.

Furthermore, 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 **\$7.5 million available** to advance this objective at this time. 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 \$1 million 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.

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 activities and goals are unrelated to the defined objective.	Project activities and goals may advance the defined objective, but connection is vague.	Project will make a clear but indirect contribution to advancing the defined objective.	Project will make a clear and direct contribution to advancing the defined objective.
Program Design			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
The approach to the work is vague or unclear.	Outlines an approach to the work that describes one of the following: the organizational capacity to carry out the proposed program, a feasible plan to implement the work, or a detailed plan to track the outcomes and impact on the relevant objective.	Outlines a clear approach to the work that describes two of the following: the organizational capacity to carry out the proposed program, a feasible plan to implement the work, or a detailed plan to track project outcomes and impact on the relevant objective.	Outlines a clear approach to the work that describes the organizational capacity to carry out the proposed program, a feasible plan to implement the work, and a plan to track project outcomes and impact on the relevant objective.
Partnerships and Collaboration			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
No identified partners or plans for collaboration.	Partners are identified but there are no clear commitments.	Some existing partnerships, a clear plan to build new partnerships, and a description of each partner's role to maximize impact.	Sufficient existing partnerships or commitments from partner organizations and a description of each partner's role to maximize impact.
Organizational Experience			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
No implementation experience and no track record of success.	Limited implementation experience (less than two years) with advancing the specified objective and a minimal track record of success.	Some implementation experience (2-5 years) with advancing the specified objective and a track record of success in Philadelphia or other relevant cities or regions.	Extensive implementation experience (5+ years) with advancing the specified objective and a track record of success in Philadelphia and/or Pennsylvania.
Community Engagement			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
No evidence of familiarity with the intended beneficiaries of the proposed effort and no plan for future engagement.	Minimal evidence of the applicants' familiarity with intended beneficiaries of the proposed effort, but there is a commitment to develop a stakeholder engagement plan during implementation.	Evidence of the applicants' familiarity with the intended beneficiaries of the proposed effort 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 effort and there is a plan for ongoing engagement during implementation.

Additional expectations:

Coordination	Proposal clearly describes planned outreach efforts that minimize duplication of current efforts by other individuals and organizations.
Focus Population	Proposal should focus on providing supports for traditionally marginalized communities including low-income, people of color, and non-English language speakers.
Service Quality	Interventions should employ a model that has been shown to be effective and culturally and linguistically relevant for the population being served.
Accessibility	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.
Budget	The requested budget is reasonable for the proposed activities, number of families being served, and the stated results.

Learning and Evaluation

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 as a result of 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 **Monday, December 16, 2024 at 11:00AM ET.**

Register for the webinar at <https://lu.ma/williampenfoundation>

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, 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 address found at the end of this document to discuss further.

Application Process

Before you apply, please review your responses to the four 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.

Does your program:

	YES	NO
Provide services to families experiencing housing instability in Philadelphia?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Primarily serve pregnant and/or parenting families of children ages 0 to 8?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Come at no cost to families?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have a successful track record of stabilizing housing for families?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please also review all of the criteria on pages 6 and 7 and make sure that your program aligns with those.

If you answered “yes” to all of the questions above and meet the stated criteria, the application process begins by completing a proposal on our online submission system at <https://wpcf.my.site.com/grantee>. Submit your application by 5:00PM ET on **January 31, 2025**. 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 preventhomelessness@williampennfoundation.org

Timeline

December 9, 2024

Proposal submission period opens.

December 16, 2024

Informational Webinar (see page 7)

January 31, 2025

Proposals due by 5:00PM ET

February 12-14, 2025

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 17-

March 7, 2025

Site visits conducted by WPF staff with selected applicants.

April 25, 2025

WPF Board review selected proposals.

May 2025

Project implementation can begin.