**Sonoma County Homeless Coalition**

**Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Local Homelessness Services Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)**

This NOFA is a consolidated NOFA that includes funds from:

State Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Funding Program

Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Round 4

Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Round 5

California State Homeless Housing Incentive Program (HHIP) Year 2

Local Sonoma County Discretionary and Other Funds

**Summary**

The Sonoma County Department of Health Services (DHS), on behalf of the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition, invites new and renewal proposals from eligible applicants for local homeless services projects in the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), also known as the “Local Homelessness Services NOFA”.

**Schedule**

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| --- | --- |
| NOFA Issued | December 11, 2023 |
| Bidder’s Conference | December 18, 2023  10 am-12 pm  Topic: NOFA TA Session  Time: Dec 18, 2023, 10:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)  Join Zoom Meeting  <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83899644524?pwd=NDhNZlVIclRBdXBwcHRnbFpaS2NWdz09>  Meeting ID: 838 9964 4524  Passcode: 850069  One tap mobile  +16694449171,,83899644524#,,,,\*850069# US  +16699009128,,83899644524#,,,,\*850069# US (San Jose) |
| Deadline for Written Answers and Questions | January 2, 2024 |
| Answers and Clarifications Posted | January 8, 2024 |
| Deadline to Submit Proposals | January 22, 2024 |
| Funding and Evaluation Committee Review of Projects \* | February 2024 |
| Final Coalition Board Approval \* | March 2024 |
| Board of Supervisors Approval and Authorization to Execute Contracts \* | May 2024 |
| Project Start Date | July 1, 2024 |

\*Dates shown later than the submittal deadline are estimates and are subject to change – please check the Coalition’s website for updates and changes: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/health-and-human-services/health-services/divisions/homelessness-services/continuum-of-care/annual-homeless-services-consolidated-nofa>

**Attachments**

Attachment 1 – Application Template and Budget Workbook

Attachment 2 – Scoring Tools

Attachment 3 – Project and Agency Questionnaire

Attachment 4 – Shelter Inventory

Attachment 5 – Budget Workbook

1. **Introduction**

The Sonoma County Department of Health Services (DHS) serves as the Lead Agency for the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition (formerly the Continuum of Care or “CoC”). The Coalition Board oversees the policies and funding priorities for this Local Homelessness Services NOFA, in alignment with the Coalition’s [2023-2027 Strategic Plan on Homelessness](https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Main%20County%20Site/Health%20and%20Human%20Services/Health%20Services/Documents/Homelessness%20Services/Continuum%20of%20Care/Strategic%20Plan/SonomaCountyStrategicPlan_CoCAdopted-12142022.pdf). Funds in this NOFA include annual and one-time funds from State and Local sources. Full funding amounts are not known as of the date of this NOFA’s release but will be released at a later date as an addendum.

**Our Goals with this NOFA.** This NOFA is intended to achieve the following goals:

1. Advancing the goals and action steps of the 2023-2027 Homelessness Strategic Plan.
2. Improving the transparency of funding sources, the decision-making process, and resultant funding awards
3. Fully incorporating scoring and performance metrics that are consistent with the Coalition’s, HUD’s, and California ICH/HCD performance goals.
4. Embracing strategies and programs that improve housing outcomes for communities overrepresented in homelessness.
5. Embracing strategies and programs that involve persons with lived experience in homelessness in all aspects of program design and delivery.
6. Awarding and contracting for funds in a timely manner such that service providers can rely upon awarded funds soon after the new Fiscal Year begins. *Please note that the CoC Board may elect to award multi-year contracts contingent on funding availability.*
7. Strive to include a 10% administrative rate for non-profits (or as close to 10% as possible).

**Eligible Applicants**. Eligible applicants include 501(C)(3) nonprofit organizations, cities within Sonoma County, Indian Tribes and Tribally Designated Housing Entities (TDHE), and the County of Sonoma itself.

**New and Renewing Projects**. Applications will be accepted for existing projects (known as “renewal” projects from Fiscal Year 2023-2024) as well as for **new** projects that are either new to this funding stream or new in program design and concept. Applicants submitting new projects to this NOFA should note whether the submitted project is **entirely new** or **new to this funding** stream. If the project is new to the funding stream but has been in operation, please:

* Note what date the project began operating.
* Indicate the applicant’s experience operating the same or a similar program elsewhere and for how long.
* Describe the funding history of the project.
* Describe other funding supporting the project including grants, other Sonoma County funding streams, organizational fundraising efforts and similar sources.
* Describe the organization or program’s previous experience and efforts to improve program design.

**Evidence-Based versus Promising New Projects.** Applicants to the Local Homelessness Services NOFA are encouraged to explore creative approaches when submitting renewal or new projects for review. Per the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, no less than 80% of the total funding will go to projects utilizing proven/evidence-based practices: “The homeless system of care should strive for a funding ration of up to 80% of existing, evidence-based, or proven programs and 20% to innovative or “promising practice” program concepts with evaluation plans.”

This ratio can include renewal projects or new projects in the FY 24-25 process. For more information, applicants can review nationally recognized practices at the Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness as well as local practices with Upstream Investments:

<http://www.evidenceonhomelessness.com/evidence-base/>

<https://upstreaminvestments.org/>

Applicants should detail their responses for projects in *Attachment 3 – Agency and Project Questionnaire*. Responses will include the level of evidence that fits the proposed service, links to documentation reflecting the stated level of evidence, and detail how the implementation of the service will reflect the practices cited in a proposal.

1. **Funding Priorities**

The Coalition’s 2023-2027 Homelessness Strategic Plan is the primary guidance document for this NOFA’s funding. Therefore, this NOFA prioritizes:

1. Interventions that target chronic homelessness.
2. Permanent Supportive Housing (either for supportive services, capital construction, operations, or some combination of these).
3. Improving supportive services for existing projects, including ways to recruit and retain qualified staff and/or lower program case management ratios (to a level of 20:1 for permanent supportive housing interventions and 30:1 for rapid rehousing interventions.
4. Geographic gap-filling projects, such as street outreach and interim housing/emergency shelter. Attachment 4 lists the inventory of emergency shelter beds in Sonoma County by region, including shelters/interim housing that are county-wide and those that limit access to specific regions.
5. Subregional Street Outreach models that also incorporate best practices in housing-focused street outreach.
6. Programs and projects that address racial disproportionality in Sonoma County’s homelessness population and that attempt to achieve equitable provision of services and outcomes for Black, Native and Indigenous residents.
7. Evidence-based programs that are housing-focused and that include clear pathways to permanent housing.

Additionally, core values in all projects should include:

* Compliance with the funding requirements of **Housing First** in California (Health and Safety Code Section 50234[f]), which includes delivery of programs and services in a low barrier, trauma informed, and culturally responsive manner.
* The inclusion of persons with lived experience in project design and delivery.
* The inclusion of equity based and culturally responsive principles in project design and delivery.
* An ability to begin services and hiring of staff on or near July 1, 2024, for both new and renewing projects.

To that end, the Coalition Board invites the following proposals for its 2024-2025 NOFA:

1. New and existing permanent supportive housing projects. Permanent supportive housing projects may include supportive services, capital costs, operating subsidies, operations, and funds for master leasing.
2. Permanent supportive housing projects that utilize Housing Choice Vouchers/Project Based Vouchers (if available)
3. Existing interim and emergency shelter projects with an emphasis on non-congregate shelters (including capital projects that modify structures to increase client privacy in congregate settings). Per the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal-ICH) funding guidelines, new interim/emergency projects cannot be funded until the jurisdiction has proved it has dedicated sufficient resources to permanent housing. However, areas in geographic need of shelter may be funded with HHIP or Local funding. These include areas that have a demonstrated lack of adequate shelter/interim housing as outlined in Attachment 4.
4. Renewing street outreach programs and funding for new street outreach programs aligned with Sonoma County’s model for subregional street outreach. With the exception of street outreach for transition age youth, the Coalition will strive to avoid geographic overlap for outreach with the goal of funding one provider per sub-region. If appropriate, proposals should reflect integration with existing or planned city-funded street outreach contracts. Proposals may include the option to fund contracts managed by the cities, and cities may modify their contracts to ensure coverage in unincorporated areas in the sub-regions.
5. Renewing Coordinated Entry projects
6. The determination of how or if and to what extent a proposal fills a gap in a service or program area will be made by Coalition staff, the Coalition’s Funding and Evaluation Committee, and the Coalition Board.
7. Rapid rehousing projects with demonstrated success and/or targeting specific populations (such as transitional-aged youth, veterans, families, victims of domestic violence, and justice-involved individuals).
8. Homelessness prevention programs may be limited to renewing projects. The County, Coalition and area partners are considering a coordinated pilot project to serve the entire Sonoma County region for homelessness prevention programs.
9. Innovative/promising projects such as Safe Parking, Shared Housing, Host Homes, or other project types that are 100% homeless-dedicated and are housing-focused, meaning that an essential component of case management is creating strong pathways to permanent housing.

Note: Up to $2.2 million of available funding associated with this NOFA may be separately assigned to support existing operations at the region’s Project Homekey interim housing sites, per the actions of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Board in Fall 2021 to dedicate a portion of State HHAP and Measure O funds to support operations at local Project Homekey interim housing sites.

All projects are required to utilize a Housing First approach and enter data into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or a comparable database for victim service providers. Additionally, all rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing projects must ensure that all placements are facilitated through the Coordinated Entry System.

Geographic Considerations

In this FY 24-25 NOFA, the Coalition Board seeks to ensure that all regions of Sonoma County are covered by quality and housing-focused street outreach and sufficient emergency shelter or interim housing to provide shelter and services close to clients’ desired location.

While permanent supportive housing (PSH) and rapid rehousing (RRH) projects will (and must) take all referrals through Coordinated Entry, thus serving all areas of the county, this NOFA may be used to inform the Coalition Board and Lead Agency staff as to the presence or absence of adequate PSH and RRH programs across all regions of Sonoma County to respect the geographic and community affinities of the clients we serve.

**3. Application Submission**

Applicants must submit funding proposals to the Sonoma County Department of Health Services by 5:00 p.m. on January 22, 2024. All applicants must submit the following to have an application package that is deemed complete:

* A completed project application.
* A signed cover sheet (by the agency or entity Chief Executive Officer or their equivalent).
* A completed project budget worksheet that includes all sources of funding that the project or program has received or for which it has applied.
* The applicant agency’s most recent financial audit, or financial reports from the most recent two fiscal years if an agency has not had a full audit.
* A completed Agency and Project Questionnaire.

Applications may be submitted electronically to Chuck Mottern, Homeless Funding Coordinator, at [Chuck.Mottern@sonoma-county.org](mailto:Chuck.Mottern@sonoma-county.org) Applications may also be delivered in person to Sonoma County Department of Health Services, 1450 Neotomas Avenue, Suite 115, Santa Rosa, CA, Attn: Michael Gause, Ending Homelessness Manager.

**4. Selection Process**

The Coalition’s Funding and Evaluation (F/E) Committee will review all project applications and make funding recommendations to the Coalition Board. The F/E Committee includes representatives of the County of Sonoma, cities, philanthropy, funders, service providers, and individuals with lived experience of homelessness. Committee members who may have conflict of interest as to an application or applications may not vote on the application(s) in question. The Committee is staffed by the Homelessness Services Division at Sonoma County DHS.

The review process will be as follows:

1. Applications received will be analyzed for eligibility by Lead Agency staff;
2. Staff will prepare brief staff reports for the F/E Committee. The staff reports will include specific funding recommendations for each application. These staff reports will be available at least one week before the Committee’s first public meeting at which applications will be reviewed. Annual Performance Reports (APRs) will be released at least two weeks prior.
3. Site visits by Committee members are discouraged, at the direction of the Coalition Board. Among other things, this ensures that Committee members all receive the same information, and that client confidentiality is protected.
4. The F/E Committee will hold one or more noticed public meeting(s) to discuss, ask questions about, and ultimately vote upon the applications and funding recommendations. The F/E Committee will vote upon one or more recommendations for funding to the full Coalition Board including:

* A list of recommended projects for funding
* Level of funding recommended
* Projects not recommended for funding

**Your Role as an Applicant**. Applicants are encouraged to review staff reports, contact DHS staff with questions and concerns, and to attend F/E Committee meeting(s) to support their proposal or answer questions. The F/E Committee funding recommendations will be made public at least three days prior to the first public meeting of the Coalition Board at which the Board will consider the applications. Applicants are encouraged to review the recommendations and to attend the Board meeting to comment on their proposal(s) or to answer questions.

Please note: Individuals who directly represent an agency with an application before the Coalition Board and who are also members of the Coalition Board may not participate in any part of the discussion or vote on any item that would approve or fund their agency’s application. “Directly represent” includes being employed by the applicant agency, having a family member who is employed by the applicant agency, or serving on the governing board of the applicant agency.

Final project contracts for FY24-25 will be presented to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors in a public meeting on or before July 1, 2024. This is a procedural step that allows the Board of Supervisors to authorize the execution of the contracts and the expenditures within a formal adopted budget.

**5. Scoring**

Projects will be scored on alignment with performance metrics, including HUD System Performance Measures and California Interagency Council on Homelessness System Performance Measures, as well as priorities within the Coalition’s Strategic Plan on Homelessness. Scoring tools will be utilized by project type (permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, emergency shelter/interim housing, and street outreach). *Project performance will be compared within each project type and scored by project type, meaning a permanent supportive housing project will not be compared against an emergency shelter or street outreach project*.

All projects will be scored on a 100-point scale (70 points for project performance and 30 points for agency capacity). As outlined in Attachments 4 and 5, scoring includes:

1. Alignment with the Strategic Plan Goals and this NOFA
2. Housing Performance – retention of and placement into permanent housing and returns to homelessness.
3. Income Performance – increasing clients’ earned and other income.
4. Project specific metrics by project type (for example: shelter bed utilization and enrollment into Coordinated Entry)
5. Housing First practices delivered in a low barrier, trauma informed, and culturally responsive manner
6. Concepts that demonstrate a commitment to addressing racial disproportionality in Sonoma County’s homelessness population and that attempt to achieve equitable provision of services and outcomes for Black, Native and Indigenous residents.
7. The involvement of persons with Lived Experience. The relative fiscal health of the applicant.
8. If a returning applicant:
   1. The applicant’s ability to spend-down funds in a fund-compliant, orderly and timely manner.
   2. The applicant’s past quality of HMIS data input and management

See Attachment 3, Scoring Tools, for full details.

Other Project Requirements:

* Project requests of less than $30,000 annually will not be considered.
* Projects must note all other funding sources, including funds from private sources as well as sources from outside the FY 24-25 NOFA in the Project Budget form.

**6. Funding Conditions and Regulations**

A. Timeliness

Funds for homeless services activities in this NOFA must be expended within 12 months of the fiscal year for which funding is allocated, unless specified for a longer period. Funding that is unexpended after the agreement term will likely be reprogrammed, unless an extension is granted. Extensions may be granted at the discretion of the Division Director of the Lead Agency or their designee.

B. Compliance with the Equal Access Rule (Gender Identity Rule)

Per HUD final rule entitled “Equal Access to Housing in HUD Programs Regardless of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity” (2012 Equal Access Rule) and the 2016 Equal Access Final Rule (2016 Equal Access in Accordance with Gender Identity Final Rule) housing programs funded through the Lead Agency are open to all eligible individuals and families regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. This includes transgender and gender non-conforming individuals who must be accommodated in temporary, emergency shelters, and other buildings and facilities used for shelter, that are permitted to have shared sleeping quarters or shared bathing facilities.

C. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

All funded applicants must input data into the County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and must provide match funding from non-McKinney-Vento, non-HEARTH Act funding sources to the agency managing the HMIS. Data must include where clients have exited homelessness, so that our HMIS and Coordinated Entry systems are up to date to the maximum extent practicable.

Funded homeless-dedicated programs must meet both HUD Continuum of Care and locally developed data standards for timeliness and completion.

Domestic violence sexual assault service agencies are a key exception to this requirement, being prohibited from entering client data into the HMIS by the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

These agencies must enter client data into a separate but comparable database that can provide aggregate reporting on all HMIS data elements.

F. Regulatory Environment:

Project models including eligible activities, record keeping, and eligible spending are defined per Emergency Solution Grant regulations stated in 24 CFR 576.100 – 576.501.

Projects also must follow the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Program Standards, which are specific to project type. Standards can be located on our website here: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/health-and-human-services/health-services/divisions/homelessness-services/continuum-of-care/coc-governance-and-compliance>

**7. Funding Sources**

Funding sources for this NOFA may include, but not be limited to:

**A. State Emergency Solutions Grants (State-ESG)**

The State ESG program is administered by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) with an allocation for the Continuum of Care. Eligible uses include a minimum of 40% to be utilized on rapid rehousing with emergency shelter street outreach and homelessness prevention also eligible uses. The estimated allocation of State ESG in this NOFA is $161,000.

**B. State Homelessness Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP) Rounds 4 and 5**

HHAP is administered by the California State Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) and funds a large portion of existing programs in the system of care. Eligible uses include permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, emergency shelter/winter shelter and non-congregate shelter, street outreach, homelessness prevention, diversion, services coordination, and improvements to existing shelter projects to enhance privacy. 10% of HHAP funds must be utilized on services for transition age youth (TAY) ages 18-24.

Please note: HHAP’s Round 5 funds require the development, submittal, and approval of a Regionally Coordinated Homelessness Action Plan between the County of Sonoma, interested cities (if any) and the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition. Interested cities may also sign on to the Action Plan.

Funding totals from residual HHAP-4 and the full amount of HHAP-5 will be shared when known.

**C. State Homelessness Housing Incentive Program (HHIP)**

The State HHIP Program is administered by Partnership Health Care (PHC) of California with funds from the State Department of Health Care Services. HHIP funds are directed towards persons eligible for and/or enrolled in Medi-Cal and are based on an incentive metric with funds being allocated to the County of Sonoma after performance benchmarks are met. As of the writing of this NOFA, approximately $2 million is expected to be available.

Eligible uses for HHIP include street outreach, services coordination and direct services (for permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, shelter, etc.), building lease or purchase, prevention and shelter diversion, interim sheltering, Coordinated Entry operations, and shelter improvements. Enhancing and deepening current projects for sustainability and which serve persons eligible for or enrolled in Medi-Cal is a priority for HHIP funding.

**D. Local County Funds**

Local County discretionary funds are allocated to the Coalition’s Lead Agency to support projects in the system of care. Eligible uses may include street outreach, permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, interim shelter (including winter shelter and non-congregate shelter), warming and cooling centers, homelessness prevention, services coordination, administrative funds for projects and other projects not eligible under State/Federal funding streams. The amount of local funds is unknown at this time.

**E. Measure O**

As of the date of this NOFA, no determination has been made as to whether the Department of Health Services or the Board of Supervisors will assign to this NOFA additional funds within various balances from Measure O, the local sales tax initiative for housing and homelessness. Should the Department and Board decide to allocate Measure O fund balance to this NOFA, Lead Agency staff will inform the applicants of this action.

**Questions? Contact Chuck Mottern at** [**Chuck.Mottern@sonoma-county.org**](mailto:Chuck.Mottern@sonoma-county.org) **or Michael Gause at** [**Michael.Gause@sonoma-county.org**](mailto:Michael.Gause@sonoma-county.org)