Virginia Eviction Reduction Program (VERP)

Program Guidelines and Application Instructions

Grant Cycle: 2027-2028

How to Apply Webinar

(Attendance strongly encouraged)

Dates: ______________________

Grant Application Deadline: ________________

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Legislative Authority

The Virginia Eviction Reduction Program (VERP) is a permanent competitive grant program administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The 2026 General Assembly established VERP as a permanent program through Chapter 164 of the 2026 Acts of Assembly (HB527), directing DHCD to expand its work to (i) promote housing stability, (ii) identify factors that contribute to eviction filings, and (iii) provide interventions to prevent or divert evictions. The biennial budget adopted for FY2027-2028 directs DHCD to expand the program to underserved regions, including Northern Virginia. For purposes of this program, a regional program serves two or more localities.

Program Design

VERP addresses systemic barriers within the eviction process while implementing proven, data-driven strategies. Prevention efforts are designed to keep evictions from being filed, while diversion efforts work to resolve or limit their harm once they reach court. When evictions do occur, VERP's optional post-eviction support includes rehousing assistance and service coordination.

Recent Policy Developments

The 2026 legislative session produced two statutory changes that shape the operating environment for VERP grantees. The Pay or Quit notice period was extended from 5 to 14 days, a change that expands the window for tenants to stabilize and for interventions, including rental assistance, legal support, and landlord engagement, to occur before eviction proceedings begin.

The 2026 session also amended the Unlawful Detainer summons statute to permit courts, with the approval of the chief judge, to attach additional information to the summons prepared by the Commonwealth, the locality, or a nonprofit organization serving the jurisdiction, including legal resources for both landlords and tenants, a plain-language overview of the court process, and Eviction Diversion Program eligibility. This creates a direct channel for eviction prevention and diversion information to reach households at the outset of the court process.

VERP is designed to reduce eviction rates through a three-pronged approach:

1. Strengthen local systems to reduce evictions

- Engage system stakeholders, including landlords, Sheriff's offices, and local courts, to address the local policies, practices, and flow of resources that contribute to Virginia's high eviction rates.

2. Prevent evictions before court

- Use data to identify tenants who are at high risk of eviction.
- Educate tenants and landlords about their rights and responsibilities and refer tenants to free or low-cost legal assistance and the Eviction Diversion Program (EDP) when appropriate.
- Provide short-term financial assistance on behalf of tenants at risk of eviction to help them pay rent and other bills to stabilize housing.
- Facilitate direct communication between landlords and tenants to resolve disputes before a case is filed.
- Connect tenants with mainstream services to help them balance their budget and stabilize their housing.
- Implement data-driven, proactive outreach to landlords and tenants in high-evicting communities to inform them about available eviction prevention services and diversion options.

3. Divert cases during the court process

- Implement best practice diversion services, which include consistent, in-person court navigation services designed to give landlords and tenants time, information, and resources to resolve housing disputes in a less harmful way.
- Partner with free or low-cost legal service organizations equipped to offer legal advice to self-represented litigants in eviction court.
- Provide financial assistance to tenants throughout every stage of the eviction process.
- Make plain language informational resources available to inform tenants about the eviction process and their rights during court proceedings.
- Connect tenants to courts, landlords, and social service agencies already engaged in supporting housing stability, so tenants have access to a broader network of resources.

Funding

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will distribute up to $17.5 million in state grant funds across the 2027-2028 grant cycle. These funds are intended to support local organizations focused on eviction prevention, diversion, and stabilization services for households at risk of eviction. Grantees must apply through a competitive grant process.

VERP funding must be coordinated with other available funding sources. Where a household is eligible for another funding source, and that funding can be delivered in time to prevent the eviction, that source should be used instead of VERP. This is most relevant for the portion of VERP's caseload at or below 30% of Area Median Income (AMI), since the Virginia Homeless Solutions Program (VHSP) funds homelessness prevention assistance, including rental arrears, for households within that same income threshold. Where a household is eligible for VHSP funds, but local funding has been exhausted, or the assistance cannot be delivered quickly enough to outpace the court process, VERP funds may be used. VERP funding is intended to supplement, not replace, existing mainstream resources, and should be deployed strategically to fill gaps in eviction prevention and diversion, rather than serving as a general-purpose housing assistance fund.

Award Amounts

Applicants must justify requested award amounts based on the proposed service area and program design. The project budget will be evaluated for cost reasonableness and consistency with the proposed scope of services as part of the competitive review process. Final award amounts will reflect demonstrated need, the proposed program, and available funding, and DHCD may negotiate award amounts with successful applicants before contract execution. First-year award amounts are supported by confirmed funding. Second-year award amounts will be stated in grant agreements as contingent on appropriation, consistent with standard practice for state-funded grants.

Award Decisions

DHCD will fund no more than one grantee to serve any locality or region. Where multiple eligible applications propose overlapping service areas, DHCD will fund the highest-scoring application for that area and will not make duplicate awards for the same localities. Applicants proposing the same service areas are not penalized in scoring; the one-grantee limitation applies only at the award decision stage.

If DHCD does not receive a fundable application for a high-priority or high-need locality or region, DHCD may reserve a portion of available funds to support capacity-building in that area rather than awarding those funds elsewhere. Capacity-building support would be designed to develop the local organizational capacity needed to deliver eviction prevention and diversion services.

Grant Continuation/Second Year of Funding (CY 2028)

Grantees must have received VERP funding during the first grant year to be eligible for continued funding in the second year. Eligibility for second-year funding will be based on the grantee's compliance with contractual requirements and demonstrated performance during the first grant year. Second-year funding is also contingent on appropriation, as described in the *Award Amounts* section, page 6.

Administrative Costs

Grantees are required to expend 100% of each annual contracted grant award by the end of the applicable contract period. Although the grant cycle spans two years, contracts are administered annually, and all funds awarded under each annual contract must be expended within that contract year. Administrative costs may be included in reimbursement requests only if the expenses have been incurred and are supported by appropriate documentation, such as invoices, receipts, or payroll records. All reimbursement requests must clearly document the expenses being claimed. Administrative costs may include accounting for the use of grant funds, preparing reports for submission to DHCD, obtaining program audits, data collection and reporting, associated staff salaries, and other costs related to administering the grant after the award. Administrative costs may not exceed 10% of the total grant award. If a grantee expends less than its full contracted award, administrative costs will be capped at 10% of the funds actually expended, not the original award amount. Any administrative funds drawn in excess of this recalculated cap must be returned to DHCD.

Grantee Eligibility

Eligible applicants must be a nonprofit, unit of local government, or planning district commission (PDC) with demonstrated experience and a record of successful administration of programs providing direct services to households at risk of eviction, including the delivery of financial assistance and eviction prevention or diversion interventions. Landlords, including Public Housing Authorities, are ineligible to apply. DHCD strongly encourages at least one representative from each applicant organization to attend a How to Apply webinar before submitting an application. Attendance is not a condition of eligibility.

Required VERP Activities

VERP grantees must design programs that ensure broad access and minimize barriers for eligible households. The required service components below are central to VERP's strategy to prevent or divert evictions whenever possible, and, when eviction cannot be avoided, to reduce its duration and mitigate its impact on affected households. All VERP grantees must:

- Provide both eviction prevention and eviction diversion services;
- Develop, maintain, and actively engage in systems change partnerships; and
- Refer tenants to mainstream and wraparound services to address barriers to housing stability

The required service categories are defined as follows:

- Prevention services: Services delivered prior to the filing of an Unlawful Detainer, before court involvement.
- Diversion services: Services delivered after an Unlawful Detainer has been filed and the case has entered the court system. Diversion services include pre-hearing support and on-site court navigation, each described in its own section below.
- Systems change partnerships: Strategic relationships and coordinated activities intended to address the structural conditions contributing to Virginia's high eviction rates.

Grantees must deliver prevention and diversion services directly. Within diversion, court navigation may be delivered by a subgrantee under a formal agreement meeting the requirements of the *Partnership and Subgrantee Agreements* section, page 21. Responsibility for meeting all program requirements remains with the grantee regardless of any subgrantee arrangement.

All grantees are responsible for developing, managing, and sustaining their own systems change partnerships.

Eviction runs on deadlines, and financial assistance must move faster than the speed of court. That remains true through the final stage of the process, when payment in full under the right of redemption can stop an eviction even after judgment. Grantees must maintain internal financial operations, including approval and disbursement processes, capable of delivering assistance within these timeframes at every stage of the eviction process.

The required activities for all VERP grantees are outlined below and are categorized as prevention, diversion, or systems change activities:

Flexible Financial Assistance

(Required as both a prevention and diversion activity.)

Financial assistance must be offered in both the prevention and diversion stages of the eviction process and may include support for the following eligible expenses:

- Rent arrears
- Current month's rent
- Prospective rent

Financial assistance is limited to a maximum of six months per household, per year. Exceptions may be made for households residing in subsidized or income-based housing, where rent is calculated as a percentage of income. In these cases, grantees may provide assistance beyond six months with documented justification, particularly when the total arrears amount is modest despite spanning a longer period.

VERP does not set a fixed maximum dollar amount for financial assistance at the state level, because the cost of housing varies too widely across Virginia to be addressed by a single statewide cap. A cap adequate for a grantee serving a lower-cost region could be far too low to meaningfully assist a household facing the same eviction risk in a high-cost area like Northern Virginia. Instead, grantees are required to establish clear, written internal policies governing award amounts, including any expectations for tenant contribution toward the total amount owed. These policies must be calibrated to local rental costs, and the total assistance provided on the household's behalf, whether from VERP alone or VERP combined with tenant contribution or other resources, must be sufficient to prevent or divert the eviction. VERP funds alone are not required to cover the full arrears amount, but grantees must not approve VERP assistance where the total package assembled is insufficient to stop the eviction. Policies must align with available funding, partnership agreements, and program goals. DHCD will review these policies and may monitor implementation to ensure funds are administered appropriately and in accordance with program expectations.

Stabilization Services

(Required as both a prevention and diversion activity.)
Even with little to no wage growth, many low-income renters remain current on rent by making difficult tradeoffs in other areas of their household budgets. Stabilization support services are critical in helping households sustain housing stability by covering essential needs, such as transportation and childcare, which could disrupt employment and threaten a household's ability to maintain income and housing if left unmet. VERP grantees are required to make financial assistance available on behalf of eligible tenants for the following stabilization expenses, subject to the triage and prioritization requirements described in the *Client Eligibility* section, page 18:

- Utility payments not included as part of rent (up to six months)
- Medical expenses
- Transportation costs
- Childcare assistance (up to six months)
- Other expenses may be considered and approved on a case-by-case basis

Grantees have discretion to establish parameters for stabilization assistance, including dollar caps, expectations for tenant contribution toward total costs, and prioritization of expense categories. This flexibility reflects the fact that non-rent expenses, and the local resources available to cover them, look different from community to community. A grantee's parameters should reflect the specific needs of its region and available partnerships rather than a one-size-fits-all standard. These parameters must be defined in written internal policies and applied consistently.

Referrals to Mainstream Services

(Required as both a prevention and diversion activity.)
Referrals to mainstream services is a required activity for every VERP grantee. However, VERP assistance may not be conditioned on a tenant accepting or participating in a referral. Grantees should be equipped to identify and connect households with broader, ongoing needs to mainstream wrap-around services, without assuming every applicant requires that level of support.

For households that do have broader needs, the goal of referral activities is to ensure they are connected to wrap-around resources that supplement VERP assistance and support longer-term budget stability. Grantees are expected to actively identify and connect eligible applicants to services that can reduce ongoing financial strain and improve housing stability.

Grantees should develop referral relationships with their local Department of Social Services (DSS) office and other relevant providers based on the needs of the households they serve and the resources available in their region. DSS administers many of the most needed mainstream benefits and is often a natural starting point for referral relationships. Examples of commonly utilized programs include, but are not limited to:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Medicaid and other medical assistance programs
- Utility and energy assistance programs (e.g., LIHEAP, PIPP)
- Unemployment Insurance

- Childcare assistance

A referral is only meaningful if it includes a concrete step toward connecting the household to assistance. Effective approaches include helping a tenant complete an application, contacting a program on the tenant's behalf, or coordinating a direct handoff to another provider's staff. Providing a phone number or written material alone does not meet this standard. Grantees' referral practices, including how meaningful connections are facilitated in practice, are subject to review as part of programmatic monitoring and annual reporting.

Legal Information vs. Legal Advice

Court navigation staff are typically not licensed attorneys and must operate within the boundary of providing legal information, not legal advice. Adherence to this boundary protects grantees, staff, and tenants from unauthorized practice of law exposure. This scope of practice reflects national best practice codified by the National Center for State Courts and by multiple state court systems and is the subject of guidance materials developed by the Virginia Access to Justice Commission.

Grantees are required to ensure that all staff working with tenants on filed eviction cases are trained on this distinction prior to service delivery.

- Staff may explain court processes, terminology, and available resources.
- Staff may not advise tenants on legal strategy or interpret how the law applies to their specific case.

Grantees are encouraged to:

- Use the Virginia Access to Justice Commission's approved guidance materials (Appendix A).
- Incorporate training resources developed by the National Center for State Courts (Appendix B).
- Develop clear, consistent messaging that explains the navigator's role and its limits to both tenants and court personnel.

Pre-Hearing Support

(Required as a diversion activity.)

While court navigation is defined as in-courthouse activity, pre-hearing support is a required complement that engages tenants in the period between a filing and their scheduled hearing. Grantees are expected to identify households with an upcoming hearing, often through the same docket-based outreach described in the *Data-Driven,* *Proactive Outreach* section, page 15, and attempt to connect with them before their court date. Contact information is not always available for every tenant on a docket, and grantees will not be penalized for an inability to reach a household when no viable means of contact exists; the requirement is a good faith attempt to connect, not a guaranteed connection.

Where contact is made, pre-hearing support may include helping tenants understand what to expect procedurally, assisting with the logistics of document readiness, such as gathering documentation, explaining what a form is asking and recording the tenant's exact words, or ensuring materials are filed on time. Staff providing this support must stay within the bounds of legal information, as described in the *Legal Information vs. Legal Advice* section, page 11, above; explaining process and helping with logistics is appropriate, while advising a tenant on what to say, what defense to raise, or what to include in a filing is legal advice and outside the scope of this activity.

Pre-hearing support should be tracked and reported separately from court navigation, since court navigation is defined specifically as in-courthouse activity.

On-Site Court Navigation Services

(Required as a diversion activity.)
Ideally, evictions are prevented before an Unlawful Detainer is filed. When this does not occur, tenants must navigate the court process, often without legal representation. In Virginia, only a small fraction of tenants facing eviction have access to counsel, and courtrooms are frequently high-volume, fast-paced environments where limited time and resources constrain meaningful engagement. Court navigation services ensure that when a case does reach the courthouse, tenants experience a process that is informed, supported, and dignified rather than isolating and confusing. As discussed in the *Program Design* section, page 4, VERP regions have seen judgment rates fall faster than filing rates, a pattern that points to something changing inside the court process itself, and court navigation is a central part of that. These services benefit tenants, landlords, and court staff by:

- Increasing the likelihood that landlords receive payment for past-due rent
- Creating opportunities to resolve disputes without prolonged court involvement
- Allowing tenants time to access financial and legal resources
- Reducing court dockets and administrative burden
- Supporting more orderly transitions when displacement cannot be prevented

Court navigation services must be available in every VERP service area, delivered by the grantee directly or by a subgrantee under a formal agreement, and reflected in the program design. A courthouse presence for the purpose of court navigation requires the approval of the General District Court; grantees must secure this approval from each court where navigators will operate before service delivery begins, and the court presence plan described below must reflect the status of that approval for each court. Grantees must track and report data on court navigation activities throughout the grant cycle, and these efforts will be assessed as part of ongoing programmatic monitoring.

Expectations for Court Navigation

Active Court-Based Support

Grantees must maintain a consistent and visible presence in the courthouses they serve, whether court navigation is delivered by the grantee directly or by a subgrantee. Each grantee is required to develop and submit a court presence plan outlining how reliable coverage will be provided across the service area. Full coverage of every eviction docket is the goal, but DHCD recognizes it will not always be feasible. Where it is not, a predictable, recurring pattern, such as being present on the same day or days each week, meets the standard, so long as the pattern is consistent enough for courthouse staff, judges, and landlords to know when and where to find navigators. The plan does not need to mandate a fixed daily schedule, as regional context and court operations vary. Consistency is a critical driver of court navigation effectiveness: judges announcing available assistance, clerks directing tenants to navigators, and landlords expecting a familiar point of contact all depend on navigators being present and visible over time.

All court navigation staff must observe the legal information boundary described in the *Legal Information vs. Legal Advice* section, page 11.

VERP and the Eviction Diversion Program (EDP)

The Virginia Eviction Reduction Program (VERP) and the Eviction Diversion Program (EDP) are complementary initiatives that address eviction risk at different stages in the eviction process. These programs are not duplicative or competing; rather, they work together to improve outcomes for both tenants and landlords.

VERP, as described above, engages households at every stage of eviction risk. EDP is a court-based program, recently updated by 2026 legislation (HB 837), that allows eligible tenants to avoid eviction by entering into a court-ordered payment plan with their landlord after a case has been filed. To participate, a tenant must appear in court at the first docket call and request referral into the Program, pay at least 10% of the amount due at that hearing, and provide sworn testimony regarding income, ability to pay, and the reason for the missed rent. Tenants are not eligible if they have defaulted on a payment plan in the past 12 months, or if they currently owe outstanding rent under a payment plan from that same period. Tenants who have already participated in EDP within the past 12 months are also ineligible.

Any general district court in Virginia may implement EDP, but courts are not required to do so. As a result, availability varies by jurisdiction.

In jurisdictions where EDP is available, VERP can help tenants understand the program, assess whether they are likely to meet its eligibility requirements, and connect them to financial assistance to help meet payment plan requirements. VERP also serves households who do not qualify for EDP, who need assistance before a filing occurs, or who need support beyond what EDP provides. By operating both before and during the court process, VERP helps ensure households have access to support at every stage of eviction risk.

Connecting Tenants to the Eviction Diversion Program (EDP)

Grantees must ensure that court navigation staff:

- Are familiar with which courts in their service area participate in EDP
- Can assess whether a tenant is likely to meet EDP requirements in real time
- Actively work to help tenants meet EDP requirements, including connecting them to financial assistance needed to qualify

Court Navigation Activity Examples

Grantees are expected to tailor these approaches to their local service area and district/circuit courts. The following represent common court navigation practices:

Courthouse Logistics

- Courthouse location and transportation options (for example, whether a bus pass is needed)
- Basic procedural information, such as courtroom location, how to check dockets, and where to go upon arrival

Referrals and Direct Connections

- Connect tenants to Legal Aid, pro bono attorneys, or mediators, whether on-site at the courthouse or by referral to free or low-cost legal assistance
- Connect tenants to clerk's office services, mediation, or language access services
- Explain the Eviction Diversion Program (EDP) where available, and assist tenants who choose to request referral into it at their first docket call
- Provide connections to community resources addressing non-legal needs, such as healthcare, childcare, food, transportation, employment, or financial counseling

Legal and Procedural Information

- Provide information about courthouse rules, protocols, and the roles of courtroom personnel
- Prepare tenants for what to expect procedurally during their court hearing
- Assist tenants with accessing self-help forms and court-approved resources
- Direct tenants to court self-help centers, law libraries, or online self-help portals for further resources
- Explain general statutory timelines in the eviction process, such as notice periods and the timeline from filing to hearing
- Explain that a waiver of filing fees may be available for tenants who qualify, and how to request one
- Explain in plain language what a continuance is and how a tenant may request one from the court

Language Access

- Assist tenants in connecting with court-approved interpreters in their preferred language

Data-driven, Proactive Outreach

(Required as both a prevention and diversion activity.)
Proactive outreach identifies and engages households who may benefit from VERP services rather than waiting for tenants to seek help on their own. Even with the extended 14-day Pay or Quit notice period, Virginia's eviction process moves quickly, and once it is underway, a grantee's outreach, screening, and assistance must move faster than the court process itself. Opportunities to intervene continue even after a judgment has been granted. Appeal periods, redemption rights, and the time before a writ is executed all carry their own deadlines, and outreach that reaches a household within those windows can still change the outcome.

Effective outreach depends on coordination. Much of what makes early identification possible, including court docket information, landlord notices, and referrals from DSS and other local and regional community partnerships, comes from relationships and data-sharing outside the grantee's own walls. Grantees must conduct outreach at both required stages of the eviction continuum, subject to the triage and prioritization requirements described in the *Client Eligibility* section, page 18:

- Prevention, before an Unlawful Detainer is filed
- Diversion, after an Unlawful Detainer has been filed, including prior to and at the court hearing

In narrow circumstances, outreach may also reach households after a judgment has been entered, where assistance may still reduce harm or support rehousing. Post-judgment engagement is an optional activity and is not a substitute for prevention or diversion outreach.

Grantees must use data, regional context, locality-specific knowledge, and community partnerships to guide outreach strategies that reach households at greatest risk.

Expectations for Outreach

The eviction process is confusing for many tenants, even as they are living through it. A tenant may not recognize what an Unlawful Detainer summons means the moment it arrives, and many never appear in court at all. Even after a judgment has been entered, most tenants do not realize they may still have options, an appeal or a right of redemption, which could change the outcome. Waiting for a tenant to reach out on their own means missing the households who do not know help exists, do not know a deadline is approaching, or do not know the case is not necessarily over. Grantees are expected to actively identify and engage these households. Passive approaches, such as maintaining a website, posting on social media, or distributing flyers, are not sufficient on their own to meet this requirement.

Outreach Activity Examples

The activities below reflect approaches VERP grantees have used successfully; they are not the only accepted methods, and grantees are encouraged to develop others suited to their community. Any of these activities may be conducted directly by the grantee or through partnerships:

- Building relationships with landlords so that VERP information is shared consistently, from the first sign of nonpayment through the delivery of a 14-day Pay or Quit notice
- Using court docket information to identify tenants with upcoming hearings, and connecting with them, often through a landlord partnership or an existing relationship, to explain their court date, what to expect procedurally, and available VERP assistance
- Canvassing or door-to-door outreach in high-eviction neighborhoods or properties
- Mailing targeted resource information directly to households in high-risk areas
- Placing materials in non-traditional but high-traffic locations (e.g., salons, gas stations, and laundromats)
- Coordinating with public schools to distribute information or conduct outreach to families (e.g., robo-calls, newsletters)

- Advertising or tabling at locations frequently accessed by low-income households (e.g., grocery stores, food pantries, health clinics, dollar stores)
- Leveraging trusted community messengers and grassroots networks to share information in culturally relevant ways
- Preparing plain-language materials for attachment to the Unlawful Detainer summons, subject to chief judge approval, so that information about the court process, legal resources, and available assistance reaches households at the point of filing

Systems Change Through Local Coordination

Systems change work under VERP is relationship-based and practice-oriented. It typically falls into one or more of the following categories:

- Building relationships with landlords and property managers to encourage earlier communication, alternative payment arrangements, or referrals to VERP prior to court filing
- Working with courts and courthouse staff on practices that connect tenants to assistance, such as judges announcing available help, clerks directing tenants to navigators, docket scheduling that allows time for resolution, or seeking chief judge approval to attach plain-language process information and resource materials to the Unlawful Detainer summons, as permitted under state law
- Coordinating with legal aid organizations and other community-based organizations through shared staffing, data access, or intake systems, so households can be identified, referred, and served without duplicated effort across programs
- Strengthening referral pathways and information sharing across systems that interact with at-risk tenants

Systems change work does not include using VERP funds for legislative or policy advocacy at the local, state, or federal level. This distinction ensures compliance with funding requirements while preserving the relationship-based, locally driven work that has been central to VERP's impact.

Optional VERP Activities

When eviction cannot be prevented, post-eviction support services are intended to reduce immediate harm and support a more stable transition for households already engaged with a VERP grantee. Despite active, timely engagement, an eviction can still occur. A landlord may decline to negotiate or accept payment, a judge may rule against the tenant despite VERP's involvement, or the resources needed to fully resolve a case may not come

together before a judgment is entered. For these households, VERP's role shifts to help ensure that the experience of eviction is as brief and humane as possible.
Post-eviction support is an optional activity, available only to households actively engaged with a VERP grantee, including households in the application or assessment process, at the time the eviction occurred. It is the final stage of an existing service relationship, not a standalone service available to households with no prior connection to VERP. Grantees may not use VERP funds to assist households whose eviction occurred prior to, or outside of, their engagement with the program, or to serve households experiencing eviction who were never engaged with VERP.

This stage is also an opportunity for coordination at the local or regional level. A household that has just lost their housing may need several kinds of support at once, including rapid rehousing assistance, mainstream benefits, or other local resources, and grantees are encouraged to draw on existing partnerships in connecting households with that support.

Eligible assistance may include financial support for local moving costs, storage of personal belongings, and local transportation to help a household remain mobile and engaged with services while working toward next steps. Temporary lodging may be considered on a case-by-case basis, but only where the household has a confirmed next housing destination and a short, defined timeline to reach it, not as open-ended support while a plan is still being developed.

This activity is limited to households with incomes between 31% and 80% of Area Median Income (AMI). Households at or below 30% AMI may be eligible for relocation assistance through local Continuums of Care, and VERP funds should not duplicate those resources.

Client Eligibility

The eligibility criteria below apply to VERP services generally. Post-eviction support, described in the previous section, page 17, has narrower eligibility requirements in addition to the criteria described here.

Income Eligibility

VERP funding may only be used to serve individuals and households with incomes at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI). This threshold recognizes that housing instability affects a broad range of households, including those who are working but still unable to reliably afford rent. Many households earn too much to qualify for traditional safety-net programs but not enough to remain stably housed. The 80% AMI threshold ensures that VERP can reach households within this gap. Grantees are required to establish policies and procedures that clearly define client eligibility, risk factors, and the program's approach to meeting client needs. Households residing in a hotel or motel at the time they first engage with VERP are not eligible for VERP assistance; this is distinct from the limited, conditional temporary lodging assistance available as post-eviction support, described in the previous section, page 18, for households who become unhoused after engaging with the program.

VERP Eligibility Form

DHCD provides a VERP Eligibility Form designed to help identify households at greatest risk of eviction. This form, included in the *Attachments* section of the VERP grantee application available online through the Centralized Application Management System (CAMS), is based on national data available at the time of program design and serves as a starting point, not a fixed or exhaustive requirement.

Local Adaptation

Grantees may adjust and refine the VERP Eligibility Form to better reflect local conditions, provided that:

- Any modifications are based on data specific to the local community
- Changes are discussed with DHCD prior to implementation
- Additional risk factors are supported by evidence and aligned with program goals

Minimum Eligibility Requirements

Grantees are not required to use the VERP Eligibility Form exactly as written and may determine how risk factors are weighted or applied in their local or regional context. In practice, grantees vary in how many risk factors are required for eligibility, and this variation is intentional. At a minimum, households must present at least three risk factors to be eligible for VERP services, and at least one of the three must be a direct indicator of eviction risk:

- Documented loss or reduction of income within the past six months;
- Receipt of a Pay or Quit notice;
- Receipt of an Unlawful Detainer; or
- An eviction within the past three years.

These minimums apply regardless of any local modifications to the form. Grantees may establish a higher threshold based on local needs and triaging capacity. Regardless of approach, eligibility criteria should be used to prioritize households most at risk, not to unnecessarily restrict access to assistance.

Client Prioritization

Eligible households are not served on a first-come, first-served basis. Grantees must prioritize households with more identified risk factors and households facing imminent eviction over households with fewer risk factors or more time before a court date. Grantees are expected to demonstrate a commitment to screening households for eligibility using risk factors to guide equitable and data-informed decision-making, while ensuring that the households facing the greatest and most immediate risk are served first.

Program Requirements

Data Collection and Evaluation

Consistent, reliable data is essential to identifying trends, informing program design, and measuring the impact of eviction prevention and diversion work. DHCD contracts with an independent third-party evaluator to assess VERP's impact, and grantees are required to cooperate fully with the evaluator's data collection, reporting, and interview processes, including providing timely access to requested data, participating in interviews or site visits, and supporting data accuracy and completeness.

Grantees must also maintain accurate, complete records sufficient to track VERP-funded activities, participant data, and expenditures separately from other programs or funding sources, and must apply standardized service and court navigation coding consistently, in accordance with DHCD guidance. DHCD will provide standardized definitions, templates, and technical assistance to support consistent data collection ahead of the reporting period.

Reporting

VERP grantees are required to submit one annual report at the end of each grant year, for a total of two reports over the 2027-2028 grant period, through CAMS. Comprehensive, accurate, and timely reporting is a condition of continued funding. Reporting includes both quantitative data, such as households served, program activities, and funds expended by category, and a qualitative narrative describing how grantees are implementing program requirements, engaging partnerships, and achieving intended outcomes.

DHCD will provide standardized reporting templates, forms, and instructions ahead of the reporting period, and these materials will govern specific reporting requirements. Failure to comply with reporting requirements may affect grant reimbursements and eligibility for future DHCD funding.

Financial and Compliance Requirements

All grantees must be registered in DHCD's CAMS and must submit the financial documentation required under the current DHCD Financial Statement and Audit Policy.

Grantees must submit the required financial document in CAMS within nine (9) months after the end of their fiscal year or within 30 days of its acceptance (for reviewed financial statements, audited financial statements, and Single Audits), whichever occurs first. Refer to the DHCD Financial Statement and Audit Policy for current financial reporting thresholds, required documentation, submission requirements, and other audit-related guidance: dhcd-audit-policy.pdf.

Partnership and Subgrantee Agreements

Any organization playing a substantial or ongoing role in delivering VERP services, including subgrantees delivering court navigation and Legal Aid providers or other partnerships whose services are relied upon to meet program requirements, must have a formal agreement with the grantee. An executed agreement or a signed letter of intent must be in place before the grant period begins; where a signed letter of intent is used, it must be replaced by an executed agreement before the partner begins delivering services. Agreements must include a clearly defined scope of services and a mutual written acknowledgment of compensation terms, whether through direct payment, in-kind exchange, or a documented agreement that services are being provided at no cost. Informal or verbal arrangements are not sufficient where a partnership is providing services integral to the grantee's program design. This requirement is intended to ensure transparency and clarity in partnership arrangements, not to mandate any specific compensation structure. Responsibility for meeting all program requirements remains with the grantee regardless of any partnership or subgrantee arrangement.

Confidentiality Policy

All grantees must ensure the confidentiality of the name of any individual assisted and any other information regarding individuals receiving assistance. The grantee's confidentiality policy should, at minimum, address:

- How staff will gather, record, and store confidential information
- The consent process for the release of confidential information
- Protocols for responding to breaches of confidentiality
- Privacy standards related to data collection and use of participant information for program reporting

Grievance and Termination Policy

Any individual receiving or applying for assistance must receive written notification of the grantee's grievance policy if requested. Grievance policies must be board-approved and provide specific procedures to be followed for any disputed decision affecting this assistance.

If a program participant contacts DHCD regarding their grievance, the agency will direct them back to the grantee for their grievance policy. The grantee must be prepared to provide documentation of the grievance record for all project participant grievances. Grantees may terminate assistance to a program participant who violates program requirements. A grantee may also resume assistance to a participant whose assistance was previously terminated.

Termination must include a formal process that recognizes the rights of individuals receiving assistance to due process of law. This process must include at least two levels. The initial level must be held by the grantee organization, with the grievance reviewed or heard by an individual other than the person, or that person's subordinate, who made or approved the termination decision. If the client or household disagrees with the initial reviewer's decision, a second level must be available for appeal.

This two-level process, at a minimum, must consist of:

- Written notice to the project participant containing a clear statement of the reasons for termination
- Prompt written notice of the final decision to the project participant

Recordkeeping

Grantees must keep all records and make all reports, including those pertaining to services received, project participant housing status and demographics (i.e., race, ethnicity, and gender) that DHCD requires within the specified period. All contractual and program participant records must be maintained for a minimum of five years after grant closeout. Records should include:

- Documentation of match requirement
- Financial records such as bank statements
- Program participant records
- Copies of canceled checks, bank statements, or expenses associated with the program
- Records of all program participants screened and classified as ineligible for a service, including documentation of the reason for that determination

Fiscal Management

Grantees must ensure compliance with regulations and requirements pertaining to the following key areas of fiscal management:

- Allowable costs
- Source documentation
- Internal controls
- Budget controls
- Cash management
- Cost allocation plans
- Accounting records
- Procurement
- Property asset controls
- Audits

Grantees must only use funds for eligible activities and in accordance with the DHCD-approved budget. Any changes exceeding 10% to the planned expenditure must be approved in advance by DHCD through a CAMS budget amendment. Funds may not be used for activities other than those authorized in the guidelines and approved by DHCD. Reimbursements are based on the date the payment is made by the grantee. All expenditures must be in accordance with program conditions such as funding ceilings and other limitations on eligible costs.

Internal controls refer to the combination of policies, procedures, defined responsibilities, personnel, and records that allow an organization to maintain adequate oversight and control of its finances. Internal controls reflect the overall fiscal management system of an organization or agency. Budget controls, cash management, cost allocation plans, accounting records, procurement, and property controls are subsets of the overall financial system.

Grantees may be monitored for compliance with the program requirements and documentation. Financial compliance monitoring may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- An organizational chart showing titles and lines of authority for all individuals involved in approving or recording financial (and other) transactions
- Written position descriptions that describe the responsibilities of all key employees
- A written policy manual specifying approval authority for financial transactions and guidelines for controlling expenditures
- Written procedures for the recording of transactions, as well as an accounting manual and a chart of accounts

- Adequate separation of duties to ensure that no one individual has authority over an entire financial transaction
- Hiring policies to ensure that staff qualifications are equal to job responsibilities and that individuals hired are competent to do the job
- Access to accounting records, assets, blank forms, and confidential records is adequately controlled, such that only authorized persons can access them
- Procedures for regular reconciliation of its financial records, comparing its records with actual assets and liabilities of the organization
- Accounting records and source documentation
- Cash management procedures
- Cost allocation plans
- Procurement procedures
- Property controls
- Annual audit

To protect participant confidentiality and ensure appropriate use of grant funds, grantees must use a standardized check request form as the primary method of requesting checks or cash for any expense incurred on behalf of grant-funded programs or program participants. Check requests must include a description of the expense, the corresponding eligible grant activity, the amount, and the payee, and must follow this process:

- Complete a standardized check request form
- Obtain supervisor approval
- Attach receipts or invoices, ensuring the requested amount matches the amount to be spent or reimbursed
- Submit to finance personnel for verification, review of supporting documentation, filing, and check preparation

Once filed, check request forms and any attached receipts or invoices must have all program participant-level personally identifying information redacted. All check requests must carry at least two signatures: the requestor and an authorizer with budgetary oversight for the program incurring the expense. All significant (over $5,000), unusual, or non-recurring transactions must be reported to the CEO.

Time Sheets

Employee time sheets must reflect actual hours (not percentages) worked based on the cost allocation plan. Time sheets must be signed and dated by the employee and the supervisor with first-hand knowledge of the work performed, or equivalent electronic approval. If an expenditure is paid for by more than one source (e.g., federal, public, private), the split costs should be accurately tracked within the grantee's accounting system.

Accounting Standards

In addition to establishing a system of accounting sufficient to accurately record and report transactions, adequate source documentation must be maintained as support for these transactions. Source documentation includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Purchase requisitions
- Purchase orders
- Contracts
- Contract invoices
- Bank statements
- Canceled checks
- Drawdowns
- Payment vouchers
- Employee time sheets
- Travel advance requests
- Travel reimbursement vouchers
- Vendor invoices
- Journal voucher entries
- Cash receipts

All source documents must be coded by reference number so that a clear link exists between the fiscal records and these documents. Coding may include the check number used to make the payment, the journal entry in which the transaction was recorded, or the page number from the cash receipt journal. Purchase order numbers and payment voucher numbers may also be used to provide the necessary audit link. Supporting documents can be copies or originals but must be sufficient in detail to support the transaction and justify it as an allowable grant expense. Grantees must keep copies of source documents, available for DHCD review upon request, for a minimum of five years post grant closeout. Grantees must maintain proof of cancellation (e.g., a copy of the check's backside, bank statement, or photocopy of the check's cancellation) for all payments. While these are not required in project participant files, they must be readily available for monitoring purposes.

Internal Controls

The grantee must have appropriate internal controls in place to:

- Safeguard assets
- Prevent waste, fraud, and mismanagement
- Promote efficiency of operations
- Protect employees from retaliation for reporting suspected fraud, waste, or mismanagement

Effective internal controls must include the following procedures, to the extent possible:

- Segregation of duties among employees, so no one person has complete control over all phases of a transaction
- Workflow procedures that move transactions from one employee to another, providing a cross-check of work without duplicating effort
- Rotation of duties among employees to prevent any one person from maintaining control over a given phase and to ensure other employees can fill in when a position becomes vacant.
- Clearly detailed and documented procedures for all individuals to follow, useful for training new employees
- Proper protection of all assets, records, and checks, using locks, safes, or other security measures

Monitoring

DHCD is responsible for monitoring all program activities conducted by a grantee to ensure that the program requirements are met. Monitoring can include both programmatic and financial reviews. Grantees must make available organizational and project-related records to DHCD with notice. Grantees are responsible for all programmatic and contractual terms. The grantee is responsible for ensuring that these terms and requirements are met regardless of partnership arrangements or MOUs with other organizations. Results from the monitoring of grantees will be shared with the grantee's executive leadership and their board of directors.

Conflicts of Interest

Grantees and partnerships must have conflict of interest policies that clearly prohibit personal gain or benefit and meet other program requirements.

Organizational Conflicts of Interest

The provision of any type or amount of assistance may not be conditional on a household's acceptance or occupancy of housing owned by the grantee, subgrantee, parent organization, or subsidiary. An organization may not participate in decision-making related to determining a household's eligibility and receive any financial benefit from that household's assistance. For example, a grantee, subgrantee, parent organization, or subsidiary may not both administer financial assistance (rent, utilities, etc.) and use that assistance for households residing in units owned by the entity.

Individual Conflicts of Interest

Individual conflicts of interest apply to any person who is an employee, agent, consultant, officer, or elected or appointed official of the grantee or its subgrantee. For the procurement of goods and services, the grantee and/or its subgrantee must comply with the agency code of conduct and conflict of interest policies. Individuals (employees, agents, consultants, officers, or elected or appointed officials of the grantee or subgrantee) may not participate in decision-making related to determining a household’s eligibility and receive any financial benefit from that household’s assistance. This financial benefit may not be received by the specific individual, any member of their immediate family or any business interest. The restriction applies throughout tenure in the position and for a one-year period following tenure.

Upon written request of the grantee, DHCD may grant an exception to the restrictions in the paragraph above on a case-by-case basis when it determines that the exception will serve to further the goals of the program and promote the efficient use of program funds. In requesting an exception, the grantee must provide a disclosure of the nature of the conflict, accompanied by an assurance that there has been public disclosure of the conflict and a description of how the public disclosure was made.

Non-Discrimination in Housing and Community Development

Grantees must comply with all applicable fair housing and civil rights requirements. In addition, grantees must make known that rental assistance and services are available to all on a nondiscriminatory basis and ensure that all tenants have equal access to information about and equal access to the financial assistance and services provided under this program. A statement to this effect must be included in the Project Participant Agreement, signed by the project participant, and maintained in the project participant file.

Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

Grantees have a duty to affirmatively further fair housing opportunities for classes protected under the Fair Housing Act. Protected classes include race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and familial status. In addition, Virginia's Fair Housing Law further protects "elderliness," individuals aged 55 or older, from housing discrimination, and the Virginia Values Act extends existing state non-discrimination protections for housing based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Examples of affirmatively furthering fair housing include: (1) marketing the program to all eligible persons, including persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency; (2) making buildings and communications that facilitate applications and service delivery accessible to persons with disabilities, including providing information in alternative formats and auxiliary aids when needed; (3) providing fair housing counseling services or referrals to fair housing agencies; (4) informing participants of how to file a housing discrimination complaint, including providing the toll-free number for the Housing Discrimination Hotline: 1-800-669-9777; and (5) recruiting landlords and service providers in areas to which housing choice is expanded. In addition, housing discrimination complaints may be reported to the Virginia Fair Housing Office at the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation at (888) 551-3247.

Ineligible and Prohibited Activities

Grantees that own housing units may not use VERP funds for rental assistance in any units owned by the grantee or a subsidiary. Grantees must consult with DHCD about how best to address the needs of tenants living in any grantee-owned units.

Application Process

Applicants must submit VERP applications through DHCD's CAMS. DHCD strongly encourages applicants to attend a How to Apply Webinar before submitting. Applicants should carefully follow all submission instructions and ensure completeness and accuracy. The CAMS User Guide provides detailed instructions for submission.

Application Submission

- DHCD may provide applicants with a one (1) business day curative period to correct administrative deficiencies identified after the application deadline. Administrative deficiencies are limited to items such as missing required attachments or supporting documents, missing signatures, and minor formatting or clerical errors.
- The curative period may not be used to revise, supplement, or replace substantive application content. Applicants may not submit new or revised narrative responses, budgets, scoring criterion responses, or any other information that could affect the evaluation of the application.

- An organization must have a registered CAMS organizational profile to apply for VERP funding. Once an organization has an approved profile, individual users may be given access to CAMS by the organization's profile manager.
- Applicants may submit applications at any time prior to the deadline. DHCD will only review applications submitted in CAMS prior to the established deadline.
- CAMS will send the applicant an email notification when an application has been submitted and received.
- All work in CAMS should be saved frequently.
- Applicants may allow multiple users to edit and review application materials. Applicants are fully responsible for controlling security access to CAMS when the application is submitted to DHCD.
- Once the applicant begins work on the application, CAMS will save the application as Incomplete. The applicant may return to CAMS to continue working on the application at any time before submission. The application will remain Incomplete until the applicant chooses to submit it. Once submitted, the status will change from Incomplete to Pending.
- Google Chrome is the recommended browser.

Project Information

The applicant must log in to CAMS, select the VERP application, and follow these steps to apply:

- Select *Apply* and enter a *Project Name*. Be careful to enter a project name that DHCD can easily identify. Note: You cannot edit this name after you leave this screen.
- Select *Continue* to generate an *Application ID number*.
- Select *Continue* to view the *Project Information* tab.
- On the *Project Information* page, the *Organization Name* will be pre-populated based on your organization's profile. Any changes or updates to the organizational profile must be made by your organization's designated profile manager.
- On the *Project Information* page, enter the *Project Primary Contact* information. This is the name and contact information of the individual DHCD should contact regarding questions about the project.
- Enter the *Place of Primary Performance*, which is the location where the project (primary office or service location) will be situated, and the *Primary Service Area*, which is the locality or localities the project is intended to serve.

- Select the *Print* option at the top right-hand corner to produce a PDF that can be printed or saved. This document will include all the information you have entered and saved in the application.
- Tip: To print an application with all the questions displayed, go to the *Narrative Information* tab and enter *NA* into each text box. This will generate a complete copy of the application, including all the narrative questions, which you can then use outside of CAMS.

Project Budget

In the Project Budget tab, enter basic budget information. Input the requested funding amount in the “DHCD Request” box and the match amount in the “Other Funding” box.

Narrative Information

Follow these steps for the narrative questions:

- Go to the *Narrative Information* section. Note that there are size limits for the text boxes.
- DHCD recommends drafting responses in a word-processing program before pasting them into CAMS.
- This allows you to spell-check and confirm the length of your text before copying and pasting into the CAMS text boxes.
- Once you complete the *Narrative Information*, print the questions by selecting the Print tab at the top of the page and review each response for accuracy.
- You can edit this information until you submit the application for review.
- The CAMS text boxes only accommodate text responses. Do not paste graphics, tables, or charts into the *Narrative Information* section. Instead, include them in a separate attachment.
- Use the CAMS *Attachment* section to provide any additional information that cannot fit in the narrative text boxes.

Narrative Questions

The narrative responses are the core of the application. Reviewers evaluate applications based on the information provided, but they are not the only factor considered. Reviewers also look closely at the project budget, including whether it aligns with the activities described and reflects a realistic plan for the service area. Reviewers can only evaluate what is written, so specific, evidence-based responses grounded in your actual service area and experience will be more competitive than general statements.

The following expectations apply to every narrative response:

- Answer every question completely. Incomplete or vague responses will not be competitive.
- Use current, jurisdiction-specific data where requested.
- Describe what your organization has done, not only what it plans to do. Where a question asks about experience, provide specific examples.
- Name confirmed partnerships. Any organization playing a substantial service delivery role must have an executed agreement or signed letter of intent in place before the grant period begins, as described in the *Partnership and Subgrantee Agreements* section, page 21.
- Describe a low-barrier model. An eviction notice may not be a precondition for assistance, and programs may not build in waiting periods before assistance is provided. Prevention services occur before an Unlawful Detainer is filed, as described in the *Required VERP Activities* section, page 7.

The narrative questions begin below.

Community Need

1. Using current data from the LSC Eviction Tracker or local court records, describe eviction filing patterns in your proposed service area and what drives them. Then identify the most significant gaps in the eviction prevention resources currently available there and the barriers residents face in reaching them and explain how those gaps contribute to eviction risk.

Organizational Capacity and Experience

2. Describe your organization's direct experience delivering services on the eviction timeline, such as responding to Pay or Quit notices, resolving filed cases, or assisting households at court, and distinguish this from related work such as financial coaching, housing counseling, or general case management. If your organization has received VERP funding, report households served, evictions prevented or diverted, spending performance against your award, and what you changed based on experience. If not, report the same measures from the most comparable program you have administered.

3. Describe the proposed VERP management team, including who will have day-to-day oversight of the program and their experience managing eviction prevention or similar crisis-response services, and your staffing plan for the grant period, including positions to be hired.

4. Describe your process from a household's first contact through payment issuance. Include the following:
   - The steps from initial contact through eligibility determination and payment issuance.
   - Who is responsible for each decision?
   - The typical timeframe for each step.
   - How your process changes when a household presents close to a court deadline (e.g., days before a hearing or after judgment).
   - Who has the authority to approve expedited payment, if applicable?
   - If your organization has administered similar assistance, report your actual average time from application to payment.

Program Design and Service Delivery

5. Explain how you will screen households for eligibility while maintaining a low-barrier, high-access approach. If you will use an assessment tool or risk factors beyond the DHCD VERP Eligibility Form, describe them.

6. Describe how your written internal policies govern award amounts, expectations for tenant contribution, and parameters for stabilization services, including the justification for any maximum assistance amount. If these policies do not yet exist, describe what they will contain and when they will be adopted.

7. Describe how your staff will actively connect households to mainstream wrap-around services rather than only providing information, and how you will know whether connections were made.

8. Describe how you will proactively identify and reach households at risk of eviction before they seek help, and how you will prioritize among eligible households so that services are not first-come, first-served.

Court Navigation

9. Describe how you will deliver court navigation: by your own staff, a subgrantee, or a combination, and the status of any subgrantee agreement. Summarize your plan for maintaining a consistent presence at the general district courts serving your proposed area; court-by-court details, including docket schedules and the status of court approval, belong in your attached court presence plan. Describe how referrals to Legal

Aid or similar legal services organizations will work in practice. If you are building court navigation capacity for the first time, describe your startup plan and timeline.

10. Describe the availability of the Eviction Diversion Program in the courts serving your proposed service area. Where EDP is available, describe how your navigators will identify eligible tenants and connect them to the financial assistance needed to enter and complete a payment plan. Where it is not available, describe how you will support households facing a filed case.

11. Describe how your court navigation and pre-hearing support staff will be trained to provide legal information while not providing legal advice, and how you will ensure staff stay within that boundary in practice.

Systems Change

12. Name 2-3 systemic barriers to eviction prevention in your community that can be influenced through local action, such as court processes, landlord practices, or coordination of local resources, rather than structural conditions like the overall supply of affordable housing. Identify who has the authority to reduce each barrier, the specific change you are working toward, how you will engage the parties with that authority, and how you will know whether progress is being made.

13. Describe how you will engage landlords and property managers in your service area beyond individual case resolution. If you have existing landlord relationships, describe them and what they have produced.

Partnerships and Coordination

14. List each organization that will play a substantial role in delivering VERP services and include the following for each:

- Organization name
- Specific role in delivering VERP services
- Status of the agreement (e.g., executed agreement or signed letter of intent)
- An executed agreement or signed letter of intent must be in place before the grant period begins, as described in the *Partnership and Subgrantee Agreements* section. Page 21. Attach documentation for each agreement or its current status.

15. Describe how you will coordinate VERP with the other assistance systems operating in your proposed service area so that services are not duplicated and households do not fall between programs, including how you will determine whether a household is eligible for

other assistance, such as Virginia Homeless Solutions Program (VHSP), and use VERP only where other resources cannot respond in time. Name the specific mechanisms you will use, such as shared referral pathways or coordinated intake. If your proposed service area covers multiple localities, describe how you will ensure households in every part of it have comparable access to assistance.

Required Attachments
Submit the following attachments in CAMS. Label each file with your organization's name and the attachment name (for example, *OrgName_Budget*).

Required for all applicants:

- Line-item *Project Budget* and *Budget Narrative*, using the DHCD budget template (supports the Project Budget review)
- Written financial assistance policies, or a current draft if final policies are in development, covering award determination, maximum assistance amounts, tenant contribution expectations, and stabilization service parameters (supports question 6)
- Court presence plan listing each general district court in your proposed service area, its eviction docket schedule, planned staffing, and the status of court approval for a navigator presence in each court (supports question 9)
- Implementation timeline from award through service delivery, demonstrating how the program will be operational by the start of the grant period (supports question 3)
- Most recent audited financial statements or financial review

Required if applicable:

- Executed agreements, signed letters of intent, or documentation of agreement status for each service delivery partnership or subgrantee (supports question 14)
- Board-approved documentation of match commitments identified in the Project Budget, as described in the *Local Match* section, page 34,
- Any assessment tool or screening criteria used beyond the DHCD VERP Eligibility Form (supports question 5)

Local Match
Local match contributions are not required. Applications that include documented local match will receive preference points based on the match amount as a percentage of the requested VERP award, as described in the *Application Evaluation* section, page. Cash and in-kind contributions are valued on the same basis. In-kind contributions must be valued at fair market value using a reasonable, documented basis, and the match documentation

must state how each contribution was valued. To receive preference points, match must be entered in the *Other Funding* field of the *Project Budget* and supported by board-approved match documentation submitted as an attachment.

Community Priority

To apply this directive consistently, every application receives a *Community Priority* score of up to 40 points, determined administratively by DHCD using objective statewide data and standardized criteria rather than through competitive review of the application narrative. *Community Priority* measures characteristics of the proposed service area, not the quality of the proposal; applicants proposing to serve the same locality receive the same *Community Priority* score. This allows the review panel to focus its competitive evaluation on *Program Approach* and *Organizational Capacity*.

Community Priority evaluates both dimensions of an underserved community: the level of housing instability and eviction risk (need), and the availability of and barriers to obtaining eviction prevention resources (access). It consists of two components:

> ***Community Need*** **(Up to 20 points)**
>
> DHCD will calculate a *Community Need Index* for every Virginia county and independent city using four indicators of housing instability: the eviction filing rate, the percentage of households below the ALICE Threshold, the percentage of cost-burdened renter households, and the percentage of severely cost-burdened renter households. Because these indicators are measured on different scales, each is converted to a statewide percentile ranking before the four are combined into a single index. Localities are then assigned *Community Need* points based on the published administrative scoring schedule for the *Community Need Index*. Applications proposing to serve multiple localities receive a *Community Need* score based on the average *Community Need Index* for all proposed localities.
>
> ***Community Access*** **(Up to 20 points)**
>
> No standardized statewide inventory of eviction prevention resources currently exists, so applicants will complete a standardized *Community Resource Inventory* identifying the availability and capacity of resources in the proposed service area, including rental assistance, housing stabilization funding, legal aid, court navigation, housing counseling, public transportation, broadband and internet access, language access services, and other locally relevant resources. For each resource, applicants indicate whether it is available and sufficient, available but capacity-limited, or not available. Communities with fewer available resources and

greater capacity limitations receive higher *Community Access* scores, because they face greater barriers to obtaining eviction prevention services. The inventory and its scoring are standardized and applied consistently across all applications.

Application Evaluation

All applications submitted by the deadline are scored on three components:

Table 1: Application scoring components

Application Component	Points
Community Priority	**40**
○ Community Need	20
○ Community Access	20
Program Approach	**35**
Organizational Capacity	**25**
Total Application Score	**100**

Community Priority is scored administratively by DHCD using the published *Community Need Index* and *Community Resource Inventory* criteria described in the *Community Priority* section.

Table 2: Preference points

Preference Category	Points
Documented local match: 25% or more of the requested VERP award	5
Documented local match: 10% to 24% of the requested award	3
Documented local match: below 10% of the requested award	1

Applications may receive a maximum of five (5) preference points.

To be considered for funding, applications must receive at least 32 combined points in *Program Approach* and *Organizational Capacity*. Preference points are not included in this calculation.

Evaluation Considerations

Program Approach and *Organizational Capacity* will be evaluated based on:

- Use of current, jurisdiction-specific data demonstrating knowledge of the local eviction landscape
- Strength of the proposed prevention and diversion model
- Ability to deliver rapid, low-barrier financial assistance
- Quality of court navigation and outreach strategies
- Quality of the proposed systems change approach
- Strength and specificity of coordination mechanisms with partnerships and other assistance systems
- Demonstrated experience providing direct eviction prevention or diversion services

Appendix A

Access to Justice Flyer

Appendix B

Training resources developed by the National Center for State Courts