

## Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP) 2023 Applicant FAQs

- How can you apply for this as an organization?
  - Applicants can apply for the 2023 VERP funding through DHCD's Centralized Application Management System (CAMS). Once in CAMS, you can go to "Program Search," "Apply," and then select "Virginia Reduction Pilot (VERP) 2023 - Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (2023)" from the dropdown menu. More application instructions can be found in the [VERP 3.0 How-to-Apply Webinar Presentation](#).
- Is there a maximum amount of award per applicant?
  - There is not a maximum amount of award per applicant. The VERP 2022 program currently includes seven grantees, but funding decisions for VERP 2023 will depend on application submissions. The available funding across all grantees is \$2.945 million. DHCD reserves the right to adjust funding level and grant period based on availability of funds.
- Will you partially fund requests, for example, if an applicant applies for \$100,000 in funding, could they be approved for less? Or is only the total requested award amount considered?
  - Yes, DHCD may choose to partially fund requests. Even though we may partially fund requests, we encourage applicants to right-size their request to the needs of their community. Applicants should provide a justification for the requested funds in the budget narrative section of the application. If an applicant is awarded less than what they requested, DHCD will meet with them to re-visit their goals and objectives based on the level of funding received.
- How many grants will be awarded?
  - The amount of grantees for VERP 3.0 will depend on the applications we receive. We currently have seven VERP 2.0 grantees which was also \$2.945 million in funding.
- Will funding be given to several organizations or go through one vendor like the Rent Relief Program (RRP)?
  - No, VERP funding will not be administered in the same way as the Rent Relief Program. DHCD will provide VERP 3.0 funds directly to Grantees to administer in their communities.
- Will new grantees be competing against current VERP 2.0 grantees for VERP 3.0 funding?
  - Yes, both new and existing VERP Grantees will be applying for the same funding. There is not a separate amount of funding set aside for new applicants. Current VERP Grantees will need to demonstrate a) the impact VERP has made in their community and b) why more assistance is needed in their communities.

- Will current VERP 2020 Grantees receive preference in the VERP 2022 scoring?
  - No, but there is a narrative question in the application where current VERP Grantees can explain their current progress to date and how another VERP award will help them further reduce evictions in their communities. DHCD will use current grantee's mid and final year reports, as applicable, as a factor in making funding decisions.
  
- Is there a limit on administrative spending in the budget?
  - Yes, the limit on administrative expenses is capped at 5%.
  
- Would a separate local rental relief program we are funding count as a match?
  - Yes, it could. In order to receive the preference points, applicants should include a letter of commitment or MOU with the organization providing local rent relief. If the local eviction prevention / diversion program is being used in place of VERP funding (i.e. the local program provides eviction prevention and rental assistance), a subgrantee agreement would need to be established to meet the eviction prevention, eviction diversion and court navigation program design requirements.
  
- Can emergency COVID-19 funding count towards the local match?
  - Yes, local COVID-19 emergency funding can count towards a local match commitment. This includes in-kind and cash matches. The pilot does not require a match; however, applicants that include local match contributions will be given a scoring preference. Matching funds can include local government resources..
  
- The program runs from January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023 with a one-year renewal until December 31, 2024 depending on grantee performance and availability of funds. Does all of the money need to be spent during that time frame?
  - Yes, all grant funds must be expended by December 31, 2023 unless a grantee is approved for a second year of funding. If approved for a second year of funding, a grantee would have until December 31, 2024 to spend those funds. As a reminder, the second year of funding would only be available to selected Grantees (i.e. another application would not be open for new grantees). DHCD reserves the right to adjust the funding level and grant period based on availability of funds and Grantee performance. Reallocation of funds may occur if a Grantee is not projected to spend their total award by the spending deadline.
  
- Public Housing Authorities are listed as a required participant in the VERP Advisory Committee. If a city or county does not have a PHA, is there a substitute agency that should be included?
  - No, just make a note in your application that PHAs do not exist in your community.

- DHCD asked that applicants involve individuals with lived experience in the VERP Advisory Committee. How will you verify that the applicant involved individuals with lived experience?
  - DHCD asks that applicants include a brief narrative describing how they plan to select and include such an individual. DHCD will not verify the individual's background, but instead, will rely upon the applicant to conduct any verification necessary.
  
- In terms of the advisory committee: does a separate organization have to fill each position, or can a single organization fill multiple (i.e. workforce development and housing counseling)?
  - No, a separate organization does not need to fill each position. A single organization can fill multiple positions. An applicant will need to provide a short justification of each advisory committee member in the narrative questions. If one organization is fulfilling multiple positions (i.e. workforce development and housing counseling), please make sure to explain how they are qualified to fill each position in the application narrative.
  
- Does VERP have citizenship requirements for pilot participants?
  - No, VERP does not have any citizenship requirements. Individuals who are undocumented are eligible to receive VERP services.
  
- Are these funds available to tax credit properties?
  - Landlords, who are owners of tax credit properties, are ineligible to apply as a Grantee for VERP grant funding. However, if tenants reside in tax credit properties, they would be eligible to receive VERP assistance if they met all other participant eligibility requirements.
  
- Can an organization applying as a primary applicant serve more than one locality in a region?
  - Yes, an organization can serve more than one locality. Organizations that serve more than one locality will receive a scoring reference. DHCD will only fund one Grantee per locality.
  
- Can an organization serve as a sub-grantee for several primary applicants?
  - Yes, but the primary applicant should consider the sub-grantee's capacity to serve multiple areas and Grantees.
  
- Do co-applicants need to have MOUs in place when applying?
  - MOUs or a similar agreement (such as a Letter of Intent) are required when applying. Applicants should submit MOUs or agreements in the "attachment" section of the application. Applicants should clearly identify all intended partners in their application.

- Does the pilot include homeowners for mortgage assistance?
  - No, the pilot does not include homeowners or mortgage assistance. The pilot is focused on eviction prevention and thus will only serve renters and their landlords.
  
- Is there a cap on the number of months or payments or eligible households?
  - VERP can cover up to six months of rent and/or utility arrears and up to one month of future rent and/or utility payments. Additional information on housing financial assistance requirements can be found in the VERP Program Guidelines under [“Eligible Activities.”](#)
  
- Many households that received RRP funding are still at risk of eviction and are waiting for those funds to come through. Does that previous assistance affect current eligibility for VERP?
  - Previous RRP assistance does not automatically disqualify applicants from receiving VERP assistance. As part of their application materials, applicants should submit an assessment form explaining how their organization will prioritize assistance for the VERP program. Previous RRP assistance can be a factor in determining VERP eligibility but is not required.
  
- DHCD stated they will prioritize applicants providing services to those localities with the highest eviction rates. What period of time should applicants be looking at to determine those eviction rates?
  - DHCD is interested in the eviction rates pre-and post-pandemic when available. If available, it is recommended to look at the eviction rates in 2019 for a locality. A list of data resources with links to help demonstrate need is included in the VERP 3.0 How-to-Apply Webinar Presentation. You can find the presentation [here](#) on the DHCD website.
  
- What are the chances of a Continuum of Care (CoC) receiving funds that are not on the list of localities that have preference?
  - Some current VERP 2.0 grantees are not representing the localities prioritized for geographic targeting. It is not a requirement that applicants serve a community with geographic targeting but those applicants will receive a scoring preference. Applications from communities not from a geographic area are eligible to apply.
  
- Homeless prevention can also work with households that are in the court process for evictions, is there any further distinction between eviction diversion and homeless prevention?
  - VERP should not duplicate existing community eviction prevention and diversion resources. Grantees should coordinate their VERP eligible activities with existing programs, including homeless prevention funds. The VERP 2023 program guidelines further describes the distinction between homeless prevention funding and VERP services

- Would the eviction prevention assistance be paid from grant funds, or from some other source?
  - Eviction prevention and housing financial assistance can be paid with VERP funding. We require Grantees to coordinate their VERP program with other funding available so that VERP is used only when other financial assistance is not available. The VERP 3.0 budget tab includes the kinds of activities that can be funded under eviction prevention (i.e. capacity building, case management, outreach and negotiation, etc.). A further description of eligible activities can also be found in the [VERP 3.0 Program Guidelines and Application Instructions](#).
  
- Would you mind elaborating more on what is an appropriate court navigation program? Does a referral program / subgrantee relationship with a legal aid satisfy the program requirements?
  - Court navigation should not involve legal advice unless a licensed attorney is providing the legal advice. Court navigators can help tenants understand the court process, refer tenants to other resources (this can include Legal Aid), help tenants complete court forms, help tenants get to court, and provide emotional support, etc.