Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot

Application

VERP 2022

Application Due Date: November 15, 2021

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Partners for Better Communities

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Background

- Reducing evictions has been a priority of Governor Northam and the Virginia General Assembly before and during COVID-19.

- In 2016, The Eviction Lab, built by sociologist Matthew Desmond, revealed that Virginia is home to five of the top ten evicting cities in America.

- In the 2020 Special Session, $3.3 million was included in the budget for the Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP). A second year of funding for the pilot was awarded by the Governor and the General Assembly during the 2021 session.

- The first round of VERP funding (VERP 1.0) focused on stabilizing individual households through a variety of housing supports including financial assistance, transportation costs, child care costs, case management and housing counseling.

- DHCD will award the full $3 million in grant funds available for a January 1, 2022– December 31, 2022 contract period

- DHCD will set aside $250,000 of the $3 million available in grant funds for grantees to pilot a court navigator program as part of their VERP grant award

Goals of the Pilot

- To demonstrate effective approaches to reducing evictions through systems changes that make eviction rare, brief and humane while also providing flexible financial assistance to those at risk of an eviction.

- To divert evictions once the household has received an unlawful detainer.

- To ensure households have early access to resources to stabilize their housing situations.

Eviction Prevention vs. Diversion

- **Eviction prevention** services are provided to households *before* they are issued unlawful detainers when courts get involved.

- Examples of prevention services include:
  - Short-term financial assistance
  - Case-management to connect household with housing stabilization resources
  - Mediation between Landlords and Tenants

- **Eviction diversion** services are provided *after* households are issued unlawful detainers.

- Examples of diversion services include:
  - Assisting with the negotiation process between landlords and tenants, outlining payment plans
  - Legal Aid

Eligible Applicants

- Units of local government

- Non-profit organizations

- Planning District Commissions (PDCs)

- Public Housing Authorities

- Institutions of higher education may apply in collaboration with a local nonprofit or unit of local governments.

- Must be registered in CAMS

Applicant Requirements

- Registered Centralized Application and Management System (CAMS) profile

- Relationships between all partners involved in project must be clearly articulated

- No outstanding issues

Pilot Program Design

- Financial assistance
  - Programs must provide housing financial assistance and stabilization support services.

- Initiatives and Partnerships Promoting Systems Change
  - Programs must create partnerships focused on increasing affordable housing options in local communities, working with courts to be part of eviction prevention response, increasing more jobs with living wages, increasing affordable childcare or eldercare, increasing affordable healthcare, increasing public transit for low income and BIPOC communities.

- Legal Aid and Mediation between Landlords and Tenants
  - Programs must host or support Legal Aid and mediation between landlords and tenants.

Pilot Program Design

- Outreach and Resource Navigation
  - Grantee must proactively seek out households at risk of eviction

- Coordination with Partners and Stakeholder
  - Grantees must actively ensure there is coordination among service providers and stakeholders

- Lived experience
  - Programs must provide opportunity for an individual with lived experience (previously evicted or experienced housing instability) to be involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the local VERP project.

Court Navigator Pilot Program

- The purpose of the this program is to increase communication between judges and eviction prevention and diversion staff, assist tenants with navigating the court system, inform tenants about other resources, inform tenants about their legal rights and encourage mediation between tenants and landlords. Court Navigator Programs should include on-site staff at courthouses to assist tenants.

- Examples of potential court navigator activities include, but are not limited to:
  - Helping tenants navigate the eviction process (i.e. what to expect in a case)
  - Referring tenants to other sources of assistance (i.e. legal aid lawyers, domestic violence services, social services)
  - Helping tenants complete court forms

- Grantees applying for the Court Navigator Program set-aside will have existing partnerships with courts and legal aid providers through Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) prior to submitting their VERP application.

Eligible Activities

- Housing Financial Assistance
  - Examples: short-term rent assistance, rent and utility arrears, moving expenses

- Stabilization Support Services
  - Examples: work supports, child care assistance, transportation

- Prevention Activities
  - Examples: case management, capacity building, housing counseling, landlord outreach and negotiation, programmatic staff

- Diversion Activities
  - Examples: Court navigation, legal expenses, programmatic staff

- Outreach and Engagement
  - Examples: Advertisement fees, travel, programmatic staff

- Administrative Costs
  - Examples: data collection and reporting, obtaining program audits, staff training

Geographic Targeting

The VERP is available statewide. Applicants from the following Virginia localities will be given a scoring preference because of their high eviction rates and/or their inclusion in the General Assembly created pilot diversion program:

- Accomack County
- Chesapeake
- Chesterfield
- Danville
- Hampton
- Henrico County
- Hopewell
- Newport News

- Norfolk
- Petersburg
- Portsmouth
- Prince George County
- Richmond
- Virginia Beach

◦ DHCD will fund only one grantee per locality.

Local VERP Advisory Committee

Each grantee is required to have significant coordination through a local advisory committee. The advisory committee must include representatives from the following:

- Local CoC
- Workforce Development
- Local DSS
- Legal Aid
- Representative of the District Court
- Representative of Public Housing Authority
- Representative of associations representing landlords such as Realtors and
- Apartment Management Associations
- Housing Counseling Agency/Program
- Conflict Resolution (Alternate Dispute Resolution)
- Person with lived experience of eviction or housing insecurity
- Organizations representing communities of color
- Tenant advocacy groups (if present in the community)
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

Local Match

- The program does not require a match.

- Applications that include match contributions (both in-kind and cash match) will be given a scoring preference per the state budget directive.

- Local COVID or other emergency resources *can* count toward a local match commitment.

Participant Eligibility

- DHCD requires grantees to use an eligibility form designed to identify households most at risk of housing instability and to have clear policies and procedures that specify household eligibility and the program's approach to meeting their needs.

- A template eligibility form can be found in the attachments section. If an applicant wishes to use their own assessment tool, it must include the following factors:
  - Household headed by a person of color
  - Single female head of household
  - Number of recent moves within the past 12 months
  - Age of the head of household and whether children are present in the home
  - Involvement of child services or foster care
  - Non-leaseholder status
  - Domestic violence
  - Frequency of law enforcement involvement at the unit
  - Tenants living in large multi-family properties
  - A household's housing cost burden

Data Collection & Evaluation

- Virginia lacks a statewide, real-time understanding of evictions across the Commonwealth.

- Access to statewide eviction data is important for understanding current eviction trends and measuring the impact of an eviction prevention and diversion programs.

- Grantees will work closely with DHCD to develop and implement a local or regional process to collect eviction data.

- DHCD will be working with a third party to help evaluate the impact of the VERP program.

- Grantees will participate with the evaluator in data collection, interviews, etc. to successfully evaluate the program.

Reporting

- VERP grantees will be required to submit a mid-year and end-year report in CAMS.

- These reports will be used to assess the impact of the grantee's program and the overall effectiveness of the pilot.

Overview of Application Process

- Deadline: 11:59PM on November 15, 2021

- All applications must be submitted through DHCD's CAMS online application system

- Applications will be evaluated as submitted

Accessing VERP Application Instructions and Guidelines

1. Go to the DHCD website, www.dhcd.Virginia.gov

2. Click on Access CAMS button in the upper right corner

3. Click <u>Applications and Programs</u>

4. Click <u>Apply</u> on the top menu

5. Select <u>Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP) 2022 – Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (2022)</u> from the dropdown menu

6. Click <u>Go</u>

7. Click <u>Apply</u>

Tips for Using CAMS

- All work in CAMS should be frequently saved

- Google Chrome is the recommended browser

- Work in MS Word and copy and paste into the CAMS text boxes

- The text box will only accommodate text responses. Graphics, tables, or charts should not be pasted into the narrative section; instead, include the information in a separate attachment.

Project Information

Project Information | **Project Budget** | **Narrative Information** | **Attachments** | **Additional Information**

Project Information

Organization Name*: [   ]

Project Primary Contact

First Name*: [   ]   Last Name*: [   ]

Title*: [   ]   Email*: [   ]

Work Phone*: [   ] - [   ] - [   ]

Project Location

Address*: [   ]   Zip Code*: [   ] - [   ] Whats my +4?

City*: [   ]

Primary Service Area

County: ✎ **Add/Edit County**   City: ✎ **Add/Edit City**   Town: ✎ **Add/Edit Town**

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Project Budget

Project Information | **Project Budget** | **Narrative Information** | **Attachments** | **Additional Information**

Project Budget Information

Please enter your Total Request: $ [0.00]

Cost/Activity Category	DHCD Request	Other Funding	Total
⊞ Financial Assistance (Housing stabilization and relocation services)	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
⊞ Stabilization Services	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
⊞ Prevention	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
⊞ Diversion	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
⊞ Outreach	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
⊞ Administration	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
TOTAL	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00

Budget Narrative:

Narrative Information

| Project Information | Project Budget | **Narrative Information** | Attachments | Additional Information |

Please answer following questions:

Tell us about the eviction rates and local needs for the locality(ies) that your proposed program would serve.

Describe your organization's approach to reducing evictions and improving housing stability.

If you have previously received VERP funding, please describe the impact VERP 1.0 has made on your system thus far and how additional funding will improve your eviction prevention and diversion efforts in your community.

Attachments

Project Information | **Project Budget** | **Narrative Information** | **Attachments** | **Additional Information**

According to the program requirement, you must submit/upload following required documents:

UPLOAD ATTACHMENTS INSTRUCTION:
Please see guidelines for description of attachment requirements.

Implementation Timeline
[Choose File] No file chosen

VERP Policies and Procedures
[Choose File] No file chosen

Court Navigator Policies and Procedures
[Choose File] No file chosen

Intake Form
(Click **HERE** for template)
[Choose File] No file chosen

Eligibility Form
(Click **HERE** for template)
[Choose File] No file chosen

Any MOUs, Letters of Commitment or Related Agreements
[Choose File] No file chosen

Match Documentation
[Choose File] No file chosen

Advisory Committee
[Choose File] No file chosen

(Optional)
[Choose File] No file chosen

Attachments

- Implementation Timeline

- VERP Policies and Procedures

- Court Navigator Policies and Procedures

- Intake Form (Optional if using DHCD template)

- Eligibility Form (Optional if using DHCD template)

- Any MOUs, Letters of commitment or Related Agreements

- Match Documentation

- Advisory Committee

- Optional Attachments

Application Status

- Multiple users can work on, edit, and review application materials.

- CAMS will save the application as <u>Incomplete</u>

- Applicant may return repeatedly to CAMS to work on application.

- Be sure all work on the application is saved in CAMS

- Once the application is submitted, the status will change from Incomplete to <u>Pending</u>.

Pilot Application Evaluation Criteria

Pilot Application Evaluation Criteria			
Criteria	**Scoring Elements**	**Max. Points (*Without* Court Navigator Program)**	**Max. Points (*With* Court Navigator Program)**
Need	Pre-pandemic rate of evictions; targeted localities	**30**	**30**
Approach	Inclusion of those with lived experience; policies and procedures; Advisory Committee; best practices; local collaboration; pilot components	**40**	**30**
	Court navigator program policies and procedures; existing MOU between organization and courts to provide services; collaboration between courts and service provider(s)	**N/A**	**10**
Capacity	Experience serving low-income households, providing financial assistance , mediation, case management and regional partnerships VERP Mid-Year Report outcomes (current VERP grantees only)	**30**	**30**
TOTAL –must score at least 60 points.		**100**	**100**

Pilot Application Evaluation Criteria

Pilot Application Evaluation Criteria		
Additional Points (Scoring Preference)		
Program partners with local government and/or housing authority (Letter of Commitment required)	**5**	**5**
Program has a regional scope (serves more than one locality)	**5**	**5**
Local Match	**5**	**5**
Program serves one priority area (see geographic targeting on pages 4 and 5)	**5**	**5**
Program serves more than one priority area	**10**	**10**

Assistance

Technical CAMS Questions:

CAMS Help Desk

CamsHelp@dhcd.virginia.gov

*Do not wait until the last minute – Resource Team is not available after business hours

Application Questions:

Senta Gorrie

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