

# reimagine redevelopment

Urban Redevelopment Authority  
of Pittsburgh

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## **Application for Funding**

**HOUSING OPPORTUNITY FUND (HOF)**

**Legal Assistance Program – Program Administrators**

**Application for Funding Issue Date: April 21, 2023**

**Proposal Deadline: May 19, 2023**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **a. Summary of Project**

The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (“URA”) Housing Opportunity Fund (“HOF”) requests proposals from for-profit and not-for-profit service agencies and/or legal clinics to provide Program Administration and/or Resource Navigation and Outreach services for the Legal Assistance Program (“LAP”).

### **b. HOF Background**

The HOF is a housing trust fund that has been established in the City of Pittsburgh (City) to support the development and preservation of affordable and accessible housing within the City’s boundaries. The HOF has allocated funding for seven (7) programs to carry out this mission in 2023: Homeowner Assistance Program, Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistance Program for first-time homebuyers, Housing Stabilization Program for at-risk renters, Legal Assistance Program, For-Sale Housing Strategy Program, Rental Gap Program to fund the creation/preservation of affordable housing, and the Small Landlord Fund.

Funds appropriated to the HOF are to be invested in accordance with an annual allocation plan (AAP) created by the Advisory Board and approved by City Council and the Governing Board. The URA Board of Directors serves as the Housing Opportunity Fund’s Governing Board (Governing Board). The Housing Opportunity Fund Advisory Board (Advisory Board) is comprised of seventeen (17) persons appointed by the Mayor to four-year staggered terms.

For the 2023 Fiscal Year, \$500,000 has been allocated for the HOF LAP

### **c. Definitions**

For the purposes of this application, the following terms shall mean:

- “URA” refers to Urban Redevelopment Authority
- “HOF” refers to Housing Opportunity Fund
- “LAP” refers to Legal Assistance Program
- “Recipients” refers to LAP recipients
- “Program Administrators” refers to non-profit agencies and or legal service providers

## **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

The main objective of the HOF LAP is to provide a variety of free housing legal services to eligible tenants and homeowners who live in the City of Pittsburgh.

The HOF LAP is designed to assist participants to stabilize their current housing, facilitate access to appropriate housing and prevent homelessness. The program provides legal eviction prevention services including legal consultation and representation for eviction defense as well as landlord-tenant mediation services. The program also provides foreclosure prevention and tangled title services to eligible homeowners. Full HOF LAP Program Guidelines are attached to this APPLICATION FOR FUNDING ([EXHIBIT A](#)).

## **APPLICATION FOR FUNDING OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (APPLICATION FOR FUNDING) is to solicit not-for-profit service agencies and/or legal clinics ("Program Administrators") to apply for and administer HOF LAP services. The URA will enter into contracts with the Program Administrators and reimburse them for costs incurred on a per household basis upon completion of work. Contracts will be for funds allocated to HOF LAP in the 2023 HOF Annual Allocation Plan. An option to extend contracts to cover future HOF allocation years and/or other sources that become available to the URA may be included.

Program Administrators must request payments on the proper URA form(s), duly signed and approved by the Program Administrator, for a specified dollar amount. The payment request must include information about the household/recipient helped (including income information). The URA will only reimburse for approved costs incurred.

Program Administrators may expect to be reimbursed within 2-4 weeks upon submission of appropriate URA forms but may take up to 60 days.

### **Program Administrator Responsibilities**

- a. Provide Resource Navigation services to households seeking legal assistance
- b. Conduct targeted outreach to households identified as having a need for housing legal services
- c. Determine recipient eligibility (both income and circumstances).
- d. Determine the package of assistance and services which are appropriate for the household's circumstances.
- e. Submit reimbursement forms to URA for payments, not more than monthly.
- f. Provide supportive services to household, as appropriate;
- g. Monitor household success, including housing stability:
  - i. For one-time and/or longer term assistance – at least three contacts, at 1 month, 3 months, and six months post assistance.
  - ii. Reporting of outcome of legal representation in eviction defense.
- h. Terminate support when no longer needed or when household is no longer meeting program participation requirements.
- i. Coordinate regular meetings and touch points with all LAP Program Administrators and URA Staff to ensure the program's efficiency and effectiveness.
- j. Maintain files documenting recipient eligibility including income, funding received, services received, and termination from program.
- k. Provide monitoring reports to URA on a monthly basis.

***\*\*The LAP program has a highly collaborative operating model and not every responsibility is expected to be carried out to the same degree by every Program Administrator. Applicants should complete this application with a focus on the responsibilities their respective organization is well positioned to provide. While not every Administrator will carry out every responsibility listed above, every organization will be expected to collaborate with the other Program Administrators to provide seamless service to LAP clients at every step in the process.\*\****

### **Program Administrator Compensation**

Program delivery funds may be provided to non-profit Program Administrators for reasonable and necessary program delivery expenses including program delivery expenses such as an allocation for staff time.

- a. Program delivery funds must not exceed 10% of the total contract that the Program Administrator has with the URA and must be clearly documented.
- b. Program delivery funds will be budgeted annually and paid either on a monthly or quarterly basis.
- c. For program administrators that provide eviction-related legal services, the program administrator must provide hourly-rates for legal services and an estimate as to the number of hours per client.

### **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Households receiving assistance under HOF LAP must meet the requirements below:

#### **a. Recipient Requirements:**

- i. Each household must reside in the City.
- ii. The annual gross household income of each tenant recipient must be at or below 50% of the Pittsburgh Area Median Income (AMI) with adjustments made for family size (Refer to [EXHIBIT B](#) for AMI Chart). The annual gross household income of each homeowner recipient must be at or below 80% of AMI with adjustments made for family size (Refer to [EXHIBIT B](#) for AMI Chart) The income limits will be specified and set in the funding award.
- iii. Determination of the recipient's annual income shall be based on current income projected from the date of application. Annual income should be based on the gross income from all sources before taxes or withholding from all household members who are not minors or full-time students. Recipient's must show pay stubs issued within the last 30 days and employment verification. A self-certification of one's income will also be required to verify the recipient's income history. The most recent federal income tax form will also be required to verify the applicant's income history.

#### **b. Property Requirements:**

Residences of the recipient households must meet the following requirements:

- I. Eligible properties must be located inside the City.

#### **c. Required and Eligible Uses of Funding for Housing Legal Services:**

- I. Housing Legal Services can include:
  - a. Mediation Services
  - b. Limited Legal Consultation
  - c. Full Legal Representation
    - a. For Full Legal Representation, neither HOF nor the URA can commit to continued funding for any legal services provided through the Program for more than twenty-four (24) months.

## **FUNDING TERMS, LIMITS, and OTHER RESTRICTIONS**

### **a. Funding Type**

Funding to social service providers and/or law clinics to administer the Legal Assistance program and/or provide legal consultation and resource navigation services to households facing eviction.

### **b. Payments and Procedures**

Program Administrators must request payments on the proper URA form(s), duly signed and approved by the Program Administrator, for a specified dollar amount. The payment request must include information about the household helped (including income information). The URA will only reimburse for approved costs incurred.

### **Questions and Answers**

All inquiries should be submitted via email to Breanna Benjamin – [bbenjamin@ura.org](mailto:bbenjamin@ura.org).

### **Additional Information**

Additional information regarding the URA may be found on the URA's website at [www.ura.org](http://www.ura.org).

## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

All application submissions are to include a completed HOF LAP Administrator Application Narrative (EXHIBIT C) and also include all attachments listed in the Attachments Checklist (EXHIBIT D).

The Application Narrative is comprised of the following sections:

- I. Organization Information
- II. Readiness to Proceed
- III. Organizational Experience
- IV. Financial Capacity
- V. Approach to Providing Social Services and Financial Planning

All sections of the Application Narrative are mandatory and must be completed to the best of the applicant's ability to be considered a complete application.

**All submissions must be electronically submitted to [bbenjamin@ura.org](mailto:bbenjamin@ura.org)**

## **SELECTION CRITERIA & REVIEW PROCESS**

Fully completed applications will be evaluated in accordance to the Evaluation Criteria for the HOF LAP (EXHIBIT F), after which URA staff will present the application for funding to the HOF Advisory Board.

### **a. Applications will be evaluated using the criteria below:**

- I. Feasibility Criteria
  1. Readiness to Proceed
  2. Organizational Experience
  3. Financial Capacity
  4. Approach to Providing Social Services

### **b. Preference will be given to Program Administrators who:**

- i. Provides service citywide
- ii. Have the ability to front all payments to the households and invoice the URA on a reimbursable basis
- iii. Have a strong track record of working collaboratively with other organizations to achieve common objectives

**c. Application Review**

After the May 19, 2023 proposal deadline, all proposals for Program Administrators will be evaluated by HOF staff, upon which a recommendation for 2023 HOF Legal Assistance Program Administrators will be presented to the HOF Advisory Board.

Upon Advisory Board approval, selected Program Administrators will then be recommended to the URA Board of Directors for approval.

HOF Legal Assistance funds are not guaranteed to any proposer, regardless of the Proposal Evaluation Criteria score, and are subject to availability.

**d. Guidelines**

The URA Board of Directors may approve awards to Program Administrators in accordance with the HOF Legal Assistance Program Guidelines (EXHIBIT A) and this APPLICATION FOR FUNDING.

**e. Deadlines**

The Program Administrator must meet URA deadlines for submission of documents at each stage of the proposal process. Failure to meet the deadlines may result in the cancellation of the proposal and/or Program Administrator's loss of a priority position for Legal Assistance funding.

**f. Written Commitment Letter**

Approval shall be evidenced by a written commitment to the Program Administrator.

**g. Withdrawal of Application**

Respondents may withdraw their Housing Stabilization proposal at any time before final approval by giving written notice to the URA. The respondent shall bear any costs incurred for items related to their response.

**MINORITY and WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PARTICIPATION (MWBE)**

The URA has a long history of diversity and inclusion within all its programs and activities. The URA encourages the full participation of minority and women organizations and professionals in this effort. The URA will require that all Program Administrators demonstrate a good faith effort to obtain MWBE participation in work performed in connection with this program.

Any questions about MWBE standards should be directed to [mwbe@ura.org](mailto:mwbe@ura.org).

## **LEGAL INFORMATION**

The URA reserves the right to verify the accuracy of all information submitted. The URA shall be the sole judge as to which respondent(s) meet the selection criteria. The URA reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject any or all responses received, to waive any submission requirements contained within this APPLICATION FOR FUNDING, and to waive any irregularities in any submitted response.

By responding to this APPLICATION FOR FUNDING, proposers acknowledge that the URA has no liability to any individual or entity related to this RFP Application for Funding any proposal and/or the URA's use or nonuse of any such proposal.

## **APPEALS COMMITTEE**

The URA will establish an Appeals Committee whose purpose is to review HOF HSP Program Guideline(s) waiver requests. The Appeals Committee will recommend approval or disapproval of the request to the Director of the Housing Opportunity Fund. The Director of the Housing Opportunity Fund can choose to accept or reject the recommendation of the Appeals Committee.

## **CERTIFICATIONS**

In accordance with 24 CFR Part 8, the Authority certifies its compliance with the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended on June 2, 1988.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION CERTIFICATION**

The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh abides by all applicable laws and regulations regarding nondiscrimination and refrains from discriminating on the basis of age, race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, political or union affiliation, and/or disability. No person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination solely on the basis of any of the above factors under the loan and grant programs operated by the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh.

## **LIST OF EXHIBITS**

[EXHIBIT A – HOF LAP Program Guidelines](#)

[EXHIBIT B – 2022 Area Median Income Chart](#)

[EXHIBIT C – Application Narrative](#)

[EXHIBIT D – Attachments Checklist](#)

[EXHIBIT E – HOF LAP Proposal Scoring Criteria](#)