VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot Supplemental Funding 2024

Application Due Date: February 29, 2024

How-to-Apply Webinar

February 7th, 2024, at 10:00 am and 1:30 pm

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During the presentation, please submit all questions to the chat.

We will pause for Q&A throughout the webinar and at the end.

Background

2016

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

2020

- Special Session, $3.3 million was included in the budget for the Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP).

- 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, childcare costs, case management and housing counseling.

2021

- A second year of funding for the pilot was awarded by the Governor and the General Assembly during the 2021 session

- The second round of VERP funding (VERP 2.0) addressed evictions from a systemic level through requiring coordination with the courts, incentivizing regional cooperation, and setting aside funds for optional court navigation pilot programs.

2022

- A third year of funding (VERP 3.0) awarded during the 2022 session by the Governor and the General Assembly

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Grant Overview

- VERP 3.0 requires Grantees to reduce evictions at the systemic level.

- This includes working with stakeholders involved in the eviction process (i.e., landlords, courts, Legal Aid and schools) with the goal of creating a coordinated eviction prevention and diversion system

- VERP 3.0 is being administered on a two-year funding cycle. DHCD has issued two-year grants (January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2024) as a result of a competitive application process.

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Goals of VERP 3.0 (SF 2024)

- To address *systemic issues* impacting the rate of evictions in Virginia.

- 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 create a coordinated eviction *prevention* and *diversion* system.

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Geographic Targeting

VERP funding 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. Existing VERP grantees will also receive a scoring preference. The service areas of existing VERP grantees are highlighted in yellow below.

- 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; however, more than one application from the same locality is welcome to apply.

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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.

- **Applicants must include *updated* MOUs, award letters and/or letters of commitment as part of their application submission.**

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Systems Change

- Systems change is defined as a strategic approach to problem-solving that focuses on how stakeholders influence a problem's *causes* rather than just treating its *symptoms.*

- Systemic change requires adjustments or transformations in the policies and practices that underlie the societal issue at stake. It requires the collaboration of a diverse set of players and can take place on a local or state level.

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

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Supplemental Funding Grant Eligible Applicants

- Units of local government

- Non-profit organizations

- Planning District Commissions (PDCs)

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

- Must be registered in CAMS and not have outstanding issues.

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Applicant Requirements

- Registered Centralized Application and Management System (CAMS) profile.

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

  - Subgrantees are allowable with VERP. Any applicable agreements or Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) **must** cover CY 2024 and be submitted with the application for this pilot and are subject to DHCD approval.

- DHCD may not enter into a contract with agencies that have outstanding audit findings, IRS findings, DHCD monitoring findings or other compliance issues.

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Changes from Calendar Year 2023

Eligible Activities Change:
- Moving costs and Application fees ARE allowable expenses, only for participants whose incomes are between 31% and 80% AMI.

Changes from Calendar Year 2023

Optional: Court Navigation
- New applicants may not have a court navigation program in place, so this funding opportunity does not require court navigation as a program element, but it is still an eligible expense.
- Preference points will be given for applicants with a court navigation program.

Pilot Program Design

Activities must include:

- Eviction prevention assistance
- Eviction diversion assistance, including legal aid and tenant-landlord mediation
- Initiatives and/or partnerships that promote systems change
- ***Optional:** Court navigation*
- Outreach and resource navigation
- Language access
- Lived Experience
- Coordination with partners and stakeholders
- Referral protocols for eligible applicants to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and Medicaid

Pilot Program Design

Eviction prevention assistance

- Programs must provide housing financial assistance and stabilization support services available before a pay or quit notice is filed.

Eviction diversion assistance

- Programs must provide housing financial assistance and stabilization support services available after an unlawful detainer is filed

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

Initiatives and/or partnerships that promote 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.

Pilot Program Design:
Court Navigation - *Optional*

- A court navigation program is an optional element for VERP Supplemental Funding.

- The purpose of 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

- In order to receive preference points, applicants must have existing partnerships with courts and legal aid providers through Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) prior to submitting their VERP application.

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Pilot Program Design

<u>Outreach and resource navigation</u>
- Grantee must proactively seek out households at risk of eviction

<u>Language access</u>
- Language access should be prioritized in program design and outreach strategies

<u>Lived experience</u>
- 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

<u>Coordination with partners and stakeholders</u>
- Grantees must actively ensure there is coordination among service providers and stakeholders

<u>Referrals to SNAP, TANF, WIC, LIHEAP, and Medicaid</u>
- Grantees are expected to develop referral protocols with their local Department of Social Services (DSS) offices in order to refer eligible applicants to benefits

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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 and/or Bar Association
    - Representative of Public Housing Authority
    - Representative of associations representing landlords such as Realtors and Apartment Management Associations

(Continued on the next slide)

Local VERP Advisory Committee (continued)

- Housing Counseling Agency/Program
- Conflict Resolution (Alternate Dispute Resolution)
- Person with lived experience of eviction or housing insecurity
- Organizations representing communities of color, particularly Black communities
- Organizations with experience serving Spanish speakers and other Non-English speakers based on demographic needs
- Tenant advocacy groups (if present in the community)
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

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Eligible Activities

- **Housing Financial Assistance**
  - Examples: Short-term (up to six months) rent assistance, Ongoing rent contributions (up to one month), Rent and utility arrears (up to six months), Utilities assistance, *Moving Costs, and Application fees.*
- **Stabilization Support Services**
  - Examples: work supports, childcare assistance, transportation
- **Prevention Activities**
  - Examples: case management, capacity building, housing counseling, programmatic staff
- **Diversion Activities**
  - Examples: Court navigation, legal expenses, mediation services, transportation to court, programmatic staff
- **Outreach and Engagement**
  - Examples: Advertisement fees, travel, programmatic staff
- **Administrative Costs (5% limit of total funds expended)**
  - Examples: data collection and reporting, obtaining program audits, staff training

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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 of the application. 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

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"Housing First" Approach

- Grantees are expected to follow a Housing First approach across their entire program.

- This approach is guided by the understanding that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending substance use issues.

- VERP assessment tools should use a Housing First approach and should not screen out applicants solely based on a lack of household income.

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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 and a program evaluator to develop and implement a local or regional process to collect eviction data.

- DHCD works with a third party to help evaluate the impact of the VERP program.

- It is expected that grantees will participate with the evaluator in data collection, interviews, etc. to successfully evaluate the program.

Reporting

- VERP grantees will be required to submit **up to two reports** in CAMS.

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

- Grantees must be able to track and report program activities, project participant data, and spending separately from other activities. Grantees will report on outputs, such as the number of persons served and demographic characteristics of persons served, program funds expended by activity type, as well as outcomes related to housing stability.

Overview of Application Process

- Deadline: 11:59PM on February 29, 2024

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

- Applications will be evaluated as submitted

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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 Program Search
4. Click Apply on the top menu
5. Select Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP) 2024 – Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (2024) from the dropdown menu
6. Click Go
7. Click Apply

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.

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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 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 (5% limit)	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
TOTAL	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00

Budget Narrative:

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Narrative Information

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

Please answer following questions:

Please describe any significant changes in your VERP Program since the FY 23 application.

Please describe the impact VERP has made on your system thus far and how additional funding will improve your eviction prevention and diversion efforts in your community.

What best practices has your organization identified in implementing VERP in your community?

What opportunities has your organization identified to improve program implementation in your community?

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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

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

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

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

Required Attachments

Updated Versions of:

- Implementation Timeline
- VERP Policies and Procedures
- Court Navigator Policies and Procedures (If applicable)
- 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

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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*	*Maximum Points*
Need	Pre-pandemic rate of evictions; targeted localities	**20**
Approach	Inclusion of those with lived experience; policies and procedures; Advisory Committee; best practices; local collaboration; pilot components	**40**
Capacity	Experience serving low-income households, providing financial assistance , mediation, case management and regional partnerships VERP Mid-Year Report outcomes (current VERP grantees only)	**40**
TOTAL –must score at least 60 points.		**100**

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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**
Program has a regional scope (serves more than one locality)	**5**
Local Match	**5**
Program serves one priority area (see geographic targeting on slide 7)	**5**
Program is currently operated by an existing VERP grantee	**10**
Court navigator program policies and procedures; existing MOU between organization and courts to provide services; collaboration between courts and service provider(s)	**10**

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Data Resources

RVA Eviction Lab
- Website includes quarterly reports on Virginia evictions and research briefs on the impact of eviction on the larger community

Legal Services Corporation (Trends in Eviction Tracker)
- Shows monthly eviction filings by city and county relative to pre-COVID levels; also includes eviction filings by week

American Community Survey (ACS 2020 5-Year Estimates)
- Census data tables searchable by city/county and census tract
  - **B25008-** Total Population in Occupied Housing Units by Tenure
  - **B25032-** Tenure by Units in Structure
  - **B25004-** Vacancy Status
  - **B25070-** Gross Rent As a Percentage of Household Income in the Past 12 Months
  - **B25064-** Median Gross Rent (Dollars)
  - **B25119-** Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months By Tenure
  - **DP03-** Selected Economic Characteristics

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 Leslie

senta.leslie@dhcd.virginia.gov

Questions?

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