

Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP) 3.0 Supplemental Funding Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is VERP?

Recognizing the benefits of eviction reduction efforts, the General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed a budget during the 2020 Special Session, allocating \$3.3 million to implement the Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP). The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) was directed to design and implement the pilot.

VERP's mission is to establish a coordinated system that makes evictions, when they cannot be avoided, rare, brief and humane. prevents evictions. In cases where evictions cannot be avoided, VERP works to make evictions will outline strategies to divert them once households receive an unlawful detainer. This approach involves implementing a collective impact model, wherein community organizations collaborate to ensure households promptly access resources to stabilize their housing situations. Learn more [here](#).

The VERP program, managed by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), collaborates with local organizations statewide. It distributes \$5.9 million in state grant funds, allotted over a two-year duration, to prevent and divert evictions. These funds are designated to bolster local initiatives aimed at establishing or strengthening a systemic strategy to prevent and divert evictions. Grantees will be chosen through a competitive application process at the local level.

2. What is VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding?

VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding requires grantees to collaborate 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 operates on a two-year funding cycle, but **this VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding application is specifically for funds that must be spent by December 31, 2024**. More details can be found in the [2024 VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding Program Guidelines](#).

3. What is the difference between *eviction prevention* and *eviction diversion*?

Eviction prevention services are provided *before* a household receives an unlawful detainer from the court, and may include short-term financial assistance, case management for housing stabilization, and mediation between landlords and tenants. Eviction diversion services are *after* households receive unlawful detainers, and may include negotiation assistance, outlining payment plans, and Legal Aid's counsel.

4. What is the total funding available to applicants?

\$465,000. These funds may be divided among multiple applicants and must be spent by December 31, 2024.

5. What is the application deadline?

February 29, 2024.

6. When will the VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding dollars be distributed to selected applicants?

VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding applications will be scored by the VERP Team by March 15th and then forwarded to the Governor's office for final review and approval. A specific deadline for the Governor's approval cannot be guaranteed, therefore we cannot predict a precise timeline for funding distribution to Supplemental Funding grantees.

7. Who can apply?

Eligible applicants are nonprofits, local government units, and planning district commissions with a history of meeting lower-income household needs are eligible. Landlords are ineligible but encouraged to partner with grantees. Grantees may partner with subgrantees, subject to DHCD approval. Partnerships with local governments and public housing authorities are encouraged. VERP funding must complement other available funding sources and cannot replace mainstream resources. Grantees should avoid duplicating existing programs; for instance, if an eviction diversion program already exists in the community, the grantee should strengthen it rather than developing another.

8. Who is VERP designed to assist?

VERP is dedicated to assisting households who meet specific income thresholds and housing instability risks. Grantees must prioritize screening households into the program rather than imposing unnecessary eligibility restrictions. Eligible expenses include housing financial assistance, stabilization support services, prevention activities, diversion activities, outreach and engagement, and administrative costs, including:

- Application fees
- Utilities
- Rental payments
- Relocation expenses (for applicants between 31%-80% Average Median Income (AMI))
- Transportation costs
- Childcare costs

9. Can any Virginia organization apply for VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding?

While VERP is a statewide program, this specific Supplemental Funding tranche must be awarded to either:

1. an existing VERP 3.0 grantee, OR
2. an organization that is not located in any of the following localities:
 - Albemarle County
 - Buchanan County
 - City of Charlottesville
 - City of Chesapeake
 - Dickenson County
 - Gloucester County
 - City of Hampton
 - Henry County
 - Isle of Wight County
 - James City County
 - Lee County
 - City of Martinsville
 - Mathews County
 - New Kent County
 - City of Newport News
 - City of Norfolk
 - City of Norton
 - City of Poquoson
 - City of Portsmouth
 - Russell County
 - Scott County
 - Town of Scottsville
 - City of Williamsburg
 - Wise County
 - York County

10. VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding applicants from the following Virginia localities will receive scoring preferences due to their community's high eviction rates and/or participation in the General Assembly's pilot eviction diversion program:

- Accomack County
- Chesterfield
- Danville
- Henrico County
- Hopewell
- Petersburg
- Prince George County
- Richmond
- Virginia Beach
- Current VERP Grantees will receive a scoring preference as well.

11. If our organization does not apply for VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding, when can we apply for the next VERP grant cycle?

VERP 4.0 program applications will be available in the summer of 2024. VERP 4.0 will span a two-year grant cycle, from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2026.

12. Are applicants required to have a local match to be eligible for VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding?

No, VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding does not mandate a match; however, applications with match contributions (in-kind and cash) receive scoring preferences. Local COVID or other emergency resources may count toward the local match commitment. Applicants must include updated MOUs, award letters, or letters of commitment in their submissions.

13. Can organizations currently being audited apply for VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding?

No, DHCD cannot enter any contract with a grantee that has any outstanding audit findings or compliance issues. Grantees must adhere to standard accounting practices, maintain compliance with IRS and DHCD regulations, and undergo organizational assessments if necessary.

14. What is the administrative fee for VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding?

Administrative costs encompass various expenses related to managing the grant after its award. These costs include accounting, reporting, and associated staff salaries, program staff training, and case management. DHCD requires grantees to track and report program activities, participant data, and spending separately. Grantees must submit biannual reports

to assess program impact and effectiveness. Failure to meet reporting requirements may affect future grant reimbursements and funding opportunities.

VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding allows grantees a 5% administrative fee of expended funds. Administrative costs may not exceed 5% of the total grant award. If the actual expenditure is less than the contracted grant award, administrative costs will be capped at 5% of funds expended. Grantees failing to utilize the full contracted grant award may need to return administrative funds.

15. Are there any requirements regarding Advisory Council formation for VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding?

While having a complete Advisory Council is required, indicating efforts and potential members suffice for the initial application, with completion expected by the grant period start. Local Advisory Councils are expected to work on reducing evictions by coordinating resources and addressing system-level challenges related to eviction prevention and diversion.

16. How does VERP define Court Navigation?

Court Navigation aims to enhance communication between judges and eviction prevention staff, aid tenants navigating the court system, and encourage mediation between tenants and landlords. Activities may include assisting tenants with court processes, referring them to legal aid services, providing emotional support, and facilitating communication between tenants and landlords.

17. Is Court Navigation required for VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding?

Court navigation is optional for VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding but is required for traditional VERP grantees and will be required for VERP 4.0.

18. Does VERP 3.0 Supplemental Funding provide program intake forms?

Grantees may use an intake form provided by the VERP team or they may use their own, pending DHCD approval, to ensure it captures the necessary data elements for VERP program monitoring.