

# United Way of Greater Cleveland

## Tenant Resources - Request for Proposals



### Background

Cleveland Tenants Organization, a nonprofit that maintained the tenant-renter information line and offered eviction diversion services, ceased operations in 2018 and the need for housing services and assistance has consistently increased. Many organizations in the Greater Cleveland area provide services and assistance to tenants. However, despite the number of organizations doing this work, housing data reflects an increasing demand for housing services and assistance.

In 2023, United Way's 211 program fielded over 100,000 calls. Housing was the number one need requested by callers, accounting for 27 percent of all calls to 211. Navigators connected over 12,000 individuals to rental assistance, 9,000 to emergency and homeless shelter services, 4,500 to rental listings, 2,300 to low-income and subsidized housing, and 900 to eviction prevention assistance.

In 2023, United Way released its triennial Community Needs Assessment, which found that Cleveland remains the second-poorest large city in the U.S. Over 30 percent of households in Cuyahoga County spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing, and almost 40 percent of renters face unaffordable housing. In addition, 56 percent of single female household renters face housing unaffordability, and older adult renters also face significant rent burdens.

Per the recent Right to Counsel Evaluation report conducted by Sout, since July 2020, Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, through Right to Counsel, has represented almost 3,500 households which is over 12,000 individuals and 7,900 children in City of Cleveland Eviction cases. Cleveland Housing Court eviction levels are still below pre-Covid eviction levels; however, the number of available rental housing units has steadily declined in the past four years.

United Way is accepting proposals from current Greater Cleveland direct service nonprofit organizations to increase services and resources in the tenant housing ecosystem, with the goal of creating systemic change.

The need for additional tenant housing services, resources and capacity is crucial. As such United Way of Greater Cleveland (UWGC) is seeking the professional services of current direct service organizations to provide additional capacity within the tenant housing ecosystem through the categories of **(1) Tenant Education and Organizing, (2) Emergency Housing Services and (3) Legal and Mediation Services.**

## RFP Overview

United Way of Greater Cleveland (UWGC) is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) and invites interested service providers to submit their proposal for (1) Tenant Education and Organizing, (2) Emergency Housing Services and/or (3) Legal and Mediation Services. Applicants can apply for one or more of the focus areas above.



The RFP budget should not exceed \$350,000 for Tenant Education and Organizing, \$250,000 for Emergency Housing Services and \$150,000 for Legal and Mediation Services over a 3-year grant term. The anticipated grant term will start July 1 2024. Work is being done to create additional and sustainable funding sources to continue the work following the conclusion of the grant term.

There will be multiple awards granted under this RFP, encompassing the four identified categories. Proposals submitted should be creative and aligned with the needs of the community. Innovative approaches as solutions are welcome and encouraged, as are multiple organizations coordinating and submitting under one application. Proposal submissions must encompass one or more of the identified categories and concisely illustrate how additional funding will increase capacity within the housing ecosystem, provide additional resources to tenants and/or increase housing stability for Cleveland residents.

***Tenant Education and Organizing*** – Provide tenant workshops and trainings promoting housing rights, tenant union formation and empowerment. When appropriate, support tenant organizing efforts to resolve collective tenant issues.

***Emergency Housing Services*** – Provide direct tenant emergency assistance (ex. Transitional housing, housing vouchers, rental assistance, essential appliance replacement, etc..)

***Legal and Mediation Services*** – Provide tenant education and engagement in pre- and post-eviction filings.

## Eligibility

Greater Cleveland based non-profit organizations older than 3 years with a geographic service area inclusive of the City of Cleveland. Organizations must have relevant program experience, demonstrated financial strength and stability, and demonstrated support from their board of directors.

Respondents must offer services in an accessible and non-discriminatory manner regardless of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, citizenship status, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, or any other protected class.

## Reporting Expectations

Selected organizations will be required to provide monthly program outcome reports on the following metrics, as pertinent to the category. An evaluator will be selected and may request additional or fewer reported outcomes, than the list below:



#### Education and Advocacy

- Number of tenants served
- Number of residents trained
- Number of trainings held by category
- Number of outreach events held
- Number of tenant organizing efforts

#### Emergency Housing Services

- Number of tenants served
- Number of transitional housing nights provided (as applicable)
- Number of housing vouchers provided (as applicable)
- Average housing voucher amount (as applicable)
- Number of tenants receiving rental assistance (as applicable)
- Average rental assistance amount (as applicable)
- Number of emergency appliance replacement, by type (as applicable)
- Average cost of emergency appliance replacement, by type (as applicable)

#### Legal and Mediation Assistance

- Number of tenants served
- Number of tenants educated on legal rights / processes (*as applicable*)
- Number of tenants who received mediation services (*as applicable*)
- Number of tenants referred to Right to Counsel

#### Proposal Submission

Maximum proposal length, including title page, cover letter, proposal, qualifications, and budget, should not exceed 12 pages, although shorter proposals are welcome. Please use fonts no smaller than 11 point. A lens of race, diversity, equity, and inclusion is critical to addressing social needs.

Completed proposals should be submitted electronically in pdf format via email to Ashley King, [Aking@unitedwaycleveland.org](mailto:Aking@unitedwaycleveland.org) no later than 5:00PM EST on April 5, 2024. Late submissions will **not** be considered. *Submitted proposals must have the following components:*

- a) Organizational contact information
  - i. Organization name, mission, tax ID, address, phone number and website
  - ii. Contact name, title, address, phone number, email address



- b) Project Description: Detailed project description encompassing one or more of the four pillars of service. This description should incorporate:
  - i. The program workflow
  - ii. Relevant organization and program milestones
  - iii. Current and projected number of clients served
  - iv. Short and long-term methods to measure program impact and effectiveness (reporting system(s) and tools)
  - v. Any potential program challenges and how they will be addressed
  - vi. Program's impact towards increasing tenant housing stability
  - vii. Relevant program partnerships
- c) Budget Proposal: Completed category itemized budget template and budget narrative
- d) Financial Statements: Most recent 990 and three years of audits
- e) Board of Directors roster
- f) Statement of Diversity and Inclusion
- g) Staff chart, including existing staff who be assigned to this project and what positions (if any) will be created

### **Submission Review and Process**

Submission will be reviewed internally by UWGC for experience, completeness, program design, clients served capacity, community engagement, organization and financial stability and commitment to increasing housing stability.

### **Selection Process**

Proposal submissions will be evaluated based upon the above criteria and one round of interviews. Selected organizations will be subject to final budget, scope of services and reporting discussions. Upon final approvals, contracts will be drafted and executed.

### **Timeline**

Event	Date(s)
RFP Proposals Due	April 5, 2024 at 5pm
Proposal Review	April 8 – April 12, 2024
Applicant Interviews	April 15- April 22, 2024
Final Determinations	April 25, 2024
Organizations Notified	April 30, 2024
Contract Term Start Date	July 1, 2024

### **Questions**

Any questions or needed clarifications regarding this RFP should be emailed to Ashley King at [aking@unitedwaycleveland.org](mailto:aking@unitedwaycleveland.org) by April 2, 2024.