Request for Information (RFI) from Community- and Faith-Based Organizations to provide services to the Alameda County Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) as

“ERAP Application Coordinators”

This is an Electronic Submission

Submissions Accepted on a Rolling Basis

Submit questions to:
Catherine Valdez, Alameda County Housing and Community Development
Email: Catherine.valdez@acgov.org
Notice of Funding Availability – Alameda County ERAP

On December 27, 2020 the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 was signed into law, providing over $2.3 trillion in economic relief nationwide from the COVID-19 pandemic. This statute includes $25 billion for rental assistance funding for qualified tenants that have been unable to pay rent because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Within Alameda County, the Cities of Fremont and Oakland (with populations above 200,000) and the County on behalf of all other cities and the unincorporated county, received an allocation of funding for Emergency Rental Assistance. Subsequently, the State of California, which also received funding, further allocated funding to the County and its cities to assist in bringing tenants current with their rents.

Alameda County received $29 million in Consolidated Appropriations Act funds (CAA) directly from the Federal treasury, and an additional $35 million in CAA funds from the State of California to address back-owed rent. Subsequently, The American Rescue Plan (ARPA) made $46 million in funding available to States and local jurisdictions also to assist households unable to pay their rent or utilities. ARPA was enacted on March 11, 2021 in response to the COVID-19 public health and economic crisis.

The County funded the Alameda County Housing Secure Program, operated by Centro Legal de la Raza, to operate the application database and online web-portal, review applications, and cut checks. The County is issuing this Request for Information (“RFI”) to contract with community and faith-based organizations (“CBOs” and “FBOs”) who will participate in assisting hard to reach, low-income populations facing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 crisis and in need of emergency rental assistance.

The County will provide contracts and funding for CBO and FBO staff to serve as County’s “ERAP Application Coordinators”. The ERAP Application Coordinators are instrumental to the application submittal process. They will be required to help low-income tenants to fill out and complete their application and offer one-on-one technical assistance to submit the application. They will also provide follow-up assistance to tenants once the application is submitted to Centro Legal and render support on the online web portal or to help them upload additional and required documentation. See “Grant Opportunity and Scope of Services” section of the RFI for detail on the expected services to be provided by the ERAP Application Coordinators.

Given the vital importance to ensure that the ERAP funds are utilized throughout Alameda County to preserve housing stability for the County’s most vulnerable populations, it has afforded this opportunity for all low-income renters who have been negatively affected by COVID-19 and unable to pay their rent to have a chance to apply to this important funding source.

The County is seeking to invest in trusted ambassadors, such as community, education and faith-based organizations, coalitions, grassroots programs, and others, to provide outreach to low-income renters economically impacted by COVID-19 and engage with those who need assistance to
complete their applications. Organizations selected through this RFI who serve as “ERAP Application Coordinators” will be invaluable in this outreach and engagement effort due to their deep connections with their communities and constituencies, and the assistance that they can provide connecting their communities to the ERAP assistance.

This Request for Information (“RFI”) includes background information on the Alameda County ERAP, the grant opportunity and scope of services, RFI submittal instructions, the County’s review process and evaluation criteria, and the RFI Submittal Form. We look forward to hearing from you!

Alameda County ERAP Implementation

Back End Administration

Since 2018, Alameda County has contracted with Centro Legal de la Raza (“Centro Legal”) to implement the County’s Anti-Displacement Program, known as “Alameda County Housing Secure.” Alameda County Housing Secure (ACHS) is a collaborative of legal service providers that have partnered to prevent the displacement of the County’s most vulnerable community members, through free legal services to lower income tenants and homeowners disproportionately impacted by the Bay Area housing crisis and COVID-19 pandemic and provision of emergency financial assistance. Since 2020, Centro Legal has served as the “back-end” administrator of the Alameda County ERAP, including managing the Program’s database, processing, and approving completed applications, and disbursing grant ERAP payments to eligible applicants by building and expand upon the ACHS model and utilize its existing program management infrastructure and partnerships.

Front End Outreach and Engagement Strategy

The goal is for Alameda County HCD to contract with organizations that will provide staff “Application Coordinators” who will provide one-on-one technical assistance on ERAP application to tenant applicants in communities most in need of emergency rental assistance and most at risk for not accessing the funds.
Grant Opportunity and Scope of Services

Alameda County HCD has issued this Request for Information ("RFI") to secure organizations to serve as Application Coordinators for the Alameda County ERAP. Alameda County HCD will provide funding to organizations who can demonstrate the ability to process applications to their lower income constituents who have been economically impacted by COVID-19, and which are in and/or serve clients or have members who live in the Alameda County jurisdictions covered by the Alameda County ERAP funding (i.e., all County jurisdictions except for cities of Fremont and Oakland).

Important Note: Organizations selected to serve as ERAP Application Coordinators will be assigned to assist those who need help with the application. Online training presentations are provided by HCD’s other partner organizations; and one-on-one application technical assistance is provided by staff through other ERAP Program contracts, including the County’s contract with Centro Legal.

Scope of Services for ERAP Application Coordinators

Selected ERAP Application Coordinator Organizations are expected to provide the following scope of services:

➢ Provide dedicated staff person(s) at organization who will be available to work one-on-one with tenants who need assistance completing the initial application for submittal through the Centro Legal online web application portal.
➢ Provide technical assistance to other applicants with incomplete applications.

Amount of Contract

The contracts for the Application Coordinator Program will be staff-based, FTE-based contracts. The amount of the contract shall be based on the organization’s proposed staffing plan and salary ranges for the proposed number of staff to be assigned to serve as Application Coordinators through the program. The County anticipates selecting several organizations to serve as Application Coordinators.

Term of Engagement

Successful organizations will enter into a contractual agreement with Alameda County anticipated to be approximately six months in duration. Alameda County HCD will serve as the main point of contact for the ERAP Application Coordinator organizations, including preparing the agreement for approval by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, overseeing the selected organizations’ implementation, issuing payments, and ensuring outcomes are met.

RFI Submittal Requirements, Other Procedures, and Instructions

RFI Submittal Due Date

Submittals in response to this RFI are accepted on a rolling basis.
How to Apply

The completed submittal and all required additional materials must be submitted electronically as PDF documents and emailed to Alameda County Community Development Specialist, Catherine Valdez, at Catherine.valdez@acgov.org.

RFI Submittal Organization

Submittals must include the following materials:

1) Completed and signed **RFI Submittal Form** (found as Exhibit A to this RFI)
2) Signed W-9 Form

RFI Submittal Requirements

RFI Submittal responses are to be straightforward, clear, concise, and specific to the information requested. Organization must provide responses to all information requested for the submittal to be considered complete. Submission to this RFI is at the organization’s expense and no part of the costs of preparation shall be reimbursed by the County. RFI Submittals in whole or in part, are NOT to be marked confidential or proprietary. County may refuse to consider any submittal or part thereof so marked. Submittals in response to this RFI may be subject to public disclosure. County shall not be liable in any way for disclosure of any such records. Please refer to the County’s website at: [http://www.acgov.org/gsa/departments/purchasing/policy/proprietary.htm](http://www.acgov.org/gsa/departments/purchasing/policy/proprietary.htm) for more information regarding Proprietary and Confidential information policies. Under California Public Records Act, all documents submitted in response to this RFI are considered part of the public record and will be made available to the public, upon request, following the application deadline.

How to Submit Questions

Questions should be emailed to Catherine Valdez at catherine.valdez@acgov.org. HCD will respond to all questions via email.

Revisions to RFI

If it becomes necessary to modify any aspect of this RFI, HCD will prepare an addendum and email it to each organization included on the email listservs used for original distribution of this RFI.

Modifications to Submittals

Organizations may not modify their submittal at any time after the due date, except in direct response to a request from HCD for clarification. Any submittal and proposed information items must be valid for at least 180 days after submission.

Expense of Preparation

HCD is not responsible for any expense incurred in preparation of submittals or taking any action in connection with the process, or for the costs of any services performed in connection with submittal, interviews, or approval process.
Reservation of Rights

HCD reserves the right to conduct any investigation of the qualifications of any organization submitting through this RFI that it deems appropriate, negotiate modifications to any of the items submitted, request additional information from any submitting organization, extend the deadline, reject any or all submittals, and waive any irregularities. HCD retains the right to negotiate the terms and services in any submittal. HCD retains the right to cancel this process, extend the deadline, re-start the process, or not select any provider.

Interviews

HCD reserves the right to conduct interviews in connection with responses submitted in response to this RFI. As such, all entities responding to this RFI should be prepared to participate in a video phone call (Zoom or similar format) upon request by HCD.

Right to Waive Irregularities

HCD reserves the right to:

1) Withdraw this solicitation at any time without prior notice and, furthermore, makes no representation that any contract will occur, and funds will be awarded to any respondent to this solicitation.
2) Waive any irregularities in the RFI process and to reject any and all submissions not in the best interest of Alameda County.
3) Request additional information and materials.
4) Fund any submittal at any amount in order to further Alameda County’s goals and objectives on homeless issues; and
5) Retain all documents submitted in response to this RFI.

Selection or rejection of a Submittal does not affect these rights.

Application Review and Funding Process

Minimum Eligibility Requirements

- Organization must be a 501(c)(3) (or have a fiscal sponsor) or be a governmental agency.
- Organization must provide a completed W-9 form or be a current vendor with Alameda County.
- Organization must be in Alameda County. Organizations headquartered outside of Alameda County must demonstrate successful experience, a local partnership, or expertise in serving the proposed constituency of Alameda County residents identified in the organization’s application.
- Organizations cannot discriminate based on race, color, national origin, citizenship status, creed, religion, religious affiliation, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, veteran status, or any other protected status under applicable law.

RFI submittals will be reviewed by County staff and/or consultants for completeness, meeting minimum eligibility requirements, and competitiveness. Incomplete submittals may not be accepted. Staff may ask clarifying questions of organizations and include this information in the review process.
Organizations that do meet the minimum eligibility requirements may be rejected, may not be rated, and may not be considered for selection.

Selection Criteria

Each complete submittal will be evaluated based on selection criteria described below. Those organizations that demonstrate the experience and ability to meet the scope of services and best meet the needs of the County for successful implementation of the Alameda County ERAP will be recommended to the Board of Supervisors for funding award.

Qualification of organizations under this RFI will be performed by County staff and/or others who have expertise or experience in emergency rental assistance and/or other housing program design, county-wide outreach and engagement planning and implementation, technical assistance programs, and community-based organizing efforts implemented in Alameda County. In addition, HCD will consult with city staff from jurisdictions in the Alameda County ERAP geographical areas to ensure that the final set of recommended organizations for the ERAP Outreach Ambassadors and Application Coordinators includes a broad range of organizations that will most successfully provide outreach to constituencies eligible for the ERAP assistance in all the geographical areas of the County covered by the Alameda County ERAP funding, and organizations with the qualifications and capacity to provide application technical assistance. HCD will notify submitting organizations of the qualification outcome.

The Selection Criteria have been established to prioritize funding for organizations that:

● Demonstrate a clear understanding of how the proposed activities will advance community knowledge about the Alameda County Emergency Rental Assistance Program and the County’s goal of ensuring that the funds are widely accessed by lower income renter populations that have been unable to pay rent because of loss of income due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

● Demonstrate their organizational connection to, and trusted relationship working with, the target population for the ERAP funds (lower income renters who need emergency rental assistance due to income losses associated with the COVID-19 pandemic).
ERAP Application Coordinators Selection Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION CONSTITUENCY ALIGNMENT</th>
<th>Organization’s constituency is aligned with the populations targeted to benefit most from the Alameda County ERAP (lower-income renters impacted by COVID-19, loss of income resulting in not being able to pay rent).</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATION EXPERIENCE AND TRACK RECORD</td>
<td>Organization has an established track record providing technical assistance to applicants for housing programs including emergency rental assistance and other publicly funded community development programs. Organization has a track record working with populations that live in an area covered by the geographical areas included in the Alameda County ERAP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATION’S PROPOSED APPLICATION COORDINATION PROGRAM</td>
<td>Organization’s proposed technical assistance and application coordination plan submitted with the RFI meets the Scope of Services for Application Coordinators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATION’S STAFFING CAPACITY</td>
<td>Organization has demonstrated capacity and experienced staffing to serve as an ERAP Application Coordinator organization.</td>
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Notice of Recommendation to Award/Not Award

After HCD evaluation of each RFI response, each submitting organization will be notified by email of the contract award recommendation(s), if any, by HCD. The document providing this notification is called the **Notice of Recommendation to Award/Not Award**. The Notice of Recommendation to Award/Not Award will provide the name of the organization being recommended for contract award, if any, and the names of all other parties that submitted responses. Debriefings for unsuccessful organizations will be scheduled and provided upon written request and will be restricted to discussion of only that submittal. Under no circumstances will any discussion be conducted regarding any other submittals. The submittals shall be made available upon request no later than 5 business days after the Notice of Recommendation to Award/Not Award is issued.
Protest/Appeals Process

The following is provided in the event that applicants wish to protest the application process or appeal the recommendation to award a contract once the Notice of Recommendation to Award/Non-Award have been issued. Protests submitted prior to issuance of the Notice of Recommendation to Award/Non-Award will not be accepted by the County.

1) Any protest by any applicant regarding their own application must be submitted in writing to the Alameda County Housing and Community Development Department, HCDadmin@acgov.org, before 5:00 p.m. of the FIFTH (5th) business day following the date of issuance of the Notice of Recommendation to Award/Not Award, not the date received by the Applicant. A protest received after 5:00 p.m. is considered received as of the next business day.
   a. The protest must contain a complete statement of the reasons and facts for the protest based on the information submitted in the application.
   b. The protest must refer to the specific portions of all documents that form the basis for the protest.
   c. The protest must include the name, address, email address, fax number and telephone number of the person representing the protesting party.
   d. The County or its designee will notify all applicants of the protest as soon as possible.

2) Upon receipt of written protest, HCD Department Head or his or her designee will review and evaluate the protest and issue a written decision. HCD, may, at its discretion, investigate the protest, obtain additional information, provide an opportunity to settle the protest by mutual agreement, and/or schedule a meeting(s) with the protesting applicant and others (as appropriate) to discuss the protest. The decision will be communicated by e-mail and will inform the applicant if the recommendation to the Board of Supervisors in the Notice of Recommendation to Award is going to change. A copy of the decision will be furnished to all applicants affected by the decision. As used in this paragraph, an applicant is affected by the decision on a protest if a decision on the protest could have resulted in the applicant not being an apparent successful applicant.

3) The decision of HCD on the protest may be appealed to the Auditor-Controller's Office of Contract Compliance & Reporting (OCCR) located at 1221 Oak St., Room 249, Oakland, CA 94612, Fax: (510) 272-6502. The applicant whose application is the subject of the protest, all applicants affected by HCD’s decision on the protest, and the protestor have the right to appeal if not satisfied with HCD’s decision. All appeals to the Auditor-Controller's OCCR shall be in writing and submitted within five (5) business days following the issuance of the protest decision by HCD, not the date received by the Applicant. An appeal received after 5:00 p.m. is considered received as of the next business day. An appeal received after the FIFTH (5th) business day following the date of issuance of the decision by HCD shall not be considered under any circumstances by the County or the Auditor-Controller OCCR.
   a. The appeal shall specify the decision being appealed and all the facts and circumstances relied upon in support of the appeal.
b. In reviewing protest appeals, the OCCR will not re-judge the application(s). The appeal to the OCCR shall be limited to review of the procurement process to determine if the contracting department (HCD) materially erred in following the application process or, where appropriate, County contracting policies or other laws and regulations.

c. The appeal to the OCCR also shall be limited to the grounds raised in the original protest and the decision by HCD. As such, an applicant is prohibited from stating new grounds for a protest in its appeal. The Auditor-Controller (OCCR) shall only review the materials and conclusions reached by HCD and will determine whether to uphold or overturn the protest decision.

d. The Auditor’s Office may overturn the results of an application process for ethical violations by procurement staff, county selection committee members, subject matter experts, or any other County staff managing or participating in the application process, regardless of timing or the contents of a protest.

e. The decision of the Auditor-Controller’s OCCR is the final step of the appeal process. A copy of the decision of the Auditor-Controller’s OCCR will be furnished to the protestor, the applicant whose application is the subject of the protest, and all applicants affected by the decision.

4) The County will complete the protest/appeal procedures set forth in this paragraph before a Recommendation to Award a Contract is considered by the Board of Supervisors for the Core Service Area for which the applicant applied.

5) The procedures and time limits set forth in this paragraph are mandatory and are each applicant's sole and exclusive remedy in the event of protest. An applicant’s failure to timely complete both the protest and appeal procedures shall be deemed a failure to exhaust administrative remedies. Failure to exhaust administrative remedies, or failure to comply otherwise with these procedures, shall constitute a waiver of any right to further pursue the protest, including filing a Government Code claim or legal proceedings.

Contract Preparation and Staff Recommendation to Board of Supervisors

At the conclusion of the RFI evaluation process, including any protest/appeals periods (if applicable), HCD staff will work with the recommended organizations to finalize the terms and conditions of the contractual agreement between the organization and the County for the particular scope of services (ERAP Outreach Ambassadors or ERAP Application Coordinators). Staff will prepare the form of agreement and a letter to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors containing the recommendation for the stipend award.
Awarding a Contract

1. During the initial period of any contract or other form of agreement which may be awarded to Contractor, the County may review the application, the contract, any goods, or services provided, and/or meet with the Contractor to identify any issues or potential problems. Thereafter, the County will monitor services on an on-going basis with periodic on-site or remote file review at the discretion of the County.

2. The County reserves the right to determine, at its sole discretion, whether:
   a. Contractor has complied with all terms of this RFI; and
   b. Any problems or potential problems with the proposed goods and services were evidenced which make it unlikely (even with possible modifications) that such goods and services have met or will meet the County requirements.

3. If, as a result of such determination, the County concludes that it is not satisfied with Contractor, Contractor’s performance under any awarded contract and/or Contractor’s goods and services as contracted for therein, the Contractor may be notified that the contract is being terminated. The County will have the right to invite the next highest ranked Applicant for the scope of work to enter into a contract.

4. Applications will be evaluated by a committee and will be ranked in accordance with the RFI. Award may not necessarily be made to the Applicant with the lowest price.

5. The County reserves the right to reject any or all responses that materially differ from any terms contained in this RFI or from any Exhibits attached hereto, to waive informalities and minor irregularities in responses received, and to provide an opportunity for Applicants to correct minor and immaterial errors contained in their submissions. The decision as to what constitutes a minor irregularity shall be made solely at the discretion of the County.

6. The County reserves the right to award to a single or multiple Contractors.

7. The County has the right to decline to award this contract or any part thereof for any reason.

8. Board approval to award a contract is required.

9. Any application/submittals that contain false or misleading information may be disqualified by the County.

10. A contract must be negotiated, finalized, and signed by the recommended awardee prior to Board approval.

11. Specific contract terms and conditions will be negotiated with each selected applicant.
LIST OF EXHIBITS
EXHIBIT A – RFI Submittal Form
EXHIBIT A – RFI SUBMITTAL FORM

The Alameda County ERAP Outreach Ambassadors Program

RFI SUBMITTAL FORM

RFI Submittal Documents: Please check boxes to ensure all required documents are included. Space has been provided for additional optional materials.

☐ Completed and signed RFI Submittal Form
☐ Specific to ERAP Application Coordinators Program: Organizations must submit an Hourly Billing Rate Sheet listing all staff members and positions proposed to implement the program.
☐ Specific to ERAP Application Coordinators Program: Organizations must submit a separate one-page Personnel Plan including the proposed number of staff and FTEs to serve as Application Coordinators, staff list and relevant experience.
☐ Other Optional Submittal (describe below and attach to Submittal):

___________________________________

RFI Submittal Due Date: Submittals in response to this RFI are accepted on a rolling basis. Late submittals will not be accepted. Hard copies will not be accepted.

RFI Submittal Email:
The completed submittal and all required additional materials must be submitted electronically as PDF documents and emailed to Catherine Valdez at Catherine.valdez@acgov.org. See RFI for other submittal instructions and detail.
GENERAL ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Name of Organization/Agency:

____________________________________________________________________________________

Address of Organization/Agency (Street Address, City, Zip):

____________________________________________________________________________________

Federal Tax Identification Number                      Organization Website (if applicable)

Name and Title of Staff Member(s) who will be leading the ERAP Application Coordinator Project on behalf of Organization:

Name                                Title

____________________________________________________________________________________

Phone Number                           Email Address

____________________________________________________________________________________

Name                                Title

____________________________________________________________________________________

Phone Number                           Email Address

Type of Organization:

☐ Faith-Based Organization (FBO)
☐ Community-Based Organization (CBO)
☐ Governmental Body (government agency, school district, etc.)

Primary Languages Spoken by Organization’s Constituency (please list below):

____________________________________________________________________________________

Does your organization have internal capacity to provide interpretation into languages other than English?
☐ Yes  Which languages? __________________________________________________________
☐ No
**ORGANIZATION QUESTIONS INSTRUCTIONS**

All responses are to be completed in narrative format or checking responses as applicable.

1) Provide a brief summary of your organization or agency’s history, mission, and services. (Two paragraphs maximum).
2) List your organization’s clientele and target populations. Provide demographics on the populations served by the organization if known: (One page maximum, please use bullet points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/ethnicity:</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary languages spoken:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Income levels (e.g., very low income, low income):</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Proportion of clientele who are renters:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities/neighborhoods where the organization’s clientele live:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3) Describe your organization’s proposed plan to undertake the ERAP Application Coordinators Scope of Services outlined in this RFI. Describe your organization’s experience and track record providing technical assistance for lower income populations and capacity to engage with the populations during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., technology use, other communication methods, etc.). Describe your organization’s capacity to provide necessary staffing to provide application one-on-one technical assistance to tenants. (One page maximum)
ORGANIZATION SIGNATURE

RFI Submittal Form must be signed and dated by representative of organization who is authorized to submit on behalf of the organization.

SIGNATURE: ________________________________________________

Name ____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Title ____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Date: ______________________________________________________________________________________________________________