

LIVE UNITED



United Way of King County

Home Base Request for Qualifications: Administer Financial Assistance & Case Management for Tenants Facing Eviction

United Way of King County requests qualifications from non-profit organizations to administer Home Base, a new eviction prevention program that pairs flexible emergency funds and case management services with legal representation provided through the King County Bar Association's [Housing Justice Project](#). Funding for the launch of this project is made possible through a catalytic investment from the Seattle Mariners and Microsoft.

Background:

In 2018, on any given night, more than 12,000 people in King County were homeless; throughout the year 30,000 people experienced homelessness. To reduce this staggering number, the Seattle Mariners brought together the expertise of the United Way of King County (UWKC) and the King County Bar Association (KCBA). Together, we have formed a new community partnership that will tackle King County's homelessness crisis by reducing the number of people who lose their home due to eviction, a leading cause of homelessness.

The Data:

Our county-wide information system indicates that homelessness impacts people of color and other marginalized populations at a disproportionate rate, for example – 52% of people experiencing homelessness are people of color, though people of color make-up only 33% of the King County population. This disparity exists because these groups are less likely to have benefited from multigenerational inherited wealth, they may have experienced displacement due to gentrification and are more likely to experience employment and housing discrimination. Furthermore, the 2018 report, [LOSING HOME](#) reports that 51.7 % of eviction filings in the City of Seattle in 2017 were people of color, and African Americans received 4.5 times the amount of eviction notices than what would be expected based on their demographics. Overall, 87% of the eviction filings in Seattle in the last year were for nonpayment of rent. Survey data showed the top cited reasons for nonpayment were lost employment or income, a medical emergency, or a death in the family. In most cases, eviction was initiated for one month or less in late rent, **with a median amount of \$1,237 owed to the landlord**. Once an eviction is recorded, it makes it much harder for renters to find another place to live in the future, which leads to increased homelessness.

The Need:

For many low-income households, the combination of scarce resources and high rent means no flexibility when facing an emergency. If a tenant needs help paying rent, tenants must piecemeal together emergency rent assistance by calling multiple agencies with different eligibility requirements – a cumbersome and time consuming process which often leaves little time for renters to come up with rent - as Washington State law allows landlords to file evictions against tenants in as little as three days after rent is due.

In addition, lack of awareness that a negotiated solution is possible means many tenants never seek legal assistance, which results in an eviction record and many additional costs. Tenants with lawyers have a better chance of reaching agreements with landlords so they can stay in their homes – and avoid eviction. However, one of the biggest challenges facing attorneys in their negotiations with landlords is the lack of tenant assistance funds to pay the full amount or a portion of the rent that is due and social services to work directly with tenants to prevent the person or family from facing eviction again.

The Solution:

Building on the success of the KCBA's Housing Justice Project and United Way of King County's [Streets to Home](#) and [Tax Free Preparation Campaign](#), Home Base will co-locate social workers with Housing Justice Project staff and volunteer attorney's to ensure tenants facing eviction can quickly access legal counsel, financial assistance and social services. Home Base will be located at the County Courthouses in Seattle and Kent.

Project Scope:

In Phase 1, Home Base will keep **4,000 low-income renters** facing an eviction proceeding in King County Superior Court in their homes by:

- Expanding the reach of the existing Housing Justice Project by adding legal staff
- Funding social workers to work directly with tenants of the Housing Justice Project to prevent the person or family from facing eviction again
- Making available a flexible pool of funds administered by nonprofit agencies that can be easily accessed at both the Seattle and Kent courthouses
- Conducting culturally relevant tenant and landlord outreach so more people can get the help they need. Outreach materials will be translated into multiple languages and targeted to neighborhoods where high rates of evictions occur
- Evaluating whether Home Base prevents homelessness and reduces racial disparities in eviction proceedings
- Engaging in public policy efforts that result in eviction reform

Request for Qualifications:

United Way of King County seeks one to three **nonprofit organizations** to provide case management services and administer flexible funding in collaboration with legal services tendered by the Housing Justice Project to prevent evictions, through Home Base. The selected agency(s) will partner on program design, implementation and evaluation; serve people of color, single adults, seniors and families; be flexible in service provision; provide services in a culturally relevant and linguistic manner; have high housing stability success rates; expertise in working collaboratively on projects with partners that share joint outcomes; and ability to quickly execute payments to landlords.

The selected nonprofit organization(s) may perform the following activities, including but not limited to:

1. Collaborate with United Way of King County and the King County Bar Association, Housing Justice Project, to design and develop intake procedures, screening tools and systems that promote success for their mutual clients and the program as a whole; and will partner with United Way staff to present the program to media, perspective donors, etc.
2. Provide case manager(s) to work in tandem with attorneys representing tenants facing eviction proceedings to ensure housing stability. Case manager(s) will:
 - a. Be co-located at the King County Superior Court in Seattle and the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent during regularly scheduled housing court hours and/or will be available to meet with tenants at an easily accessible location.
 - b. Have the ability to interpret and translate services into multiple languages
 - c. Assess a household's ability to pay rent on an ongoing basis to determine level of subsidy or rent arrears payment plan required to maintain housing

- d. Help tenants access public benefits, social services and/or other types of financial assistance or resources that may be needed to avoid eviction and ensure housing stability
 - e. Coordinate and communicate with attorneys as they negotiate settlement agreements with landlords to prevent an eviction from being filed and/or to dismiss a judgement already filed with the court.
 - f. Provide periodic check-ins with tenants after settlement agreement is reached to assess housing stability and if needed, provide additional services and/or referrals to other community based organizations
 - g. Follow-up with landlords to ensure tenancy is moving forward smoothly
3. Manage a flexible eviction intervention fund that covers such items as: full rent arrears, late fees, damages, past-due utilities, legal fees, rent subsidies, etc.
 4. Quickly disburse eviction assistance funds to landlords that have entered into a settlement agreement with volunteer attorneys representing tenants in Housing Court.
 5. Coordinate with other county-wide homeless services, local housing authorities and nonprofit affordable housing providers to help tenants locate other housing options if tenancy comes to an end to avoid entry into homelessness
 6. Assist in community outreach to promote Home Base services

Reporting, Invoicing and Monitoring:

The selected agency(s) will be required to submit timely program invoices to United Way of King County. Services, demographics and outcome data will be entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), including data on the type of housing client is currently living in. Agencies will be expected to provide additional information, as needed, for project monitoring, management, and evaluation.

Performance Measures:

The selected agency(s) will work with partners to determine benchmarks to be measured through this project. However, the initially identified eviction prevention and housing stability goals sought through this RFQ will include:

- Number or percentage of evictions prevented as a result of legal services, case management and/or financial assistance tendered
- Reduction in the number or percentage of people of color being evicted
- Number and percentage of housing retention rates

Metrics that may be tracked and reported on a regular basis include, but are not limited to:

- **Legal Services:** Legal services provided, number of households served, the frequency of services provided, type of outcome, the number of households able to remain in their housing following legal intervention, referrals and connections made to other community-based service
- **Eviction Prevention and Housing Stabilization Services:** Housing stabilization services provided, number of households served, the frequency of services provided, amount of tenant financial assistance funds provided, referrals and connections made to other community-based services, number of households that retained housing

Role of King County Bar Association (KCBA):

The KCBA's, Housing Justice Project (HJP) provides legal representation to low income tenants facing eviction. Services include: providing legal counsel, responding to summons and complaints, representing tenants at hearings in court, negotiating settlement and payment plan agreements with landlords,

preparing tenants for trial, and/or procuring other legal remedies to reduce impact of an eviction from appearing on a record.

Home Base will increase the capacity of HJP. HJP staff and volunteer attorneys will coordinate with the selected agency(s) for quick access to the eviction assistance funds, along with case management services to negotiate settlement agreements with landlords to prevent imminent eviction. It is anticipated that these efforts will double the number of tenants HJP is able to represent in housing court - leading to more positive housing outcomes for 4,000 tenants facing eviction.

Role of United Way of King County (UWKC):

UWKC will identify and leverage funding from the public and private sector to scale Home Base to a three year, \$12 million program as part of our vision and commitment to end homelessness. As stewards of this investment, UWKC will use best practices in program design and evaluation, will use our expertise to create and distribute culturally appropriate outreach materials, and will advocate for public policies that support eviction reform.

Funding Available:

In 2019, Home Base will have up to \$250,000 available for administrative staffing and up to \$2 million in flexible financial assistance funds. United Way is seeking to establish partnerships with several key agencies who will work collaboratively with UWKC and HJP staff and attorneys. The level of funding awarded is dependent on the number of agency(s) selected and will be negotiated after the final selection process. However, we expect that no more than three agencies will be selected.

Funding Period:

The initial award will be for the period of March 2019 – December 31, 2019. Assuming strong results, the grant will be extended for up to 2 years.

Timeline:

- January 18, 2019: RFQ released
- February 7, 2019: Qualifications due by 5 pm via email to mklein@uwkc.org
- February 8, 2019: Agencies selected to be interviewed will be notified
- February 13, 2019: Interview potential applicant(s)
- February 15, 2019: Selection made and, all applicants notified
- February: Collaborate with UWKC, KCBA to design/coordinate program elements
- March 2019: Contract begins

Learn More:

- [United Way of King County](#)
- [Home Base Community Partnership](#)
- [Losing Home: The Human Cost of Eviction in Seattle](#)

Application Procedures:

Agencies that meet the requirements listed under the *Request for Qualifications* section are invited to submit an application. Please respond to the application questions in the order presented below by **February 7, 2019 at 5 pm.** Limit your responses to five pages.

To submit the application, send an email that includes a cover letter with your contact information and attach a pdf document of your completed application. Email all materials to: Marlo Klein, United Way of King County, Community Impact Manager, at mklein@uwkc.org. For questions about the application process, please contact Marlo Klein by email or at 206.461.5082.

Application Questions

General Agency Information

1. Provide a brief overview of your agency mission, the geographic area where services take place, the relationship your organization has to the population(s) and community served and whether staff, leadership, board members represent the race, culture, gender and other characteristics of the people you serve.
2. Describe why you are interested in administering the eviction intervention fund and providing case management services through Home Base; include any unique attributes your agency will bring to this program.

Service Delivery and Implementation

3. Describe the services your agency provides to prevent and move people out of homelessness, including the populations served.
4. Tell us about your housing stability success rates. Explain how you achieved these results.
5. How will you ensure that programming effectively meets the cultural and linguistic needs of tenants participating in Home Base services? Speak to the strategies you will employ to reduce the high rate of evictions among people of color.
6. What experience do you have working with local Housing Authorities, nonprofit low-income affordable housing providers, Section 8 and/or private-market rate landlords to house or keep people housed. Include, any experience you have mediating and resolving landlord-tenant issues in a timely manner.
7. Briefly tell us about a successful project that you worked collaboratively on with funders and other agencies. Why was the project successful?
8. Will your organization participate in public policy efforts to prevent evictions and homelessness?

Agency Capacity and Financial Accounting Procedures

9. Describe your capacity to implement this program. Include: a) your staffing plan and/or ideas; b) whether staff will be located in Seattle, Kent or at both Courthouse locations; c) staff roles and responsibilities; d) if you expect to hire new staff or use existing employees; e) whether this will be a standalone program within your agency or incorporated into an existing program, etc.
10. Do you have experience using the Homeless Management Information System: Yes No
11. Describe your expertise administering flexible client assistance funds such as diversion dollars. Please include:
 - A. Processes and procedures you have in place that demonstrate you can quickly distribute rent assistance checks to landlords and other vendors within 1-3 business days or sooner if necessary.
 - B. How you will ensure allocated funds are tracked, distributed and used in accordance with the grant.