



# House Wake!

Phase II of the Wake County COVID-19 Strategic Plan for Housing

Wake County  
July 24, 2020



## HOUSE WAKE! PHASE II Announcement

Wake County (County) has received special allocations of funds under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), to be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to this historic public health crisis. The County's Department of Housing Affordability and Community Revitalization is administering these funds and is seeking qualified community partners to assist with implementing the second phase of the HouseWake! Strategic Plan.

**Wake County Board of Commissioners expressed their support for the House Wake! strategic plan on May 4, 2020, to minimize the effects of COVID-19 on homeless and precariously house Wake County residents, while maximizing opportunities for positive long-term outcomes.** The plan will run through December 30, 2020, utilizing and coordinating federal, state and local funding to address the COVID-19 crisis within our homeless and precariously housed population. The plan is focused on implementing stabilization and intervention programs through our community partners that can minimize the harm from COVID-19 and help pivot our vulnerable residents to recovery.

In Phase I, the County successfully selected partners to implement programs focused on addressing the various needs of households who are homeless, cannot access financial resources, and face a high risk of contracting COVID with negative outcomes.. These ongoing programs have or will produce the following results:

**Housing Hotline Established:** One-number Wake County hotline created with:

- Dedicated staff, trained to route callers to appropriate County resources
- Average monthly call capacity of approximately 1,500

**Housing Navigation & Landlord Engagement Team Created:** Team of new Landlord Engagement Specialists hired to:

- Create new informational landlord website
- Recruit landlords to provide affordable housing and/or accept vouchers
- Secure 250 new units in the 2020 calendar year
- Establish vacant affordable unit database

**Support Services and Access to Permanent Housing Increased:** Funding provided to community service providers yielded:

- **450+** Additional temporary housing units provided by utilizing hotels and increasing shelter capacity
- **450+** Households provided with Case Management
- **450+** Households provided with direct rental assistance
- **500** Newly housed individuals and families to receive complete furnishings, dishes, cookware, etc. at no cost
- **250+** Homeless individuals to receive Street Outreach
- **Eight Months** of mobile showers and laundry provided to residents continuing to experience street homelessness

**Phase II of House Wake!** will focus on helping to reduce evictions in Wake County, by providing resources for tenants and landlords. The House Wake! Phase II three-step intervention process will consist of:

- Eviction Prevention which aims to provide financial assistance to tenants and landlords to cover rent shortfalls resulting from a loss of income;
- Legal services, provided pro bono, for tenants who need legal counsel to negotiate filed evictions with landlords; and

- Homelessness Prevention and Relocation Assistance, which will assist with relocating residents whose housing could not be stabilized through Interventions #1 or 2.

Partners for this next phase include:

- City of Raleigh
- Legal Aid of North Carolina
- The Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness
- Community partners selected through the Phase II RFP and LOI process

## Opportunities to Partner

### Request for Proposals: Eviction Prevention Program

Emergency financial assistance to renters for paying their rent or security deposits and funds to prevent an eviction. *Treasury CRF funds will support this program.*

#### **Summary:**

The program seeks to prevent the displacement of Wake County renter households that suffered a loss of income as a result of COVID-19 by providing public funding that is matched by forgiveness of rent owed by the landlord to allow them to remain stable housed until they can reestablish their income or secure more affordable quality housing. The program is guided by the following principles:

- Prioritize those with the greatest need. Focus limited resources on serving the population with the greatest need, or those most vulnerable to loss of housing.
- Extend benefits to serve more households. To extend benefits to as many households as possible, a stabilization strategy will share the cost burden among the tenant, landlord, and government.
- Address near and long-term needs. COVID-19 will create multiple phases of housing insecurity. A stabilization strategy must address acute challenges right now, while factoring in the needs of the long-term unemployed including both landlords and renters.

The program is currently anticipated to run through to the end of the current year. Up to \$20 MM dollars have been dedicated to relief efforts, and it is anticipated that up to 3,000 clients/families will be served.

#### **The Opportunity:**

This program is utilizing federal (Treasury) funds as part of the County's response to the COVID-19 crisis. As such, this RFP is being issued under emergency conditions; as time is of the essence, most of the typical RFP processes have been abbreviated to facilitate expediency.

Wake County (County) is seeking an Administrator to successfully manage its Eviction Prevention Program. This program has been developed and has established program guidelines and requirements.

The Administrator will:

- Oversee all aspects of the program
- Provide services on a County-wide basis
- Establish a banking account for program funds
- Create online and mail-in application processes using an application template provided by the County
- Perform intake of prospective clients seeking eviction relief/prevention
- Determine client eligibility

- Apply program guidelines in providing payment to landlords on behalf of clients
- Maintain records of transactions and clients assisted
- Work closely with partner agencies identified by Wake County
- Refer clients to partner agencies using HMIS (staff will need to be trained on HMIS)
- Provide regular progress reports/communicate with County staff

### **The Process:**

Interested entities should refer to the [Eviction Prevention RFP/Wake County Bids and Notices](#), and provide the following information in an electronic format to [Housing.Info@wakegov.com](mailto:Housing.Info@wakegov.com) :

- Brief intro regarding their organization/mission statement
- Narrative regarding experience in implementing similar programs as outlined in this RFP (utilizing federal funds for public benefit/income verification), as well as organization size and capacity (refer to RFP Guidelines)
- A budget reflecting all fees, costs and charges required for conducting the program
- Methodology for staffing and implementing program (implementation speed is of the essence)
- Most recent audited financials

The County will review all responsive and responsible bidders. Due to the expedient nature of this process, the County reserves the right to waive any errors/inconsistencies and seek clarifications to any proposal. The County will select the most responsive and responsible bidder. The County's preference is for a single entity to run the program (as opposed to two or more agencies partnering.)

### **Timeline**

As stated, due to the emergency nature created by the COVID-19 virus, time is of the essence. All proposals are to be submitted to [Housing.Info@wakegov.com](mailto:Housing.Info@wakegov.com) by **July 31, 2020 by 3:00 pm local time, with "House Wake! Phase II RFP" in the subject line.** Questions of a general nature and their responses will be posted for public view on our website at <http://www.wakegov.com/housing/Pages/opportunities.aspx>.

### **Request for Letters of Interest (LOI): Homelessness Prevention & Relocation Services**

#### **Summary:**

Wake County is currently seeking partners to operate Homelessness Prevention & Relocation services in accordance with US Department of Housing and Urban Development Emergency Solutions Grant as defined in 24 CFR 576.2.

These Homeless Prevention & Relocation Services are the third intervention in Wake County's broader strategy to prevent evictions and homelessness. These services are for households unable to maintain their current unit and are at-risk of homelessness due to the COVID19 pandemic. Wake County is seeking partners to provide Homeless Prevention & Relocation Services for households with annual incomes below 50 percent of area median income. *ESG & HOPWA-CV funds will support this program.*

#### **The Opportunity:**

The County is seeking partners to perform housing relocation and stabilization services and short-and/or medium-term rental assistance as necessary to prevent the individual or family from moving to an emergency shelter or a place not meant for human habitation. Eligible costs include:

- Rental Assistance: rental assistance and rental arrears

- Financial assistance: rental application fees, security and utility deposits, utility payments, last month's rent, moving costs
- Services: housing search and placement, housing stability case management

### **The Process:**

Agencies whose current organization mission falls within the parameters outlined in this Request for Letters of Interest are strongly encouraged to evaluate their programs to see how they can best increase their current capacity and/or initiate new programs to work with Wake County in responding to the COVID-19 crisis.

Proposals should include the following information:

- A Program Narrative
  - Who you are- brief organizational bio with key staff;
  - Primary contact;
  - Program methodology;
  - The capacity/number/type of clients that can be served;
  - A timeline for implementation;
  - Outreach strategies;
  - How social equity will be ensured;
  - Staffing needs;
  - Program costs/resource needs;
  - Tracking accomplishments and recording demographic data; and
  - Plans for continuing the program after December 2020 if funding should be available.
- Cost Allocation Budget
  - If an expansion of a current program, include a copy of the current budget;
  - Identify direct and indirect costs
  - Allocation of staff salaries, benefits, and taxes
  - Identify program specific categories

Funded agencies should maintain complete program records demonstrating compliance and use of funds and will be required to allow Wake County access to all records. Progress reports will be required. All funded programs will be monitored for federal, state and local regulatory compliance as well as programmatic accomplishments.

### **Timeline:**

**The County is looking to fund projects that can begin *as soon as possible*. Proposals are due by 3:00 PM on Friday July 31, 2020.**

Wake County will accept questions and proposals at [HOUSING.INFO@WAKEGOV.COM](mailto:HOUSING.INFO@WAKEGOV.COM), with “HOUSE WAKE! Phase II LOI” in the subject line until Tuesday, July 28, 2020. Questions of a general nature and their responses will be posted for public view on our website at <http://www.wakegov.com/housing/Pages/opportunities.aspx>.