



Colorado Division of Housing
Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance Program (CERA)
Housing Stability Services
Request for Applications (RFA)

Request for Applications (RFA) Purpose

The State of Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA)'s Division of Housing (hereafter referred to as "DOH") is seeking organization(s) able to provide Housing Stability Services as part of the statewide Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance program (CERA) (see Section II, Program Module for further information). DOH requires CERA Housing Stability Services to be available and embedded in communities throughout Colorado (including rural communities):

- **Housing Stability Services:** Housing Stability Services provides outreach to and aids income eligible households who are at risk of housing instability and require assistance in completing the CERA application.

Please note that there is a separate Request for Applications (RFA) to provide Case Review and Administration as part of the statewide Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance program (CERA).

Total Allocated Funds:

DOH intends to allocate funds for eviction prevention based on dollars allocated through Proposition 123 (C.R.S. 29-32-101). The allocation amount is subject to change based on the amount the Division receives annually and determination of annual program budgets. Currently the funding amount is estimated to be between \$2M and \$3M annually, depending on budgetary determinations.

RFA Questions:

For specific questions, please contact Maria Stein in DOH at maria.stein@state.co.us.

Release Date:

Tuesday, October 1, 2024



Informational Session: Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance (CERA) Housing Stability Services Q & A

Wednesday, October 9 from 10:00am – 11:00am

Time zone: America/Denver

Google Meet joining info

[Video Call Link](#)

Or dial: (US) +1 929-324-2562 PIN: 925 823 945#

Application Deadline: October 31, 2024.

The application must be submitted via email as a single PDF document to maria.stein@state.co.us. Any applications received after 11:59 p.m. MST on October 31, 2024, will not be accepted.

Award and Determination Announcements:

RFA determinations will be made by December 2, 2024. Selected agencies/organizations may be required to attend a DOH State Housing Board meeting (in person or via phone) to give a brief description of the proposed program(s) and respond to board member questions to assist in the funding decision.

Colorado Open Records Act:

RFA applications received by DOH are subject to the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) and are considered public documents.

DOH Administration of CERA:

While granting out program duties to selected agencies/organizations, DOH will remain the administrator for CERA. As program administrator, DOH will be responsible for the following:

- Creating program guidelines and overall program intent
- Determining the program budget
- Setting application review requirements
- Managing grants
- Reviewing and making final decisions for appeals
- Managing program software
- Managing communications and reporting

I. Program Background/Overview

In November 2022, Colorado voters authorized Proposition 123, which allocated several hundred million dollars toward the creation and preservation of affordable housing and the prevention of homelessness throughout Colorado. As a part of this funding source, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), through its Division of Housing (DOH), has established the Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance program (CERA) to distribute the funds. Through this RFA, DOH is requesting applications from agencies/organizations to operationalize the Housing Stability Services portion of the statewide CERA program.

The CERA program funds outlined in this RFA will be allocated to provide Housing Stability Services to eligible tenants in accordance with the requirements of Proposition 123 and DOH's CERA HSS Program Guidelines (See Exhibit A, Section II - Program Eligibility), which may be revised or modified at any time.

Program Timeframe: This award for the Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance program is expected to launch on February 1, 2025, and expected to end on January 31, 2026.

For detailed information regarding applicant eligibility and eligible payments, please refer to the CERA HSS Program Guidelines (See Exhibit A). Note that these guidelines are subject to change at the State's discretion.

II. Program Module

For the purposes of this RFA, the administration of CERA will consist of Housing Stability Services. Proposals must include and address the following module:

Housing Stability Services:

These funds may be used to provide referred households with case management services and other services intended to help keep households stably housed.

If an agency/organization is selected for both Housing Stability Services and Case Review and Administration, they are not permitted to "double bill" for Housing Stability Services/Case Review and Administration for the same hours/same staff member.

Housing Stability Services will be provided by skilled housing navigators whose positions will be created to better serve Coloradans who are at risk of housing instability and have barriers to

accessing the current online application process. The intent of CERA is to ensure the housing navigators are residents of local communities throughout the state, thus providing tenants better access to in-person support when needed.

The applicants targeted via Housing Stability Services include (but are not limited to) the following:

- People with low technology access and/or skills
- Non-English speakers
- People with disabilities that make the online application difficult to complete
- Households facing imminent eviction (e.g., have received a 14-day demand and/or the landlord has filed a complaint and/or a court has ordered eviction)

The scope of work for these housing navigators includes the following:

1. Conduct outreach in designated service areas to promote availability of CERA
2. Work one-on-one with clients to assist and facilitate the complete submission of an online rental assistance application – Housing navigators will be the ongoing point of contact for the applicant until the application is complete.
3. Access CERA application system to facilitate completion of applications
4. Coordinate with landlords to ensure that the landlord is also submitting the necessary paperwork to complete the application process
5. Serve as the point of contact and liaison between applicant and DOH and/or local non-profit partner agency processors
6. Assist and work with applicants identified through outreach, as well as applicants referred by DOH and/or by its contractors regardless of which county the Applicant resides in, as directed
7. Serve as the liaison for Housing Stability Services referrals based on the Application Prioritization
8. Provide other targeted case management services related to housing stability, such as securing stable housing and/or eviction diversion services, referred by DOH and/or by its contractors, as directed



9. Provide warm handoffs to other housing resources if applicants do not qualify for CERA
10. Provide linkages and warm handoffs for other assistance, including food assistance, medical coverage, child care assistance, and child support services when appropriate
11. Provide equitable access to CERA by assisting applicants that need additional assistance or a reasonable accommodation

Housing Stability Services may also include referrals to mediation services, housing counseling, fair housing counseling, ongoing case management related to housing stability, housing-related services for survivors of domestic violence or human trafficking, and specialized services for seniors or individuals with disabilities that supports their ability to access or maintain housing.

Housing navigators will be required to accept paper documents, documents shared via text message, and emailed documents, and to be available by phone, email, and text. When necessary, housing navigators will use these documents to submit an online application on behalf of the tenant or upload missing documents to an existing application.

Households in need will be identified by Case Review and Administration agencies and/or call center. As capacity permits and as households are identified, Housing Stability Services agencies will assign a navigator to provide assistance in completing applications and provide linkages for wrap-around assistance and other resources. Assignments should be based on an agency's designated region and the urgency/age of application (from oldest submitted forward). DOH and/or its contractors may assign additional applications at any time, as needed, to assist with and/or prioritize for assistance.

Housing Stability Services will be provided under the following parameters:

1. Housing navigators shall assist applicants that are referred to them from DOH or other agencies regardless of where they reside. Housing navigators are not to be utilized solely to help process the Agency's own rental assistance applications.
2. Housing navigators should have some flexible hours to assist people in the evening and/or on weekends, as needed.
3. Housing navigators will connect households to outside and non-CERA resources through warm handoffs, as needed.

4. Housing navigators will participate in regularly scheduled meetings to discuss case assignments, in addition to monthly meetings with DOH and other contracted agencies to work on program improvements to better reach this community.

III. Program Data Metrics

DOH will work with awarded agencies/organizations to develop a program outcomes and outputs plan based on the following data metrics. Awarded agencies/organizations must work with DOH and other awarded agencies/organizations to determine how data and metrics will be collected.

- a. Program outputs:
 - i. Total number of households who received Housing Stability Services
 - ii. Number of households who received Housing Stability Services broken down at the following AMI percentages: 60 percent AMI, 50 percent, and 30 percent
 - iii. Number of households who were deemed ineligible for rental assistance and the reason why
 - iv. Breakdown of assistance by geographic location, demonstrating equitable distribution, including and especially rural Colorado
 - v. Breakdown of primary reason for housing instability by household

IV. General Requirements for All Applying Agencies/Organizations

- a. Applying agencies/organizations must meet the following criteria to be considered for funding:
 - i. Operate within the State of Colorado and engage in business that is not primarily property management
 - ii. Have a standing DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) number
 - iii. Have experience in administering local, state, or federal funds
- b. **Organizational Capacity:** All agencies/organizations seeking to administer Housing Stability Services for the CERA program must provide and maintain adequate staff and

all necessary workspace, equipment, supplies, and hardware to provide CERA services and handle expected case volume.

- c. **Project Location:** Agencies/organizations must be within DOH’s jurisdiction, which is the entire State of Colorado. Agencies/organizations should demonstrate the willingness and ability to serve all counties in Colorado, with housing navigators embedded throughout the State. If unable to serve the entire state, agencies/organizations must list the counties they are able and willing to serve and/or indicate their willingness and ability to partner with regional agencies. Priority will be given to agencies/organizations willing to serve the entire state and/or who serve rural areas.
- d. **Organizational Experience:** Either through direct experience or memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with partner organizations, agencies/organizations should demonstrate experience, ability, and expertise in the following:
 - i. Experience providing Housing Stability Services to households
 - ii. Capacity and staffing to provide near-immediate assistance to households in need
 - iii. An understanding of eviction and housing-loss processes in order to navigate assisting participants in these situations
 - iv. Experience analyzing all forms of income documentation to ensure tenants/program participants meet AMI guidelines by county
 - v. Ability to assist participants with completing applications, technological issues, language barriers or other accessibility issues
 - vi. Ability to attend DOH-sponsored meetings and trainings regarding familiarity with federal and state funding requirements and procedures specific to the Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance program
 - vii. Financial stability and administrative capacity to manage the timely submission of pay requests to DOH for eligible expenses
 - viii. Experience in providing monthly/quarterly reports to DOH and/or other government entities
 - ix. Experience working with a required data management system, as a system of record

V. System of Record Requirements

- a. **Reporting and Documentation:** DOH currently utilizes the Neighborly software platform to track and review all CERA tenant applications and to track and approve payments made through the CERA program. DOH will use a separate platform to track Housing Stability Services provided to households.
- b. **Housing Stability Services Reporting:** Selected agencies/organizations must have the ability to collect and report information related to services provided in accordance with DOH requirements. This may include entering tenant information, uploading documents, and/or recording efforts related to Housing Stability Services.
- c. **Collection of Documents:** All beneficiary documentation for this program shall be stored via a system utilized by DOH for the purpose of collection and reviewing tenant applications for the CERA program.
- d. **Recordkeeping Requirements:** Selected Housing Stability Services agencies/organizations must maintain records and financial documents for five years after all award funds have been expended or returned.

VI. Qualifications for Housing Stability Services

Respondents must demonstrate, either through direct experience or memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with partner organizations, experience and expertise in the following to be considered for funding:

- a. Demonstrates ability to engage tenants, and/or provide warm handoffs to households for legal services, food assistance, child care assistance, or other resources as needed
- b. Ability to have housing navigators embedded throughout the state of Colorado and within 50 miles of most households
- c. Ability to assist participants with completing applications, technological issues, language barriers or other accessibility issues
- d. Ability to assist tenants through eviction and displacement proceedings by providing expedited payments. Expedited payments will include hand-delivered payments to court clerks throughout the state on an as-needed basis

VII. RFA Application Selection Criteria:

The following is the selection criteria to determine CERA awards to agencies/organizations. The agency/organization's current and historical performance administering other local, state, or federally funded programs may be considered as well.

An application submitted by agencies/organizations will be rejected if it: (1) fails to receive the minimum score in each individual Category A to F below or (2) fails to achieve a total score of at least 48 out of the 100 possible. This is intended to ensure that approved plans and budgets are minimally adequate in each category, and that the entire score reflects a level of competence and quality above the bare minimum category scores (which total to 48 points), (3) is incomplete or turned in after 11:59 PM MST on October 31, 2024.



General Organizational Criteria

Scoring Criteria	Minimum Points	Maximum Points
Organization's current and historical performance administering other local, state, or federally funded rental assistance programs	5	12
Demonstrates experience in serving defined population	4	8
Demonstrates adequate staff, equipment to handle volume	4	8
Demonstrates experience in providing monthly/quarterly reports to DOH and/or other government entities	4	8
Demonstrates financial stability and administrative capacity to manage the timely submission of pay requests to DOH for eligible expenses	3	8
Demonstrated experience of creating and implementing a system of record; or demonstrates access to existing system of record	4	8



Housing Stability Services Experience

Scoring Criteria	Minimum Points	Maximum Points
Demonstrates ability to engage tenants, and/or provide warm handoffs to households for legal services, food assistance, child care assistance, or other resources as needed	6	12
Demonstrates ability and/or willingness to provide Housing Stability Services to all areas of the state by having staff and/or subcontracting organizations within 50 miles of each applicant	6	12
Demonstrates ability to assist participants who face barriers in completing their applications	6	12
Demonstrated willingness and ability to facilitate expedited payments, e.g. hand-delivering checks	6	12
Total Points (both tables)	48	100

a. Agency/Organization Interviews:

If needed, DOH will conduct an interview with or ask for additional information from agencies/organizations applying for funding prior to finalizing scoring.



Colorado Division of Housing
Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance Program
Housing Stability Services
Request for Applications Required RFA Application Contents

Please complete and submit the following as one PDF for all documents and one budget template to DOH at maria.stein@state.co.us by 11:59 pm MST on October 31, 2024. Any applications received after 11:59 p.m. MST will not be accepted.

- Cover Page (page 13)
- Narratives (Sections 1-5, pages 14-16)
- Services Budget (Sections 1-2, page 16)



CERA Housing Stability Services Application Cover Sheet

Selected Program Module: Housing Stability Services

Amount Requested for Housing Stability Services: \$ _____

Total Amount Requested: \$ _____

Type of Agency/Organization: Non-Profit For-Profit Unit of Local Government

Applying Agency/Organization Information

Legal Organization Name and Address:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____ Phone #: _____

Fax #: _____ Email: _____

Organization Contact Person:

(the person most knowledgeable and available to answer questions about the proposal)

Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____ Phone #: _____

Fax #: _____ Email: _____

Agency/Organization Federal Tax ID #: _____ DUNS #: _____

To register: www.dnb.com

Chief Elected Official, Executive Director, or President:

(the person who has signature authority for contracts)

Name: _____ Title: _____

Address (if different from above): _____

Phone #: _____ Fax #: _____

Email: _____

This Area for DOH Staff Use Only

Date Received: _____ **Project #:** _____



CERA Housing Stability Services Narrative Form

Please complete the CERA Housing Stability Services Narrative Form, taking care to answer all of the following questions (Sections 1-5 below), and submit as a PDF document to DOH at maria.stein@state.co.us by 11:59pm MST on October 31, 2024.

1. Agency Capacity, Experience and Qualifications

- a. Provide an overview of the agency/organization including mission, history, years in operation, and staff size.
- b. Describe the agency/organization's experience administering federal, state, or local funds.
- c. Describe the agency/organization's financial stability and administrative capacity to submit pay requests to DOH for eligible expenses, and/or timely remittance of payments to third parties.
- d. Describe agency/organization's experience in serving individuals/households as described in this RFA.
- e. Describe agency/organization's experience in preventing eviction and displacements of participants experiencing financial hardship. If the organizational experience is not substantial in this area, list how this expertise would be incorporated in the proposed program through external partnerships.

2. Program Modules

- a. Describe the agency/organization's experience in relation to administering Housing Stability Services.
- a. Describe the agency/organization's staffing structure for implementing services, including staff credentials and experience.
- b. Describe services/resources to be leveraged through collaborative partnerships.
- c. Demonstrate how your agency/organization will embed HSS staff throughout the State as opposed to being located in the Metro area.

- d. Describe the systems your agency/organization has in place to ensure efficient and effective delivery of eviction prevention services that adhere to program and grant requirements. Include a description of how your organization will ensure that tenants:
 1. Are educated about the Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance program, and
 2. Receive assistance with applying for Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance program, or
 3. Receive outside resources/referrals or legal services if they are not eligible for Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance program funds.

3. Inclusive Service Provision

- a. Describe how your agency/organization will provide inclusive services for people from diverse backgrounds, languages, ethnicities, income levels, regions and other factors that influence equity in services.
- b. Describe your agency/organization's methods for providing services to households with limited or no access to internet service or virtual tools.

4. Service Area

- a. Describe the agency/organization's willingness and/or ability to serve tenants in all counties in Colorado. If unable to serve the entire state, agencies/organizations must list the counties they are able and willing to serve. Priority will be given to agencies/organizations willing to serve the entire state and/or who serve rural areas.

5. Reporting and Documentation

- a. Describe agency/organization's experience utilizing a software system to enter and manage program data and documentation.
- b. Describe agency/organization's experience with collecting and reporting on data metrics referenced in Section III, including program outcomes and outputs.



CERA Housing Stability Services Budget

(Sections 1-2 Below)

1. Services Budget

- a. Fill out the provided [budget template](#). Please include how many tenants/participants are anticipated to be served in the funding period.

2. Budget Narrative (if applicable)

- a. Describe any expenses requested by the agency/organization in the “Other Costs” category on the budget template (if applicable).



Exhibit A - CERA Housing Stability Services Program Guidelines

Division of Housing

Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance (CERA)

Housing Stability Services

Program Guidelines

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I. Definitions

For purposes of these guidelines, terms are defined as follows:

1. **Tenant** – the individual(s) or household(s) who meet criteria set forth in these Program Guidelines and who have obtained rental housing or rent land on which to park their mobile home from a Property Owner
2. **Landlord or Property Manager** – the individual or entity contracted by the Property Owner to manage the rental housing or mobile home park, who may also be the Property Owner, and completes the landlord portion of the application
3. **Property Owner** – the individual or entity that is the fee simple or leasehold owner of rental housing used as the primary residence for tenants or of a mobile home park on which tenants may park a mobile home which is their primary residence
4. **Agency** – the organization providing application review and processing services on behalf of the Division of Housing
5. **Case Review and Administration** – the work of agencies to review and approve/deny rental assistance applications for the Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance program
6. **Housing Stability Services (HSS)** - the work of agencies to assist income eligible households to help them maintain or overcome barriers in their existing housing

7. **Colorado Department of Local Affairs | Division of Housing** – abbreviated as DOH

8. **Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance program** – abbreviated as CERA

II. Housing Stability Services (HSS)

Under CERA, up to 10% of program funds can be utilized for Housing Stability Services. These funds may be used to provide eligible households with case management/navigation services and other services intended to help keep households stably housed.

If an agency/organization is selected for both Housing Stability Services and Case Review and Administration, they are not permitted to “double bill” for Housing Stability Services/Case Review and Administration for the same hours/same staff member.

Housing Stability Services will be provided by skilled housing navigators whose positions will be created to better serve Coloradans who are at risk of housing instability and who have barriers to accessing the current online application process. The intent of CERA is to ensure the housing navigators are residents of local communities throughout the state, thus providing tenants better access to in-person support when needed.

Program Eligibility

The applicants targeted via Housing Stability Services include (but are not limited to) the following:

- People with low technology access and/or skills
- Non-English speakers
- People with disabilities that make the online application difficult to complete
- Households facing imminent eviction (e.g., have received a 14-day demand and/or the landlord has filed a complaint and/or a court has ordered eviction)

Participant Identification Process

Households in need will be identified by Case Review and Administration agencies and/or call center. As capacity permits and as households are identified, Housing Stability Services agencies will assign a navigator to provide assistance in completing applications and linkages for wrap-around assistance and other resources. Assignments should be based on an agency’s designated region and the urgency/age of application (from oldest submitted forward). DOH and/or its

contractors may assign additional applications at any time, as needed, to assist with and/or prioritize for assistance.

Housing Stability Services will be provided under the following parameters:

1. Housing navigators shall assist applicants that are referred to them from DOH or other agencies regardless of where they reside. Housing navigators are not to be utilized solely to help process the Agency's own rental assistance applications.
2. Housing navigators should have some flexible hours to assist people in the evening and/or on weekends, as needed.
3. Housing navigators will connect households to outside and non-CERA resources through warm handoffs, as needed.
4. Housing navigators will participate in regularly scheduled meetings with DOH and other contracted agencies to work on program improvements to better reach this community.

Scope of Work

The scope of work for these housing navigators includes the following:

1. Conduct outreach in designated service areas to promote availability of CERA
2. Work one-on-one with clients to assist and facilitate the complete submission of an online rental assistance application – Housing navigators will be the ongoing point of contact for the applicant until the application is complete.
3. Access CERA application system to facilitate completion of applications
4. Coordinate with landlords to ensure that the landlord is also submitting the necessary paperwork to complete the application process
5. Serve as the point of contact and liaison between applicant and DOH and/or local non-profit partner agency processors
6. Assist and work with applicants identified through outreach, as well as applicants referred by DOH regardless of the county in which the applicant resides, as directed
7. Serve as the liaison for housing stability services referrals based on the Application Prioritization

8. Provide other targeted case management services related to housing stability, such as securing stable housing and/or eviction diversion services
9. Provide warm handoffs to other housing resources if applicants do not qualify for CERA
10. Provide linkages and warm handoffs for other assistance, including food assistance, medical coverage, child care assistance, and child support services when appropriate
11. Assist applicants that need additional assistance or a reasonable accommodation to provide equitable access to CERA

Housing Stability Services may also include referrals to mediation services, housing counseling, fair housing counseling, ongoing case management related to housing stability, housing-related services for survivors of domestic violence or human trafficking, and specialized services for seniors or individuals with disabilities that supports their ability to access or maintain housing.

Housing navigators will be required to accept paper documents, documents shared via text message, and emailed documents, and to be available by phone, email, and text. When necessary, housing navigators will use these documents to submit an online application on behalf of the tenant or upload missing documents to an existing application.

Tracking and Reporting Program Metrics

Agencies/organizations providing Housing Stability Services are required to track the following program outputs and include them in any Housing Stability Services reimbursement requests submitted to DOH on a monthly basis:

- Total number of households who received Housing Stability Services
- Number of households who received Housing Stability Services broken down at the following AMI percentages: 60 percent AMI, 50 percent, and 30 percent
- Number of households who were deemed ineligible for rental assistance and the reason why
- Breakdown of assistance by geographic location, demonstrating equitable distribution, including and especially rural Colorado

Housing navigators will track the program outputs detailed above on a tracking document similar to the one below:

[Template: CERA HSS Tracking](#)

DOH will create this document for each agency/organization administering Housing Stability Services to use for tracking purposes by agency and as a whole. The number of cases shown as having been pursued for Housing Stability Services must match the reimbursement request invoices provided to DOH for reimbursements.

Coordination with Other Programs

Agencies are encouraged to work with and/or refer tenants to apply for other available assistance, including but not limited to Unemployment Insurance, housing assistance, and employment assistance to ensure their housing stability into the future. Please note, application for and/or approval of Unemployment Benefits (UI) is not an eligibility requirement for this program.

III. Change Log

This document logs changes made to guidance since the start of the Colorado Emergency Rental Assistance program: