

The City of Richmond's Right to Counsel Program

Call for Applications for Fiscal Year 2025



Release of Application Packet: November 18, 2024

Applications Due: November 25, 2024 @ 3:00 pm.

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Call for Applications

The City of Richmond's Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) is issuing a call for applications from organizations who are experienced in eviction proceedings, have the capacity to provide a legal defense for City of Richmond residents facing eviction, including pre-trial consultations and representation in court. Familiarity with Tenant/Landlord Laws are required, to implement its Fiscal Year 2025 Right-to -Counsel (RTC) Program. The Program will be funded with a Non-Departmental appropriation to be approved by the City Council and the contract to be overseen by the City's Housing and Community Development Department (HCD).

In November 2021, the RVA Eviction Lab at Virginia Commonwealth University L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs released a report titled "Eviction, Legal Counsel, and the Courthouse". Examining data from Richmond, Henrico, and Chesterfield, the study found that tenants who have representation receive a more favorable outcome in 18.4% of cases versus 2.4% of the time for those where tenants are not represented.

City Council declared that evictions without legal representation is a public crisis and supports right-to-counsel programs and programs increasing access to counsel for residents of the City of Richmond facing eviction as a critical necessity.

Along with the provided Application Cover Sheet, application packages should include the following information and attachments:

- **Description of the Applicant Organization and its Capacity to Undertake the Proposed Program**, including its current work, experience in eviction proceedings, including pre-trial consultations and representation in court. Capacity to undertake the proposed RTC program, as well as applicable accomplishments for FY23 and FY24. Attachments to be included for this section: (a) copy of program brochure or information demonstrating expertise, (b) listing of the Board of Directors, (c) copy of Good Standing Certificate from the State Corporation Commission (SCC), (d) organizational chart, (e) current year operating budget, (f) if a nonprofit, copy of the IRS Tax-Exempt Designation, and (g) the bylaws for the organization.
- **Proposed Program Design** - the Applicant must provide a detailed narrative on how it will operate the proposed RTC Program, including intake, collaboration to provide outreach and education resources, how the program will support the City's Eviction Diversion Program that is administered by Southside Community Development and Housing Corporation, dedicated staffing for the program,

marketing, and outreach efforts, and the utilization of additional partnerships as well as technology in the delivery of the program, etc., based on the required guidelines outlined on Page 5. Attachments to be included for this section: (a) a listing of current staff to be associated with the program and the qualifications to be required of additional staff. (b) all Memorandums of Understanding or Partnership Agreements, and (c) Credentials for all Attorneys.

- **Line-Item Project Budget** - the Applicant must include a line-item budget for the proposed program. **Note that the City will allow no more than 15% for general administration (i.e., office supplies, postage, mailings, contractual services, website, pro-rated cost of its annual audit, etc.); and 85% for direct support/personnel expenses.**

Applicants must submit their applications electronically through an agency- specific OneDrive folder as described in the submission description section. **Please submit all applications and attachments in a single compressed file according to the instructions attached.**

All applications must be received no later than 3:00 p.m. on Monday, November 25, 2024. Faxed applications and late submissions will **not** be accepted.

Please direct any questions to the Department of Housing and Community Development at (804) 646-1863. The City of Richmond does not discriminate based on disability status in the admission or access to its programs. Virginia Relay Center - TDD users dial 711.

Disclaimer/Disclosure: The City of Richmond reserves the right to award funding other than what has been requested by an applicant, at its discretion, based on funding availability and/or for projects that meet an immediate need, priority, or goal of the City, and is an eligible activity as permitted by the City's general provisions for the FY25 Right-to-Counsel Program.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ENTITIES APPLYING FOR FUNDING TO ADMINISTER THE CITY'S FISCAL YEAR 2025 RIGHT-TO-COUNSEL (RTC) PROGRAM

Purpose and General Information:

The City of Richmond is utilizing a competitive application process to allow applicable entities to apply for funding to administer the City's Fiscal Year (FY) Right-to-Counsel (RTC) All funding under this Call for Applications will be available to the following types of organizations:

- (a) Attorneys licensed to practice law in the State of Virginia. This involves passing the bar exam and meeting CLE requirements with an emphasis on tenant rights and eviction laws, and;
- (b) Legal Aid Organizations and Law Schools who operate legal clinics with students under faculty supervision.

Funding will be made available through the City's Non-Departmental appropriation approved by the City Council for FY 2025.

Other required programmatic guidelines are as follows:

1. The Respondent must collaborate with Southside Community Development and Housing Corporation, the organization that administers the City of Richmond Eviction Diversion Program.
2. The Respondent should collaborate with a certified housing counseling agency or provide HUD-certified housing counselors as it relates to all housing counseling services provided.
3. The Respondent should leverage additional financial resources.
4. The Respondent must detail how it will provide in-court representation to all eligible participants. The Respondent must detail the office hours that will be maintained at the courthouse and the number of days a week the office will be staffed.
5. The Respondent should refer the participants to partners who can provide housing counseling through a combination of group and individual sessions on budgeting, financial literacy, and other appropriate housing counseling to all persons receiving representation. The classes shall include budgeting, and financial literacy. The classes can be in-person or virtual. The Respondent should provide a copy of the referral document to be used in the program.

6. The Respondent must provide post-case closeout monitoring with participants in person, by telephone, or by email at a 60-day interval.
7. The Respondent must provide the City with its marketing and outreach strategy for the RTC Program.
8. The Respondent must provide a line-item program budget. Note that the City will allow no more than 15% for general administration (i.e., office supplies, postage, mailings, contractual services, website, pro-rated cost of its annual audit, etc.); and 85% for direct support/personnel expenses.
9. The minimum number of households to be served is 300 households.

Application Guidelines

I. Planning and Submission

- A. Distribution** - The Application Coversheet and General Call for Applications Packet will be available on the Housing and Community Department's (HCD) webpage at <https://www.rva.gov/housing-and-community-development/public-documents>. To request an application packet by email or for a paper copy, please contact Ms. Avrian Gray at 804-646-1863 or via email at avrian.gray1@rva.gov.
- B. Staff Consultation** - Staff members are available to discuss the application process, and other issues over the phone, via Microsoft TEAMS, or in-person. Appointments are required, please call Avrian Gray at (804) 646-1863 to schedule an appointment for an in-person or TEAMS meeting. Questions regarding the application and process will be answered until November 25, 2024, at noon.
- C. Language Assistance Information** - If translation services are required, please contact Avrian Gray at 804-646-1863.

D. Deadline for Submission – Applications must be submitted no later than 3:00 pm. on Monday, November 25, 2024. To submit an application, Applicants must send the name and email address of the Agency Representative to Amanda Wrinkle, Senior Project Development Manager at amanda.wrinkle@rva.gov by 5:00 pm on Wednesday, November 20, 2024. Amanda will create an agency-specific OneDrive folder and send a link via Microsoft to the Applicant's Agency Representative. All submission documents must be uploaded into the OneDrive folder using the link by 3:00 pm on Monday, November 25, 2024. If you need clarification of the upload instructions, please contact Amanda Wrinkle at Amanda.Wrinkle@rva.gov. Submit applications and attachments in a single compressed file per the instructions provided. Faxed and late applications will **not** be accepted.

Attachments - All attachments must be provided, and the attachments should be labeled appropriately. All necessary information should be placed on the Application Coversheet, as applicable. Other documents cannot replace the Application Coversheet. All attachments should be submitted with the application in the agency-specific OneDrive folder by the deadline.

Summary of Evaluation Criteria

HCD will utilize a panel of evaluators from various City departments to serve as the reviewers of the applications received.

The evaluation for the RTC applications consists of a four-part, 100-point evaluation criteria. Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria: Experience and Capacity (40 points), Program Design, including Housing Counseling Collaborations and Post Closeout Monitoring (40 points), Marketing and Outreach Plan (10 points), and Leveraging (10 points).



THE CITY OF RICHMOND'S RIGHT-TO-COUNSEL PROGRAM APPLICATION COVER SHEET

1. Program Funds Requested:

- RIGHT-TO-COUNSEL (RTC) PROGRAM

2. Amount Requested: _____ MAXIMUM AWARD \$500,000

3. Sponsor Organization:

Sponsor Organization Name: _____

Federal Tax ID: _____

SAMS/UEI Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Program Name: **RIGHT-TO-COUNSEL (RTC)**

Program Point of Contact: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Executive Director/CEO: _____

Is the Organization Incorporated? (Include Applicable Attachments)

Non-Profit Yes No

For-Profit Yes No

Attachments: (Provide applicable documents and check the corresponding boxes of documents submitted)

Copy of Credentials for each Lawyer

List of Board of Directors, Members, and Executive Officers Copy of the State Corporation

Good Standing Certification Copy of the Organizational Chart

Copy of Current Year Operation Budget

Copy of IRS Tax Exempt Designation (Non-profits only) By-Laws Copy of Assigned Project

Staff Resume/Bios

Copies of Partnership Agreements/Memorandum of Understanding Copy of Marketing Plan

Copy of Referral Form for Housing Counseling Services

Other