



Request for Qualifications
CDBG-CV Short-Term Housing Assistance Program



300-C Outlet Pointe Boulevard
Columbia, SC 29210

www.schousing.com

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Program Overview

On March 27, 2020 the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) was signed into law, providing over \$2 trillion in financial aid to families and businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill made \$5 billion in Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) funds available to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the pandemic. The South Carolina Department of Commerce in partnership with the South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority (SC Housing) is making available \$25,150,000 to the SC Stay program to provide short-term housing assistance to low-income households that have become delinquent on rent or mortgage payments due to circumstances stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

SC Stay is a statewide initiative being implemented to provide rent and mortgage assistance to eligible low-income households experiencing financial hardship due to the economic impact of COVID-19. The program will help prevent evictions and foreclosures to promote housing stability during the ongoing pandemic. SC Stay funding is made possible by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Eligible households will access SC Stay assistance through Processing Agencies selected by this Request for Qualifications (RFQ). Contracted Processing Agencies will intake applications and review documentation to ensure assisted households meet program criteria.

Respondents to this RFQ should refer to the ***SC Stay Frequently Asked Questions*** prior to completing the application. FAQs are located on the Authority's website at: <https://schousing.com/home/SC-Stay>

Funding Availability

Up to \$25,150,000 in funding will be available to all 46 counties in South Carolina. Funding will be prioritized to Applicants proposing to service areas that are likely to have the greatest impact on reducing housing instability that can demonstrate they have the necessary level of organizational capacity needed to intake and process a high volume of applications. There is no maximum or minimum award amount that Applicants can request. Applicants should propose an amount based on demonstrated need that they can reasonably expect to expend on housing assistance over the course of ten (10) months. Submission of an application does not guarantee funding. Awards will be made to the highest scoring applications until funding is depleted as described on Page 3. SC Housing reserves the right to partially fund an application and reallocate funding if expenditure deadlines are not met.

Applicants awarded funding will be required to provide assistance to renters and homeowners in their defined service areas. Sixty percent (60%) of the funding awarded will be designated to assist renters and the remaining forty percent (40%) will be designated to assist homeowners. SC Housing may elect to adjust funding designations and allocations if necessary based on demonstrated needs of the community.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING

In an effort to provide funding opportunities that best allow for the equal distribution of funding to qualified Applicants in all regions of the state, awards will first be made to the four (4) highest scoring applications in each of the four (4) designated regions of the state. Each region has funding set-aside as noted in Table 1, which was determined by the percentage of population in the aggregated counties.

After the four (4) highest scoring awards are made in each region, remaining funds will be awarded to the next highest scoring applications proposing to service areas of the state at highest risk of housing instability as a result of the pandemic as identified by the Urban Institute.¹

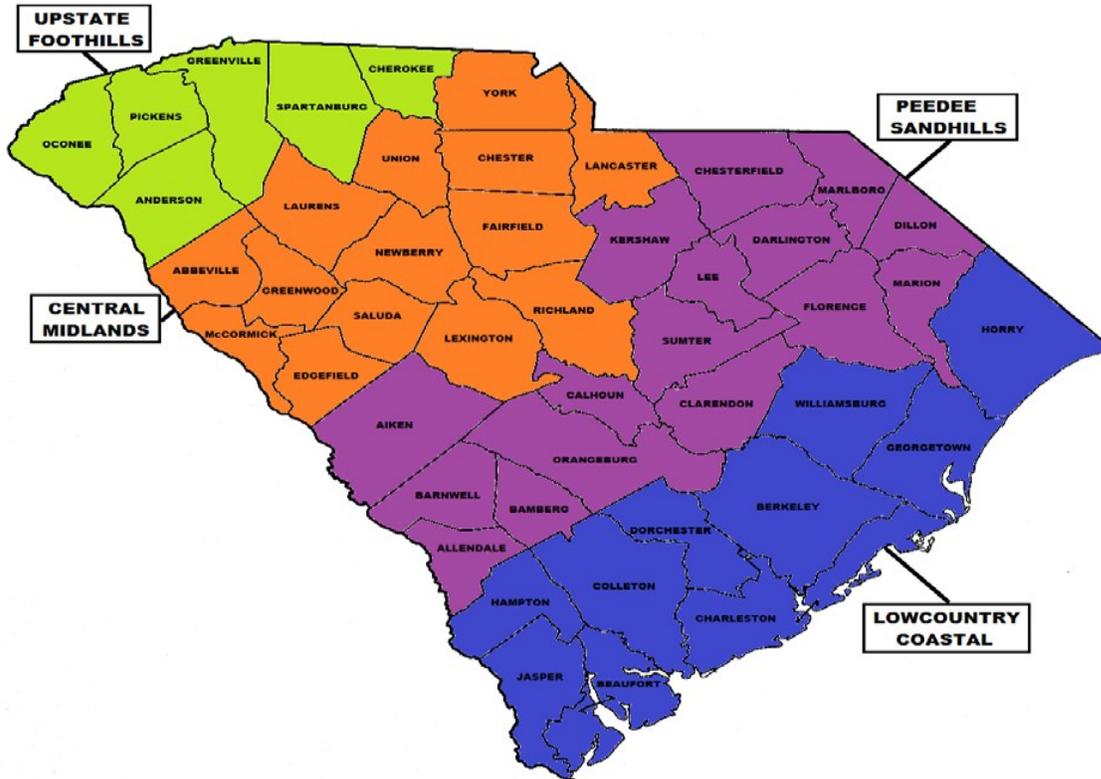


Table 1

Regional Set-Asides			
	Total Population	% of Population	Amount of Funds Set-Aside
Upstate Foothills (Region 1)	1,309,615	25%	\$ 6,287,500
Central Midlands (Region 2)	1,433,874	28%	\$ 7,042,000
Pee Dee Sandhills (Region 3)	876,880	17%	\$ 4,275,500
Lowcountry Coastal (Region 4)	1,528,345	30%	\$ 7,545,000
	5,148,714	100%	\$ 25,150,000

¹Regions were determined using 2019 U.S. Census Bureau population estimates to aggregate counties based on population size.

¹ <https://www.urban.org/features/where-prioritize-emergency-rental-assistance-keep-renters-their-homes>

Eligible Applicants are housing authorities, nonprofits, councils of government, cities, towns, or counties in South Carolina. Applicants proposing to service regional areas of the state may elect to submit one application in partnership with other eligible entities; however, one of the entities must be designated as the lead entity at the time of application. An entity cannot be included in more than one application.

Applicants that choose to serve as a lead entity may choose to work with one or several Partners. Lead Applicants are held accountable for the actions of their selected Partners. Partner selection should be taken with extreme care. All Applicants will be required to execute written agreements. SC Housing reserves the right to determine if an entity has the capacity to participate in the proposed activities and may require a Partner to be removed from a proposal.

Applicants and Partners must be in good standing with all programs administered by SC Housing and/or SC Housing Corp. Applicants will be disqualified if any of the following issues of non-compliance are demonstrated:

- Compliance violations not corrected within the designated cure period.
- Delinquent loan payments or compliance monitoring fees, etc.
- Debarment or suspension from participation in federally or state administered programs.
- Entity is not in good standing with the SC Secretary of State’s Office.

SC Housing staff has sole discretion in the determination of the status of good standing and it is not subject to interpretation or appeal.

Program Schedule

Awarded Applicants will have approximately 10 months to complete the SC Stay Program.

RFQ Application Deadline.....	January 19, 2021
Award Announcements.....	January 29, 2021
Implementation Training.....	February 1-5, 2021
Execution of Written Agreements.....	February 5, 2021
Program Launch.....	February 15, 2021
25% Expenditure Deadline.....	May 15, 2021
50% Expenditure Deadline.....	July 15, 2021
100% Expenditure Deadline.....	December 31, 2021
Award Close-Out.....	March 1, 2022

In general, successful Applicants will have until December 31, 2021 to complete SC Stay activities. SC Housing reserves the right to revise expenditure and completion deadlines as necessary to meet HUD expenditure deadlines. SC Housing also reserves the right to reallocate funding if necessary based on the progress or lack of progress demonstrated by Processing Agencies to meet program deadlines and address areas identified to be most at risk of experiencing housing instability and homelessness by the Urban Institute.

**The above dates are expected time frames for the program. SC Housing may adjust dates set forth above as needed to meet program requirements and address community needs.*

Eligible Uses of Funds

Funding can be used to provide up to six consecutive months of assistance to pay for past due rent and mortgage payments. Households requesting assistance must:

- Certify that they are eligible and that their income is at or below 80% AMI adjusted by family size.
- Demonstrate that they are unable to pay all or a part of the rent or current mortgage, or are behind on their rent or mortgage, due to circumstances stemming from the coronavirus. Examples include, but are not limited to, lost wages due to layoff or reduced hours as a result of an employer going out of business, reducing staff, reducing hours or the inability to work due to infection with COVID-19 and required quarantine, quarantine of a family member, etc.
- Have a landlord or mortgage lender provide confirmation of their past due status and be willing to accept payment on their behalf.
- Certify that a Duplication of Benefits as described on Page 7 has not and will not occur.

Program Limitations

The maximum amount of assistance per household is \$7,500. Assistance can only be provided for expenses incurred after the national health emergency declaration on January 21, 2020. The following additional program limitations must also be adhered to:

- Households residing in properties built prior to 1978 are only eligible to receive up to 3 months of assistance. This limitation may be waived if the property owner can provide documentation that the property is in compliance with Subpart K of the Lead Safe Housing Rule. More information regarding lead-based paint requirements will be provided as soon as it is released from HUD.
- Assistance must be provided for consecutive months. Intermittent assistance is not permitted by HUD.
- HUD's Office of Block Grant Assistance has determined the term "consecutive" to mean one period of assistance, regardless of the number of months in that period. Therefore, a household would not be eligible to receive another round of assistance after the initial assistance has expired even if the total number of months in the initial assistance was less than 6 months.
- Assistance can be provided for the current month, months in arrears and upcoming months.
- Existing late fees are eligible expenses; however, landlords and lenders must agree not to impose additional fees during the term of SC Stay assistance while waiting to receive payment.
- Households whose rent can be adjusted downwards due to loss of income, such as those receiving rental assistance through the Housing Choice Voucher Program, HOME tenant based rental assistance, etc. are not eligible to receive assistance.

- Landlords must agree not to increase the monthly rent payment for tenants that have a month-to-month lease agreements during the period of assistance.
- Households that do not have written lease agreements with their landlords can only be assisted if documentation can be provided that demonstrates the household had been making a monthly rent payment to the landlord prior to incurring the financial hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic i.e. bank statements, cancelled checks, money order receipts, etc.

Scope of Services

The primary responsibility of awarded Processing Agencies is to provide trained and knowledgeable staff who have the technical expertise to verify household eligibility by certifying household income, calculating assistance amounts, and reviewing supporting documentation for program compliance. Services shall include:

- Reviewing and certifying household income in accordance with program requirements.
- Reviewing lease and mortgage statements to calculate assistance payments.
- Communicating with landlords and mortgage lenders to verify past due amounts and confirm their willingness to accept payment on behalf of the household. Collecting information from landlords and mortgage lenders so that assistance payments can be made directly to them.
- Review of documentation such as Duplication of Benefits Certifications and COVID-19 Hardship Certifications for compliance with program requirements.
- Requesting additional information from households, landlords and mortgage lenders as needed.
- Notifying applicants of assistance approval or denial within a timely manner.
- Reviewing household and assistance data entered in and uploaded to the SC Stay database and ensuring all required data necessary for reporting to HUD is captured in the system.
- Preparing and submitting disbursement requests to SC Housing for processing.
- Remaining the households primary point of contact during the assistance period.

It is projected that approximately 3,000 households will participate in SC Stay throughout the duration of the program; however, SC Housing makes no assurance that these projections will be realized.

Payment Schedule

SC Stay allows for the payment of activity delivery fees to contracted Processing Agencies. Payment will be as follows:

- \$300.00 per case for each approved household that receives housing assistance.
- \$150.00 per complete application where the household is denied assistance upon the determination that household income is too high, delinquency is not the result of hardship due to COVID-19, or the landlord or mortgage lender is not willing to accept payment on behalf of the household, etc.

Households that are denied assistance may appeal the determination and request that their information be re-evaluated. The re-evaluation will be completed by SC Housing staff. Activity delivery fees cannot be paid for denials generated by the SC Stay database during the pre-screening process. To earn a fee for

denied applications, the processing agency must have reviewed a complete application (documentation) submitted by the household and made the determination of ineligibility.

CDBG Requirements

In addition to the eligible activities and national objective requirements of CDBG and CDBG-CV, all other regular CDBG program requirements apply unless explicitly superseded by the CARES Act. These include environmental review, procurement, fair housing and equal opportunity, and lead based paint, etc. The CARES Act also requires that no duplication of benefits occurs as a result of providing the assistance. HUD indicates that a duplication occurs when a person, household, business, or other entity receives coronavirus assistance from multiple sources for the same purpose, and the total assistance received for that purpose is greater than the total need.

Application and Award Process

SC Stay funds will be awarded on a competitive basis. Entities wishing to compete for an award must apply during the funding cycle. Applicants should thoroughly review the **SC Stay RFQ, Processing Agency Application, Checklist and Frequently Asked Questions** posted on the SC Housing web site to ensure proposals are complete and meet program requirements.

SC Stay program documents are located at <https://schousing.com/home/SC-Stay>.

Application Process

APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Applications may be downloaded from the SC Housing website or can be requested in writing. Directions to complete and submit the application are included in this RFQ. **Applications must be submitted to the SC Housing no later than 5:00 p.m. on January 19, 2021. Late applications will not be accepted.**

Submitting hard copy Applications:

- Applications may be delivered by mail, or other shipping service. Applications should be mailed to the attention of **SC Stay, 300-C Outlet Pointe Blvd., Columbia, SC 29210**.
- Applications can be delivered by hand by dropping them in the designated box located in the SC Housing lobby entranceway.
- Applicants submitting hard copies must submit two (2) copies of the application (one original and one copy) in 3-ring binders and one (1) electronic copy of the application on a thumb drive. Applications must be appropriately separated and tabbed as instructed.

Submitting electronic Applications:

- Applicants can submit electronic applications in a .pdf format via email to SCStay@schousing.com.
- Applicants can submit an electronic copy of the application in a .pdf format on a thumb drive via the mail or other shipping service.
- Applicants can submit electronic applications using SC Housing's Secure File Exchange Upload Account located at <http://www.schousing.com/Home/PartnerLogin>. Instructions on how to create an account and upload the documents are provided on the log-in page. If using the Secure File Exchange Upload Account the application must be uploaded as one single .pdf file.

All applications, including copies must be self-contained and complete. SC Housing will not rely on previously submitted information. Applications must be submitted in their entirety. All costs incurred by the Applicant or a Partner for the preparation, transmittal, or presentation of the application package,

are the responsibility of the Applicant/Partner. SC Housing will acknowledge receipt of each application received by email within two business days. There is no fee to submit an application.

QUESTIONS

All questions from potential Applicants must be submitted in writing to SCStay@schousing.com. No verbal requests will be honored. All written questions and inquires must be emailed to SC Housing no later than **January 13, 2021**. Questions must include the name and organization of the inquiring party to ensure that responses requiring additional clarification can be addressed promptly.

A summary of **Frequently Asked Questions** will be posted to the SC Stay webpage. The FAQs will be updated periodically as new questions are submitted.

Evaluation Criteria

Applicants will be notified if their applications require additional information or have missing items. Applicants will be given three (3) business days to correct deficiencies and provide additional information. Applicant's that do not provide the requested information by the deadline may be removed from consideration. An **Application Checklist and Scoring Rubric** has been provided with the RFQ. Applications will be scored in accordance with the following criteria:

Service Area.....	30 Points
Experience and Capacity.....	40 Points
Financial Capacity.....	30 Points

Experience and Capacity

40 Points

SC Housing will conduct a review of the experience and capacity of the Applicant and its Partner(s). At a minimum, the Applicant and if applicable, their Partner(s) must provide the following in the application:

1. Organizational chart, staff roster, list of governing/board members and the resumes of key development staff within the organization that will be responsible for the oversight of SC Stay activities.
2. A list of employees/staff that will be assigned responsibilities related to the administration of the program. Provide information specific to each employee's experience with similar programs, if applicable experience calculating household income. Indicate the specific responsibilities the employees will have in the administration of SC Stay and how many hours per week each employee will be dedicating to SC Stay Program activities.
3. If applicable, a narrative of previous experience with programs and/or projects of similar scope and nature to the SC Stay Program, such as SC HELP, rental assistance programs, etc. Include the number of households assisted with similar projects within the last 7 years. Applicants proposing to work with partners should include any experience it has acting in the role of a lead entity.
4. The number of households the Applicant reasonably expects to be able to service within the expected ten month duration of the program.

SC Housing will evaluate financial capacity to determine if the Applicant is financially sound and has the financial sustainability to demonstrate the ability to maintain general operations for the long term. Applicants are required to submit the following to demonstrate they have the financial capacity to undertake SC Stay activities:

- The organization's most recent audited or compiled financial statements that include an Income Statement (Statement of Activities for nonprofit applicants) documenting one full year of activities and a Balance Sheet (Statement of Financial Position for nonprofit applicants). If an applicant has been in existence for at least three months, but less than one year, the Income Statement submitted should cover the period since inception of the organization and monthly bank statements from each month the organization has been in existence must be provided. Applicants in existence less than three months will not be considered.
- Applicants meeting the \$750,000 federal funds expenditure threshold must be in compliance with C.F.R. 200.512. An Audit Certification Form must be provided by all Applicants and if applicable a copy of the applicant's most recent audit report must be provided.

Service Area**30 Points**

The effectiveness of the Applicant's proposed service area will be evaluated by the following:

- The percentage of the state's population located in the census tracts of the Applicant's proposed service area.
- The percentage of the census tracts that are at or above the 50th percentile of need, according to the Urban Institute index.
- The average percentile of need across all census tracts included in the proposed service area.

Awards Process

Contracts will be awarded to Applicants that can provide the most effective combination of qualifications and service areas most severely impacted economically by the pandemic. SC Housing reserves the right to reject any and all proposals at any time. SC Housing reserves the right to cancel, withdraw, modify or reissue this RFQ at any time for any reason deemed necessary.

All Applicants will be notified in writing and a list of awarded entities will be posted to the SC Stay webpage. Upon confirmation from successful Applicants of their acceptance of the award, written agreements will be prepared and sent for execution. Awarded applicants will be required to participate in a mandatory virtual Implementation Training, which will cover program requirements and processes. Training will also include information on how to use the SC Stay database.