



Skagit County Public Health

Monica Negrila, Director
Howard Leibrand, M.D., Health Officer

2026-2028 HOMELESS CRISIS RESPONSE SYSTEM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Frequently Asked Questions (2/23/2026)

Q1: Who is eligible to apply for Skagit County's Homeless Crisis Response System RFP?

A1: Organizations are eligible to submit a full proposal only if they submitted a Letter of Interest (LOI) to Skagit County by January 26, 2026, at 4:30pm.

Skagit County has contacted all eligible organizations directly. If your organization submitted an LOI, you were emailed the RFP materials, including your required budget and performance template, on February 10, 2026.

Please use the budget and performance template that was emailed to you when preparing your proposal. The PDF version posted on the County website is provided for reference only and should not be submitted.

Q2: Can our organization apply for more than one program category?

A2: Yes! Organizations are welcome to apply for funding in multiple program categories, including:

- Diversion
- Emergency Shelter
- Transitional Housing

Program category requests should match up against what your organization initially submitted in your LOI.

Q3: If we are applying for multiple program categories, should we submit one proposal or multiple proposals?

A3: Proposers requesting funding for multiple program categories need only submit one proposal. However, the proposal must include a completed set of Proposal Narrative (Attachment B), Budget and Performance Data (Attachment C), and Low-Barrier Monitoring Tool (Attachment D) attachments for each program category requested.

Important: Organizations seeking funding for both Emergency Shelter and Cold Weather Shelter must submit separate proposal materials for each. Please do not combine these two funding requests into a single shelter proposal.

Q4: The Budget and Performance Data (Attachment C) listed on the County website does not include my program's data, and I can't enter information into Attachment C or the Low-Barrier Monitoring Tool (Attachment D). Am I doing something wrong?

A4: The versions of Attachment C and Attachment D posted on the County website are PDF files and are not editable. They are provided for reference only and may not reflect your program's specific data.

On February 10, Skagit County emailed your organization customized, editable Excel templates for:

- Budget and Performance Data (Attachment C)
- Low-Barrier Monitoring Tool (Attachment D)

Please complete and submit the Excel templates that were emailed to you. Do not use the PDF versions posted on the website.

Q5: Why are these populations prioritized?

A5: Chronic Homeless Disabling conditions – Skagit County is prioritizing people who are chronically homeless and suffer from two or more disabling conditions (e.g. substance use disorder, serious mental illness, complex medical problems, severe trauma). This population represents a significant share of individuals experiencing homelessness, has the highest barriers to housing stability, and disproportionately relies on emergency and crisis-driven public systems.

Data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), HUD Annual Performance Reports (APR), the Skagit County Point-in-Time Count (PITC), and the Housing Interest Pool (HIP) consistently demonstrate that people who are chronically homeless with multiple disabling conditions make up a substantial and persistent segment of Skagit County’s homeless population.

Families with Children - Skagit County is prioritizing families with children due to consistently high demand for housing and homeless services across nearly all intervention types, including emergency shelter, rental assistance, eviction prevention, transitional housing, and permanent housing. This gap exists even when accounting for both county-funded and non-county-funded programs.

Data and program experience indicate that families with children are often more responsive to early housing interventions than other populations. Short-term rental assistance, eviction prevention, and rapid rehousing are particularly effective in stabilizing families and preventing prolonged or repeated episodes of homelessness.

Skagit County will continue to support services for other vulnerable populations, recognizing that a smaller number of programs are specifically targeted to DV survivors, foster youth, veterans, youth, and non-chronically homeless adults.

Q6: What is a “low-barrier” project?

A6: Low-barrier projects are designed to remove unnecessary obstacles to support while maintaining safe environments.

Low-barrier projects have realistic and clear expectations. Rules and policies are narrowly focused on maintaining a safe environment and avoiding exits to homelessness. Low-barrier projects do not have work or volunteer requirements. Projects that require households to pay a share of rent allow reasonable flexibility in payment. Emergency shelters must not require households to pay a share of rent or program fees.

Households are not terminated from the project for the following reasons:

- Failure to participate in supportive services or treatment programs
- Failure to make progress on a housing stability plan
- Alcohol and/or substance use in and of itself is not considered a reason for termination
- Households residing in emergency shelter must not be exited to homelessness due to reaching a maximum stay limit.

If a household is terminated from a low-barrier project due to violating rules focused on maintaining a safe environment, there must be a process in place for the household to be considered for re-enrollment if the

household demonstrates unsafe behavior is unlikely to re-occur (i.e. engaged in new treatment plans, mental health services, medical care, etc.).

Q7: Why does Skagit County prioritize low-barrier and Housing First approaches, even though they don't work for everyone?

A7: It is true that no single housing model works for everyone, and Skagit County's homeless response systems includes a range of interventions - prevention, diversion, shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing. Low-barrier and Housing First approaches are prioritized not because they are perfect, but because they consistently work better for people with the highest barriers and fill critical gaps that other models do not reach.

Prioritizing low-barrier and Housing First does not eliminate other housing options. It ensures that the system includes pathways for people who are least well served by traditional models. Higher-barrier, service-intensive, or abstinence-based programs can be effective for some people, but without low-barrier options, many Skagitonians would have no viable path to housing at all.

- Housing First and low-barrier approaches are evidence-based best practices and most effective for the hardest to serve
- Alignment with state funding requirements and system sustainability
- A system approach, not a one-size-fits-all solution

Q8: What are the Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG) requirements regarding low-barrier programs?

A8: CHG requires that no less than 80% of a county's CHG-funded projects be low-barrier. Project types that may meet this requirement include Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, Homelessness Prevention, and Permanent Supportive Housing.

Service-only projects, such as outreach, day centers, coordinated entry and temporary shelters—are not eligible for low-barrier designation.

See [CHG Guidelines SFY 2026-2027](#) for more info.

Q9: How does the CHG requirement impact RFP funding allocations?

A9: Whether a program meets the low-barrier requirement directly influences how funds can be allocated. Because the vast majority of funding available through this RFP comes from the Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG), it is more difficult to fund programs that do not qualify as low-barrier.

For example, if 15 programs are funded using CHG dollars, at least 12 of those programs must meet the low-barrier requirement. Programs with time limits or mandatory program participation do not qualify as low-barrier (see CHG guidelines for additional detail). In addition, certain programs such as coordinated entry, day shelter, temporary shelter, and outreach, do not count toward the low-barrier requirement.

Because approximately 84% of the funding available through this RFP comes from CHG, the County has limited flexibility to fund non-low-barrier programs while also maintaining a balanced homeless crisis response system.

Q10: If I'm not a low-barrier program, can I still apply for funding? Do I have to fill out the low-barrier assessment form?

A10: Yes, programs that are not low-barrier are still eligible to apply and receive funding.

Yes, we would still like all shelter programs to submit the low-barrier tool so we can understand intake, eligibility, screening, and program staffing.

Q11: Why switch to a two-year cycle?

A11: Moving to a two-year funding cycle adds stability and predictability for providers and supports stronger program outcomes. Longer funding periods allow programs to plan staffing, services, and

operations more effectively, reduce disruption caused by annual funding uncertainty, and focus more time on service delivery rather than repeated application and contracting processes.

The second year of funding will be contingent on funding availability and satisfactory performance during the first year. If those conditions are met, contracts will be extended or amended to add additional time and funding, without requiring providers to submit a new RFP for the second year.

Q12: What are proposer eligibility requirements?

A12: Organization must be a local government, Council of Governments, Housing Authority, Community Action Agency, Regional Support Network (under 71.24 RCW), nonprofit community or neighborhood-based organization, federally recognized Indian tribe in the state of Washington, or regional or statewide nonprofit housing-assistance organization that operates programs to end homelessness within a defined service area.

Q13: How do we measure “success” in the Homeless Crisis response system?

A13: For shelter, diversion, and transitional housing, success is measured by timely exits to permanent housing, reduced length of time homeless, and effective engagement in services.

System-wide, we assess performance using HMIS data, progress toward system flow goals, and outcomes for priority populations. While housing availability and affordability affect results, providers are expected to demonstrate strong performance within these constraints, including efficient use of resources and continuous improvement toward housing-focused outcomes.

For shelter, diversion, and transitional housing, success is measured by timely exits to permanent housing, reduced length of time homeless, and effective engagement in services.

System-wide, we assess performance using HMIS data, progress toward system flow goals, and outcomes for priority populations. While housing availability and affordability affect results, providers are expected to demonstrate strong performance within these constraints, including efficient use of resources and continuous improvement toward housing-focused outcomes.

The second year of funding will be contingent on funding availability and satisfactory performance during the first year. If those conditions are met, contracts will be extended or amended to add additional time and funding, without requiring providers to submit a new RFP for the second year.

Q14: How will RFP process evaluate an organization’s capacity, financial management, and track record when awarding funds?

A14: Funding decisions will consider a combination of demonstrated organizational capacity, sound financial management, and past performance. This includes experience operating similar programs, staffing and governance structures, fiscal controls, and the ability to meet contract and reporting requirements. Funding decisions will also consider an organization’s track record of achieving outcomes, responsibly managing public funds, and responding to performance feedback, with priority given to providers that demonstrate readiness to deliver effective, housing-focused services.