



City of Charlottesville  
Charlottesville Affordable Housing Fund (CAHF)  
**2026 CAHF Grant Program Information**

## **1. About Charlottesville Affordable Housing Fund Grant Program**

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The Charlottesville Affordable Housing Fund (CAHF) Grant Program is a key tool in the City's efforts to address affordable housing challenges. The program provides critical financial resources to nonprofit organizations and developers for the creation, preservation, and rehabilitation of affordable housing units within the City of Charlottesville. CAHF grant funds can be used for capital development projects, including new construction and rehabilitation, to ensure long-term affordability for low- and moderate-income households. The CAHF Grant Program aims to increase Charlottesville's affordable housing stock, mitigate displacement, and support inclusive growth.

## **2. Key Points and Eligibility Requirements**

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The Charlottesville Affordable Housing Fund (CAHF) Grant Program is designed to provide critical funding for the development, preservation, and creation of affordable housing within the City of Charlottesville. By funding housing developers, nonprofits, and public entities, CAHF supports long-term affordable housing initiatives aimed at addressing the city's most pressing housing needs. The program focuses on increasing the availability of affordable homes for individuals and families who live or work within Charlottesville, prioritizing projects that contribute to the creation and preservation of affordable housing stock for low- to moderate-income residents.

### **A. Key Points**

1. Available Funding: \$823,000, in total, will only be recommended by the CAHF committee to the City Council to be awarded to eligible applicants.
2. Application Deadline: **November 21, 2025, by 5:00 PM.**
3. Funding Is Not Guaranteed: Applications will be reviewed by the CAHF Committee, and recommendations will be made to the City Council for final approval.

### **B. Eligibility Requirements**

1. Nonprofit or for-profit developers addressing affordable housing needs are eligible to apply. This is not a direct-grant subsidy for individuals or households, and therefore, individuals and households are not eligible to apply directly.

*However, individuals and households may benefit from programs and services (such as down payment assistance or affordable rental units) provided by grant recipients. Interested individuals should apply for such assistance through those organizations receiving CAHF funding.*

2. Projects must align with the City of Charlottesville’s affordable housing programs, policies, and priorities (e.g., a project that provides housing for households earning 30% or less, or 50 to 60% or less of the Area Median Income (AMI)).

### **3. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) About the CAHF Grant Program:**

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#### **A. General Information**

**Q: What is the purpose of the CAHF?**

**A:** The Charlottesville Affordable Housing Fund (CAHF) supports the development, preservation, and promotion of long-term affordable housing options. It also assists with housing-related services for low- and moderate-income households, prioritizing projects that serve households earning 60% or less of the Area Median Income (AMI).

**Q: Who can apply for CAHF funding?**

**A:** Both nonprofit and for-profit developers working towards the City’s housing goals are eligible to apply. Projects must align with the City’s housing strategies, with a focus on lower-income households and long-term affordability.

#### **B. Funding and Application Process**

**Q: How is the CAHF funded and administered?**

**A:** The CAHF is funded through the City of Charlottesville’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget, developer contributions, voluntary proffers, and loan repayments. The Housing Division of Neighborhood Development Services administers the fund, ensuring alignment with the City’s housing and community development strategies.

**Q: How does the CAHF determine how much funding is available each year?**

**A:** The amount of funding is finalized during the City’s annual budget adoption process, which runs from July 1 to June 30. The final amount depends on the City Council’s decisions and any additional contributions, like cash from developers or loan repayments.

**Q: What is the timeline for applying for CAHF funding?**

**A:** Applications must align with the City’s fiscal year, which starts on July 1 and ends on June 30. Off-cycle applications will not be accepted by the CAHF Committee or Housing Division staff. Additionally, awarded funds must be expended within 24 months.

**Q: Can organizations apply for funding outside the regular cycle?**

**A:** No, all funding applications must be submitted within the City’s fiscal year timeline. Off-cycle funding requests will not be considered.

#### **C. Project Eligibility and Prioritization**

**Q: What types of projects receive priority for CAHF funding?**

**A:** Priority is given to projects that offer long-term affordability, particularly those that serve households earning 60% of AMI or below. Projects aligned with the City’s housing and community development goals, including sustainability and equity, are also prioritized.

**Q: What are the priority tiers for CAHF funding distribution?**

**A:** CAHF grants are awarded based on the following three priority tiers:

- **Tier 1:** \$412,000 for households earning up to 30% of AMI.
- **Tier 2:** \$247,000 for households earning up to 60% of AMI.
- **Tier 3:** \$164,000 for households earning up to 80% of AMI.

**D. Program Oversight and Monitoring**

**Q: What are the monitoring and compliance requirements for CAHF grantees?**

**A:** Grantees are required to participate in regular desk reviews, submit quarterly progress reports, and undergo site visits to ensure compliance. If issues arise, grantees may need to submit a Corrective Action Plan. Final compliance reviews are conducted to ensure all deliverables are met.

**Q: How are applications reviewed for CAHF funding?**

**A:** Applications are reviewed through a technical review process, beginning with City staff assessing their completeness and viability. A CAHF Committee evaluates applications based on affordability, organizational capacity, and alignment with City goals before recommendations are presented to the City Council for approval.

**E. Special Program Considerations**

**Q: How does CAHF align with the City’s Climate Action Plan?**

**A:** CAHF encourages projects that incorporate sustainable building practices and energy efficiency measures. The Climate Action Plan emphasizes resilience to climate-related risks, and projects aligned with these goals may receive higher priority.

**Q: What types of projects are eligible for CAHF funding?**

**A:** Eligible projects include redevelopment of public housing, land acquisition, and construction of affordable housing units. Other uses include predevelopment costs, energy efficiency upgrades, homeownership programs, and housing rehabilitation.

**4. Plans and Policy Alignment**

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In 2021, the Charlottesville City Council adopted the Comprehensive Plan, which includes the Charlottesville Affordable Housing Plan. This plan is designed to address the City's pressing housing needs by creating a sustainable, long-term approach to affordable housing. To achieve these goals, the City’s funding approach is to better allocate resources for affordable housing and initiatives to support the homeless. As part of the Affordable Housing Plan, the City of Charlottesville has established ambitious targets to:

- Create 1,100 new subsidized homes, adding to the existing 1,630 homes.
- Preserve 600 existing affordable units.
- Stabilize 1,800 to 2,200 owner and renter households facing housing instability.

The Charlottesville Affordable Housing Fund (CAHF), established in 2007, serves as the City's primary funding mechanism for housing-related projects. All applications for funding through the

CAHF Grant Program must align with this budget cycle, and off-cycle requests will not be considered by the CAHF Committee or Housing Division Staff.

*All CAHF applications must demonstrate how the proposed project aligns with the Affordable Housing Plan, Climate Action Plan, Strategic Framework, and other relevant documents. Ensuring alignment with these plans is critical to securing funding and supporting the City's broader goals of affordable housing, equity, and sustainability.*

- i. **Affordable Housing Plan:** This 2021 plan outlines immediate, short-term, and long-term strategies to meet the City's affordable housing goals. Priority is given to projects that create long-term affordability for households earning primarily up to **60% of AMI**.
- ii. **Charlottesville Comprehensive Plan:** The Comprehensive Plan outlines the City's vision for land use, transportation, housing, and public services. The Affordable Housing Plan (2021), part of this plan, includes goals to create 1,100 new subsidized homes, preserve 600 units, and stabilize up to 2,200 households.
- iii. **Vision and 2023 Strategic Framework:** The City's Strategic Framework has replaced the former Strategic Plan details previously included in the prior program packet before FY2023-2024, and identifies key strategic outcome areas (SOA), and CAHF applications must align with these specific strategic areas. Several SOAs directly apply:
  - a. **Housing:** Increasing access to affordable, high-quality housing.
  - b. **Equity and Inclusion:** Promoting equity in housing access, whether in rental or ownership, particularly for underserved communities.
  - c. **Climate Action:** Community sustainability and resilience, e.g., supporting sustainable housing initiatives and long-term community resilience, access **Climate Action Plan [HERE](#)**.
  - d. **Public Health and Safety:** Enhancing public health and safety through stable, affordable, and equality housing development and preservation initiatives, and housing equity and anti-displacement strategies.
- iv. **Consolidated Plan and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER):** The Consolidated Plan is the City's application to HUD for federal programs like the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME). These programs provide resources for affordable housing and community development.

## **5. CAHF Funding Sources and Annual Allocations**

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CAHF is funded through a combination of annual appropriations and additional contributions. Each year, the City Council approves funding for CAHF through the Capital Improvement

Program (CIP) budget. The total amount of funds available for affordable housing projects is determined during the annual budget adoption process.

In addition to the CIP, CAHF may receive funding from other sources, such as:

1. Cash contributions from developers, e.g., a developer in place of providing affordable housing units in certain rezoning or Special Use Permit cases. Also, these contributions are governed by the City's Affordable Dwelling Unit Ordinance and are indexed to the Consumer Price Index for Housing in the South Urban Region.
2. Voluntary contributions made through development proffers.
3. Loan repayments or grant recalls from past CAHF-funded projects.

The final amount of funding available each year varies based on these inputs and is formalized once the City Council adopts the fiscal year budget.

## **6. Distribution of Funds**

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CAHF funding is distributed annually through a competitive application process, with grants awarded to nonprofit housing developers, for-profit developers, and other eligible entities. Funding is prioritized for projects that serve lower-income households.

Grants are divided into three tiers based on the income levels of the households served:

- 1. Tier 1: \$412,000 available for households earning up to 30% of AMI.**
- 2. Tier 2: \$247,000 available for households earning up to 60% of AMI.**
- 3. Tier 3: \$164,000 available for households earning up to 80% of AMI.**

Additional disbursements may be made depending on available funds and project needs.

## **7. Eligible Applicants**

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Organizations eligible to apply for CAHF funding include:

1. 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations as defined by, the United States Internal Revenue Service and the Code of Virginia, government entities, experienced housing developers, or public housing agencies.
2. Applicants must comply with all federal, state, and local regulations.
3. Projects must provide housing units affordable to households earning up to 80% of AMI, with preference given to developments that focus on lower income brackets.

## **8. Eligible Uses of CAHF Funds'**

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CAHF funds may be used for a variety of affordable housing-related activities, including:

1. Redevelopment of public housing properties.

2. Land acquisition and development for affordable housing, provided the project is "shovel-ready" within two years.
3. Construction of affordable housing units, including mixed-income and single-room occupancy (SRO) developments.
4. Homeownership programs, including counseling and down payment assistance.
5. Energy efficiency upgrades and housing accessibility improvements.

## **9. Grant Program Application Review Process & Timeline**

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Charlottesville Affordable Housing Fund (CAHF) Grant Program is meant to provide financial support for affordable housing projects that serve individuals and families living or working in Charlottesville. This process ensures transparency and aligns funding with the City's Affordable Housing Plan.

### **Step 1 - Review Eligibility**

1. Ensure your organization is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, for-profit housing developer, government entity, or public housing agency.<sup>ii</sup>
2. Projects must serve the City's population of households with incomes of 30% AMI or less; or 50% to 60% AMI, and not more than 80% of AMI, adhering to HUD guidelines.<sup>iii</sup>

### **Step 2 - Application Submission**

1. **Submit Application by 5:00 PM - November 21, 2025. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered by the CAHF Committee.**
2. All required documents must be provided at the time of submission.
3. Applications must be submitted electronically through the Neighborly Portal, [available here](#).

### **Step 3- Application Review Process**

1. **Technical Review:** City staff ensures that applications are complete and meet basic eligibility requirements.<sup>iv</sup>
2. **CAHF Committee Review:** The CAHF Committee evaluates applications based on scoring criteria and categorizes them into:
  - Group A: Ready for consideration.
  - Group B: Requires additional information.
  - Group C: Incomplete or ineligible applications and lacks readiness.<sup>v</sup>
3. **Evaluation Criteria:** Each application submitted for HOPS funding will be carefully reviewed and evaluated based on a comprehensive set of criteria. In total, 23 points of evaluation will be considered to ensure that the proposed programs align with the City's priorities, demonstrate strong organizational capacity, and effectively serve Charlottesville's housing needs.

**Application Opens**  
• October 21, 2025



**Applications Due**  
• November 21, 2025 by 5:00PM



**Application Review**  
• January 2026



**City Council Approval**  
• February - March 2026



**Award Notices**  
• by April 30, 2026

Applicants will be assessed on the quality and effectiveness of their program, how well it aligns with City Council goals, and their ability to collaborate with other organizations. The evaluation process will also consider the applicant's past performance, financial soundness, and ability to adapt if full funding is not awarded. The following criteria will guide the evaluation process to ensure fair and thorough assessment of all applications:

- Number of affordable units
- Level of Affordability
- Long-Term Affordability Periods
- Population Served<sup>vi</sup>
- Environmental Impact and Sustainability
- Demonstrated Need
- Project Readiness
- Alignment with City Priorities
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Focus
- Accessibility
- Community Participation and Engagement
- Organizational Capacity
- Budget and Funding Strategy

**Step 4 - Recommendations and Approval**

A quorum of the CAHF Committee members shall rank and score applications based on evaluation criteria and forward recommendations to the City Council for final approval. Funding is not guaranteed until approved by the City Council.

**Step 5- Post-Award Requirements**

- Awardees must sign a CAHF Grant Program grant agreement within 3 months of receiving City Council approval.
- Project funds must be used within 24 months.
- Recipients must submit regular reports on project progress and financial management as outlined in their grant agreement.

## Links Referenced

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### **Affordable Housing Plan (2021):**

- <https://www.charlottesville.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8600/Chapter-05-Appendix-2---Charlottesville-Affordable-Housing-Plan-PDF>

### **Charlottesville Comprehensive Plan (2021):**

- <https://www.charlottesville.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7073/Comprehensive-Plan-Document---2021-1115-Final?bidId=>

### **Vision and 2023 Strategic Framework:**

- <https://www.charlottesville.gov/684/Vision-Statement>
- <https://www.charlottesville.gov/1373/Strategic-Plan>

### **Climate Action Plan:**

- <https://www.charlottesville.gov/1576/Climate-Action-Plan>

### **Consolidated Plan and CAPER:**

- <https://tjpd.org/our-work/thomas-jefferson-regional-home-consortium/>

## Additional Notes

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- See definitions and end notes in Appendix A

## Appendix A

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i **CAHF funds cannot be used for the following** – Property tax penalties; Administrative or staffing costs exceeding 10% of total funding; or community outreach expenses such as refreshments or transportation to meetings.

ii **Eligibility** – Applicants must be a **501(c)(3)** or an equivalent nonprofit organization, for-profit developer, government entity, or public housing agency. Applications are checked for administrative compliance and alignment with CAHF’s funding scope. For reference see, U.S. Internal Revenue Service, “501(c)(3) Organization Requirements.”

iii **AMI** –Area Median Income (AMI) is a measure used by HUD to establish income limits for affordable housing programs.

All projects funded through the Charlottesville Affordable Housing Fund (CAHF) must and shall serve households within specific AMI thresholds:

- **30% AMI or less: Extremely low-income** – *sometimes referred to as deeply affordable*  
(e.g., earning \$37,750/year or less for a family of four)
- **50% - 60% AMI: Low-income households**  
(e.g., earning between \$62,900 and \$75,480/ year for a family of four)
- **80% AMI: Moderate-income households**  
(e.g., earning up to \$100,650/ year for a family of four)

These limits are adjusted based on household size and are calculated using the 2025 Area Median Income (AMI) for the Charlottesville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). For future AMI limits for the Charlottesville Area, refer to the [HUD website](#).

**Households and Unhoused Individuals/families within the City of Charlottesville** – According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a household is defined as all individuals occupying a single housing unit, regardless of their relationship. A household can consist of a single person, a family related by birth, marriage, or adoption, or even unrelated individuals who share the same housing unit (HUD, 2024). This broad definition also applies to unhoused individuals or families, allowing them to qualify for HUD’s housing assistance programs such as Continuum of Care (CoC) and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), which aim to support households facing homelessness (HUD, n.d.). In this grant program, as in HUD’s programs, an unhoused individual or family

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unit fits the household definition, and assistance is available based on the household composition and income at the time of application (HUD, 2023).

iv **Initial Intake and Applicability Review** – Assigned City staff, as designated or requested by the Housing Program Manager, will review the application for completeness and adherence to basic eligibility criteria. They will ensure that the proposal aligns with the City’s housing goals and determine which funding Tier (1, 2, or 3) the application fits into.

v **Readiness to Proceed** – The project must demonstrate readiness, e.g., it details plans, budget narratives, project timelines, details for the acquisition of permits, staffing, and other necessary steps to initiate construction or services promptly; and has clear and demonstrable aligning objectives, and performance measures and detail strategy for maintain reporting and compliance with terms of this grant program, etc.

vi **Populations Served** – Consistent with the City’s Affordable Housing Plan and Housing Policy 1, the CAHF Committee shall make recommendations to the council, with priority given to projects serving underserved populations, especially those at 30% AMI or less; then those between 50% to 60%; and lastly, any above 60% AMI but not exceeding 80% AMI. Additionally, special consideration is given to outreach strategies and equitable service to lower-income households.