



## **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION** **Tenant Education Curriculum**

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**Posting Date: November 18, 2024**

**Response Submission Deadline: 3:00 PM on January 24, 2025**

### **INTRODUCTION**

As the state's Housing Finance Agency, Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation ("RIHousing") works to help Rhode Islanders find, buy, keep, rent and build affordable homes. One program our agency administers to meet this mission is the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP). This program allows tenants to receive vouchers that cover a portion of their rent in homes on the private market. Landlords are often hesitant to rent to tenants with vouchers, and those with vouchers struggle to find landlords who will accept vouchers. As part of an effort to both increase landlord participation in HCVP and set tenants up to succeed in their tenancies, we intend to implement a tenant education course for those who have received a voucher.

Through this Request for Information ("RFI") RIHousing seeks external responses and information on program curriculum and design from a range of respondents including, but not limited to, agencies that may want to assist RIHousing in providing the tenant education courses, agencies that work with and represent recipients of Housing Choice Vouchers or other tenant-based vouchers, landlords or HCVP recipients.

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

Responses are to be submitted via email to: **Stacy Wasserman, Innovation Program Manager at [swasserman@rihousing.com](mailto:swasserman@rihousing.com)** no later than the submission deadline set forth above.

All questions regarding this RFI must be made in writing and submitted via email to Stacy Wasserman at [swasserman@rihousing.com](mailto:swasserman@rihousing.com) prior to the submission deadline.

### **NOTE TO RESPONDENTS:**

Please be advised that **all** responses may be made available to the public on request pursuant to the Rhode Island Access to Public Records Act, Chapter 2 of Title 38 of the Rhode Island General Laws (the "APRA") upon award of a contract(s). Respondents are advised not to include information that they deem proprietary or confidential or that constitutes a trade secret.



RFP/RFQ Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Respondent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

With your response, please provide a description of the organization you represent. Please also include the name, business telephone number and email of a representative of your organization authorized to discuss your response.

**Background:**

As a first step to creating and implementing a tenant education course for HCVP program participants, we have begun to build the curriculum. In order to accurately inform the curriculum with information that will be useful to tenants and cover the topics landlords would like tenants to know, we have conducted focus groups with current HCVP landlords, current HCVP tenants, and youth aging out of foster care who have or soon will rent their first apartment on their own, to hear firsthand what topics should be covered. Following these focus groups, we surveyed current HCVP landlords to ensure the topics that came out of the focus groups reflected the information they would want included in a course and allowed them to share additional topics to include.

This tenant education course intends to provide HCVP recipients with the knowledge and tools they need to be successful renters. It is not intended to include HCVP rules and regulations, nor is it intended to provide budgeting or financial education. RI Housing will offer this course once an HCVP recipient has been selected off the HCVP waitlist and a voucher is available for them. While RI Housing will not require HCVP recipients to take this course, it intends to provide an incentive for those who do.

RI Housing is dedicated to ensuring that the tenant education program curriculum is thoroughly informed and reviewed by the appropriate stakeholders. Our next step in this process is issuing this RFI to allow partner agencies and other interested parties the opportunity to review the proposed curriculum and provide feedback. Through this Request for Information (“RFI”) RI Housing seeks external responses and information on program design, interest, and general feedback from a range of respondents.

Before responding to this RFI, please review Attachment A, a draft outline of the proposed curriculum.

**Request for Information**

Below are prompted questions that RI Housing seeks specific feedback on; however, feedback on topics or ideas not specifically requested is welcome.

1. Are there topics missing from the curriculum that you believe should be included in a curriculum? Please note the topics and why they should be included.
2. Are there topics on the draft curriculum that you think should not be included? Why not?
3. It is likely this education course will only be offered a few times a year, as tenants do not come off the waitlist on a regular basis due to the high demand for a voucher. Tenant education will be conducted when tenants are offered and accept a voucher, prior to leasing an apartment.



RFP/RFQ Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Respondent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

What do you feel would be the most effective way to provide this education? I.e. In-person, virtually (with a person teaching the course in real-time), or on-demand (which participants could access at any time). Please explain why. Which days of the week would be best, and during which times?

4. As part of this program, we would like to provide helpful resources and templates to participants, such as:
  - a checklist that includes questions renters should ask their landlords
  - template for keeping track of helpful information (i.e. landlord contact information, emergency contacts, utility company numbers, locations of water shut off and fuse box, etc).
  - document that provides guidance on how to respond in certain scenarios
    - a. What types of questions and items should be included in these documents?
    - b. Are there other similar types of documents that would be helpful to tenants that we should provide?
    - c. Are you aware of any existing templates or similar documents? If so, please share copies or hyperlinks.
  
5. Do you have recommendations on resources that could be provided for conflict resolution, as well as organizations that tenants should reach out to if the conflict cannot be resolved? We would like to provide tenants with some guidance on how to deal with conflict with neighbors, particularly if the situations are scary or concerning, such as addressing violence or drug use. We understand that it is not easy for tenants with vouchers to find new homes, and we want to provide knowledge and resources to help them stay safely and comfortably in their homes.