

**Knoxville-Knox County Office of Housing Stability**  
**Local Request for Proposals**  
**FY 2026 Low-Barrier Emergency Shelter and Homeless Day Center**

**Background**

Knoxville-Knox County Office of Housing Stability (OHS) seeks to address the growing need for homeless shelter and day space facilities and services in Knoxville and Knox County, Tennessee. The number of individuals accessing homeless services on an average day has grown from 1,000 in 2018 to over 2,100 in 2025, an increase of 110%. In that same period, the number of homeless shelter beds in the community has increased by only 16%. The community recognizes the need for 1) additional shelter beds, especially low-barrier shelter beds accessible to unhoused individuals with a wide variety of vulnerabilities, 2) day center spaces where unhoused individuals can access resources for basic needs and connect with supportive services, and 3) programming in the “Day Space,” the fenced area under the I-40 overpass on North Broadway.

The goal of this RFP is to help unhoused individuals and households access supportive services to help them establish self-sufficient and sustainable lives for themselves. The successful proposer(s) for this funding will submit a detailed plan for providing the supportive services that will allow clients to quickly find housing and rapidly exit from shelter and/or homelessness.

Award will be made to the most responsive, responsible proposer(s) meeting specifications. OHS reserves the right to award this proposal on an all-or-none basis or by multiple award. OHS reserves the right to not award this proposal. Award will be made in accordance with the criteria specified under “Evaluation Criteria.”

**Program Period**

The program period will be from contract signing to June 30, 2026. Contracts will be for Fiscal Year 2026.

**Eligibility Requirements**

OHS is seeking proposals from experienced organizations actively engaged in addressing homeless services needs in the community. Eligibility requirements include:

1. The organization must be located within and serving residents of Knoxville and/or Knox County.

2. The organization must be an incorporated non-profit entity registered with the TN Secretary of State and listed as “Active” at <https://tncab.tnsos.gov/portal/registered-charities-search>

### Key Dates

Date	Action
July 31, 2025	RFP released
August 11, 2025 at 11:30 am	Public information session at 405 Dante Road
September 1, 2025 at 5pm	Responses due
September 30, 2025	Award notification

### Eligible Project Types

Three basic project types are eligible for funding under this award: low-barrier emergency shelters, homeless day centers, and programming in the Safe Space. Proposals should include a chosen location, facility, and the zoning designation of that location.

#### 1. Low-Barrier Emergency Shelter

Multiple different project designs are acceptable:

- Seasonal low-barrier shelter (at least December 1, 2025 to March 1, 2026), open seven days a week, 24 hours a day if possible OR if not, overnight only
- Year-round low-barrier shelter, open seven days a week, 24 hours a day if possible OR if not, overnight only

Low-barrier shelters operate according to the following principles:

- Housing-focused, rapid exit services: focus services in shelter on assisting people to access permanent housing options as quickly as possible
- Safe and appropriate diversion: provide diversion services to help individuals find safe and appropriate housing alternatives to entering shelter
- Low-barrier access: keep barriers to entry low, for example, consider allowing pets, or allowing couples to stay together, or not having sobriety or income requirements
- Use data to inform operations: see “Metrics for Success” in 1.c below

##### a. Objectives

- i. To provide at least 100 beds in a decent, safe, and sanitary shelter for homeless individuals and households in accordance with federal, state and local guidelines.

- ii. To operate at least during the colder parts of the year or if possible, year-round.
- iii. To utilize trauma-informed practices and treat clients with respect.
- iv. To admit and serve clients in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.
- v. To ensure that clients are entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

b. Services/Daily Operations

- i. Provide safe, secure, temporary shelter to homeless individuals and households.
- ii. Provide at least one prepared, nutritious meal per day while in operation.
- iii. Offer housing-focused case management services (could be accomplished via partnerships with other providers).
- iv. Coordinate with other providers to link clients to services such as health care, behavioral health supports, domestic violence issues, legal issues, child care, employment support, etc.

c. Metrics for Success

- i. Number of individuals sheltered
- ii. Number of individuals diverted from shelter into housing
- iii. Number of individuals exited to housing
- iv. Number of individuals who are progressing in their housing plan
- v. Number of individuals who increase their income level
- vi. Number of individuals who are connected with case management services
- vii. Number of individuals who are connected with appropriate medical and behavioral health care
- viii. Number of individuals who are connected with appropriate employment supports
- ix. Number of individuals who are connected with other services

## **2. Homeless Day Center**

This project should offer day center services in the near vicinity of the fenced day space under the I-40 overpass along North Broadway, with special emphasis on providing sanitary bathroom facilities at least during business hours.

### **a. Objectives**

- i. To provide a safe, welcoming and low-barrier environment for individuals and households experiencing homelessness to access basic needs, connect with supportive services, and build relationships that foster pathways to stability and permanent housing.
- ii. To utilize trauma-informed practices and treat clients with respect.
- iii. To admit and serve clients in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.

### **b. Services/Daily Operations**

- i. Provide for basic needs such as food, water, restrooms and hygiene, showers, laundry, secure mailboxes, charging stations for phones, etc. as location and facility will allow.
- ii. Provide comprehensive information on available community resources such as shelters, food pantries, healthcare, mental health care, substance abuse treatment, employment services, legal aid, etc.
- iii. Provide co-located or visiting services as available through partnerships: healthcare, mental health/substance misuse support, case management, employment support, legal aid, etc.

### **c. Metrics for Success**

- i. Number of individuals served
- ii. Number of individuals meeting basic needs onsite (bathrooms, showers, laundry, etc.)
- iii. Number of individuals who are connected with case management services
- iv. Number of individuals who are connected with appropriate medical and behavioral health care
- v. Number of individuals who are connected with appropriate employment supports
- vi. Number of individuals who are connected with other services

### 3. Day Space programming

This project should offer programming for the fenced day space area under the I-40 overpass on North Broadway, across the street from KARM and next to Salvation Army.

#### a. Objectives

- i. To improve access to services in the Day Space.
- ii. To maintain basic security in the Day Space, including uniformed security officers.
- iii. To utilize trauma-informed practices and treat people experiencing homelessness with respect.

#### b. Services/Daily Operations

- i. Provide security, outreach, case management and other homeless services in the Day Space.
- ii. Coordinate any donations or feeding or other volunteer offerings and services in the Day Space.
- iii. Regulate and monitor entry into the Day Space and enforce basic rules (no drug use, etc.).

#### c. Metrics for Success

- i. Number of individuals who are connected with case management services
- ii. Number of individuals who are connected with appropriate medical and behavioral health care
- iii. Number of individuals who are connected with appropriate employment supports
- iv. Number of individuals who are connected with other services
- v. Number of security incidents in the Day Space (minimize)
- vi. Consider surveying individuals utilizing the Day Space to establish baseline and measure improvement

### Reimbursement Process

The successful proposer(s) will invoice OHS for eligible costs on either a monthly or quarterly basis and **will receive reimbursement** for those costs within 45 days of successful invoice submission.

### OHS Contact Information

Erin Read

Executive Director

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### **RFP Workshop**

An RFP Workshop will be held on **August 11, 2025, from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm** at **405 Dante Road, Knoxville, TN 37918**. The workshop will cover accessing the ZoomGrants system, eligibility, and funding priorities. There will also be time for potential proposers to ask any questions they may have. Persons requiring special assistance or accommodation should contact Arielle Benson at OHS at 865-318-2603 at least three days before the public meeting.

When: August 11, 2025, 11:30 am to 12:30 pm

Where: 405 Dante Road, Knoxville, TN 37918

Those who are unable to attend in-person may attend virtually on Zoom:

<https://knoxcounty.zoom.us/j/96909663859?pwd=uVDuMWY4FyABPKFExKWOFTpMYCbjL.1>

### **Required Documents for Submission**

- Articles of Incorporation and By-laws
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure (*downloaded from application, must be completed by Executive Leadership and all Board Members*)
- Current List of Board of Directors with term dates
- Most recent IRS 990 or Audited Financial Statement
- Organizational Chart
- 501(c)3 Tax Exemption Letter/Non-Profit Determination
- Most recent TN State Annual Report (*per TN code § 5-9-109*)
- Title VI Agency Certifications (*downloaded from application*)
- Salary information for the CEO/ED and next highest-paid employee (*per Knox County Ordinance No. O-92-5-102, § 1, 7-27-92*)

### **Suggested Documents for Submission**

- Impact reports
- Brochures
- Client Satisfaction Surveys

## Proposal Submission

Proposals are submitted online through the ZoomGrants software portal utilized by OHS for recipient and contract management. Proposers may access the OHS grants management website at [https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/Office\\_of\\_Housing\\_Stability](https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/Office_of_Housing_Stability).

Existing recipients and subrecipients may log in using their current credentials. New Proposers must register for the portal. ZoomGrants registration information is included at the end of this notification.

All proposals submitted should include the following information. Please refer to the application in ZoomGrants for the questions and character limits.

1. Agency profile
  - a. Applicable experience and qualifications
2. Program description
  - a. Program components
  - b. Staffing plan
  - c. Services you plan to offer onsite (either in-house or through partnerships with other providers)
  - d. Address and description of physical location and facility
3. Detailed program budget, including any other funding sources that will supplement the award amount
4. Detailed plan for measuring success metrics (listed in the “Eligible Project Types” section of this NOFO)
5. Description of partnerships and letters of support/commitment
  - a. List of partners and what services they will provide onsite
  - b. Letters of support from partners
  - c. Letters of commitment from any partners who will agree to provide services to clients onsite

## Proposal Review

OHS will select an Evaluation Committee to thoroughly review and score all submitted responsive and responsible proposals. **Proposals that do not meet all requirements outlined in this funding announcement will not be evaluated.**

## **Evaluation Criteria**

Each evaluator will have the ability to award up to 100 points, based on the Evaluation Criteria.

Experience and Qualifications	25 Points
Program Plan and Approach	40 Points
Program Location/Facility/Zoning	10 Points
Cost	25 Points

Preference points will be given to proposals that include:

1. Leveraged funds to support the proposed program.
2. Plans for independent fundraising, grant-writing, and/or other efforts to supplement the award amount.
3. Partnerships with other service providers to ensure necessary wrap-around services are available for clients.

OHS reserves the right to use all pertinent information in the evaluation of proposals. Information on a service provider from reliable sources, and not within the service provider's proposal, may also be noted and made part of the evaluation file. OHS shall have sole responsibility for determining a reliable source. OHS reserves the right to conduct written and/or oral discussions/interviews after the request for proposals closes. The purpose of such discussions/interviews is to provide clarification and/or additional information to make an award.

OHS will consider rankings along with other factors to make final funding decisions. Other factors may include cost effectiveness, overall funds availability, city and county priorities and strategies, federal or state regulations, community need, geographic distribution, or other relevant factors. OHS may award funding for only a portion of the proposed work and ask multiple awardees to collaborate to achieve greater impact and cost effectiveness. Approval of any funding provided through OHS is ultimately the decision of the OHS Board of Directors.

## **Reporting Requirements**

Those selected for funding will be required to complete quarterly reports and reimbursement requests through OHS's online grant reporting system, ZoomGrants. Goals and performance indicators will be set for each contracted program.

## Accessing and Registering for ZoomGrants

You will need to register as an Applicant within ZoomGrants by following the program access link provided.

Zoom Grants University, the online resource hub for Zoom Grants has each step of the process, from registration to completing the application thoroughly detailed. This includes information on collaborating, which allows for multiple people to work on an application, and many other useful topics. They have videos and step-by-step walkthroughs available.

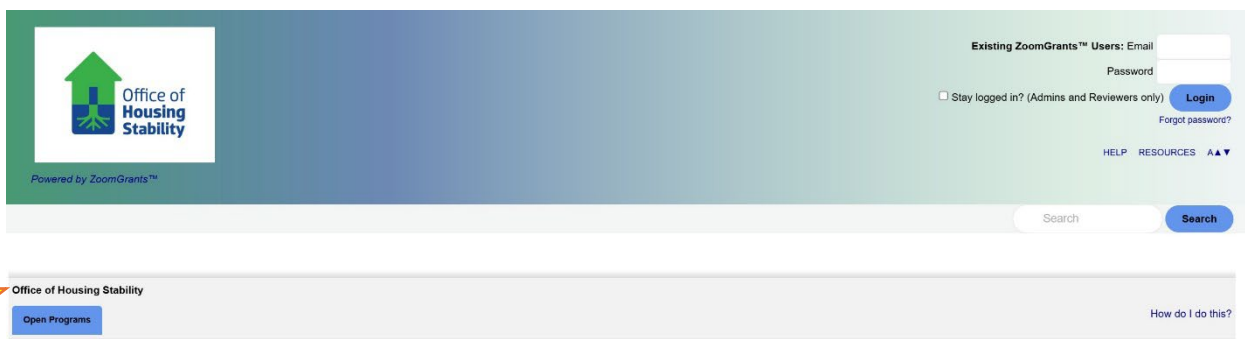
**Access Link:** [https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/Office\\_of\\_Housing\\_Stability](https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/Office_of_Housing_Stability) (click here to start registration process!)

- 1) Click on “New ZoomGrants Account” on the right side of the page.
- 2) Follow the prompts for set-up.

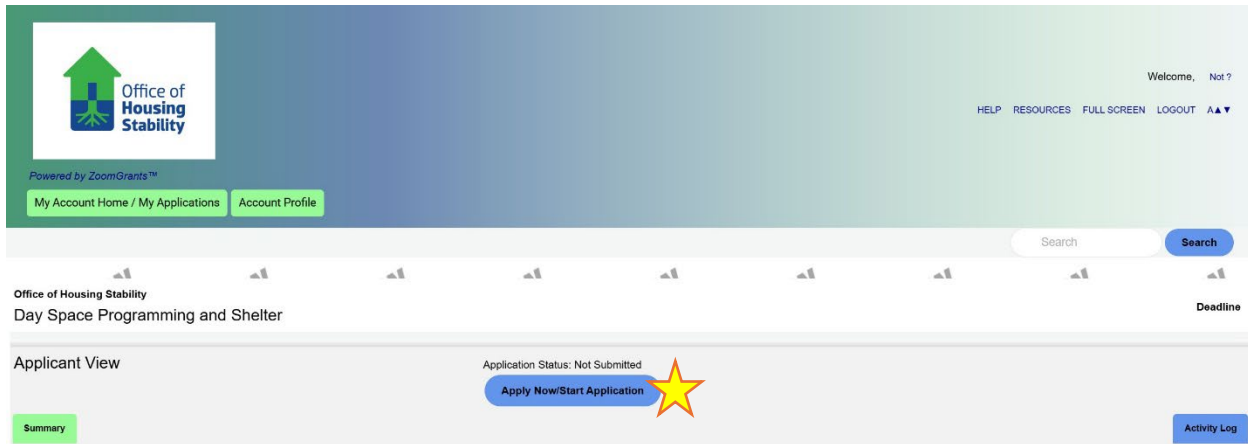
Before you set up your account, consider who will be working on the Proposal, and what access is most appropriate for them, as ZoomGrants allows for flexibility in set-up. Here is a link to the [Account Ownership Considerations](#).

## Proposals

Once your account is set up, follow these steps to start an application:



 Available RFPs will be listed here under “Open Programs”



★ Click the Apply button next to the program you wish to apply for

Zoom Grants University: <https://help.zoomgrants.com/>

