

Workforce Housing Project Grant *Request for Proposals*

Applications due by 6 p.m. PST on March 8, 2019

Background

Powered by a network of credit unions, the Northwest Credit Union Foundation (NWCUF) is uniquely positioned to harness and deliver resources that strengthen the financial lives of people throughout our region. We do this through asset building, economic empowerment, and cooperative development. In cooperation with the Northwest Credit Union Association (NWCUA), we help more than 185 Idaho, Oregon, and Washington credit unions achieve positive social impact in their communities.

NWCUF Contact Info
Claire Hendrix
Program Director
chendrix@nwcua.org
(208) 515-4476

Over the past year, NWCUF has become increasingly engaged in catalyzing our credit union network around the lack of affordability for workforce housing in our communities. Policy makers and credit union leaders consistently have urged NWCUF to use our resources and networks to develop a significant workforce housing initiative. In January of 2018, we hosted our first Affordable Housing Summit, where credit union leaders from across our three states came together. We identified workforce housing as an area where we have considerable opportunity in the housing market, given credit unions' existing infrastructure and capabilities as community-based financial institutions. Credit unions are uniquely positioned to think creatively and leverage resources to help address this critical issue. Whether it's single-family homes in rural Eastern Idaho, or large mixed-income apartments in Seattle, one thing remains abundantly clear: credit unions in our region want to step up and achieve measurable, positive impact for their members and communities. The Northwest Credit Union Foundation will serve as a hub for incubating innovative solutions that have the potential to be scaled or replicated to improve affordability and access to workforce housing options across the region.

We invite all NWCUA member credit unions to submit their interest in applying for a project grant to address workforce housing in their community to NWCUF by **January 30, 2019**. Interest submissions are not required for submittal of an application but are strongly encouraged. All project proposal submissions are due by no later than 6 p.m. PST on **March 8, 2019**.

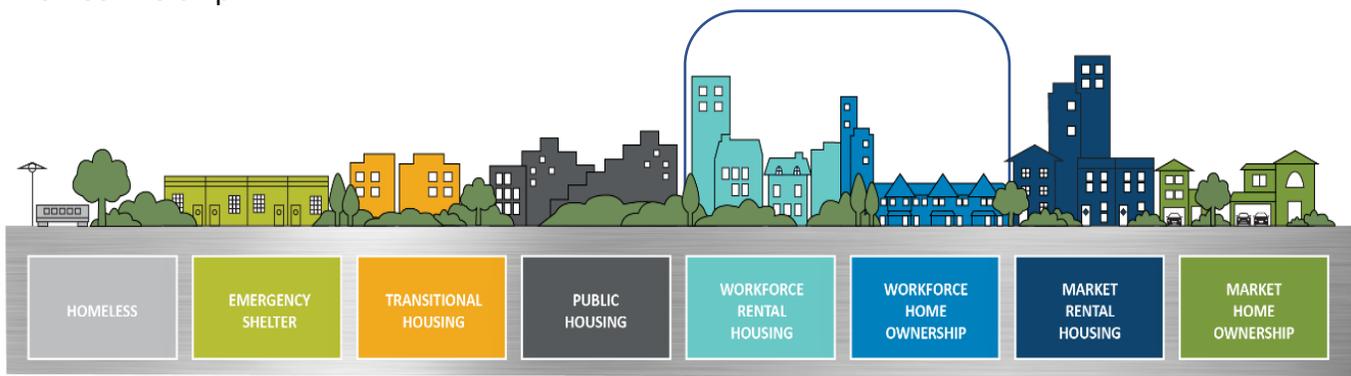
Overview

The long-term goal of NWCUF’s workforce housing grant opportunity is to increase affordability and access to workforce housing options in our region. Each project plan should be comprehensive, well-reasoned, and designed to address the unique workforce housing challenges faced by credit union communities. To the greatest extent possible, your project plan should be based on research and data. As member-driven financial cooperatives, credit unions must make business decisions that are good for their members. Since the project proposal is for the benefit of credit union members, NWCUF encourages members to be a part of the planning process and have a voice in the selected project plan their credit union chooses, as it will directly benefit themselves and their fellow members. We also encourage credit unions to see this grant as an opportunity to increase their membership in underserved markets.

Nationally, credit unions who are effectively working in the housing space and implementing housing-based products are successful because of the partnerships they have developed to bolster resources, their innovation on existing practices, and risk mitigation. Being community-based cooperatives, credit unions have close relationships with their membership base and local partners that big banks, traditional mortgage brokers, and the current alternative lending market simply don’t have. These connections to the community make the design and delivery of innovative housing solutions not just possible, but an incredible opportunity to showcase credit unions as leaders in addressing affordable housing barriers across the country.

Defining Workforce Housing

NWCUF defines workforce housing as housing that is affordable to workers and close to their jobs; and that is affordable to households earning 60% to 140% of the area median income (AMI). Workforce housing can include homeownership as well as rental housing, ensuring that housing costs are no more than 30% of household income. Workforce housing is often thought of as housing for teachers, police officers, firefighters, etc., but also includes housing for young professionals, workers in the construction trades, retail workers, office workers, service workers, and others. On the housing continuum, workforce housing is adjacent to market rate rental housing and market rate homeownership.



Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

NWCUF is committed to promoting and supporting efforts that address the inequity that exists in our communities across the Northwest. Through our workforce housing grantmaking, we will prioritize funding for credit unions or credit union partnerships that clearly identify diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) outcomes or strategies in their project proposal. Historically, many minority groups have been denied access to fair and equal housing opportunities across the country. The current housing crisis we are experiencing today is affecting members across all credit union communities, however it is still disproportionately affecting specific subsets of our region's population. NWCUF believes credit unions have a role in positively impacting the financial health of our underserved communities and minority populations. We encourage you to reach out and engage with these groups to better understand what their needs and challenges are that may be different than those of your other members. NWCUF recommends applying DEI frameworks to your project plan to address the diversified needs in your own communities and be a leader in minimizing the level of inequity that persists in the financial health of our communities.

Types of Eligible Workforce Housing Projects

NWCUF is committed to supporting affordable and innovative workforce housing solutions in communities across the Northwest. Workforce housing is a complex issue with no single solution that will work for all communities or populations. However, NWCUF is interested in funding project grants that identify scalable or replicable solutions that are responsive to the needs of local communities. The project should focus a majority of its work on impacting workforce housing (60-140% AMI) access or options in the credit union's local and/or surrounding community. What works in rural regions might not be what works in urban areas, and what works in Idaho might not fit in Washington, etc. Some credit unions may choose to identify ways they can positively impact the rental market with security deposit loans, while others may choose to focus on how they can impact homeownership for underserved populations. With this funding opportunity, the sky is the limit.

Eligibility Requirements for Credit Unions

NWCUF invites applications from all NWCUA member credit unions. Workforce housing projects must focus on credit union communities in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Credit unions who received planning grant funds are strongly encouraged to submit applications for project grants. If you did not receive a planning grant from NWCUF, you are still eligible and encouraged to apply for a project grant. Credit unions are welcome to partner and combine their efforts to form a collective project; only one submission is needed as long as the partner credit unions are defined in the Team and Partnerships section of the application.

Letter of Commitment

In order to increase the sustainability of the proposed projects, NWCUF will require a letter of commitment from each credit union or credit union partnership who applies for the grant on their credit union's level of financial contribution to their project.

Funding Availability and Award Range

NWCUF has committed \$500,000 in grants to fund workforce housing projects in 2019. While we anticipate making awards up to \$100,000, each applicant credit union is encouraged to apply for the reasonable funding necessary to implement your project plan as detailed in your application. We encourage credit unions to find opportunities to utilize funds from additional funders or project partners as a matching component for this project proposal, but it is not a requirement of submission. NWCUF is committed to supporting credit unions as they have a positive impact in the workforce housing space and will work to identify future funding opportunities.

Award Timeline

NWCUF strongly encourages a submitting your interest to apply for the grant by January 30, 2019 to allow NWCUF staff time to follow up with each application. The RFP submission window will close on March 8, 2019 at 6 p.m. PST. NWCUF anticipates making grant award announcements by the beginning of May. NWCUF staff is available during the RFP application window to answer any questions or provide additional information or resources.

Submission Guidelines

Please submit your interest in workforce housing to Claire Hendrix at chendrix@nwcua.org or online [here](#). All project applications are due by no later than 6 p.m. PST on March 8, 2019. To access the project grant application form, visit our [website](#). All fields must be completed before the form can be submitted. There will not be an option to change or edit your application once it has been submitted. However, if new opportunities arise or key elements of your plan need revision after you submit your application, please contact NWCUF to discuss the needed modifications.

Project Grant Application Details

NWCUF upholds the credit union mantra of People Helping People and believes this workforce housing grant is an opportunity to do just that. We are looking for project plans that are comprehensive, intuitive to community needs, and can be replicated or scaled. We are not interested in one off or one-year projects. Project plans should be ready for implementation by the time of the grant award in May 2019.

NWCUF strongly encourages applicants to draft responses in an outside document and copy/paste those responses into the application form. Applicants cannot save and return to the application form. Once an application is submitted, it cannot be edited.

The following includes application requirements and questions:

- **Credit Union Information**
- **Grant Point of Contact Information**
- **Proposal Narrative**
 - *Project Title*
 - *Project Location*
 - *Community Needs Being Addressed*
 - What is the state of workforce housing in the communities you serve? What are the needs of the populations you intend to serve through a workforce housing project? What are the barriers or challenges they are currently facing in accessing housing options? Please include supporting data and statistics, where relevant.
 - *How will you utilize DEI frameworks or principles in your project?*
 - Does your credit union already have policies around diversity and inclusion? If so, what are they and how will you utilize them in this project? If not, how will you build DEI principles into your project?
- **Project Plan**
 - *Project Description*
 - Please provide a three-year overview and plan for your intended project. How does your proposed project address the current or future housing need in your community? How will your team and partners execute this project? What products/services will you provide, that you currently don't, to alleviate barriers or challenges to accessing workforce housing for your members?
 - *Impact*
 - How will this project impact workforce housing and the community as a whole? Describe your project's long-term goals and metrics for success (What will be true if your project is successful?) as well as specific project deliverables for this grant award. How do you intend to measure this impact?
 - *Beneficiaries and Community Outreach*
 - Describe the populations that you are targeting and who will ultimately benefit from your project. Are they current members and/or potential new members? Are you planning to provide products/services to specific underserved or minority populations in your community?
 - What is your strategy for reaching and engaging with your target population?

- ***Team and Partnerships***
 - Please identify who from your credit union will be working on this project (internal team) and what other CUs, if any, you have partnered with.
 - List partnerships (community-based organizations, private market, government agencies, etc.) you have solidified or are you currently working on. Who do you project you will partner with by end of the third year? Are there other funders besides NWCUF that you plan on approaching for this project?
 - Please list any additional grant opportunities you have identified as possible avenues of current or future support for your project.
- ***Timeline***
 - What is your timeline for implementation of this project? What is your 3-year projection for your project's growth and/or scalability? What are some key milestones that will demonstrate if your project is successful? When, if ever, will your project be sustainable without NWCUF support?
- ***Budget***
 - Provide a detailed budget (to the best of your ability) on the first 3 years of this project. Please separate out NWCUF potential grant funds and any other possible grant opportunities.
- **Additional documentation**
 - ***Letter of Commitment***
 - If awarded a workforce housing project grant, what would you credit union financially commit to the project for the first year? For three years?

Reporting

Every credit union or credit union project receiving a project grant from NWCUF has a responsibility to report on the use of grant funds. Upon grant award, NWCUF and the recipient credit union will enter into a grant agreement with mutually agreed upon project deliverables and metrics of success. There will be reporting requirements throughout the grant period that will be submitted to NWCUF for review. Failure to meet project deliverables or to comply with other grant agreement articles could influence future grant decisions by NWCUF.

Engagement with NWCUF and Other Grantees

Every credit union receiving a project grant from NWCUF will be expected to participate in routine check-in meetings with NWCUF staff. Additionally, it may be beneficial from time to time for all grantees and possibly partners to discuss best practices, barriers, and progress toward project deliverables as a collective group. For this purpose, NWCUF will coordinate in-person, video, and/or phone meetings and grantees will be strongly encouraged to participate. NWCUF recognizes this workforce housing grantee cohort will be serving very different and diverse population segments and will therefore be taking unique approaches to address the needs of their individual communities.

However, NWCUF believes there is great value in collectively sharing and discussing these approaches to create new connections and further the impact of the workforce housing initiative across the Northwest. NWCUF may also identify professional development opportunities that will benefit the collective work of all grantees and require participation from credit unions in these trainings.

Resources

In January of 2018, NWCUF convened an Affordable Housing Summit and shared examples of housing success stories for credit unions across North America. These examples were meant to illustrate the depth and breadth of what's possible for credit unions, and presentations from the Summit can be found here:

- [State of Affordable Housing in Our Region](#), Marty Kooistra, Housing Development Consortium
- [Single Family Housing Solutions](#), Larry Garcia, Mountain Star Federal Credit Union
- [Impact Real Estate Program](#), Lilian Chau, Vancity Credit Union
- [Affordable Rental Housing and Multiunit Housing Solutions](#), Mark Kretzschmar, North Carolina State Employees Credit Union

Below are some additional resources to support you in creating your project plans. Please feel free to reach out to Claire Hendrix if you would like any additional information or assistance with your proposal.

- DEI Resources
 - The Greenlining Institute, [DEI Framework](#)
 - Nonprofit Leaders Alliance, [DEI Resource Library](#)
- Federal Housing Resources
 - [National Fair Housing Alliance Resources](#)
 - Fannie Mae, [Innovation Challenge](#)
 - Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines, [Affordable Housing Products](#)

Questions

NWCUF is committed to ensuring that every interested NWCUA credit union member has the support they need to join us in addressing workforce housing challenges in our Northwest communities. We are here as a resource for your credit union as you explore this opportunity, so please do not hesitate to reach out. If you have questions, need for additional information or resources, we encourage you to contact NWCUF Program Director, Claire Hendrix, for any inquiries at chendrix@nwcu.org or (208) 515-4476.