

Subject: New submission from Community Development Combined
Date: Thursday, January 4, 2024 at 9:53:49 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: jnytko@govsol.org
To: jnytko@govsol.org

General Information
Date of application:
01/04/2024
Organization name:
Refugee Welcome Corporation
Organization TIN or EIN:
81-2233661
Organization physical address:
488 Elk Street Albany, NY 12206 United States Map It
Is the mailing address different from the physical address?
No
Contact Information
Primary contact name:
David Edelson
Primary contact title:
Board Member
Primary contact phone:
(518) 396-8940
Primary contact email:
davidedelson@gmail.com
What is the preferred method of contact?
Email
Website (if available):
https://www.rwcwesthill.com/
Organization Info and Structure:
Is the organization a nonprofit?
Yes
Date of establishment:
07/01/2016

Give a brief description of your organization. Please include information on the organization's activities or mission statement (150 words or less):

The Refugee Welcome Corporation's (RWC) mission is to connect low-income families (primarily recently arriving refugee and immigrant families) with safe affordable housing and wrap-around support services. Our work is built on top of our affordable housing program, which strives to revitalize the West Hill neighborhood of Albany NY through property acquisition, rehabilitation, and management. By providing access to safe, quality affordable rental housing, our families can begin to thrive and thereby help stabilize the entire neighborhood. Our key areas of work are:

- 1) Affordable housing program –dedicated to making safe affordable housing available to refugee and immigrant families. We do this by rehabilitating, maintaining, and/or leasing under-invested homes to make them livable for families in need.
- 2) Educational and Social Support Services –Conducted at our community center.

Provide the total number of full-time employees (if applicable):

1

Provide the total number of part-time employees (if applicable):

5

Provide the total number of volunteers (if applicable):

15-25

What is the organization's current annual budget?

\$566,000

Have you or the organization ever received any form of COVID-19 relief funds or loans specific to the negative impacts of the Pandemic?

Yes

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify type and amount.

RWC was awarded \$70,000 from earlier ARPA funding efforts in order to facilitate full ownership of our community center building.

Did your organization lose revenue as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic? If yes, provide the amount of lost revenue (2020-2022)

With the economic downturn that resulted from the Covid-19 Pandemic, non-profits suffered reduced donations and grants as funding became more difficult to come by. An exact figure is difficult to pinpoint because we had only recently begun formal development efforts in 2020, so we didn't have a history of previous outside funding levels.

Project Proposal

Applicants may choose to apply for up to 2 program areas. Please select the primary program area for which you would like to apply.

Affordable Housing/ Housing Support

What amount of funding is being requested (Must be at least \$100,000 and should not exceed program area totals)?

\$590,000

Is this a new project or expansion of an existing initiative, please describe.

This proposal represents an expansion of our existing Affordable Housing Program initiative.

Please provide an executive summary of the proposed program or project for which you are requesting funds. Include a description of the target population, as well as the goals and objectives of your proposed project (500 words or less).

The RWC proposes four projects within our Affordable Housing Program. They are:

- 1) Expansion of an existing RWC-owned property to make it available for larger families (365 Sherman Street).

\$50,000

2) Rehabilitation of RWC-leased property (468 Elk Street). \$130,000

3) Complete rehabilitation of an RWC owned property (480 Elk Street). \$50,000

4) Purchase (from a private landlord) two 2-family units to bring under RWC control and to ensure the rents remain affordable for the foreseeable future (469 and 473 Elk Street). \$350,000

The RWC's Affordable Housing Program aims to provide safe and affordable housing to low-income families in the West Hill neighborhood of Albany. We currently own and/or lease 24 units, serving more than 100 individuals, mostly newly arriving refugee and immigrant families from Afghanistan, Sudan, Myanmar, and more recently Latin America.

The goal of the four initiatives above is to expand the pool of desperately needed affordable housing in Albany, which is consistent with the RWC's mission.

Please explain why this program or project is needed within the County.

The affordable housing crisis in the United States has plagued residents across the country since the Great Recession—and is only getting worse. The issue was exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, whereby supply chain disruptions and demographic shifts (e.g. work from home) have resulted in skyrocketing housing and construction costs. Add to that the subsequent increase in interest rates, and it has created a perfect storm that makes it next to impossible for private and non-profit entities to afford to keep rental prices low without subsidies. As more and more immigrant families are arriving in the capital region every week, this problem is not going away anytime soon.

The RWC's proposed projects are all designed with a singular objective....expand the pool of affordable housing units available in Albany for families in desperate need of it.

All funded activities must meet the objective of responding to the public health and negative economic impact of the pandemic. Please describe how your proposal will help address this objective and assist with recovery (250 words or less).

The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic are wide and varied. However, demand for, and availability of, affordable housing has become a second public health pandemic resulting from the initial Covid-19 outbreak. The Covid-19 pandemic altered supply and demand for affordable housing, with numerous families losing their homes and unable to find replacement places to live that were previously affordable. In addition, with rent collections frozen and the economy shut down, private landlords stopped investing in older buildings, allowing them to become uninhabitable in many cases. As demand continues to increase, and the supply continues to dwindle, prices/rents keep rising, making many homes out of reach for the low-income families who are most impacted by the negative health-effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. With several hundred asylum seekers landing in Albany in just the past 6 months alone, the growing issue of scarce affordable housing will continue to strain Albany county's services. Long-term solutions on a mass scale have yet to materialize. It is the work of grassroots organizations like the RWC that is making a difference in the lives of residents of Albany, NY today. Our proposal will result in an expansion of affordable housing that will serve an additional 20-40 adults and children (depends on the size of families living in each unit).

If an award is made, describe how Albany County stakeholders will benefit. Where possible, please use measurable outcomes to quantify impact.

If awarded, our proposal will increase the availability of affordable housing in Albany. The benefits of adequate affordable housing have been well-documented and proven. Lack of affordable housing increases homelessness. Higher rates of homelessness have been linked to increased crime, public health problems, and negative economic consequences for the community. Moreover, government spending on shelters, emergency room visits, and jail time for homeless persons is eventually passed on to community members in the form of taxes.

If fully awarded, this project will result in 8 additional affordable housing units coming online and under the control of the RWC, whose primary objective is to maintain rents at affordable levels. These 8 units can house anywhere from 20-40 adults and children.

Please describe your organization's ability to implement the project you propose including organizational structure, staff members involved, a summary of similar initiatives you have undertaken and the date they were completed:

The RWC's bread and butter is acquiring, renovating, and bringing online houses in Albany to expand affordable housing access. Our executive director and founder, Tim Doherty, has over twenty years' experience in property management functions. He has directly overseen numerous projects for which the RWC's families are directly benefitting right now. These include:

- 478 Elk Street, a 2-unit building acquired in 2016
- 473 Elk Street, a 2-unit building acquired in 2017
- 469 Elk Street, a 2-unit building acquired in 2018
- 480 Elk Street, a large single family residence, acquired in 2019 from the Land Bank, and currently undergoing

renovations to make it inhabitable.

- 474 Elk Street, a 2-unit building acquired in 2021, sold to one of our partner landlords, rehabilitated, and currently being subleased by the RWC

- 365 Sherman, a small single family home, acquired in 2022, significant renovations by the RWC to bring it up to code.

- 650 Clinton, a small single family home, acquired in 2022, significant renovations by the RWC to bring it up to code.

How will you track performance goals and define success? Include at least two key performance indicators and expected annual outcomes/impact?

Success for each property in our proposal involves 1) In one instance, acquisition of already live properties, and 2) in the other three instances, completion of renovations of properties to bring them online as expanded affordable housing. Put more succinctly, success will be measured with two milestones:

- 1) Completion of renovations on three properties.
- 2) Active leases at below-market rates on all five properties.

Project start date:

04/01/2024

Project End date:

06/01/2025

Please provide key project milestones inclusive of the anticipated timelines and descriptions

Milestone	Anticipated Timeline	Task Description
480 Elk St. renovation complete	August 31, 2024	Roof, trim, flooring, etc
468 Elk St renovation complete	August 31, 2024	Complete interior gut and redo.
469 and 473 Elk St acquisition complete	December 31, 2024	Purchase two properties within our service area to retain them as affordable housing units.
365 Sherman St. renovation complete	June 1, 2025	Expansion of second floor with dormers, additional bedroom, and new roof.

At the top of this page is a downloadable project budget. Please download the budget form and upload it here.

- [Budget-Form-2024.pdf](#)

If you are funding a multi-year initiative, please provide a breakdown of funding level per year below:

2024	2025	2026
\$535,000	\$55,000	

Use this space to provide a narrative supporting and clarify anything from the proposed project budget above. In addition, if "Other Funds" or "Other Uses" are included above, please specify the source(s) below.

For 'Other Forms of Revenue', any matching amounts we are unable to raise through our own development activities will be financed. The \$120,000 figure is our best estimate of the amount that would require financing.

Explain why ARPA funds are needed to complete the proposed program/project. Would the proposal be possible without ARPA assistance? Describe how your proposal would be impacted if you are awarded a smaller grant than requested?

It is unlikely we could afford to take on these projects without the support of ARPA funds. We would instead choose to seek separate funding to complete the renovation work ongoing at 480 Elk Street, but would not pursue the other properties, thus keeping those affordable housing units under-utilized and/or at risk of being lost as affordable

housing properties.

ARPA funds must be expended by December 31, 2026. Please describe how your project will be sustained if it will continue beyond this date.

We expect all of our work in this proposal to be completed by mid-2025.

Please list any matching funds:

There are other capital grant opportunities we will seek to attain matching funds from. Any matching funds we are unable to raise through other grants and/or our fund-raising activities, will be financed.

Tax Information or Additional Information

Please upload Federal tax returns for tax year 2019

- [2019_990EZ.pdf](#)

Please upload Federal tax returns for tax year 2020

- [2020_990.pdf](#)

Please upload Federal tax returns for tax year 2021

- [2021_990.pdf](#)

Please upload Federal tax returns for tax year 2022

- [2022_990.pdf](#)

Please upload IRS Form W-9

- [RefugeeWelcomeCorporation-W9.pdf](#)

Risk Assessment:

Has the organization adopted and/or implemented policies relating to: records retention, conflict of interest, code of ethics, and/or nondiscrimination policies

Yes

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify:

To resolve any potential or appearance of conflict of interest, the RWC established its independent Board of Directors in 2019. The Board reviews and votes on all matters that may result in actual or perceived conflict of interest.

Is the organization properly insured?

Yes

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify the types of insurance held and the limits:

Director and Officer's Liability insurance up to \$1,000,000, Business Personal Property Insurance up to \$150,000, and Commercial General Liability insurance up to \$2,000,000 aggregate.

Does the organization have a financial management system?

Yes

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify:

All finances are managed by our bookkeeper within Quickbooks.

Has there been any change in your organization's key staffing positions in the last 2 years?

No

Has the organization previously done work for the Federal government (i.e. Is the entity experienced in managing Federal funds)?

No

Certifications

Acknowledgment 1

I Have Read and Understand the U.S. Treasury's Compliance and Reporting Guidance for State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (see below link)
U.S. Treasury's Compliance and Reporting Guidance for State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds:
<https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Compliance-and-Reporting-Guidance.pdf>

Acknowledgment 2

Should the County Allocate ARPA Funds, I am Able to and Pledge to Adhere to ALL Compliance and Reporting Requirements of the U.S. Treasury as it relates to any State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Acknowledgment 3

I Understand the County Will Contact me if/when Additional Information is Needed and that Information will be Promptly Provided to the County to Support Reporting Requirements

Acknowledgment 4

If for Any Reason I am Unable to Comply with the U.S. Treasury's Compliance and Reporting Requirements I will Immediately Notify the County in writing by email or letter

Acknowledgment 5

All Information Submitted in this Application is True & Accurate

Electronic Signature Agreement

I agree
By checking the "I agree" box, you agree and acknowledge that 1) your application will not be signed in the sense of a traditional paper document, 2) by signing in this alternate manner, you authorize your electronic signature to be valid and binding upon you to the same force and effect as a handwritten signature, and 3) you may still be required to provide a traditional signature at a later date.

Type name

David Edelson