

Oregon Housing and Community Services

# **ORCA Capacity Building Grants Instruction Guide**

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## **Affordable Rental Housing Division**

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## Overview

OHCS has consolidated the 2025-27 priorities for the General Housing Account Program (GHAP) Capacity Building funds into the Oregon Centralized Application Capacity Building (ORCA CB) grant. ORCA CB grants help organizations that currently (or have taken documented steps to) develop, preserve, operate, or increase affordable rental housing (ARH) opportunities in Oregon, by providing funds for a variety of capacity building activities. Individual grants are for a two-year work period. Applicants can request \$50,000 to \$150,000 for the two-year grant period, the actual dollar amount of the final award will depend on the capacity building activities and program priorities proposed. Grant activities should strengthen organizational and/or regional ability to meet their goals related to developing and/or operating affordable rental housing.

ORCA CB grants are meant to aid growth and development at a structural level, increasing an organization's ability to deliver on its affordable housing mission and goals over time. They are not intended to provide ongoing support for programs and operations.

OHCS identifies resources from GHAP for ORCA CB grants each biennium. Applications are accepted on a rolling-basis until the reserved funds have been exhausted. Please refer to the GHAP and ORCA Manuals for additional information about grantmaking processes.

## Eligibility

### Eligible entities

The following entity types are eligible to apply for this ORCA CB Grant:

- Nonprofit organizations\*
- Public housing authorities
- Native Nations
- Local governments that have passed a model ordinance for the Moderate-Income Revolving Loan (MIRL) program

\*For the purposes of this grant, “nonprofit” means an established nonprofit organization that has been operating for more than two years. This offering is not intended to build capacity to start-up a new nonprofit organization.

## Eligible activities

Grant awards can be used for capacity strengthening activities, which include (but are not limited to):

- Initial funding to add or expand grantee housing staff capacity
- Training staff, including professional certifications, memberships, and continuing education
- Delivering a tested and effective curriculum for strengthening capacity to build and operate ARH
- Acquiring technical assistance, including contracting with consultants
- Community engagement, networking, and collaboration related to organizational housing development and operating priorities, including for service-enriched housing
- Acquiring hardware or software to more effectively meet housing goals
- Strengthening organizational management systems (e.g., financial, project tracking, portfolio management, etc.)
- Piloting an innovative solution to a capacity need related to development and operation of ARH
- Paying for report costs for asset management evaluation activities.

## **Funding availability**

OHCS has identified \$2 million in funding for ORCA CB grants in the 2025-27 biennium. Of this, \$500,000 will be set aside for regional and innovative grant applications that create capacity related to development and operations of affordable rental housing (including capacity building for local governments that have passed a model ordinance for the MIRL program). Uncommitted funds in the set-aside will be pooled after April 30, 2026, and made available for general ORCA CB grant making. Native Nations that provide an intent to apply may have funds held for 60 days to allow for submission of application.

## Application process

### Application overview

OHCS will consider grant applications that:

- Increase housing production, preservation, and sustainability in regions and communities in Oregon with unmet needs through capacity building investments; or,
- Strengthen capacity of eligible entities and geographic areas in Oregon with high need for housing and limited local resources to meet shared affordable housing development and operating goals.

OHCS staff will begin review of submitted application materials upon receipt of a complete ORCA CB Grant application.

Applications will also be reviewed against the following standards:

- The applying entity does not currently have an active GHAP Capacity Building grant.
- The applying entity has completed and submitted a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Agreement.\*
- The applying entity has a mission, bylaws, or board-approved strategic plan (or project) that includes goals related to growing or preserving affordable rental housing.
- Activities funded by the grant are related to the development of new affordable rental housing units or preservation of existing affordable rental housing units.

For the purposes of this grant, “Board” also encompasses the council, commission, or other governing body composed of elected officials that serves as the primary decision-making authority for a local government entity.

\*A waiver for this standard may be provided by OHCS on a case-by-case basis.

### Application schedule

The ORCA CB grant application schedule for the 2025-27 biennium is summarized below.

*October 1, 2025:* Resource announcement via Technical Advisory

*October 7, 2025:* Application info webinar at 2-3 p.m. PST

*October 8, 2025:* Application open in ORCA until resources exhausted

## Accessing the application

The application for the ORCA CB grant is accessed through the [ORCA Intake Form](#). The application consists of two parts. The first part is an online form used by OHCS to collect applicant information and ensure eligibility for the resource offering. OHCS staff will review each submission and when appropriate, provide a Procorem WorkCenter to the applicant to access and complete the required forms and documents for the grant application. Procorem is an online file sharing platform used by OHCS.

The ORCA Capacity Building Grant Application (Word document) and the ORCA CB Budget Tool (Excel document) can be found in the Application & Key Docs folder of the assigned WorkCenter. OHCS will also provide a Grant Checklist in the WorkCenter to help with planning and tracking the required steps.

## Application evaluation

All grant applications will be evaluated against the following criteria:

| Component Area              | Selection Criteria   |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Proposed use of funds       | Proposal includes a clear, feasible plan for managing activities and completing deliverables.  |
| Community knowledge         | Application demonstrates strong understanding of community need and effective strategies for supporting affordable rental housing (ARH) projects.                              |
| Demonstrated need           | Proposal identifies specific limitations to capacity and housing development currently facing the organization or region that this grant will work towards mitigating.         |
| Demonstrated impact         | Application provides specific examples of how the grant will enhance organizational or regional capacity to build or preserve ARH.   |
| Ties to planning            | Proposed activities are explicitly connected to a strategy or plan developed through a state or federally funded regional or local housing planning group.                     |
| Effective knowledge sharing | Applicant provides evidence that the training they intend to acquire for staff or deliver to others will enhance organizational or regional capacity to build or preserve ARH. |

Regional and innovative grant applications will also be evaluated against the following criteria:

| Component Area      | Selection Criteria   |
|---------------------|--|
| Innovative solution | Proposed activities support an innovative and non-duplicative or new solution to an ARH capacity need with a goal of generating a solution and model that can be replicated. |
| Regional outcomes   | Application provides specific examples of how the grant will bring together regional stakeholders and strengthen regional capacity to build or preserve ARH.                 |

### Review and award

OHCS staff will evaluate the applicant information and eligibility criteria for appropriate next steps and seek to reach out to the applicant within 14 days. Follow up may come through either the Capacity Building program staff or from Procorem, with an invite to enter your project's specific WorkCenter.

When all required documentation has been submitted to the WorkCenter, the application will be considered complete, and ready for review. Applications will be reviewed in first-completed-first-reviewed order.

Grant awards will be based on a review of threshold requirements and the evaluation criteria. Applicants will be emailed with notification of award and information about next steps. Where remaining resources are insufficient to fully fund the application, OHCS reserves the right and discretion to offer the next eligible applicant funds for a reduced scope of work or to add resources to fully fund that application where feasible.

### Additional documentation

When appropriate, you will be asked to upload additional required documentation to your project's specific WorkCenter prior to executing a grant agreement.

#### *Insurance coverage*

- Each WorkCenter will contain an individualized summary of insurance coverage requirements that aligns with your planned grant activities along with other documents needed for the grant agreement.
- You must provide a compliant insurance certificate, including required endorsements, to OHCS **before execution of the agreement**. Grantees must maintain continuous, uninterrupted coverage and provide insurance certificates

demonstrating the required coverage for the Term of the Agreement and additional insureds.

- Coverage requirements may include, but are not limited to:
  - A. Commercial General Liability
  - B. Automobile Liability
  - C. Workers' Compensation
  - D. Directors, Officers, and Organization Liability
  - E. Crime Protection
  - F. Professional Liability (may be required for awardees whose grant scope of work will include providing ARH professional or skilled advising or training for ARH professions)
  - G. Physical Abuse and Sexual Molestation Liability (required for awardees whose grant scope of work will include activities serving vulnerable clients, such as children, older adults, and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities)

*Other additional documentation*

- 501c3 Letter of Determination (when applicable)
- Copy of Bylaws, resolution, ordinance, or formal documentation of Board decision outlining the ARH-related project or the organization's commitment to ARH housing development, preservation, or operations
- IRS W-9
- Oregon Secretary of State Active Business Registration (when applicable)
- Internal Financial Controls Statement (when requesting advance)

## **Receiving funds and reporting**

OHCS grants generally use a standard reimbursement model every quarter to disburse funds - starting upon the work period's effective date. Payments are made via direct deposit or paper check. Awardee requests for advance will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Your chosen compensation method will be agreed upon with OHCS and written into the final grant agreement. Grantees will need to submit progress reports on grant activities twice each year during the grant period.



**More Information:** Please visit the Capacity Building web page at <https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/rental-housing/housing-development/development-resources/Pages/general-housing-account-capacity-building.aspx> or email [hcs.ghap.cb@hcs.oregon.gov](mailto:hcs.ghap.cb@hcs.oregon.gov).