

# INVESTMENT CONNECTION

Community Development Investment & Lending Partnership

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF RICHMOND

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## Investment Connection Online Proposal

# Catalyzing Opportunities for Residents To Build Financial Stability

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Email Address	<a href="mailto:klucas@piedmonthousing.org">klucas@piedmonthousing.org</a>
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Name of organization	Piedmont Housing Alliance
Mission statement	<p>This mission of Piedmont Housing Alliance is to improve financial outcomes for low-income individuals and families by offering innovative affordable housing solutions. We take a holistic approach to community management, housing counseling and financial services and development, looking at the many ways a family or individuals can benefit from our services. All of this is done with acknowledgment that the housing space locally—as well as nationally—suffered for decades from unfair and unjust lending practices, discriminatory zoning laws and other practices at the systematic level that hindered progress. Our approach and focus on equitable practices speak to Piedmont Housing’s core values of home, opportunity, community, respect, and equity. These values guide our interactions with clients, partners and the greater community. Our service area includes the City of Charlottesville and the counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson.</p>
Overview of organization	<p>This mission of Piedmont Housing Alliance is to improve financial outcomes for low-income individuals and families by offering innovative affordable housing solutions. We take a holistic approach to community management, housing counseling and financial services and development, looking at the many ways a family or individuals can benefit from our services. All of this is done with acknowledgment that the housing space locally—as well as nationally—suffered for decades from unfair and unjust lending practices, discriminatory zoning laws and other practices at the systematic level that hindered progress. Our approach and focus on equitable practices speak to Piedmont Housing’s core values of home, opportunity, community, respect, and equity. These values guide our interactions with clients, partners and the greater community. Our service area includes the City of Charlottesville and the counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson.</p>

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Website	<a href="http://www.piedmonthousingalliance.org">www.piedmonthousingalliance.org</a>
State where proposal is located	Virginia - Charlottesville
Proposal title	<b>Catalyzing Opportunities for Residents To Build Financial Stability</b>
Support request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment/Grant</li> </ul>
Requested amount	\$150,000
Other significant partners in the proposal	<p>In partnership with LISC Virginia, the planning for Charlottesville’s first FOC began in late 2019 on fertile ground. The community has been yearning for shared impact goals and a coordinated approach to catalyzing opportunities for all residents. With Piedmont Housing acting as the lead local entity, a deeply committed coalition of nonprofit service providers with expertise in housing and financial counseling, workforce development, and employment benefits navigation has emerged as a web of aspiring connected partners.</p> <p>Among others, these organizations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piedmont Housing Alliance (financial/housing counseling)</li> <li>• Network2Work (workforce development)</li> <li>• United Way of Greater Charlottesville (EITC tax preparation and other financial services)</li> <li>• Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority (Section 3 employment services)</li> <li>• Monticello Area Community Action Agency (academic support, benefits navigation)</li> <li>• International Rescue Committee of Charlottesville (immigrant-related financial services)</li> <li>• Community Investment Collaborative (small business startup services)</li> </ul> <p>These organizations seek to co-locate staff and services to create a one-stop shop for clients seeking an array of supports to stabilize and strengthen economic opportunities for themselves and their families</p> <p>.</p>
Proposal narrative	<p>Piedmont Housing Alliance, an affordable housing nonprofit, based in Charlottesville, VA, is collaborating with several local organizations to establish a financial stability initiative that will connect low- to moderate-income families with the financial and labor market mainstream through an equity lens.</p> <p>Partnering with LISC, Piedmont Housing seeks to establish the region’s first FOC. LISC, a national nonprofit envisioned by the Ford Foundation in 1979, connects hard-to-tap public and private resources with underinvested places and people, catalyzing opportunities all Americans deserve. Given that no single factor drives the opportunity gap, no single fix will bridge it. For this reason, the FOC model deploys a comprehensive strategy for helping people connect to safe, affordable housing, quality education and job training, and</p>

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	<p>financial coaching – all the requisites to build assets and healthy, satisfying lives.</p> <p>This comprehensive strategy has been proven across the LISC network of nearly 100 FOCs nationwide. LISC leverages the relationships and expertise to help community organizations attract the kinds of resources that allow them to forge resilient and inclusive communities of opportunities.</p> <p>The Charlottesville FOC will provide employment and career counseling, one-on-one financial coaching and education, and low-cost financial products that help build credit, savings and assets. It will also connect clients with income support benefits, both in the public sphere and private employment market, such as SNAP, health insurance, and retirement planning. The cornerstone of the FOC model is providing these services in an integrated way—rather than as stand-alone services—and with a long-term commitment to helping clients reach their goals.</p> <p>With Piedmont Housing Alliance acting as the backbone institution, this multi-sectoral enterprise aims directly at redressing root causes of systemic inequality. A legacy of restrictive and destructive policies and decisions, including urban renewal, racial deed restrictions, and biased lending practices, has left the Charlottesville region deeply divided by race and wealth with crumbling communities devoid of pathways for upward economic mobility. A regional LISC will endeavor to restore lost pathways for economic sustainability to low-income residents, the vast majority of whom are people of color.</p>
Issues addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset Building / Financial Access</li> <li>• Capability and Empowerment</li> <li>• Affordable Housing</li> <li>• Workforce Development / Economic Development</li> </ul>
Geographic impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City-wide</li> </ul>
Population served	<p>The FOC will serve the City of Charlottesville and surrounding urbanized ring in Albemarle County, with opportunities also open to the surrounding largely rural counties of Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa and Nelson. According to 2018 U.S. Census data, 63,581 families live in the region and of these, 12,024 families (19 percent) do not make enough money to afford the essentials of life—food, shelter, clothing and utilities—and costs associated with working— childcare and transportation.</p>
Population income	<p>In a region that boasts a world-class health system and home to the University of Virginia, the nation’s number two public university, astonishingly, the Charlottesville-Albemarle area ranks below 97% of localities in the U.S. in economic mobility opportunity. Many families do not earn enough to be self-sufficient and 12,000 families--70% of whom work--make less than \$35,000 annually. Overall, 20% of families in the region do not earn enough to meet basic needs (housing, food, etc.) and work-related costs (childcare and transportation). High housing costs, in particular, fuel the challenge.</p>

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	<p>For all its accolades and perceived high quality of life, the city of Charlottesville, home to 8,391 families, is a designated persistent poverty “county” (all of Virginia’s cities are independent jurisdictions.) The average household income (AHI) for Charlottesville city is \$89,600, and yet 25% of the population lives in poverty, more than double the state average of 11%. The picture is even starker for African American households with an average poverty rate of 31%, with some Census tracts with high populations of African Americans reaching an astounding rate of 57%, reflecting deep, concentrated pockets of severe poverty. When comparing poverty rates with population data, African American households bear a deeply disproportionate burden from the impacts of poverty (PolicyMap.org).</p> <p>Historically, Albemarle County preceded the City of Charlottesville, providing rich, fertile soil for the cultivation of tobacco, one of the early and major economic engines of the South. Within this environment emerged enormous wealth where three U. S. presidents were born and bred. Today, Albemarle is one of the most progressive and thriving localities in the state, with an excellent school system, low crime and unemployment rates and a wide range of cultural, historical and recreational activities. Yet, at the other end of the wealth spectrum, 14% of the total 25,352 families do not earn enough to provide for their basic needs and the costs associated with working. Of the total population of 109,330, 8.7% live in poverty and 9.7% are without health insurance. For most of these households, the service industry is the main employer and earnings range between \$15,000 and \$35,000 annually.</p>
Anticipated outcomes or impact	<p>In addition to existing outcomes associated with Piedmont Housing’s housing counseling programs, the FOC will utilize LISC’s standard data system (described further below) with specific key outcomes tracked for every client. The core FOC outcome categories include: job placement, job retention/advancement, net income, net worth, and credit score.</p> <p>Further, in addition to individual services, the promise of the FOC model is client access to an integrated model which independent research shows provides an increase in year-round employment, credit score improvement, and increased net worth compared to clients accessing just one service. The initial collaboration of multiple, co-located, high-impact partner agencies planned for the Charlottesville FOC will create a foundation for community benefit.</p> <p>In its first year, among other goals, the Charlottesville FOC is anticipated to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individuals with increased earnings: 100</li><li>• Individuals with steady employment: 30</li><li>• Individuals approved (or re-approved) for income benefits: 30</li><li>• Individuals with increased credit scores of 40+ points: 50</li><li>• Individuals who reduced non-asset debt (credit card, etc.): 100</li></ul>

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	<p>Based on LISC guidance, the first year of an FOC will focus both on achieving outcomes and refining the specific service model relevant to Charlottesville and the partner agencies. Subsequent years routinely see significant increased impacts.</p>
Evaluation methods used to measure success	<p>Piedmont Housing will follow the structure for evaluation created by LISC. All of the FOCs in LISC’s national network use a standard data system—Family Financial Tracking (FFT), developed specifically for the needs of the data-driven FOC model and deployed on a Salesforce platform—and are aligned around a set of core FOC outcomes: job placement, job retention/advancement, net income, net worth, and credit score.</p> <p>Within the context of the organizational collaborative model of the Charlottesville FOC, the coaches will use FFT to track services provided to clients, baseline and subsequent assessments (e.g. financial assessments, employment/education status), and clients’ vision and goals. The system tracks the FOC key outcomes as well as a multitude of outputs and points of service delivery. Piedmont Housing will use LISC’s FFT performance report to measure progress toward the FOC’s outcome goals, identify service-delivery practices that are yielding success, and pinpoint areas where improvement, strategic shifts, or additional technical assistance may be needed.</p> <p>As part of the creation of the FOC, LISC will provide Piedmont Housing and partner organizations training on the data system and ongoing user support through regular FFT “office hours” via webinar, a support e-mail inbox, and one-on-one support as necessary. In the first year, Piedmont Housing will work closely with LISC central staff (meeting on a monthly basis) to understand the data, use it as a management tool, and inform best practices or new innovations to replicate.</p>
Project timeframe. Is your request for an existing or new program?	New Program