



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: Friday, April 3, 2026.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. Contact [Gage Harter](#) with any questions.

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: James City County

Program Title: James City County Housing Portal

Program Category: Technology

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Patrick Page

Title: Director, Information Resources Management

Signature: 

## Executive Summary

In May 2024, James City County launched a centralized Housing Resource Portal, available 24 hours a day, that makes it easier for residents to find information on rental assistance, food resources, and housing support in one place. The streamlined experience reduced confusion for users while cutting down on repetitive inquiries for County staff. Between July 2024 and June 2025, key program pages saw major growth, including a 98% increase in views for income-based rentals and a 117% rise in visits to local food bank information. As a result, staff spend less time answering basic and repetitive questions, and more time supporting residents directly.

## Problem, Challenge or Situation

Staff recognized that many residents experience barriers such as available transportation, available childcare and work schedules that prevent the ability to visit the Housing Office in person to apply for assistance. Staff wanted to find a more efficient way to make it easier for residents to find, apply for, and receive the assistance they need. Staff determined that by creating an online resource portal (website) for residents, the portal would offer significant benefits to both residents and staff, foremost among them efficiency. The online resource would reduce the need for in-person office visits and speed up service delivery, and most importantly, it would ensure that housing services and resources are accessible anytime, anywhere, which is especially valuable for those individuals with disabilities or other hardships that may prevent them from visiting the Housing Office.

## Award Criteria

In support of citizens and businesses, James City County sought to develop an interactive website to serve as the Housing Resource Portal for County residents. The vision was to have an interactive website that

provided valuable information and interactive tools to residents 24 hours a day. This website would serve as a one-stop shop for residents where information on existing assistance available to County households could be found. Staff also wanted to increase opportunities for working households to find appropriate and affordable housing in the community.

Cross-departmental collaboration was key in this project as it brought together staff with the needed skills to ensure the project's success. Meetings were held to determine what information should be included on the new Portal and how to organize it so citizens could find information easily. Discussions were also held on the need to convert paper application forms into online electronic forms, making application processes easier for residents and staff alike. Knowing that many residents experience transportation and childcare barriers, and work schedules that prevent the time or the ability to physically visit the Housing Office, one of our top goals was to have this website be a tool that provides residents with easy access to program and services information and online application forms 24 hours a day. The project team partnered with the County's website provider, CivicPlus, to help design and host the new website, and an implementation timeline of 6-8 months was adopted. Familiarity with the CivicPlus product ensured that the County's Web Team would be able to provide support from the start, as well as train Housing staff on how to update content on the website.

## Finance and Staffing

The County utilized \$46,500 in ARPA funding for the initial creation and implementation of the Housing Portal website. This funding covered CivicPlus costs for design, setup, a Project Manager, graphic design services, DNS hosting, a programmer for the Housing Portal Mobile App, and staff training. The County's Web staff and Housing staff currently maintain all content on the website and perform all updates on the website. If the County were to replicate this program, we would take the same path forward and utilize

our website partner, CivicPlus. Slightly higher costs would be anticipated for design and implementation due to pricing changes over the past two years.

## Program Results and Impact

In the first full year of operating (July 2024-June 2025), visits to the Housing Portal steadily increased each quarter with the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2025 receiving over 1,900 visits (640+ per month). Based on analytics for Fiscal Year 2025, the Housing Portal saw its website traffic significantly increase in the areas of Homelessness Prevention Program (14.63%), Housing Voucher Program (45.49%), Income-Based Rental Unit opportunities (98.22%), First-Time Homebuyer (42.99%), and Food Banks (116.9%).

The first two quarters of FY 2026 have shown an additional increase in visitors to targeted areas of the website. Overall, there has been a 35% increase to the website alone. Analytics are also registering increases in the areas of Income-Based Units (2.5%) and the Homelessness Prevention Program (27%). In particular, the second quarter of FY 2026 has tracked significant increases over the fourth quarter numbers in the areas of Emergency Home Repairs (from 19 to 56 – 194% increase) and for Food Bank information (from 186 to 754 – 305%).

This data reflects the number of citizens using the portal and finding the information they need quickly. Staff have noted that as website traffic increases, in-person office visits have decreased and service delivery to clients has sped up. By tracking the analytics, staff can map which programs are being viewed and accessed the most. This pattern highlights the most important areas for staff to focus on. By improving these key areas, we feel we can enhance user satisfaction and engagement.