FY 27 AHSP Application Staff Summary Safe Shelter: Affordable Tiny Home Educational Network of Asheville (ATHENA) – New Start

1	$50,000	$1.00:$5.00	≤60%	100%
Unit to be Constructed	AHSP Request Per Unit	Leverage Ratio AHSP $: Other Non-County $	AMI Target	% Admin Cost

Project Description: Safe Shelter submitted a **New Start** application requesting grant funds in the amount of **$50,000** to launch the Affordable Tiny Home Educational Network of Asheville (ATHENA) as a pilot build and workforce training initiative.

AHSP Goal: Support activities that achieve functional zero Homelessness

Summary: Safe Shelter's request ($50,000) is intended to fund the ATHENA program designed to create deeply affordable housing through community-based collaboration, education, and construction. Safe Shelter plans to coordinate with tiny home builders, workforce educators, volunteers and community organizations to construct tiny homes for people who face barriers accessing traditional housing. The program aims to lower construction costs through donated materials and volunteer labor while maintaining professional oversight and safety standards. The request will support an overall project budget of $300,000.

Safe Shelter plans to construct at least six (6) tiny homes in 2026. This request will support establishment of the ATHENA program and development of the first unit. The five (5) remaining units and ongoing operations will be funded through grants, donations and private investors.

The funds requested will be used to pay for administrative expenses including builder's risk insurance and staff costs for an on-site project manager and a project coordinator.

The ATHENA program will focus on households earning 60% AMI including, but not limited to, those experiencing homelessness. Assisted households will be referred to the program by community partners addressing homelessness. Priority will be given to individuals with high vulnerability due to homelessness and barriers to housing. Safe Shelter estimates people experiencing homelessness will represent 60% of the total served by the project. Similarly, 60% will be residents displaced by Tropical Storm Helene.

Safe Shelter has previously operated under Trinity United Methodist and incorporated as of October 2025. The applicant has filed to become a 501(c)(3) non-profit as required by the AHSP Guidelines and expects to receive an IRS determination letter within weeks. Any award considered must be conditioned on the applicant securing a non-profit designation or Trinity United Methodist Church serving as fiscal sponsor.

Safe Shelter has also submitted a separate request for Administrative Support, which proposes an additional $8,000 in administrative costs for this project.

Finance Department Assessment of Audits and Financial Position: Safe Shelter provided a packet of information that included an independent auditor letter, statements of activity, and bank balances. Based on what was provided, there is insufficient information to determine financial health.

Recommendation: Community Development Division staff reviewed the project. The project does not align with the New Start Program because (1) the project's housing activity is construction of units for rent, and (2) administrative costs for unit construction does not represent a new or innovative strategy. Staff recommend the applicant consider applying in a future cycle under the Construction Loan Program, if funding is still needed for the project. The project does not appear eligible for funding and an award is not recommended to be considered at this time.

PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET	Y/N
Project Description/Narrative	
Clearly affordable housing focused	Y
Aligns with all components of the application	N
Aligns with all guidelines of the AHSP program	N
Aligns with the selected strategic goal	Y
Aims to impact at least one Social Determinate of Health	Y
Designed to Serve Households with AMI	
<80%	Y
<50%	Y
<30%	Y
Designed to Serve	
Income qualified general populous eligible for the program	N
Individuals who are age 55 or older	Y
Individuals with a disability	Y
Individuals who are hard to house	Y
Individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	Y
Individuals who are BIPOC	Y
Individuals who are justice involved	Y
Individuals who have vouchers	Y
Individuals who have been affected by Helene	Y
Project Expenses	
Complete	Y
Reasonable	Y
Project Uses	
Complete	Y
Reasonable	Y
Includes leveraging additional investment (non-AHSP funds)	Y
Project Team	
Relevant experience and qualifications to complete the project	Y
Project History	
Indicates success in completing projects in the program category	N
Applicant	

Has timely audits free of qualifications and findings which would adversely indicate ability to manage an AHSP allocation	N
Shows a healthy financial position	N
Is a non-profit applicant	Y