

Homelessness Prevention and Re-Housing

Congress passed a nearly \$800 billion economic stimulus bill that includes \$1.5 billion for homelessness prevention and re-housing. This funding will be distributed quickly, and communities should begin preparing immediately.

Basics. More details of the program will be available when HUD develops guidance by mid-March. However, many details of the program are already clear.

- Funding will go to cities, counties, and states using the Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) formula.
- Funding will not be used for traditional ESG activities of operating emergency shelters; instead, it will be used for homelessness prevention and re-housing people who became homeless as a result of the economic crisis.
- The amount of funding will be approximately 9-10 times a jurisdiction's normal allotment for ESG.
- Eligible activities:
 - short- or medium-term rental assistance,
 - housing relocation and stabilization services,
 - housing search assistance,
 - mediation or outreach to property owners,
 - credit repair,
 - security or utility deposits,
 - utility payments,
 - rental assistance for a final month at a location,
 - moving cost assistance,
 - case management, and
 - other appropriate homelessness prevention and re-housing activities.
- Grantees will have approximately 2 years to spend the money.
- There will probably be no match requirement, but communities should begin planning how it may complement other services.
- Jurisdictions receiving funding will need to submit an action plan to HUD.

- Information will have to be tracked in HMIS or comparable data system. HUD will determine how much data will be required.
- The process will move quickly. HUD will issue guidance in March, and communities will have a short period of time (possibly 30 or 60 days) to submit their plans to HUD. Programs will begin operating very shortly after that.

Preparation. Homeless assistance providers, city, county, and state officials who administer ESG and who administer homelessness funding and services, homeless advocates, community-based agencies that serve people at risk of homelessness, and entities that administer the Continuum of Care should begin right away to plan how they will utilize funding. Key questions include–

- What are the fundamental goals – what outcomes does the community want to see as a result of this funding and how will they be tracked?
- How will the community identify the people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who will be served?
- Who can administer short- or medium-term rental assistance and other financial assistance?
- Who will provide housing location and stabilization services, including outreach to landlords? How will they be selected?
- How will information be tracked in HMIS or another data system?

Opportunities. In the midst of the worst economy in decades, the homelessness prevention funding gives communities the opportunity to further their plans to end homelessness and make their homelessness prevention and homeless assistance more effective. The National Alliance to End Homelessness is developing additional information and helpful tools, which will be posted on the website below.

www.endhomelessness.org