

RAPID RE-HOUSING PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Program Description

Rapid Re-housing (RRH) is permanent housing that provides short-term (up to three months) and medium-term (4-24 months) tenant-based rental assistance and supportive services to households experiencing homelessness.

Every Continuum of Care (CoC) is required by HUD to establish written standards of which RRH projects are required to follow. RRH projects have the opportunity to coordinate with their CoC and participate in the process to determine written standards of assistance for all RRH projects within the CoC. This includes establishing standards for determining and prioritizing which households will receive RRH assistance, how income will be calculated, and determining what percentage or amount of rent that each RRH program participant will pay.

The Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Community Services (FCS) is committed to the development and expansion of Rapid Re-housing (RRH) for families and individuals experiencing homelessness in alignment with Home Illinois, Illinois' Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness.

Eligible Grantees

- A. All applicants must be nonprofit organizations, subject to 26 U.S.C. 501(c) (3) of the federal tax code.
- B. Applicant organizations must be designated by the local Continuum of Care (CoC) as a qualified provider of rapid re-housing and be recommended by their partner CoC for funding through this program in accordance with that CoC's policies.
- C. Applicant organizations must be in good standing with the Illinois Secretary of State and have been so for the last four fiscal years.
- D. Applicant organizations that are current IDHS grantees must be in good standing with the IDHS Office of Contract Administration and have been so for the last four fiscal years.

Program Participant Eligibility Requirements

- 1. Program participants must be currently homeless (HUD definition at 76 FR 75994).
- 2. Program participants must be selected through the local Continuum of Care's (CoC's) established processes for evaluating and prioritizing households for rapid re-housing as is required by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Eligible Service Costs

Rental Assistance –provide tenant-based rental assistance to pay a portion of the rent on behalf of program participants for individual housing units for RRH. Under rental assistance, the lease for the unit is between the program participant and the property owner. Rent must be reasonable in relation to rents charged for comparable units in the area. Rent may not exceed the lower of 120% of Fair Market Rent (FMR) or the rent reasonableness limit for the unit, but the rent can never exceed what is considered reasonable to support that unit. For more information, see Leasing and Rental Assistance Requirements. Rental Assistance funds can pay for the following activities:

- Rental assistance for the unit
- Security deposits for up to 2 months
- First and last month's rent (up to one month each, allowed as an advanced payment)
- Property damages due to the action of a program participant (must not exceed 1-month's rent and is a one-time cost per program participant, paid upon the program participant's exit from the unit)
- Vacancies (30 to 90 days depending upon the circumstances)

Supportive Services – All eligible supportive services provided must help program participants obtain and maintain housing. Funds may be used to pay the salary and benefits of grantee staff who directly deliver eligible supportive services. It can also cover eligible services contracted with and performed by another agency. Additionally, any overhead costs directly related to providing supportive services are eligible. Grantees are required to make available supportive services to program participants for the entire duration of their residence in the project. Eligible supportive services are:

- Moving costs – reasonable one-time costs are eligible and include truck rental and hiring a moving company
- Case management – costs of assessing, arranging, coordinating, and monitoring the delivery of individualized services to meet the needs of the program participant(s) are eligible costs. Component services and activities consist of:
 - o Counseling;
 - o Developing, securing, and coordinating services;
 - o Using the centralized or coordinated assessment system as required;
 - o Obtaining federal, State, and local benefits;
 - o Monitoring and evaluating program participant progress;
 - o Providing information and referrals to other providers;
 - o Providing ongoing risk assessment and safety planning with victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and
 - o Developing an individualized housing and service plan, including planning a path to permanent housing stability.
- Childcare – costs of establishing and operating childcare, and providing child-care vouchers, for children from families experiencing homelessness, including providing meals and snacks, and comprehensive and coordinated developmental activities, are eligible:
 - o The children must be under the age of 13, unless they are disabled children.
 - o Disabled children must be under the age of 18.
 - o The child-care center must be licensed by the jurisdiction in which it operates in order for its costs to be eligible.
- Education services – costs of improving knowledge and basic educational skills are eligible:
 - o Services include instruction or training in consumer education, health education, substance abuse prevention, literacy, English as a Second Language, and General Educational Development (GED).

- o Component services or activities are screening, assessment and testing; individual or group instruction; tutoring; provision of books, supplies, and instructional material; counseling; and referral to community resources.
- Employment assistance and job training – costs of establishing and operating employment assistance and job training programs are eligible, including classroom, online and/or computer instruction, on-the-job instruction, services that assist individuals in securing employment, acquiring learning skills, and/or increasing earning potential. The cost of providing reasonable stipends to program participants in employment assistance and job training programs is also an eligible cost.
 - o Learning skills include those skills that can be used to secure and retain a job, including the acquisition of vocational licenses and/or certificates.
 - o Services that assist individuals in securing employment consist of:
 - Employment screening, assessment, or testing;
 - Structured job skills and job-seeking skills;
 - Special training and tutoring, including literacy training and pre-vocational training;
 - Books and instructional material;
 - Counseling or job coaching; and
 - Referral to community resources.
- Housing search and placement services – costs of assisting eligible program participants to locate, obtain, and retain suitable housing are eligible:
 - o Component services or activities are tenant counseling; assisting individuals and families to understand leases; physically inspecting units to ensure compliance with housing quality standards; securing utilities; and making moving arrangements.
 - o Other eligible costs are:
 - Mediation with property owners and landlords on behalf of eligible program participants;
 - Credit counseling, accessing a free personal credit report, and resolving personal credit issues; and
 - The payment of rental application fees.
- Legal services – eligible costs are the fees charged by licensed attorneys and by person(s) under the supervision of licensed attorneys, for advice and representation in matters that interfere with the homeless individual or family's ability to obtain and retain housing.
 - o Eligible subject matters are child support; guardianship; paternity; emancipation; legal separation; orders of protection and other civil remedies for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking; appeal of veterans and public benefit claim denials; landlord tenant disputes; and the resolution of outstanding criminal warrants.
 - o Component services or activities may include receiving and preparing cases for trial, provision of legal advice, representation at hearings, and counseling.
 - o Fees based on the actual service performed (i.e., fee for service) are also eligible, but only if the cost would be less than the cost of hourly fees. Filing fees and other necessary court costs are also eligible. If the grantee is a legal services provider and

performs the services itself, the eligible costs are the grantee's employees' salaries and other costs necessary to perform the services.

- o Legal services for immigration and citizenship matters and issues related to mortgages and homeownership are ineligible. Retainer fee arrangements and contingency fee arrangements are ineligible.
- Life skills training – costs of teaching critical life management skills that may never have been learned or have been lost during the course of physical or mental illness, domestic violence, substance use, and homelessness are eligible. These services must be necessary to assist the program participant to function independently in the community. Component life skills training are the budgeting of resources and money management, household management, conflict management, shopping for food and other needed items, nutrition, the use of public transportation, and parent training.
- Mental health services – eligible costs are the direct outpatient treatment of mental health conditions that are provided by licensed professionals. Component services are crisis interventions; counseling; individual, family, or group therapy sessions; the prescription of psychotropic medications or explanations about the use and management of medications; and combinations of therapeutic approaches to address multiple problems.
- Outpatient health services – eligible costs are the direct outpatient treatment of medical conditions when provided by licensed medical professionals including:
 - o Providing an analysis or assessment of an individual's health problems and the development of a treatment plan;
 - o Assisting individuals to understand their health needs;
 - o Providing directly or assisting individuals to obtain and utilize appropriate medical treatment;
 - o Preventive medical care and health maintenance services, including in-home health services and emergency medical services;
 - o Provision of appropriate medication;
 - o Providing follow-up services; and
 - o Preventive and non-cosmetic dental care.
- Substance use treatment services – costs of program participant intake and assessment, outpatient treatment, group and individual counseling, and drug testing are eligible. Inpatient detoxification and other inpatient drug or alcohol treatment are ineligible.
- Transportation – Eligible costs are:
 - o The costs of program participant's travel on public transportation or in a vehicle provided by the grantee to and from medical care, employment, child care, or other services eligible under this section.
 - o Mileage allowance for service workers to visit program participants and to carry out housing quality inspections;
 - o The cost of purchasing or leasing a vehicle;
 - o The cost of gas, insurance, taxes, and maintenance for a vehicle in which staff transports program participants and/or staff serving program participants;
 - o The costs of grantee staff to accompany or assist program participants to utilize public transportation; and

- o If public transportation options are not sufficient within the area, the grantee may make a one-time payment on behalf of a program participant needing car repairs or maintenance required to operate a personal vehicle, subject to the following:
 - Payments for car repairs or maintenance on behalf of the program participant may not exceed 10 percent of the Blue Book value of the vehicle (Blue Book refers to the guidebook that compiles and quotes prices for new and used automobiles and other vehicles of all makes, models, and types);
 - Payments for car repairs or maintenance must be paid by the grantee directly to the third party that repairs or maintains the car; and
 - The grantee may require program participants to share in the cost of car repairs or maintenance as a condition of receiving assistance with car repairs or maintenance.
- Utility deposits – This form of assistance consists of paying for utility deposits. Utility deposits must be a one-time fee, paid to utility companies. Utility arrearages are not an eligible cost for this program.
- Direct provision of services – if the supportive service described in this section is being directly delivered by the grantee, eligible costs for those services also include:
 - o The costs of labor or supplies, and materials incurred by the grantee in directly providing supportive services to program participants; and
 - o The salary and benefit packages of the grantee staff who directly deliver the services.

Utility Allowances – eligible costs include electricity, gas, heating oil or other heating/cooling costs, water, sewer, and trash removal for any tenant-paid utilities (not included in the lease and paid for by the owner or designated agent). Providers are responsible for ensuring that all program participants complete applications for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) on an ongoing basis. Utility arrearages are not an eligible cost for this program. Grantees may provide a utility allowance to program participants

- Utility allowances are meant to cover the approximate cost of tenant-paid utilities (not actual cost) and must be based on the utility allowance schedule developed by the Public Housing Authority (PHA) covering the geographic location where the property is located.
- Utility allowances must be deducted from a program participant's rent responsibility (where the participant is responsible for a portion of the rent based on their income); or, in the case where a utility allowance exceeds a program participant's monthly rental contribution, a utility reimbursement must be either paid directly to the program participant (or representative payee) or a utility payment made directly to the utility provider on the program participant's behalf.
- Utility allowances are not permitted if the current utility bill has a credit beyond the current monthly cost (no payment due to utility provider).

HMIS – costs directly related to contributing and maintaining data in HMIS or a comparable database (for victim service providers) as is required for this program are eligible and include:

- Obtaining technical support
- Paying for travel to, and attending, CoC-required or CoC-approved trainings
- Paying for HMIS licenses and/or participation fees charged by the HMIS Lead

Cost Sharing or Match Requirements

There are no cost sharing or match requirements for this program.

Leasing and Rental Assistance Requirements

Lease Structure – Leases must be between the program participant and the landowner and must be for a term of at least one year and automatically renew upon expiration. A contract that governs program terms and rental assistance payments must also be executed between the grantee and the landowner.

Fair Market Rent (FMR) – FMRs are HUD-established estimates of gross rent, taking into account both rent and the cost of necessary utilities. They are based on a standard calculation, updated annually and are published online on HUDUser.gov. Grantees must use the FMR applicable to the geographic area in which the housing unit is located. Rent and utilities may not exceed the lower of 120% of Fair Market Rent (FMR) or the Rent Reasonableness limit for the unit, but the rent can never exceed what is considered reasonable to support that unit.

Rent Reasonableness – grantees must ensure that a unit supported by grant funds is not more expensive than a similar unit that is not supported by grant funds. When leasing and rental assistance funds are used to pay rent for individual housing units, the rent paid must be reasonable in relation to rents be charged for comparable units, considering the location, size, type, and age of unit, as well as any amenities, housing services, maintenance, and utilities provided by the owner.

Grantees cannot pay more than what is reasonable, even if the Fair Market Rent (FMR) is higher. If the reasonable rent is higher than the FMR, grantees may approve up to 120% of FMR. Rent reasonableness may be documented in various ways, however:

- Using HUD's Rent Reasonableness Checklist is the easiest.
- Documentation (e.g., unit rent/description, evidence that the units share the same features, etc.) must be maintained in the client/unit file.
- Also acceptable: written verification signed by the property owner or management on letterhead affirming that the rent for the unit assisted with CoC Program funds is comparable to current rents charged for similar units managed by the same owner.
- Comparable rents vary over time with market changes, so it is important to ensure that the comparison you are using is up-to-date and appropriate for each prospective unit.

Housing Quality Standards – All units paid for with rental assistance funds must meet HUD's basic Housing Quality Standards (HQS) prior to expending funds on that unit. Grantees are also expected to screen for, disclose the existence of and take reasonable precautions regarding the presence of lead-based paint in leased or assisted units constructed prior to 1978. All units must additionally meet state and local codes.

- The grantee must physically inspect all units prior to expending funds and must continue to do so annually. The annual review can take place during lease renewal.
- Inspectors do not need to be certified.
- The owner of the unit has 30 days to address and correct any deficiencies in the unit.
- The grantee must maintain documentation of compliance with HQS, including inspection reports.

Performance Measures

- Number of persons served (by household type)
- Number of persons served who moved into housing (by household type)
- Number of households served (by household type)
- Number of households who moved into housing (by household type)
- Physical and mental health conditions at start (by household type)
- Living situation (prior to program entry, by household type)
- Cash income – ranges by start and annual assessment/exit status
- Client cash income change – income source – by start and exit
- Length of participation for leavers and stayers
- Length of time between project start date and housing move-in date (by household type)
- Exit destination (by household type)

Performance Standards

100% of households will be tracked in HMIS or a comparable database

100% of households entering program will meet HUD's definition of homelessness

80% of households will have a move-in date within 30 days of start date

85% of households will remain permanently housed for 12-months

65% of households will assume a lease or maintain other permanent, stable housing upon exit

35% of households with a source of reportable income at program entry will increase income

Reporting

- This program was designed for compatibility with HUD's Annual Performance Report (APR) data reporting standards that are required by HUD to be exported from HMIS (or a comparable database for victim service providers). Grantees are responsible for ensuring the completion and maintenance of all data fields required for HUD-funded Continuum of Care RRH projects as well as meeting all requirements of their local Continuum of Care's HMIS and Coordinated Entry policies, procedures, processes, and/or standards. IDHS may require submission of exported APR reports to verify compliance, performance measures, and demographic information for those served through this program.
- Periodic Financial Reports will be required on a monthly basis and must be submitted no later than 20 days after the end of the reporting month.
- Periodic Performance Reports will be required on a quarterly basis and must be submitted no later than 20 days after the quarter ends.
- Other Unique Programmatic Reporting Requirements: Additional annual performance data may be collected as directed by the Department and in a format prescribed by the Department.