



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor

Michael P. Hein
Commissioner

Barbara C. Guinn
Executive Deputy Commissioner

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act-Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Application

Interim Guidelines

These interim guidelines represent a combination of previous experience with administering emergency funds in 2008 and information provided by the National Alliance to End Homelessness. These guidelines will be finalized upon HUD issuing further CARES Act-ESG guidance.

The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) has received an allocation of \$21,730,655 through phase one of the CARES Act - ESG (“ESG CV”) funds. ESG CV funding will provide resources for counties’ efforts to address the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) locally. It is expected that ESG CV funds will be strategically utilized as a last resource. The ESG CV funds received by OTDA are intended by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to be used to serve areas outside of the twenty-one entitlement areas that directly receive ESG CV funding. In counties in which the entitlement area is directly funded by HUD, but other portions of the county do not directly receive ESG CV funding, OTDA-administered funds must be coordinated with locally-administered funds so that there is no duplication of services.

Through ESG CV, HUD has allocated funds for street outreach, shelter, rapid re-housing and eviction prevention activities to help communities prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19 among individuals and families who are homeless or receiving homeless assistance. The funds will also support additional homeless assistance and homelessness prevention activities to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. Funds available may be used to support costs, including but not limited to: hotel/motel vouchers, shelter operations, incentive pay for staff, supplies, rental assistance, housing relocation and stabilization services, security deposits, utility deposits, rental arrears, utility arrears, moving cost assistance, case management, or other appropriate activities relating to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations to prevent, prepare for and respond to COVID-19 among persons experiencing homelessness or those at risk of homelessness.

In anticipation of receiving these funds, there must be collaboration between the local social service district, the County Department of Health (DOH), the County Emergency Management Office (EMO), and Continuum of Care (CoC) in identifying unmet needs for the county. ESG CV funds are to be used to ensure the most vulnerable people are assisted and it is expected the community will work with its Coordinated Entry system to identify those deemed most vulnerable. In addition, the community should partner with organizations that serve or represent those most vulnerable, such as the county mental health agency and LGBTQ advocates. ESG CV funds are also designed to be funding of last resort, meaning no alternative resources are available to meet the identified gap in needs, including Public Assistance. The local plan should take into account additional expenses incurred by the local

community during the pandemic as well as anticipated costs for activities to address the lasting effects of COVID-19.

The local collaborative group will decide which entity should administer the funds and hold the contract(s) with OTDA. Funds can be administered using one contract to fund program activities, one contract utilizing sub-contracts with community partners to fund program activities, or a series of contracts to fund program activities. Local collaborative groups will work with OTDA to determine the approach and negotiate contracts.

Each local collaborative group should submit an ESG CV application (attached), approved and signed by the Commissioner, indicating proposed uses of the funds, which entity will contract with OTDA, and time frames for utilizing the funds. The completed and signed ESG CV application should be emailed to Linda Camoin at linda.camoin@otda.ny.gov by August 3.

ESG CV funds will support eligible activities directed at serving homeless families and individuals and those at risk of homelessness who are at or below 50 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI). Individuals and families are at risk of homelessness and eligible for prevention activities provided that they:

- have insufficient resources immediately available to attain housing stability;
- have moved frequently because of economic reasons;
- are living in the home of another because of economic hardship;
- have been notified that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated;
- live in a hotel or motel paid for by private means;
- live in severely overcrowded housing;
- are exiting an institution; or
- live in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness.

Funds are anticipated to be available until September 30, 2022. The following requirements must be satisfied pursuant to this funding opportunity:

- conduct an assessment for each program participant and document the eligibility status for the household (nature of homelessness or the at-risk factors);
- conduct or verify housing habitability standards for participants receiving rental assistance;
- report client level data in the local Continuum of Care Homeless Management Information System (HMIS);
- ensure Performance Reports are submitted;
- ensure the confidentiality of records concerning project participants;
- conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act as of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008;
- comply with Fair Housing and Civil Rights Laws; and,
- meet other generally applicable requirements, such as nondiscrimination and equal opportunity.

Eligible Costs Include:

Housing Assistance – rental assistance (up to 24 months) may be provided to allow eligible households to remain in their existing housing or assist with obtaining new rental housing. No program participant may receive more than 24 months of assistance. Program participants receiving rental assistance must be evaluated every three months to determine if rental assistance is needed to remain housed. All rental subsidies should be based on the standard of “rent reasonableness.”

Security Deposits - may be used in combination with other assistance. For example, a security deposit for a participant in the HUD-VA Supportive Housing program, which provides rental assistance, would be appropriate.

Utility Payments - may be used in combination with other assistance.

Rent/Utility Arrears - for up to six months – rent arrears cannot exceed the cost reasonableness standard for such a unit.

Moving Costs - may be used for reasonable moving costs such as truck rental, hiring of a moving company, or short-term storage fees for a maximum of three months or until the program participant is in housing, whichever is shorter.

Motel and Hotel Vouchers - may be used for reasonable and appropriate motel and hotel costs, such as providing shelter for isolation due to COVID-19, or if rental housing has been identified but is not immediately available for move-in by the program participants.

Supportive Services - may include housing-related case management, outreach and engagement, housing search and payment, legal services for eviction prevention for renters, and/or credit repair.

Supplies - may include cleaning, personal protective equipment, food, and other appropriate needs

Eligible Activities Include:

Prevention:

- Increased staffing.
- Housing assistance, including rental assistance up to 24 months.
- Services including but not limited to case management and assistance necessary to avoid eviction or termination of services.
- Training to provide diversion assistance/problem-solving.
- Problem-solving and flexible financial assistance available at Coordinated Entry Access Points to identify opportunities for people to avoid shelter/unsheltered homelessness.
- Employment related services.
- Supplies to combat COVID-19 including but not limited to, cleaning supplies, food, room separators, and security.
- HMIS related costs.

Outreach:

- Increased staffing.
- Services related to engaging unsheltered homeless persons for the purpose of providing immediate support, intervention, and referrals/connections to services such as medical assistance, mental health counseling, substance abuse counseling, and employment counseling.
- Supplies that unsheltered people require.
- Supplies to combat COVID-19 including but not limited to, cleaning supplies, food, items needed for basic hygiene, washing stations.
- Staff salaries and investments in technology and equipment that people experiencing homelessness can use (internet access and cell phone minutes) to remain connected to support system.
- Hotel/motel vouchers.
- HMIS related costs.

Shelter:

- Increased staffing.
- Services related to securing permanent housing.
- Costs to maximize current space for emergency shelter including contracts for hotel/motel rooms, dorms, event spaces, etc.
- Increased staffing and operational support for overnight shelter programs to convert to 24/7 operations.
- Staff salaries to increase staffing in new spaces; consider hiring hotel staff for security and food preparation.
- Supplies to combat COVID-19 including but not limited to, cleaning supplies, food, room separators and security.
- Funds to support COVID-19 CDC-compliant separation, isolation, and quarantine spaces.
- Staff salaries and investments in technology and equipment that people experiencing homelessness can use (internet and cell phone minutes) to remain connected to their support system.
- HMIS related costs.

Rapid Rehousing:

- Increased staffing.
- Financial assistance - rental assistance up to 24 months for rapid rehousing.
- Services related to building landlord relationships, including case management.
- Services related to insuring housing stability so people can continue receiving medications (e.g., telephonic consultations with mental health providers; having prescription renewals/co-pays covered and delivered).
- Food and food delivery services.
- Services to mitigate future risks of evictions.
- Supplies to combat COVID-19 including but not limited to, cleaning supplies and food.
- Employment related services.
- HMIS related costs.

Other COVID 19 related activities:

- Costs that cannot be grouped in any of the above categories. A detailed description is required in the application.