

Funding Application Q & A
From Meetings with Shelter Providers in July 2007
And Questions Submitted to MaineHousing

Below are the questions, with answers, asked at the Informational Funding Application meetings held in Portland on July 12 and in Bangor on July 19. Also listed are the questions that were submitted in writing to MaineHousing between July 19 and August 1.

- **If clients are placed in a motel over the weekend will reimbursement take place for the nights clients are in the motel?**

If the shelter has designated using motel beds as part of an overflow plan and described the overflow plan on the funding application, the bednights would be eligible for reimbursement.

- **How does a shelter provider record more than one client in one bed per night? Example; client A stays in bed #1 from 8 p.m. until 1 a.m., client B stays in the same bed from 2 a.m. until 7 a.m.**

MaineHousing is currently developing processes and will be providing the information to funded shelters prior to January 1, 2008.

- **During Statewide Homeless Council (SHC) meetings there was mention of a letter proving shelter need from Regional Homeless Council (RHC) and/or the Continuum of Care (COC). This information is not indicated in the application. Is it still required?**

Data from various sources can be included with the submitted application to indicate the need for your shelter in your geographic location. Data sources could include: Continuum of Care Gaps Analysis, Regional Homeless Councils, Point in Time Surveys and/or local homeless workgroups such as Lewiston Auburn Services for the Homeless (LASH) or Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee (ESAC).

- **Who will be receiving the 15% Even Distribution part of shelter funds?**

The even distribution portion of shelter funds will go to each agency approved for shelter funds. The even distribution funds will not be distributed by program. This means that an agency with two shelter programs will receive only one share of the even distribution.

- **When will we be informed of allocation amounts?**

Funded shelters will not receive predetermined allocation amounts, except for the 15% even distribution. Instead, shelters will bill MaineHousing for bednights provided based upon a per diem rate. The per diem rate will be calculated by November. Shelter providers will be notified of the per diem rate when it has been calculated.

- **Does MaineHousing want a total agency budget included with the application?**

No, only a total operating budget for the shelter program you are submitting a shelter funds application for is required.

- **Does MaineHousing only want expenses and not revenue?**

Yes.

- **Does MaineHousing want an individual budget for each shelter program applying for funds?**

Yes

- **Timesheets: Do timesheets have to indicate a breakdown of time for ESG and will percentages of the staff salary satisfy this requirement?**

Yes, this is a regulation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). An agency may determine that a certain percentage of an employee's time will be spent on ESG funded activities. If so, the timesheet must designate what hours were spent on those activities.

- **Should an ESG category be added to timesheets?**

If salaries are being charged to ESG, there must be an indication on the timesheet of how much of the salary is being charged to ESG.

- **Do we have to get a letter from the State Fire Marshall's office to prove that our shelter is up to code?**

Please see answer to next question.

- **Can MaineHousing clarify code requirements?**

It is in everyone's interest to assure that each facility is providing the appropriate level of safe and sanitary housing for the client population and the programs administered. Therefore, MaineHousing would like copies of any documentation that provides reassurance that each facility is in compliance with local and/or state codes and/or ordinances. Understanding that standards vary considerably based on each facility's physical size, type of care, population served, and/or location, we ask that each applicant provide their own documentation of compliance as appropriate. Such documentation may include copies of most recent inspection or status reports from program administrators (DHHS, MaineHousing, etc.); or inspection reports or Certificates of Occupancy from local or state codes officials (fire department, building inspector, state fire marshal's office, etc). Lacking any specific documentation demonstrating the facility's safe and sanitary conditions, MaineHousing may choose to conduct its own inspections to verify compliance before funds will be provided.

- **What job descriptions should be submitted with the application?**

MaineHousing and HUD want job descriptions for all positions that are involved in the operation of your shelter.

- **What does "key employees" mean?**

It means employees who you determine are necessary in the operation of your shelter.

- **How will compliance be monitored in the future?**

Monitoring protocols are still being determined and will be provided at a later date to all funded shelter providers.

- **Do Essential Services requirements apply to State Funds as well as ESG?**

Yes, as relates to page 6, section 3 of the application.

- **Can cribs be used when accommodating families with babies?**

Yes.

- **On page 5, Description of Applicant Organization, item A.3.A, 1st paragraph:**

"provide a clean bed and not a cot, floor mat, or other collapsible bed for every shelter client; however, if an applicant provided cots, floor mats or other collapsible beds to clients in 2006, the applicant will satisfy this standard if the applicant is actively working with the Statewide Homeless Council to develop strategies to replace such cots, floor mats and other collapsible beds, and there is no displacement of clients during this process;"

Is attending meetings of the SHC considered actively working with them?

The SHC has the responsibility for communicating with MaineHousing relative to whether the applicant is actively working with the SHC.

- **A certified copy of a certificate of existence and good standing from the office of the Maine Secretary of State is required as an attachment to be submitted with the application. Is this our annual registration as a charitable organization?**

A certified copy of an organization's good standing certificate is obtained from the office of the Maine Secretary of State (SOS), either from the SOS's website or from the SOS's office. SOS phone number is 624-7740 or 624-7752. If the good standing certificate is obtained directly from the SOS's office, sufficient time should be factored in for the SOS to process the request and mail the good standing certificate.

- **Since we don't know how much our funds will be, can we submit a one column program budget that just covers all the costs without breaking it down by funding sources?**

You are required to submit a total operating budget for the shelter program. This means a breakdown of all expenses. It does not include funding sources.

- **Will we be billing for bednights throughout 2008 or will we be allocated an amount based upon prior year's usage?**

Billing will be for bednights provided based on a per diem rate.

- **If a shelter received \$12,818.00 in ESG funds and \$33,765.00 in MSHA state funds in 2007, would it be accurate to say that the 15% even distribution funds replace the ESG amount of \$12,818.00 and the bednight allocation replaces the amount of \$33,765.00?**

No. The 15% of total funds (\$3,167,000) amount is \$475,050. This amount will be divided equally among all funded shelters. The bednight per diem rate will be calculated by MaineHousing in fall 2007.

- **Clarify what type of information MaineHousing is looking for when they ask for a "narrative describing the applicant's financial management capabilities?"**

An agency could utilize the information from the financial checklist on page 7 of the application to describe their financial management capabilities. Agencies must demonstrate their ability to financially manage program funds based upon state and federal regulations found in the Homeless Programs Rule attached to the Emergency Shelter Funds Program Guide and HUD's ESG Desk guide which can be found at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/programs/esg/index.cfm>.

- **If a motel is used as part of an overflow plan, what rate will MaineHousing use to reimburse, the motel rate or the per diem bednight rate?**

The per diem bednight rate will be used.

- **Could our overflow plan include using a library, office or classroom if necessary?**

There may be cases where a shelter provider chooses to designate a sofa or available space such as a classroom or other kind of room for setting up some temporary beds so that a person who is homeless does not have to be turned away from shelter. However, these kinds of accommodations need to be for very short periods of time and used only while other kinds of arrangements are being made.

- **How is MaineHousing defining dormitory style accommodation as indicated in the Homeless Programs Rule?**

Dormitory style house generally means a space with beds that is shared with others who are not related.

- **The HMIS system and our billing will have different numbers. Correct?**

This is possible if a shelter serves more than one person in the same bed at different times during one night.

- **If we have emergency shelter beds and transitional housing beds in the same building do we have to break down our costs by percentages?**

Yes.

- **What is the disincentive for shelters to not take advantage of reimbursement using their overflow plans?**

The disincentive is if providers are using a motel as an overflow plan they will not be reimbursed the motel rate. Also, the more bednights reported the lower the per diem rate will be which will result in providers receiving less funds.

- **What about the chronically homeless? Are they considered emergency? What happens to the people who continually keep coming back to shelter, those you just keep entering and exiting? Will we be penalized for sheltering those that just keep coming back?**

No.

- **Are the applications rated by points? Is there going to be a preference for rural areas?**

This is a non-competitive process. The applications will not be numerically scored. All providers found eligible based upon the criteria in the application will be funded.

- **Will language in our agency's financial manual suffice in demonstrating our financial management capabilities?**

Each agency needs to determine if this would be accomplished by using this document.

- **Section 1: Program Narrative: states that "the narrative must not exceed 7 pages for applications involving one facility. How should we format A. # 3, Maine Minimum Standards check list. Should we include the entire check list in the narrative and have it count towards our 7 pages? Would the check list become an attachment? If we meet all of the standards, would you accept a narrative stating that we meet all standards and not include the entire check list?**

The checklist can be included as part of the 7-page narrative or can be included as an attachment to the 7-page narrative. The entire checklist should be included using one of these methods rather than a narrative stating a shelter meets all the standards.

- **Could you provide specific information on what sections should be included in the narrative which must not exceed 7 pages?**

Section1: 1, 2 & 3

- **In reviewing the application, I could not find a question related to "need" for the shelter. Should this be covered in the general narrative section?**

Yes

- **Would you please explain the procedure for asking for reimbursement for motel bed nights? How do I enter that info on the SOS report and on the HMIS?**

MaineHousing is currently developing processes and will be providing the information to funded shelters prior to January 1, 2008.

- **The Program Guide discusses Eligible Program Activities under ESG but not under the State Funds (SOS). Are we to follow previous year's allowable activities under SOS or use the ESG allowable activities?**

The application references program activities for both ESG and State Funds. Therefore, allowable activities are the same for both funds.

- **1: A. number 5. "Describe the steps that will be taken within the organization to ensure confidentiality of records in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act when the Emergency Shelter will be used for provision of family violence or treatment services".**

If the Emergency Shelter is not used for the provision of family violence or treatment services how would you like us to complete this section? Should we write NA for this section or write a narrative on how we ensure confidentiality for all services provided at the shelter?

N/A unless the shelter is used for the provision of family violence or treatment services.

- **We can only charge essential services to ESG if this is a new service or a quantifiable increase in service. Our advocates provide essential services in obtaining permanent housing, assistance in obtaining federal, state, and local assistance and income support, and other services, so I'd like to include staff salaries to provide these services. However, this is not a new or quantifiable increase in services--it's what they always do. Can I charge part of the staff salaries to provide these services to State funds?**

This question relates to specific contracts, Workplans and budgets for funds. This application doesn't require any breakdown of funds. Only a total operating budget is required to be included with the application. Information to specifically answer this question will be provided by MaineHousing at a later date when Workplans and budgets are requested from those shelters that will be funded.

- **I am curious about where the questions about homeless consumer participation (section 5) come from. Is this a requirement?**

The questions originate with HUD. Homeless consumer participation has always been required for any shelter receiving ESG funds.

- **Since Domestic Violence shelters are not yet using HMIS, how are Domestic Violence shelters going to meet that requirement? How should they fill out Attachment D: HMIS Participation Certification?**

Efforts currently being undertaken with MaineHousing in order to meet the requirement should be described.

- **Could you provide clarification surrounding the town official certification form? If a shelter cannot get city/town approval, will their application for funding be denied?**

HUD requires local government certification of approval if ESG funds are being distributed to a non-profit who is providing assistance to homeless individuals (as outlined on Attachment A of the application). If a municipality refuses to give approval, the shelter provider could contact MaineHousing for technical assistance.

- **Once the funding decisions have been made and the per diem rate established, what will be the process for new shelters that wish to come on board next year? How will new shelters impact the previous year's funding decision for the other shelters? If a new shelter is established next year and wants to apply for MaineHousing monies, what is the timeline for them to be approved for funding?**

Shelters that have submitted an application to MaineHousing by August 27, 2008 and are approved to receive funds in 2008 will be the only shelters who will receive shelter funds in 2008. Any shelter providers wishing to receive funds in 2009 will have to complete a process in 2008 that is currently being developed by MaineHousing.

- **Does a crib count as a bed and can this be considered as a bed night?**

Yes. Information about any cribs that are available at your shelter should be included in the narrative describing your program.

- **Where is the best place to indicate anticipated number of bed nights for the grant application? Also, in calculating the bed night per diem rate, will you be looking at actual occupancy histories to determine if what agencies propose for bed nights are in keeping with their past history?**

Any anticipated numbers should indicate that they are anticipated and be included in the information submitted on page 6 under the heading "Description of your Shelter Program". The per diem rate will be calculated on actual bednight usage during the previous year. Please see page 9 of the Program Guide regarding funding for 2008.