

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION & RAPID RE-HOUSING PROGRAM The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

MaineHousing expects to continue updating responses as more questions are received relative to applying for the two initiatives recently finalized as part of the Homelessness Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). Two programs that will be delivered as part of the HPRP in Maine are the Homeless Diversion and Prevention Program and the Engagement and Housing Stabilization Program. Full descriptions of these programs along with other Recovery information can be found at:

<http://www.mainehousing.org/ARRAHomeless.aspx>

Question: Are the responses to the “bullet” points in the Letters of Invitation the only information that is required for the application?

Response: An application consists of an agency’s proposal to deliver a program in one or more of the geographic areas outlined in each of the program descriptions and in the letters of invitation. Each proposal must include thorough responses to the items requested in the “bullet” points as well as any required certifications. Responses will be reviewed for completeness and ability to meet identified program needs within the financial resources available.

Question: If a non-profit selected as a sub-grantee, such as an emergency shelter provider, also owns and operates permanent supportive housing, would clients receiving HPRP financial assistance be able to occupy those rental units?”

Response: MaineHousing asked this question of the HUD HPRP Help Desk and received the following response: “No, this situation would violate the Conflict of Interest requirement described in Section VII.A of the Notice. An assisted property may not be owned by the grantee, sub-grantee or the parent, subsidiary or affiliated organization of the sub-grantee.

Recently, however, HUD has issued Corrections and Clarifications to its original Notice regarding the requirements for HPRP grantees and sub-grantees. The following paragraph has been added as paragraph 4 of Section I.A. of the Notice: “The requirements in this Notice may be waived in the same manner as regulatory requirements. Grantees must submit a written request to HUD. Upon a determination of good cause, the Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development may, subject to statutory limitations, waive any provision of this Notice. Each waiver must be in writing and must specify the grounds for approving the waiver.”

MaineHousing has submitted additional questions to the HPRP Help Desk relative to the waiver process and is awaiting answers.

Question: Must sub-grantees budget for the cost of the software license or is it included in the HMIS participation fee that MaineHousing receives?

Response: The cost of the software license is included in the HMIS participation fee that MaineHousing receives.

Question: After calculating what our agency will be allocating for staff salary, travel and fringe are sub-grantees expected to estimate what they expect to expend on Financial Assistance and Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services separately or should we just indicate the lump sum amount that will be used?

Response: A lump sum amount is acceptable.

Question: Must interested agencies submitted proposals for the entire designated area indicated on the Allocation for Funding document?

Response: Yes

Question: Will MaineHousing administer the security deposit program and as such will proposals not be sent out?

Response: We are still in the process of determining the most efficient and effective way for the security deposit program to be administered.

Question: Are services expected to be delivered county wide as the Homeless Diversion & Prevention Program Allocation for Funding document suggests?

Response: Yes

Question: Will there be only one entity in each area awarded the total allocation?

Response: MaineHousing will decide based upon the applications that are received what arrangement for program administration would best serve the people in a particular community.

Question: Will the Advisory Committee look at a collaborative application between two or three entities or is it expected that each entity submit its own application?

Response: Collaborative applications will be accepted. However, MaineHousing is expecting any entity that is administering the program to create and develop collaborative relationships with all agencies that provide resources for the clients they are serving. This should be outlined in the application they are submitting.

Question: How many proposals would an agency submit if they wanted to administer a program in more than one area?

Response: An agency would submit one proposal indicating which areas they are interested in administering the programs in and outlining their capacity for each area.

Question: Collaboration and coordination will be a challenge with a 30 day start up timeline except from the operational perspective. Will we be given time to form collaborative relationships?

Response: We understand that it will take sub-grantees time to form collaborative relationships in their communities and expect that it will be an on-going task that agencies will be working on throughout the time the programs are being administered.

Question: Two forms were distributed with the Program Guide. Are these expected to be completed included with our application?

Response: The forms were an agency certification form which certifies that the agency will further fair housing laws and provide a drug free workplace etc. This form should be signed and submitted with the application. The other form was a HPRP Certification form which must be signed by an authorized official of the State or jurisdiction that has an approved Consolidated Plan with HUD. We understand it may take some time to obtain the signatures for this form therefore it is not expected to be included with the application unless you are able to obtain a signature before the application is submitted. However, the form is expected to be submitted before Grant Agreements are issued.

Question: Do participants in the Engagement and Stabilization Program have to meet the HUD definition of homelessness?

Response: Yes.

Question: Is the allocation amount for each area a two year allocation?

Response: Yes

Question: Is more than one full time employee allowed to be hired for each program in each area?

Response: No

Question: Is it acceptable to divide the HPRP program hours between two 1/2 time positions where each person would be working in a different area of the state? For example one person would be assigned to Franklin County and the other assigned to Oxford County.

Response: Yes

Question: Would it be acceptable to divide 40 hours between current case management staff? For example assigning 10 HPRP hours to each of four current full time staff to provide 40 hours of program delivery.

Response: No. It is expected that the focus of the staff delivering the HPRP funds would be devoted solely to the HPRP.

Question: Can a sub-grantee re-assign a current staff member to be the Case Manager or Housing Retention & Stability Specialist for one of the HPRP initiatives and not replace the current position held by that staff member?

Response: The grantee (MaineHousing) will be required to report to HUD on jobs created and maintained by both the grantee and sub-grantees on a quarterly basis. Guidance from HUD states that "one of the requirements of the Recovery Act of 2009 is that jobs that are created and/or retained through the use of these funds must be tracked and reported." Preference will be given to applications that indicate jobs will be created or jobs that would have been eliminated because of loss of funding will be retained.

QUESTION: What costs are allowable for the direct service staff person that each sub-grantee will be hiring to carry out each of the HPRP initiatives, i.e. the Engagement and Stabilization Program and the Diversion and Prevention Program?

Response: After considering input from the information meetings held on July 7, MaineHousing has developed a new sample budget form that shows the following as allowable costs for each Case Manager or Housing Retention & Stability Specialist: salary, benefits, travel, occupancy expenses, and supplies.