

EPP Administration Question and Answers

Updated August 20, 2024

Q: After MaineHousing pays for the software and their own administrative costs, what is left for the administrative entity?

A: Approximately \$2 million will be available for the administrative entity. MaineHousing will not utilize any of the administrative funds and will be looking closely at the bids for administrative costs, as any administrative funds not used will add to program dollars.

Q: Is this already budgeted for two-year pilot and not the potential 3rd and 4th years?

A: This is one time funding, we are not aware of ongoing funding for this program

Q: Is the program guide written, and will you share it?

A: A draft is circulating internally and will be posted the week of August 19, 2024.

Q: What software is going to be used for this program?

A: HOTB Software Solutions has been awarded the software contract

Q: What is the software going to use to prioritize applications, or is that to be done by staff? Will a court ordered eviction “count” more than a Notice to Quit or late notice, for example?

A: Applications will be processed according to the following priorities, on a first-come-first-served basis:

1. Eligible households who have received a Notice to Quit for nonpayment of rent.
2. Eligible households who have received a Late Notice or have an Approved Payment Arrangement.

The software will identify applications that have priority based on information given by the applicant and the administrative staff will collect documents verifying the priority.

Q: Will the software assure all applications are complete?

A: Yes

Q: Will the software keep track of funds going out and remaining?

A: Yes

Q: What is your plan for closing the program? As you know, \$18M will go quickly, even with a one-year maximum.

A: We will monitor the funding and move to a waiting list model if needed.

Q: Is the maximum allowed benefit 12 months overall, or 12 contiguous months?

A: 12 months overall

Q: Will checks be sent to landlords directly from MaineHousing via the software, or are they to be processed by the Administrative Entity?

A: Yes – checks will be sent to landlords directly from MaineHousing.

Q: What documents will the software (and MaineHousing) require?

A: Documents that verify program and income eligibility, rental relationships and owner forms necessary to make payment

Q: Do you picture this program being more like the HAF or HEAP than the ERA? What would you like to keep or lose from those programs to inform this one?

A: The program will be most like HAF. It is not a rental subsidy program and will focus on eviction prevention as the main goal.

Q: What are the allowable costs under the 12% cap administrative costs?

A: Salary and benefits for processing staff and indirect costs

Q: Will there be a suggested number of households to serve (or financial limit) per county?

A: This is a statewide first come first serve program and will serve as many households as possible with the funding available

Q: How will MaineHousing want the funds dispersed throughout the state?

A: This is a statewide first come first serve program and will serve as many households as possible with the funding available

Q: Will there be any federal reporting requirements?

A: No

Q: Is there data around the estimated amount of eligible households for this program at 60% AMI

A: There are approximately 74k rental households at or below 60% AMI level, this program serves renter households below 60% AMI level so the amount could be slightly less. We are not able to estimate the amount of households that would meet the additional eligibility requirements.

Q: Will MaineHousing advance funding to provide vendor with operating cash? And if so, what does that look like?

A: The vendor would receive the amount approved from the budget submitted at the start of the program.

Q: Who will be providing the program marketing and external communication?

A: MaineHousing

Q: Will a completed online application include uploading the necessary documents at the time of submittal?

A: Yes

Q: For the purpose of this program, are hotels/motels ever considered a residential dwelling?

A: No

Q: Do past due rent notices have to be from the landlord or are property managers acceptable?

A: Either but the property manager will supply a signed management agreement if accepting payment on behalf of an owner

Q: Do the leases need to be current or will expired leases count as a month to month lease?

A: Yes- expired leases will count as month to month

Q: What physical docs will be needed for program proof?

A: Documents that verify program and income eligibility, rental relationships and owner forms necessary to make payment

Q: What documentation is required for an Approved Payment Arrangement?

A: Date stamped communication identifying the amount owed and the agreed on installment amounts.

Q: What does the appeal process look like?

A: The applicant will appeal to the administrative agency first, someone other than the person who verified eligibility will review and send a written decision to the applicant. If they appeal the administrative agencies decision, they will have the opportunity to appeal to MaineHousing for final decision.

Q: Will a demonstration be available before contract is solidified

A: Yes

Q: Will clients be uploading files directly and will they be able to see their status?

A: Yes

Q: Will the \$18 million be for one year?

A: This is one time funding. The initial contract for the administrator is 18 months and the program will end when the funds have been fully utilized.

Q: On the RFP, section VI Format, you ask for a narrative #1, then appendices A, B and D; did I miss a C? In addition, there is an area in Appendix A that also asks for a narrative, are they to be different?

A: On appendix A, provide a brief summary of the more comprehensive narrative provided on #1. Appendices A, B and D are required as part of the submission. Appendix C is a listing of key proposal and response dates.

Q: Is the Administrator the sole determinant of who is eligible to receive assistance?

A: The administrative agency is the first appeal contact and then MaineHousing will process any appeals received in writing to the administrative agencies decision

Q: The RFP states that the Administrator will be working with applicants, landlords, the program software system and MaineHousing. Would the Administrator also receive referrals from social service agencies? How/who would applicants and landlords be informed of this program?

A: It will be an online application process with opportunity for paper applications as needed. It will be marketed Statewide. We have been working with partners across the state on this program and they will also assist to inform renters and landlords about the program.

Q: Is this funding replacing housing problem-solving?

A: This is one time funding and is not replacing any current programs

Q: Is housing problem-solving, or any type of support beyond financial assistance (including social service support) a component of this program and/or a responsibility of the program administrator?

A: Eviction Prevention funds can only be used for rent arrears and up to 12 month of rental payments. Other types of financial assistance are not part of this program.

Q: Would MaineHousing allow or anticipate subcontracting or a consortium model?

A: Yes – MaineHousing would review and enter into a contract with the entity who submitted the proposal and would also have to approve any subcontractors.

Q: What time period should proposal staffing plans and budgets cover? (i.e., one year, five years?) On a related note, what time period does the \$18 million in funding cover?

A: Staffing plans and budgets should cover 18 months. The program will end when the funds have been fully utilized and this is our best estimate.

Q: Can you please describe the parameters and specs being used for setting up the software system?

A: We are in initial discussion with HOTB Software Solutions and the software will be set up in accordance with the RFP and Program Guide.

Q: Has the application for households already been developed? If yes, can you share a copy? If not, can you please tell us what questions are included and what information/documents will be required for verifying eligibility?

A: Not yet. The final application will be drafted in conjunction with the Program Administrator based on the Program Guide.

Q: Regarding accessibility for the application, what plans are in place to provide language translations, screen-reader friendly access, and plain language materials? Should costs for these be included in the proposed budget?

A: Please include the costs in the proposed budget. After determining what functionality will exist within the software, we will work with the Program Administrator on how much should be included in the final budget.

Q: Regarding payment processing, can you delineate roles of the selected program administrator and MaineHousing?

A: The Program Administrator will determine eligibility and approve payment processing. All payments will be carried out by MaineHousing on a weekly basis. We anticipate the system will be virtually paperless.

Q: Appendix A asks for a “list of planned resources to be assigned to meet the obligations of the RFP.” Can you provide some examples of “resources to be assigned”?

A: Resources could include number of staff involved, any other services that may be provided to program applicants funded through other sources, office space, etc.

