

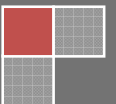
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2015**

Guide for Homeless Services Grantees

Homeless Women – Crisis Shelter Home Program
Service Linked Housing Program
Emergency and Transitional Housing and Services Program
Housing Counselor and Aftercare Program
Homelessness Prevention Program



Maryland Department of Human Resources
Family Investment Administration
Bureau of Homeless Services



LETTER FROM THE FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Providers,

Thank you for working diligently to serve the homeless across Maryland. Your work is not easy work and it requires a great deal of creative thinking, patience, perseverance and dedication. We hope this guide will be an easy tool that will allow you to maximize the funding available for this work in the most effective and efficient manner.

During FY 2014, you provided more than 400,000 bed nights to the homeless throughout the state, and helped prevent more than 4,500 evictions, attributed to the services you offered.

The staff within the Bureau of Homeless Services (BHS) is working on significant improvements to the way our grants are managed and to the support our agency offers to providers. Included within this guide you will see the expectations associated with our grants, broken down in a clear and concise way. You will also notice a few new requirements that will go into effect as of July 1st, 2015. The ultimate goal of these changes is to do all we can to better serve our clients.

I am very optimistic about what the upcoming year holds along with the important work of the state Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH). We look forward to working very closely with you all!

Sincerely,



Rosemary Malone

The Bureau of Homeless Services

Heather Sheridan, Director of Homeless Services

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I. Definitions

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| COMAR | Code of Maryland Regulations. This set of regulations interprets the details of the laws passed by the State Legislature. |
| Crisis Shelter Home | Defined in COMAR as a facility that provides shelter, meals, information and referral service and counseling. |
| Department of Human Resources | Referred also as the “Department” or “DHR” throughout this guide, is the state agency responsible for assisting individuals with economic need. DHR houses the Family Investment Administration’s Bureau of Homeless Services. |
| Family Unit | Defined in COMAR as an individual or one or more adults and children living together as a family. |
| Homeless Family Unit | Defined in COMAR as a single or a family household without housing and lacking resources to provide housing. |
| Homeless Woman | Defined by COMAR as a female 18 years old or older who is without shelter, and who is not eligible for or not able to be housed by another shelter facility or housing service at the time of application |
| Housing Crisis | A situation involving a family unit that is threatened with the immediate loss of housing or other shelter, without resources to prevent an impending eviction; or are otherwise at risk of becoming homeless. |
| Local Administering Agency (LAA) | The entity identified by DHR to receive the grant funding for a particular jurisdiction. This same entity identifies secondary grantees/grant recipients/service providers to work directly with clients to provide the services supported by the grant. In some cases the LAA can also be a direct recipient of grant funding for said program. |
| Maryland State Homelessness Data Warehouse (MSHDW) | A resource that will collect aggregate data about homeless services from each jurisdictional HMIS system. The MSHDW is overseen by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and is supported by DHR and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH). |
| Resident Advocate (RA) | A staff position within a provider organization that is financed by DHR through the Service Linked Housing program. |
| Service Provider | A public or private nonprofit shelter that contracts with DHR or a local administering agency (LAA) to provide services under the program. |
| Secondary Grantee/ Sub-Grantee | The eligible applicants to be recipient agencies of grant funding from the Local Administering Agency to provide direct programming to clients. These can include but are not limited to non-profit agencies, agencies of local government, public Housing Authorities, for-profit organizations in partnership with non-profit agencies and/or local government. |

II. Policy Introduction

Maryland Human Services Code

Maryland Human Services Code **6-417-6-427**, Part III entitled “*Shelter, Nutrition, and Service Program for Homeless Individuals and Families*” requires the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to “adopt regulations to govern the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies and programs to make homelessness rare and, if it occurs, of brief duration.”

The Human Services Article of the Maryland Code, **6-430**, part IV entitled “*Homeless Women – Crisis Shelter Home Program*” is the law that establishes a program to provide crisis shelter homes, meals and counseling to clients.

As a result, COMAR, Title 07, Chapters 17, 18 and 19 were written to establish the five homeless grant programs throughout the state:

| | |
|------------|---|
| Chapter 17 | Homeless Women – Crisis Shelter Home (HWCSH) |
| Chapter 18 | Service Linked Housing Program (SLHP) |
| Chapter 19 | Emergency and Transitional Housing and Services Program (ETHS) Housing Counselor and Aftercare Program (HCAP) Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) |

Navigating the Web

The Maryland Human Services Code can be found on the General Assembly of Maryland’s website by selecting “Human Services” in the drop down menu and then choosing the appropriate section. *Click here for direct access:* [Statute Look Up](#) (1)

COMAR Regulations and the goals of each program can be found can be accessed through the Office of the Secretary of State’s website by looking up Title 07.

Click here for direct access: [Title 07, Department of Human Resources](#) (2)

1 <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmStatutes.aspx?pid=statpage&tab=subject5>

2 http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/subtitle_chapters/07_Chapters.aspx

III. Basic Criteria for all Grant Recipients

All grant recipients of the Department of Human Resources' (DHR) Bureau of Homeless Services (BHS) must meet the following criteria:

1. **Be a public agency**, have a non-profit status, or be a profit-motivated entity in partnership with a non-profit or public agency and work from a client-centered approach to ensure the positive outcomes for all clients seeking service.
2. **Comply with all federal and state requirements as outlined in the law**, and abide by all grant guidelines and regulations as outlined in the COMAR, Chapters 17, 18 and 19. Use all forms required by BHS and the Local Administering Agency (LAA)
3. **Comply with Federal and state anti-discrimination policies**. A client non-discrimination policy must be included with every grant application. This policy shall be substantially similar to the enclosed requirements of COMAR 07.01.03. If not, the enclosed DHR non-discrimination policy shall be used.
4. **Have a formalized grievance procedure**. Providers must give written notification of the right to, and verbal notification of the procedure for, initiating a grievance procedure or appeal for a fair hearing, to each applicant of program service. There also must be a grievance procedure in case of a disputed decision; and, send a summary of the outcome of any dispute to the BHS within 7 business days of receipt of grievance notice
5. **Function with sound financial and program management**, be in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and be in compliance with all other federal and state programs where funding is received. All grant recipients will:
 - **Acknowledge** funding received from DHR in all related publications.
 - **Maintain** accounting and record keeping systems that control and identify contract funds, track all expenditures and generate statistical reports.
6. **Purchase goods and services from minority-owned and operated companies when possible, especially when using BHS grant funding.**
7. **Maintain all books, client records and financial documents** in secure locked location and ensure that these are kept for at least **7 years** following the date of the audit or end of grant.
 - LAAs and providers receiving DHR funding may not disclose identifying information regarding service applicants or recipients to any agency or individual without a written release from the client. DHR employees authorized to monitor or audit the program are exempt from this requirement.
8. **Use a Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) to enter and track data and share data with the Maryland State Homelessness Data Warehouse (MSHDW)** on a regular basis. The statistical information gathered from client forms

should be used by the Service Provider as the basis for submitting monthly financial and activity reports.

9. **LAAs must develop policies and protocols to guide the work of sub-grantees to meet the requirements outlined in this policy guide.**

10. **LAAs and providers must actively participate in the Regional Homeless Board (RHB) and attend meetings on a regular basis.**

- The RHB must **work closely** with the local Continuum of Care (CoC) and the statewide Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) to:
 - Generate and leverage local funds to support facilities and programs that serve the homeless in their area, and
 - Develop a plan to meet the emergency, intermediate, and long-term needs of the homeless as well as a plan to prevent homelessness in the jurisdiction.
- Board membership should be comprised of representatives from **key community stakeholders** such as:
 - Homeless services providers
 - Community services agencies (public and private)
 - Government entities such as the local Department of Social Services (DSS), local Health Department, local housing agency and/or local education agency
 - Homeless or formerly homeless persons
 - Emergency management/planning entities for cold weather sheltering
 - Charitable and religious groups
 - Business community
 - Coalitions and citizen groups
 - Correctional agency representatives to assist with exit planning to prevent homelessness
- Each RHB must prepare a **report** at the end of the year that details progress made during the year.

IV. Homeless Women- Crisis Shelter Home

A. Program Description

The Homeless Women-Crisis Shelter Home Program (HWCSH) provides grant funding for facilities that provide temporary shelter/safe accommodation, meals, information and referral services, and counseling for homeless women and their children in Maryland. Services are delivered by community-based agencies (Service Providers) that assess and address the needs of women at the local level. The Shelter home shall develop a service contract with the resident that is designed to secure a stable living environment, secure any entitlements or benefits, secure education, training, or employment opportunities, as appropriate to the client's capacity and resolve the problems that led to the resident's homelessness.

B. Funding Requirements

All organizations meeting eligibility criteria are encouraged to apply for program funds. To receive funding from HWCSH, the LAA and Service Provider must abide by all fiscal reporting requirements outlined in COMAR 07.01.17.08 related to book keeping, records, evidence of all expenditures and income. Monthly expenditure statements as required by the Department are required. Finally, certification of current non-profit status must be on file with the LAA before a HWCSH grant is awarded.

In addition, the LAA must do the following:

- **Give Service Providers a copy of the relevant guidelines and regulations**, as well as other materials necessary for the implementation of the program.
- **Inform all known local organizations providing services to homeless people about the availability of funds**, using list serves, social media, advertisements, letters, telephone contacts, or any other means at its disposal.
- **Monitor** all HWCSH funded local Service Providers annually and **attend meetings** of the Local Board on Homelessness.
- **Maintain client data tracking in HMIS**, cooperate with the Maryland State Homelessness Data Warehouse (MSHDW) and the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH).

Allowable Use of Funding

Funding is available to provide shelter, room and board, counseling, and referral services to homeless women and children. The shelters are required to offer a 24-hour crisis hotline in addition to safe accommodations and meals. Other services include direct resource referral for housing, physical and mental health care, education, training, employment services, and case management services as well as follow up services as needed to the client in the community if not available elsewhere.

Unallowable Use of Funding

Funds cannot be allocated to any organization that requires participation in religious activities as a condition for receiving housing or services.

C. Reporting Requirements

The Department will use monthly reporting data from LAAs to project and revise funding amounts for the following fiscal year. For the duration of the grant period, each LAA shall submit copies of the following forms:

1. Monthly Statistical Report Form submitted by each Service Provider

- This report is due to the BHS **by the 15th of the month following the report month**. This requirement will be strictly enforced. Reports are required even if there were no activities for the month.

2. Monthly Expenditure Report Form

- The Monthly Expenditure Report form is due **by the 15th of the month following the report month**. These reports should be signed by the LAA and then scanned to the BHS office. This will suffice as an electronic signature, however please note that typing a name in and emailing without signature, is not sufficient. Reports are required even if there were no activities for the month. Failure to submit timely reports will be a consideration in future funding.

3. Budget Modification Forms

- A Budget Modification Form is only required to request budget changes due to unspent funds in one line of the budget to be spent on a different budget line (where allowed). This form must be completed by the grant recipient and forwarded to the LAA for approval. Once approved by the LAA it must be forwarded to the BHS for final approval. No budget modifications will be permitted without prior written approval (via email or letter) by the LAA and the BHS.

Late Reports

Jurisdictions whose reports are more than thirty (30) days late will receive a call from DHR's Program Administrator and given 48 hours in which to submit the report. Jurisdictions that fail to submit the report within that time frame will receive a non-compliance letter and are subject to suspension, reduction, and/or re-distribution of their grant award. Reports later than sixty (60) days may result in grant termination.

D. New Requirement – Fee for Service

According to COMAR, providers are permitted to charge clients a weekly fee for service. Please refer to COMAR 07.01.17.11 for the fee chart and use the “**Fee Determination Form**” located in the appendix to determine what fee a client will pay. **As of July 1, 2015** all providers and LAAs must choose from one of the following to manage these fees:

Clients Save Fees in External Savings Account

To ensure more moves from shelter into permanent housing, **the BHS strongly encourages** providers collecting these fees to assist clients with establishing savings accounts in a local bank to save money while in shelter. If clients are **able to save more** than the set fee, they should be encouraged to do so.

- **Clients must bring copies** of their savings account statement to their case manager on a monthly basis. The case manager will work with the client to manage the account and plan a budget to prepare them for move out.
- Copies of the savings statement and/or receipts of deposits to the account must be kept in the **client case file**.
- If clients are able to save but do not agree to do so, facilities must **establish procedural guidelines** that outline the consequences for clients that have the ability to save but do not agree to do so.
- This policy must be **shared with LAA and the BHS** prior to roll out; it must be presented to clients upon intake (for agreement and signature) and be posted throughout the facility.

Internal Savings Accounts

If clients are **unable or uncomfortable opening a bank account** outside of the facility, but want to save their money while in shelter, an internal savings account option may be offered to those select clients to which this applies. Providers must establish an internal savings procedural guideline so staff and clients understand what is expected. Procedural guidelines must meet the following:

- Clients must get money orders, made out to themselves, they are not permitted to save cash onsite. No staff member should handle cash.
- All money orders must be kept in a locked safe and only one supervisory staff member must have access to the safe.
- A record for each client saving internally must be kept in a binder, one page for each client showing what deposits are made, date and the money order number. Each client must be given a receipt each time they hand in a money order to the staff.
- At least two staff members must be present to witness the deposit.

If the **facility decides to continue to collect the fees** rather than encouraging clients to deposit them into external or internal saving accounts, **they are considered income to the provider.**

Therefore **it is a strict requirement of the BHS** that each provider maintains a detailed accounting records of all fees received. **Starting July 1, 2015**, providers must:

- Establish a **“Fee Management Procedure”** that details the procedure by which the provider will follow to collect the fees, track the money collected, deposit the money and which staff will be responsible for collecting the fee. Provider must also include a detail of how the fees will be used within the program budget. This policy must be sent to the BHS for approval, prior to July 1st, 2015.
- For the safety of staff, **no individual staff person is permitted to accept cash, there must always be a second staff witness**. Staff are not permitted to keep cash on hand or in their desk. All cash must be kept in a locked safe, in a supervisor’s office before being deposited into a bank account. **No exceptions**.
- All **clients must receive a receipt** upon payment of the weekly fee. The receipt must include the organizations logo with the amount paid, date and signature of staff that received the fee.
- Providers must maintain a **monthly census tracking tool** that includes a list of all clients living in shelter during the month, along with notation of the clients that paid the weekly fee, the amount they paid and the date it was received and by whom (see appendix).
- All organizations collecting fees must include the amount of fees collected for the month with their **monthly expenditure form** sent to the LAA.

The LAA is responsible for monitoring all sub-grantees collecting fees from clients on a consistent basis. The LAA must include the separate monthly total for each provider they oversee, with their monthly expenditure form sent to the BHS.

E. Monitoring Requirements

All LAAs will receive one monitoring visit per programmatic year by BHS staff. During the monitoring visit, BHS staff will speak with staff providing oversight to the program and review a variety of reports used to complete the monthly activity and fiscal reports. BHS staff may also request to see client case files, expenditure receipts and/or may request to visit a provider facility.

The LAA is required to monitor all service providers at least once during the programmatic year. All program monitoring forms for the visits conducted by the LAA to the Service Providers shall be submitted all together, to the BHS **no later than January 30th of the fiscal year**. The LAA shall use the reporting forms provided by BHS in the grant applications. Substitutes are not allowed.

F. New Requirement – Documentation of Bed Nights

When funds are used to pay for **motel stays**, providers must maintain detailed records to support what bed night numbers they document to the BHS in their monthly activity reports. Detailed records must include the following:

- Copies of invoices paid to hotels providing the bed night that include date of stay, total number of guests and total cost. Hotel receipts without this information are not sufficient.

When funds are used to cover **bed nights within an existing, congregate shelter**, providers must maintain accurate daily census lists, either by hand or in HMIS. Providers must maintain detailed records to support what bed night numbers they document to the BHS in their monthly activity reports.

The LAA is responsible for ensuring that providers are maintaining the detailed supporting documentation of bed night payments. Back up documentation for each must be made available to the BHS upon request and/or during annual monitoring visits.

V. Service Linked Housing Program

A. Program Description

The Service-Linked Housing Program (SLHP) is intended to support a staff position referred to as a “resident advocate” (RA). The RA must provide linkages for low-income persons living in permanent housing to supportive services in the community to help them maintain their housing and not become homeless. This can include but is not limited to linking residents to supportive services such as job training, health care, budgeting counseling, parenting skills, substance treatment, etc. This grant can support the cost of staff who assist clients to apply for food, medical and other benefits available to low income clients. The RA under this grant source must locate and obtain services and facilitate the resident’s participation in the surrounding community. The RA can also conduct workshops with community resources on topics such as financial planning, budgeting, literacy, interpersonal skills, computer and parenting skills.

B. Funding

Requirements

All organizations meeting eligibility criteria are encouraged to apply for program funds. To receive funding from SLHP, the LAA and Service Provider must abide by all fiscal reporting requirements outlined in COMAR 07.01.18.06 and .08 related to book keeping, records, evidence of all expenditures and income. Expenditure statements are due to the BHS on a monthly basis.

In addition, the LAA, must do the following:

- **Give Service Providers a copy of the relevant guidelines and regulations**, as well as other materials necessary for the implementation of the program.
- **Maintain client data tracking in HMIS**, cooperate with the Maryland State Homelessness Data Warehouse (MSHDW) and the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH).

Allowable Use of Funding

Funds can be used only for salary, FICA, Unemployment Insurance and other benefits (health, vacation, etc.) for resident advocates, and for specified expenses related to assisting clients.

Administrative costs can include those associated with data collection and reporting requirements, as well as for telephone expenses, supplies, postage, copying.

- Local jurisdictions may allocate a total of no more than 7.5% of the funding amount towards administrative costs. The LAA should receive no more than 5% of the total grant amount and the providers should receive the rest of the allocation. During any program year, surplus funds may be considered for re-allocation. All requests must be made to and approved by the BHS.

Unallowable Use of Funding

Funds cannot be used for direct rental assistance or move out funds to tenants. Nor can the money be used for start-up funds or capital costs for a new facility. Funds cannot be allocated to any

organization that requires participation in religious activities as a condition for receiving housing or services. As a reminder, administrative costs may not exceed 7.5% for the allocated amount given to the LAA and secondary grantee, combined.

C. Reporting Requirements

For the duration of the grant period, each LAA shall submit copies of the following forms by the dates listed:

1. Bi-Annual Progress Report

- This report is due to the BHS **by January 1st and June 15th of the fiscal year**. This report includes statistics about those served for the prior 6 months before the report is due as well as a narrative summarizing achievements made by the RA and any proposed changes to the SLH program the LAA suggests.

2. Monthly Expenditure Report Form

- The Monthly Expenditure Report form is due **by the 15th of the month following the report month**. These reports should be signed by the LAA and then scanned to the BHS office. This will suffice as an electronic signature, however please note that typing a name in and emailing without signature, is not sufficient. Reports are required even if there were no activities for the month. Failure to submit timely reports will be a consideration in future funding.

3. Budget Modification Forms

- A Budget Modification Form is only required to request budget changes due to unspent funds in one line of the budget to be spent on a different budget line (where allowed). This form must be completed by the grant recipient and forwarded to the LAA for approval. Once approved by the LAA it must be forwarded to the BHS for final approval. No budget modifications will be permitted without prior written approval (via email or letter) by the LAA and the BHS.

Late Reports

Jurisdictions whose reports are more than thirty (30) days late will receive a call from DHR's Program Administrator and given 48 hours in which to submit the report. Jurisdictions that fail to submit the report within that time frame will receive a non-compliance letter and are subject to suspension, reduction, and/or re-distribution of their grant award. Reports later than sixty (60) days may result in grant termination.

D. Monitoring Requirements

The BHS will monitor a majority (at least 75%) of all the LAAs annually. During the monitoring visit, BHS staff will speak with staff providing oversight to the program and review a variety of reports used to complete the monthly activity and fiscal reports. BHS staff may also request to see client case files, expenditure receipts and/or may request to visit a provider

facility. Where the LAA is also a Service Provider, they will be monitored as both the LAA and the Service Provider.

Financial Audit

LAAs may be required by the BHS to submit an audit of their financial operations including compliance with program regulations and guidelines affecting the expenditure of funds. The audit should meet generally accepted auditing standards and should be prepared by A Certified Public Accountant and show, at minimum, expenses and receipts (if applicable) for the most recent fiscal year.

Case Records

All Service Providers must maintain a case record for each client that receives supports or funding that includes the following:

- Client Application (Providers may use their own form with approval from the BHS.)
- Verification of the applicant's identity (photo ID is preferred)
- Documentation of services provided

Note: The application shall be signed by the applicant or by the applicant's authorized representative who shall be at least 18 years old and not employed by the agency to which the application is being submitted. If photo ID is unavailable, the service provider shall document other efforts to verify the applicant's identity. The inability to verify the identity of the applicant is not a reason to deny assistance to the applicant.

VI. Emergency and Transitional Housing and Services Program

A. Program Description

The Emergency and Transitional Housing and Services Program (ETHS) provides funding for shelter operations and support services, start up funding for new programs as well as limited rent and mortgage assistance.

- Please note that although ETHS has been and can continue to be used to help clients maintain housing through eviction prevention, however, since all jurisdictions that receive ETHS also receive Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) funds, HPP funding should be used first towards eviction prevention and focus the ETHS funding towards move out supports. More details are included below.

To receive funding from ETHS, the LAA and Service Provider must abide by all client eligibility and service delivery requirements as outlined in COMAR 07.01.19.05.

B. Funding Requirements

All organizations meeting eligibility criteria are encouraged to apply for program funds. To receive funding from ETHS, the LAA and Service Provider must abide by all fiscal reporting requirements outlined in COMAR.

In addition, the LAA, must do the following:

- **Give Service Providers a copy of the relevant guidelines and regulations**, as well as other materials necessary for the implementation of the program. All service providers must have a **written policy** that summarizes what services they offer to homeless families and individuals.
- **Inform all known local organizations providing services to homeless people about the availability of funds**, using list serves, social media, advertisements, letters, telephone contacts, or any other means at its disposal.
- **Monitor all ETHS funded local Service Providers annually and attend meetings of the Local Board on Homelessness.**
- **Maintain client data tracking in HMIS**, cooperate with the Maryland State Homelessness Data Warehouse (MSHDW) and Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH).

Allowable Use of Funding

- **Shelter.** Operation of existing beds in shelters (emergency, transitional, day time/drop in facilities or bed nights in a hotel). If no shelter exists or is unavailable at the time of need grant funding can be applied towards the cost of overnight motel stays for a family or single.
 - All sheltering policies must be applied consistently to all households and in accordance with COMAR. Set policies must include what is required of a client staying in emergency shelter and what behaviors will result in termination of shelter.
 - Clients must remain in compliance with a written case plan. Copies of all sheltering policies must be presented to the client during intake and signed by the client and placed in the client folder.

- **Cold Weather Sheltering.** Each jurisdiction is required to provide emergency cold weather shelter beds in accordance with their local emergency cold weather plan. This plan must be sent to the BHS during the fall of each calendar year. ETHS funding can be used to support the additional sheltering needs during the cold weather months.

- **Move out Funds.** Funding provided through the ETHS program can be used to pay one-time move out fees including one (1) month of rent and/or security deposit to assist clients in moving out of shelter.

- **Eviction Prevention.** Since all jurisdictions that receive ETHS also receive Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) funds, HPP funding should first be used to assist with eviction prevention then ETHS funding can be applied. If being used for eviction prevention, clients must present verification of a pending eviction or foreclosure and the client can only receive up to one (1) month of back rent to maintain housing. Additionally, the following must be true:
 - Payment will prevent the client's eviction or foreclosure, and
 - The service provider determines that the client will be able to continue in the home or to move to other permanent housing through payment to or arrangement with the landlord or mortgage holder. Clients may receive the emergency rent or mortgage subsidy service no more than once in any state fiscal year.

- **Transportation.** This includes the cost of transporting homeless people to and from shelter facilities, meal programs, or case management service programs. This may not include vehicle lease or purchase.

- **Case Management Services.** This includes, but is not limited to assessing the client's needs, developing a case plan, linking the client to other services and advocating for services on the client's behalf.
 - It is expected that the majority of this funding will go towards the costs associated with providing shelter for clients and not employee salary or benefits.

- **Food Service.** This includes meals in shelter facilities for homeless people or vouchers/checks/cash grants for meal purchases by or for people who are homeless when other funding sources are not available. Funding can also be used to refer clients to food banks when necessary.

Unallowable Use of Funding

Funds cannot be used for the following:

- Vehicle lease or purchase
- Administrative costs exceeding 7.5% of the total grant, this includes salary for case managers.
- Funding for rent or mortgage payment beyond the first month and security deposit

C. Reporting Requirements

The Department will utilize monthly reporting data from LAAs to project and revise funding amounts for the following fiscal year. For the duration of the grant period, each LAA shall submit copies of the following forms:

1. Monthly Statistical Report Form submitted by each Service Provider

- This report is due to the BHS **by the 15th of the month following the report month.** This requirement will be strictly enforced. Reports are required even if there were no activities for the month.

2. Monthly Expenditure Report Form

- The Monthly Expenditure Report form is due **by the 15th of the month following the report month.** These reports should be signed by the LAA and then scanned to the BHS office. This will suffice as an electronic signature, however please note that typing a name in and emailing without signature, is not sufficient. Reports are required even if there were no activities for the month. Failure to submit timely reports will be a consideration in future funding.

3. Budget Modification Forms

- A Budget Modification Form is only required to request budget changes due to unspent funds in one line of the budget to be spent on a different budget line (where allowed). This form must be completed by the grant recipient and forwarded to the LAA for approval. Once approved by the LAA it must be forwarded to the BHS for final approval. No budget modifications will be permitted without prior written approval (via email or letter) by the LAA and the BHS.

Late Reports

Jurisdictions whose reports are more than thirty (30) days late will receive a call from DHR's Program Administrator and given 48 hours in which to submit the report. Jurisdictions that fail to submit the report within that time frame will receive a non-compliance letter and are subject to suspension, reduction, and/or re-distribution of their grant award. Reports later than sixty (60) days may result in grant termination.

D. New Requirement – Fee for Service

According to COMAR, providers are permitted to charge clients a weekly fee for service. Please refer to COMAR 07.01.17.11 for the fee chart and use the “**Fee Determination Form**” located in the appendix to determine what fee a client will pay. **As of July 1, 2015** all providers and LAAs must choose from one of the following to manage these fees:

Clients Save Fees in External Savings Account

To ensure more moves from shelter into permanent housing, **the BHS strongly encourages** providers collecting these fees to assist clients with establishing savings accounts in a local bank to save money while in shelter. If clients are **able to save more** than the set fee, they should be encouraged to do so.

- **Clients must bring copies** of their savings account statement to their case manager on a monthly basis. The case manager will work with the client to manage the account and plan a budget to prepare them for move out.
- Copies of the savings statement and/or receipts of deposits to the account must be kept in the **client case file**.
- If clients are able to save but do not agree to do so, facilities must **establish procedural guidelines** that outline the consequences for clients that have the ability to save but do not agree to do so.
- This policy must be **shared with LAA and the BHS** prior to roll out; it must be presented to clients upon intake (for agreement and signature) and be posted throughout the facility.

Internal Savings Accounts

If clients are **unable or uncomfortable opening a bank account** outside of the facility, but want to save their money while in shelter, an internal savings account option may be offered to those select clients to which this applies. Providers must establish an internal savings procedural guideline so staff and clients understand what is expected. Procedural guidelines must meet the following:

- Clients must get money orders, made out to themselves, they are not permitted to save cash onsite. No staff member should handle cash.
- All money orders must be kept in a locked safe and only one supervisory staff member must have access to the safe.

- A record for each client saving internally must be kept in a binder, one page for each client showing what deposits are made, date and the money order number. Each client must be given a receipt each time they hand in a money order to the staff.
- At least two staff members must be present to witness the deposit.

If the **facility decides to continue to collect the fees** rather than encouraging clients to deposit them into external or internal saving accounts, **they are considered income to the provider.** Therefore **it is a strict requirement of the BHS** that each provider maintains a detailed accounting records of all fees received. **Starting July 1, 2015**, providers must:

- Establish a **“Fee Management Procedure”** that details the procedure by which the provider will follow to collect the fees, track the money collected, deposit the money and which staff will be responsible for collecting the fee. Provider must also include a detail of how the fees will be used within the program budget. This policy must be sent to the BHS for approval, prior to July 1st, 2015.
- For the safety of staff, **no individual staff person is permitted to accept cash, there must always be a second staff witness.** Staff are not permitted to keep cash on hand or in their desk. All cash must be kept in a locked safe, in a supervisor’s office before being deposited into a bank account. **No exceptions.**
- All **clients must receive a receipt** upon payment of the weekly fee. The receipt must include the organizations logo with the amount paid, date and signature of staff that received the fee.
- Providers must maintain a **monthly census tracking tool** that includes a list of all clients living in shelter during the month, along with notation of the clients that paid the weekly fee, the amount they paid and the date it was received and by whom (see appendix).
- All organizations collecting fees must include the amount of fees collected for the month with their **monthly expenditure form** sent to the LAA.
- The LAA is responsible for monitoring all sub-grantees collecting fees from clients on a consistent basis. The LAA must include the separate monthly total for each provider they oversee, with their monthly expenditure form sent to the BHS.

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E. Monitoring Requirements

The BHS will monitor a majority (at least 75%) of all the LAAs annually. During the monitoring visit, BHS staff will speak with staff providing oversight to the program and review a variety of reports used to complete the monthly activity and fiscal reports. BHS staff may also request to see client case files, expenditure receipts and/or may request to visit a provider facility. Where the LAA is also a Service Provider, they will be monitored as both the LAA and the Service Provider.

The LAA should monitor a majority (at least 75%) of jurisdictional Service Providers once every fiscal year. During this visit, the LAA should complete a Program Monitoring Form for each Service Provider. All program monitoring forms for the visits conducted by the LAA to the Service Providers shall be submitted all together, to the BHS no later than **June 15th** of the fiscal year.

F. New Requirement – Documentation of Bed Nights

When funds are used to pay for **motel stays**, providers must maintain detailed records to support what bed night numbers they document to the BHS in their monthly activity reports. Detailed records must include the following:

- Copies of invoices paid to hotels providing the bed night that include date of stay, total number of guests and total cost. Hotel receipts without this information are not sufficient.

When funds are used to cover **bed nights within an existing, congregate shelter**, providers must maintain accurate daily census lists, either by hand or in HMIS. Providers must maintain detailed records to support what bed night numbers they document to the BHS in their monthly activity reports.

The LAA is responsible for ensuring that providers are maintaining the detailed supporting documentation of bed night payments. Back up documentation for each must be made available to the BHS upon request and/or during annual monitoring visits.

VII. Housing Counselor and Aftercare Program

A. Program Description

The Housing Counselor and Aftercare Program (HCAP) grant funds a Housing Counselor (HC) staff position. The purpose of the HC is to assist homeless families or individuals or those in imminent danger of a housing crisis, in obtaining and maintaining permanent housing. This can include case management while in housing as well as aftercare case management support to maintain housing. Providers who employ a HC must strictly follow the expectations outlined in COMAR 07.01.19.06.1 while serving clients seeking housing as well as those that attain housing.

B. Funding

Requirements

To receive funding for this program, the LAA and Service Provider must abide by all programmatic requirements outlined in COMAR. The credentials of all HCs hired to fulfill the responsibilities of this grant program must be sent to the BHS upon request or upon hiring of a new candidate. When LAAs are hiring a new candidate, his/her credentials must be approved by the BHS prior to offering the position to the candidate. If the position goes vacant for more than 45 days, the BHS may consider re-allocating the funding received.

In addition, the LAA must do the following:

- **Give Service Providers a copy of the relevant guidelines and regulations**, as well as other materials necessary for the implementation of the program.
- **Maintain client data tracking in HMIS**, cooperate with the Maryland State Homelessness Data Warehouse (MSHDW) and the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH).

Allowable Use of Funding

Salary and FICA for housing counselors and aftercare case managers. Client-related expenses such as first month's rent and security deposit, transportation for housing searches (cab fare, reimbursement for transportation costs incurred by the HC, or public transportation fees), moving expenses, essential furnishings, storage, arrearages, credit checks and housing application fees, security deposits, utility deposits and other identified needs. The LAA shall provide funds for additional costs related to, or as a result of, operating the program.

Unallowable Use of Funding

Funds cannot be used for the following:

- Lease or purchase of a vehicle
- Purchase of furniture
- Rental assistance or eviction prevention support
- Administrative costs related to running programs or recruitment to hire for the position.

C. Reporting Requirements

Each case record must include documentation of service contracts with clients and records of the client's compliance or non-compliance with the contract. During on-site monitoring visits, the HCP Administrator will check the client files for the presence of such documentation.

1. Monthly Statistical Report submitted by each Service Provider or LAA with an HC

- This report is due to the BHS **by the 15th of the month following the report month**. This requirement will be strictly enforced. Reports are required even if there were no activities for the month.

2. Monthly Expenditure Report Form

- The Monthly Expenditure Report form is due **by the 15th of the month following the report month**. These reports should be signed by the LAA and then scanned to the BHS office. This will suffice as an electronic signature, however please note that typing a name in and emailing without signature, is not sufficient. Reports are required even if there were no activities for the month. Failure to submit timely reports will be a consideration in future funding.

3. Modification Forms

- A Budget Modification Form is only required to request budget changes due to unspent funds in one line of the budget to be spent on a different budget line (where allowed). This form must be completed by the grant recipient and forwarded to the LAA for approval. Once approved by the LAA it must be forwarded to the BHS for final approval. No budget modifications will be permitted without prior written approval (via email or letter) by the LAA and the BHS.

D. Monitoring Requirements

The BHS will monitor a majority (at least 75%) of all the LAAs annually. During the monitoring visit, BHS staff will speak with staff providing oversight to the program and review a variety of reports used to complete the monthly activity and fiscal reports. BHS staff may also request to see client case files, expenditure receipts and/or may request to visit a provider facility. Where the LAA is also a Service Provider, they will be monitored as both the LAA and the Service Provider.

Financial Audits

LAAs may be required by the BHS to submit an audit of their financial operations including compliance with program regulations and guidelines affecting the expenditure of funds. The audit should meet generally accepted auditing standards and should be prepared by A Certified Public Accountant and show, at minimum, expenses and receipts (if applicable) for the most recent fiscal year.

Case Records

All Service Providers must maintain a case record for each client that receives supports or funding that includes the following:

- Client Application (Providers may use their own form with approval from the BHS.)

- Declaration Form
- Verification of the applicant's identity (photo ID is preferred)
- Documentation and verification of the applicant's need (e.g., eviction notice)
- Proof of payment (e.g., check stub, copy of check, etc.) (same question as above)
- Any other documentation of services provided

Note: The application shall be signed by the applicant or by the applicant's authorized representative who shall be at least 18 years old and not employed by the agency to which the application is being submitted. If photo ID is unavailable, the service provider shall document other efforts to verify the applicant's identity. The inability to verify the identity of the applicant is not a reason to deny assistance to the applicant.

E. Personnel Contract

The HC will enter into a personnel contract with either local government or the local agency where the position is based and is not considered an employee of the State of Maryland. The salary of each HC should be based on a full year (52 weeks) at an estimated annual amount of \$38,117 (not including FICA). The salary level may be adjusted to suit local agency or county pay scales. Approval from the BHS is required, however, for any salary adjustments. If the position is not filled for the full year, the salary paid to the counselor should still be based on the full-year pay scale. HCs are subject to the personnel policies of the employing agency. At no time should an HC handle cash; this is grounds for termination.

VIII. Homeless Prevention Program

A. Program Description

The purpose of the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) is to assist individuals and families facing a housing crisis. As outlined in COMAR 07.01.19.07, case management and counseling is provided to those households in need and for early intervention to prevent eviction. Grant funding is used for training clients on budgeting and other life skills, education on tenant rights and responsibilities, and mediation between landlord and tenant. One-time direct grants to family units to prevent eviction are also available through this program.

B. Funding

Requirements

All organizations meeting eligibility criteria are encouraged to apply for program funds. To receive funding from ETHS, the LAA and Service Provider must abide by all fiscal reporting requirements outlined in COMAR.

In addition, the LAA, must do the following:

- **Give Service Providers a copy of the relevant guidelines and regulations**, as well as other materials necessary for the implementation of the program.
- **Inform all known local organizations providing services to homeless people about the availability of funds**, using list serves, social media, advertisements, letters, telephone contacts, or any other means at its disposal.
- **Monitor all HPP funded local Service Providers annually and attend meetings of the Local Board on Homelessness.**
- **Maintain client data tracking in HMIS**, cooperate with the Maryland State Homelessness Data Warehouse (MSHDW) and the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH).

Allowable Use of Funding

A Family Unit is eligible for permanent rental housing and facing immediate eviction or at risk of becoming homeless. The Family Unit must be able to present verification of pending eviction or risk of evictions. The Service Provider must determine that the Family Unit will be able to continue to stay in the permanent housing or move to other permanent housing through payment to or arrangement with the landlord. It is expected that the majority of this funding will go towards the costs associated with providing shelter for clients and not employee salary or benefits.

Unallowable Use of Funding

Funds cannot be used for shelter operations, capital improvements, or start-up costs for shelters.

C. Reporting Requirements

The Department will utilize monthly reporting data from LAAs to project and revise funding amounts for the following fiscal year. For the duration of the grant period, each LAA shall submit copies of the following forms:

1. Monthly Statistical Report Form submitted by each Service Provider

- This report is due to the BHS **by the 15th of the month following the report month**. This requirement will be strictly enforced. Reports are required even if there were no activities for the month.

2. Monthly Expenditure Report Form

- The Monthly Expenditure Report form is due **by the 15th of the month following the report month**. These reports should be signed by the LAA and then scanned to the BHS office. This will suffice as an electronic signature, however please note that typing a name in and emailing without signature, is not sufficient. Reports are required even if there were no activities for the month. Failure to submit timely reports will be a consideration in future funding.

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Late Reports

Jurisdictions whose reports are more than thirty (30) days late will receive a call from DHR's Program Administrator and given 48 hours in which to submit the report. Jurisdictions that fail to submit the report within that time frame will receive a non-compliance letter and are subject to suspension, reduction, and/or re-distribution of their grant award. Reports later than sixty (60) days may result in grant termination.

D. Monitoring Requirements

The BHS will monitor a majority (at least 75%) of all the LAAs annually. During the monitoring visit, BHS staff will speak with staff providing oversight to the program and review a variety of reports used to complete the monthly activity and fiscal reports. BHS staff may also request to see client case files, expenditure receipts and/or may request to visit a provider facility. Where the LAA is also a Service Provider, they will be monitored as both the LAA and the Service Provider.

The LAA should monitor a majority (at least 75%) of jurisdictional Service Providers once every fiscal year. During this visit, the LAA should complete a Program Monitoring Form for each Service Provider. All program monitoring forms for the visits conducted by the LAA to the Service Providers shall be submitted all together, to the BHS no later than June 15th of the fiscal year.

IX. Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) Requirements

A. Overview

A Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is the information system designated and managed by local Continuums of Care (CoC) to comply with the requirements of the federal CoC Program interim rule 24 CFR 578. It is a locally-administered data system used to record and track information about clients served, individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. In 2010 the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) affirmed HMIS as the official method of measuring outcomes for homeless services providers.

B. 17 Universal Data Elements

As of October 2014, all homeless service providers are required to enter the following 17 universal data elements into HMIS for each client served:

1. Name
2. Social Security Number
3. Date of Birth
4. Race
5. Ethnicity
6. Gender
7. Veteran status
8. Disabling Condition
9. Residence Prior to Project Entry
10. Project Entry Date
11. Project Exit date
12. Destination
13. Personal ID¹
14. Household ID
15. Relationship to Head of Household
16. Client location
17. Length of time on street, in an emergency shelter or safe haven

C. Program-Specific Data Elements

These data elements provide information about the characteristics of clients, the services that are provided and the client outcomes. The program-specific data elements that are required for federal reporting include elements that may be used by more than one federal funder program. An HMIS must have the ability to enable and restrict visibility of elements based on the funding needs of the specific program. Please use the links below to determine the program-specific data elements to track.

¹ A **Personal ID (PID)** is an automatically generated identifier created by the HMIS application and must be permanent and unique to a single individual within an HMIS implementation. A PID must be created, but there is no required format as long as there is a single unique PID for every client and it contains no personally identifying information. The PID must be able to be attached to the same individual when served by multiple projects. HMIS must have functionality to allow the HMIS Lead to de-duplicate multiple records with distinct PID's that are identified as representing the same individual based on identifying information.

D. Data Entry Expectations of Providers

Entering data into HMIS is mandatory. BHS will monitor compliance with this requirement during scheduled or unscheduled monitoring visits.

- Training should also be arranged through the **HMIS coordinator** for each jurisdiction.
- Data shall be entered into HMIS **within 24 hours of** the new or existing customer's contact with a case manager.
- All new and existing customers' information shall be updated and entered to reflect services provided **during each engagement**.
- Each participating agency shall agree to and **sign all documents regarding HMIS** policies and procedures and follow strictly all protocols regarding sharing of information.

E. Data Collection Requirements of Domestic Violence/ Survivor Services

A Victim Service Provider is a nonprofit or nongovernmental organization including rape crisis centers, battered women's shelters, domestic violence transitional housing programs, and other programs whose primary mission is to provide services to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking.¹

Victim service providers that are **funded under HUD's Supportive Housing Program** are instructed not to disclose personally identifying data about any client for purposes of HMIS, per the requirements of the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (Pub. L. 109-162) (VAWA).

HUD does not expect victim service providers funded through other sources to disclose personally identifying information for the purposes of HMIS. **However, please know the following:**

- **Victim service providers receiving HUD funds must use a comparable database that adheres to the same technology data standards as mainstream HMIS Systems**
- **Victim service providers must provide aggregate information in reports to HUD.** Information in these reports must be non-identifying, which can include aggregate totals or other demographic information that does not identify a victim. Since it is possible to identify many victims in rural states or small communities with only ethnicity or age and zip code, the information that victim service providers can share must be carefully scrutinized and limited.

¹ https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/FinalHMISDataStandards_March2010.pdf

- **Non-personally identifying information** must be further protected by being "de-identified, encrypted, or otherwise encoded."

Regardless of funding sources, Program Descriptor data for each homeless assistance program within the CoC operated by a victim service provider must be recorded in the HMIS (either by provider staff member or by the HMIS system administrator); with the exception of a street address for a facility that provides victim services to clients.

F. Communication with Clients about HMIS

Basic data elements identified by HUD and are a part of HMIS shall be entered and recorded as unduplicated homeless persons receiving assistance in Maryland.

Each participating agency shall:

- Explain the purpose of the HMIS.
- Attempt to secure release of information documents from customers before entering data.

**Under federal law (5 U.S.C. Section 552a) a government agency cannot deny shelter or services to clients who refuse to provide their SSN and this applies to all HUD-administered McKinney-Vento Act programs.

Other than name, a client can refuse to answer all other questions asked of the universal data elements. If a client refuses to answer a question, the Case manager should enter "refused" or "don't know" depending on the context. Case managers should make their best attempt to get the answers from the client in the initial screening or after if the information is provided in later conversations. If provided after, the case file should be updated accordingly in HMIS and in paper form.

G. HMIS and the Maryland Statewide Homelessness Data Warehouse

Each provider throughout all 24 jurisdictions in the state contributes client data to their local HMIS system. Aggregate data from these HMIS systems, will then be copied to the Maryland statewide Homelessness Data Warehouse (MSHDW). Collection of the universal data elements within HMIS and sharing that information enable the state of Maryland to draw conclusions about our progress towards supporting the homeless population across our state. Therefore, **all recipients of DHR grant funding for homeless services are required to comply with data sharing to the MSHDW.**

H. Data System Requirements for HMIS

Each participating agency should work with the local Continuum of Care Committee (CoC) to determine resources available to pay for user licenses and other fees required for the HMIS system. Computer systems shall meet the following requirements in order to run an HMIS program:

- Microsoft Windows 98 (SE), 2000, XP, ME or Macintosh OSX
- Internet Explorer 6.0+, or Firefox 2 or 3, or Safari 2, 3 or 4 (Mac)

- Flash – A high speed internet connection and Flash 9.0.115 or higher
- Windows Media – A high speed or Dial up internet connection, Windows Media Player or better or WMV Player for OSX
- Cookies must be enabled.

Navigating the Web

Federal Plan, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*
Available here:

http://usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Opening%20Doors%202010%20FINAL%20FSP%20Prevent%20End%20Homeless.pdf

A summary of the 2014 HMIS Data Standards are available here:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HMIS-Data-Dictionary.pdf>

The HMIS Data Manual is available here:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HMIS-Data-Standards-Manual.pdf>

X. Appendix – Fee for Service Tracking Forms

Fee Determination and Agreement Form

*To be used for those receiving ETHS, HPP and Homeless Women funding

 Client Name

 Income per Month

 Source

| Monthly Income | Daily Charges | I, _____, agree to pay \$ _____ per _____ beginning _____ first payment due on _____. I realize that the payment must be made with cash or money order made payable to Human Services Programs. I agree to report all changes in the amount or status of my income to my caseworker immediately. FAILURE TO PAY SHELTER FEE COULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT ELIGIBILITY FOR HSP SHELTER APPLICATIONS IN THE FUTURE. <p style="text-align: center;">Fee will be re-evaluated as needed.</p> |
|-------------------------|---------------|--|
| \$ 0 - \$ 99 | None | |
| \$100 - \$149 | \$0.50 | |
| \$150 - \$199 | \$1.00 | |
| \$200 - \$249 | \$1.50 | |
| \$249 - \$299 | \$2.00 | |
| \$300 - \$349 | \$2.50 | |
| \$350 - \$399 | \$3.00 | |
| \$400 - and over | \$4.00 | |

| Fee Received Date | Amount Received | Dates Covered By Fee |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
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 Client Signature

 Date

 Program Coordinator Signature

 Date

Tracking Chart: Collection of "Fee for Service" from Clients

Fee Chart for the month of: _____ Year: _____

Provider Name: _____

Address: _____

Jurisdiction: _____

| | Fee collection Date | Client Name | | Fee Required Based on Monthly Income | Fee Paid (listed in dollars) | Last Name of Staff that Received | Initials of Staff Person | Receipt Provided to Client (Y/N) | If Fee was not received, list reason why client was unable to pay |
|----|---------------------|-------------|-------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| | | Last | First | | | | | | |
| 1 | | | | \$ | \$ | | | | |
| 2 | | | | \$ | \$ | | | | |
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| 4 | | | | \$ | \$ | | | | |
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| 20 | | | | \$ | \$ | | | | |

TOTALS: \$ - \$ -