



**Virginia Homeless and Special Needs Housing
Housing Trust Fund – Homeless Reduction Grant
Funding Guidelines
Fiscal Year 2027**



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Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) partners with state, federal, local and nonprofit housing and community and economic development initiatives. DHCD programs strive to maintain the vibrancy of communities throughout the Commonwealth and include providing universal broadband access, investing in economic development initiatives, promulgating the statewide building and fire regulations, preserving the affordability and efficiency of Virginia's homes and buildings, addressing homelessness, reducing eviction rates across the state and fostering innovative solutions to create affordable housing.

Homeless and Special Needs Housing Grant Programs

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) partners with state, federal, local and nonprofit entities to implement housing and community and economic development initiatives. DHCD programs strive to maintain the vibrancy of communities throughout the Commonwealth and include providing decent, safe and affordable housing and universal broadband access, investing in economic development initiatives, promulgating the statewide building and fire regulations, addressing homelessness, and reducing eviction rates across the state.

HSNH administers three grant programs:

Virginia Homeless Solutions Program

Virginia Homeless Solutions Program (VHSP) funding supports the development and implementation of localized emergency crisis response systems, to ensure homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time through coordinated community-based activities. Through a housing-focused approach, the goals of VHSP are to assist households experiencing homelessness to quickly regain stability in permanent housing and to prevent households from becoming homeless. These activities are designed to reduce the overall length of homelessness in the community, the number of households becoming homeless, and the overall rate of formerly homeless households returning to homelessness.

Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS

The Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) program is U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding dedicated to the housing needs of people living with HIV/AIDS. DHCD administers the program by granting funds to nonprofits and local governments to provide housing and services that benefit low-income persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families.

Virginia Housing Trust Fund

The goal of the Virginia Housing Trust Fund Homeless Reduction Grant (HTF-HRG) is to reduce homelessness in the Commonwealth of Virginia. DHCD will support Continuum of Care (CoC)/balance of state local planning group (LPG) strategies and homeless service projects that are a part of an effective emergency crisis response system in communities to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time.

FY 2027 HSNH Administered Funding*		
VHSP	HOPWA	HTF Homeless Reduction Grant
\$16,098,561	\$1,683,495	\$14,000,000

**Funding levels are estimates for each source. DHCD may modify the funding amounts based on availability and program need.*

Homeless and Special Needs Housing Grantee Requirements

Grantees must comply with program guidelines and applicable state and federal policies and procedures, including compliance with non-discrimination laws. In addition to the grantee requirements below, grantees must adhere to the requirements for the specific funding streams.

Organizations funded by HSNH grant programs (direct grantees and subgrantee) may not engage in inherently religious activities, such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization as part of the programs or services funded under HSNH. If an organization conducts these activities, then they must be offered separately, in time or location, from the programs or services funded under HSNH and participation must be voluntary for project participants.

Grantees must have established standard accounting practices including internal controls, fiscal accounting procedures, and cost allocation plans as well as track agency and program budgets by revenue sources and expenses.

Grantees with outstanding audit findings, IRS findings, DHCD monitoring findings, or other compliance issues are not eligible to receive funding. Grantees will not be eligible to receive allocations if any of these conditions occur within the grant period. DHCD will work with all interested parties where appropriate, to resolve findings and compliance issues.

Proposed grantees without DHCD HSNH funding agreements within the last two years will be subject to an organizational assessment prior to the execution of any DHCD HSNH funding agreement. DHCD reserves the right to require and conduct organizational assessment of any proposed or current grantee prior to the execution of any HSNH agreement. An assessment includes a review of organization finances, accounting standards, internal controls, grievance policies, record keeping policies, confidentiality practices, conflict of interest policies, and fair housing practices.

All grantees, subgrantees, CHDOs, localities, developers, or any other organizations that receive funding during a program year and/or have projects in progress are required to submit financial statements to DHCD.

Required statements are as follows: Financial Statement(s)**, Reviewed Financial Statement(s) that have been reviewed by an Independent CPA, Financial Statement(s) that have been audited by an Independent CPA or an audit required by the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), (2 CFR 200 Subpart F), audited by an independent CPA. Please see the table below to determine which documents your organization is required to submit.

If the entity expends awards under only one DHCD program and the program's statutes or regulations, or terms and conditions of the award do not require a financial statement audit, the entity may elect to have a program-specific audit conducted.

The threshold requirements outlined below are the minimal standards required by DHCD.

Threshold Requirement - The threshold requirements outlined below are the minimal standards required by DHCD.	Document
Total annual expenditures < \$350,000 (Regardless of source)	Financial Statement(s) prepared by organization**

Total annual expenditures > \$350,000 (Regardless of source)	Reviewed Financial Statement(s) – Reviewed by an Independent CPA
Total annual expenditures > \$550,000 (Regardless of source)	Financial Statement(s) – Audited by an Independent CPA
Federal expenditures > \$1,000,000	2 CFR 200 Subpart F Audit – Audited by an Independent CPA

****Does not require preparation by a CPA**

Required financial statements/audit must be submitted yearly, within nine (9) months after the end of your fiscal year or 30 (thirty) days after it has been accepted (reviewed financial statement(s), audited financial statements, and 2 CFR 200 Subpart F audit only) - whichever comes first. Entities must electronically submit their financial statement(s), reviewed financial statements, audited financial statements, 2 CFR 200 Subpart F audit, or program specific audit in DHCD's Centralized Application and Management System (CAMS) which requires the organization to register in CAMS at <https://dmz1.dhcd.virginia.gov/camsportal/Login.aspx>.

Entities are required to have a DHCD reviewed and approved current audit or reviewed financial statement(s) in order to submit a remittance request.

The full DHCD Audit Policy, including explanation of the specific document requirements can be found online at: <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/Docx/audit-policy/dhcd-audit-policy.pdf>

Eligible grantees are the organizations that DHCD contracts with for the provision of eligible activities. These organizations are identified during the grant application process and are designated as the:

- Service Provider(s)
- Service Coordinator, and/or
- Fiscal Agent

Service Provider

These are the individual organizations identified in the HSNH application to provide the eligible activities. This would also include a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) administrator, if applicable.

Service Coordinator

One or more service providers may collaborate to provide specific services. In this case, DHCD will consider contracting with the service coordinator. The service coordinator is a service provider in the collaboration. The application must clearly explain how the service providers will work together. Written agreements are required between services providers involved in the coordinated effort. Copies of the related written agreements or Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) must be submitted as an attachment with the application. The service coordinator (grantee) assumes full responsibility for meeting all HMIS, reporting, record keeping, spending, and other program requirements. These responsibilities include monitoring each service provider included in the coordinated effort for program compliance. This role is limited to organizations with demonstrated capacity.

Fiscal Agent

DHCD will consider contracting with organizations as fiscal agents. In this case, the organization does not directly provide any services covered by the DHCD contract. However, all remittances, documentation requirements, and other program responsibilities must be maintained by the fiscal agent. The fiscal agent assumes full responsibility for meeting all HMIS reporting, record keeping, spending, and other program requirements. These responsibilities include monitoring each service provider providing any services or activities funded through the application process. This role is limited to organizations with demonstrated capacity.

Continuum of Care (CoC)/Local Planning Group (LPG) Point-in-Time Count Date Coordination
Each CoC and LPG must conduct the annual point-in-time (PIT) count on the date designated by the state.

Participation in CoC/LPG

CoC/LPG participation in accordance with the community's bylaws and standards is required.

Non-Discrimination in Housing and Community Development Programs

It is the policy of the Commonwealth of Virginia to provide for fair housing throughout the Commonwealth, to all its citizens, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, elderliness, familial status, source of funds, sexual orientation, gender identity, military status, or disability, and to that end to prohibit discriminatory practices with respect to residential housing by any person or group of persons, in order that the peace, health, safety, prosperity, and general welfare of all the inhabitants of the Commonwealth may be protected and ensured. These obligations extend to recipients of DHCD financial assistance, including subrecipients, as well as the operations of state and local governments and their agencies, and certain private organizations operating housing and community development services, programs, or activities.

Equal Access and Prohibited Inquiries

All activities must be made available without regard to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. Grantees are prohibited from inquiring about an applicant's or participant's sexual orientation or gender identity for the purpose of determining eligibility or otherwise making housing available. This does not prohibit an individual from voluntarily self-identifying sexual orientation or gender identity.

Service providers that make decisions about eligibility for or placement into single-sex emergency shelters or other facilities will place a potential project participant (or current project participant seeking a new assignment) in a shelter or facility that corresponds to the gender with which the person identifies, taking health and safety concerns into consideration. A project participant's or potential project participant's own views with respect to personal health and safety should be given serious consideration in making the placement. For instance, if the potential project participant requests to be placed based on his or her sex assigned at birth, the provider should place the individual in accordance with that request, consistent with health, safety, and privacy concerns. Providers must not make an assignment or reassignment based on complaints of another person when the sole stated basis of the complaint is a project participant or potential project participant's non-conformance with gender stereotypes.

While an emergency shelter or housing project may limit assistance to households with children, it may not limit assistance to only women with children. Such a shelter or housing project must also serve the following family types, should they present, in order to be in compliance with the Equal Access rule: Single male head of household with minor child(ren); and any household

made up of two or more adults, regardless of sexual orientation, marital status, or gender identity, presenting with minor child(ren).

Further, grantees must not discriminate against a group of people presenting as a family based on the composition of the family (e.g., adults and children or just adults), the age of any member's family, the disability status of any members of the family, marital status, actual or perceived sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Under the Equal Access Rule, "family" includes, but is not limited to, regardless of marital status, actual or perceived sexual orientation, or gender identity, any group of persons presenting for assistance together with or without children and irrespective of age, relationship, or whether or not a member of the household has a disability. A child who is temporarily away from the home because of placement in foster care is considered a member of the family.

Grantees must assess and serve individuals and households as they present. Any group of people that present together for assistance and identify themselves as a family, regardless of age, relationship, or other factors, are considered to be a family and must be served as such.

Discharge Coordination

Persons who are being imminently discharged into homelessness from publicly funded institutions are eligible to receive financial assistance or services through this funding as long as they meet the project participant eligibility requirements. Grantees and CoCs/LPGs must coordinate with these institutions to prevent, where possible, individuals from becoming homeless. Referrals must be made where appropriate to the following:

- Veterans Administration (VA)
- Department of Social Services
- Community Services Boards (CSBs)
- Other mainstream resources as needed

Compliance with Fair Housing and Civil Rights Laws

(1) Grantees must comply with all applicable state and federal fair housing and civil rights requirements (see 24 CFR 5.105(a)). This includes the Virginia Values Act (effective July 1, 2020) which expands the list of protected classes under the Virginia Fair Housing Act. As expanded, the Virginia Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, elderliness (age 55 and older), familial status, source of funds, sexual orientation, gender identity, military status, or disability (collectively the "Protected Classes"). (2) If the grantee: (a) Has been charged with an ongoing systemic violation of the Fair Housing Act; or (b) Is a defendant in a Fair Housing Act lawsuit filed by the Department of Justice alleging an ongoing pattern or practice of discrimination; or (c) Has received a letter of findings identifying ongoing systemic noncompliance under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or section 109 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, and the charge, lawsuit, or letter of findings referenced in subparagraphs (a), (b), or (c) above has not been resolved before the application deadline, then the grantee is ineligible to apply for funds.

Compliance with Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act

All HSNH-funded project activities must adhere to the [Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act](#) (VRLTA) as applicable.

Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

All grantees shall adhere to Title II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Title II prohibits discrimination in the form of excluding an otherwise qualified person with a disability

(i.e. a person who would qualify for the program or activity but for their disability) from participating in programs or activities is prohibited. All are required to make reasonable accommodations in policies and practices and to make reasonable modifications in physical structures to ensure equal access to the programs. Title III prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in the activities of places of public accommodations which include shelters, social service establishments, and other public accommodations providing housing and requires newly constructed or altered places of public accommodation—as well as commercial facilities (privately owned, nonresidential facilities such as factories, warehouses, or office buildings)—to comply with the ADA Standards.

Confidentiality Policy

All grantees shall ensure the confidentiality of the name of any individual assisted and any other information regarding individuals receiving assistance.

The grantee's confidentiality policy should, at a minimum, address:

- How staff will gather, record, and store confidential information;
- The consent process for the release of confidential information;
- Protocols for responding to breaches of confidentiality;
- Standards contained in relevant state and federal laws, including HIPAA compliance (if applicable) and HIV confidentiality statutes; and,
- Privacy standards related to data collection and use of participant information for program reporting, such as HMIS.

Grievance and Termination Policy

Any individual receiving assistance must receive written notification of the grantee's grievance policy. Grievance policies must be board-approved and provide specific procedures to be followed for any disputed decision affecting this assistance. Project participants contacting DHCD directly will be referred back to the grantee's grievance policy. The grantee must be prepared to provide documentation of the grievance record for all project participant grievances. DHCD will review and approve all grievance policies.

Grantees may terminate assistance to a project participant who violates program requirements and resume assistance to a project participant whose assistance was previously terminated. Termination must include a formal process that recognizes the rights of individuals receiving assistance to the due process of law. This process must include at least two-levels. The initial level of the process should be held by the grantee organization wherein the grievance is reviewed or heard by an individual other than the person (or subordinate of that person) who made or approved the termination decision. Should the client or household disagree with the decision made by the initial reviewer, a second level must be available for an appeal at the CoC/LPG level. This two-level process, at a minimum, must consist of: (1) Written notice to the project participant containing a clear statement of the reasons for termination; (2) Prompt written notice of the final decision to the project participant; and (3) Written policy for continuing assistance to surviving family members, in the event of a death of a head of household, that establishes a reasonable grace period of continued assistance to surviving family members, not to exceed one year, measured from the date of death of the participant.

Recordkeeping

Grantees must keep any records and make any reports (including those pertaining to services received, project participant housing status, race, ethnicity, gender, and disability status data) that DHCD requires within the specified timeframe. All contractual and project participant records must be maintained for at a minimum of five years. Records include both program records such as the documentation or match requirement, financial records such as bank statements, and project participant records. Copies of cancelled checks/bank statements or

expenses associated with the project participant must also be retained. Grantees are required to maintain a record of all project participants that are screened and classified as ineligible for a service provided within the Continuum of Care. This must include documentation of the reason for the determination of ineligibility. For more information about documentation requirements see [Accounting Standards](#).

Data Reporting Requirements

Reports must be submitted in CAMS as required by DHCD. Reports will also be required at the CoC and LPG level. Timeliness is critical, as this data will be aggregated for other reporting purposes. Grantees that fail to meet reporting requirements and deadlines are considered non-compliant which may affect future grant reimbursements and other DHCD funding opportunities.

Grantees must ensure that data is complete and accurate. Each grantee is expected to enter all project participant data into the HMIS system, complete periodic data quality checks, and work with the local HMIS administrator to ensure that complete quality data is submitted to DHCD by the specific due dates. Grantees primarily serving survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault must meet these requirements using a comparable database.

Grantees must be able to track and report program activities, project participant data, and spending separately from other activities. Grantees will report on outputs, such as the number of persons served and the demographic characteristics of persons served, program funds expended by activity type, as well as outcomes related to housing stability. Most reporting elements will be generated from HMIS data. Adherence to required HMIS data standards will be essential to performance reporting.

HMIS

HMIS is an electronic data collection system that facilitates the collection of information on persons who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless that is managed and operated locally. Grantees must certify that there is full utilization with the HMIS in their area. However, different areas within the state may use different systems and/or system administrators. The grantee or any prospective grantee should work with their CoC/LPG to coordinate HMIS access and technical assistance. The grantee assumes full responsibility for all reporting to DHCD.

Grantees are required to report project participant-level data, such as the number of persons served and their demographic information, in a HMIS database. Grantees providing financial assistance and services will use the HMIS system in the applicable Continuum of Care to collect data and report on outputs and outcomes as required. The required data elements that will be collected in HMIS are included in the [2026 HMIS Data Standards](#).

HMIS systems may be open or closed. Closed systems prevent other providers within a local HMIS system from sharing project participant data. Open systems allow for coordination among service providers and facilitate a coordinated or centralized assessment process. While an open system may not yet be available in a specific CoC/LPG, grantees must participate in an open system as one becomes available for local use.

Domestic violence service providers and providers not using HMIS must use a comparable system that meets all HMIS data standards and reporting requirements.

Learn more about [HMIS requirements](#).

Unique Entity ID (UEI)

All grantees are required to register with a UEI in the System for Award Management (SAM).

System for Award Management (SAM)

The System for Award Management (SAM) combines federal procurement systems and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance into one system to include the CCR. As with CCR, SAM collects, validates, stores, and disseminates data. Since 2003, indirect recipients of federal funds have been required to register with CCR and as of 2012, CCR merged with SAM. All grantees and subgrantees or subcontractors receiving federal grant awards or contract must be registered with SAM. For further information on registering and renewing annual registrations, go to <https://www.sam.gov>.

Method of Payment

Funds are disbursed on a reimbursement based on payment dates. All grantees must be registered in CAMS and have approved audits in order to receive reimbursement. Remittances are submitted in CAMS; however, any grantee with unresolved findings or compliance issues may have reimbursement suspended.

DHCD requires that grantees receive funds via electronic transfer. Instructions on establishing an account with the Virginia Department of Accounts (DOA) is located on their website through the selection of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) from the link on the right hand side of the DOA main webpage. The EDI guide can then be accessed through a link under the Trading Partner Information section.

Financial Management

Grantees must ensure compliance with regulations and requirements pertaining to the following key areas of financial management:

- Allowable costs
- Source documentation
- Internal controls
- Budget controls
- Cash management
- Cost allocation plans
- Accounting records
- Procurement
- Property asset controls
- Audits

Grantees must only use funds for eligible activities and in accordance with the DHCD-approved program budget. Any changes from the planned expenditures must be approved in advance by DHCD. Funds may not be used for activities other than those authorized in the guidelines and approved by DHCD. Reimbursements are based on the date the payment is made by the grantee. All expenditures must be in accordance with program conditions such as funding ceilings and other limitations on eligible costs.

Internal controls refer to the combination of policies, procedures, defined responsibilities, personnel, and records that allow an organization to maintain adequate oversight and control of its finances. Internal controls reflect the overall financial management system of an organization or agency. Budget controls, cash management, cost allocation plans, accounting records, procurement, and property controls are subsets of the overall financial system.

The specific administrative requirements (i.e., financial management standards) for grants to state and local government entities are contained in 24 CFR Part 200 and CAPP Manual. Grantees will be monitored for compliance with the program requirements and documentation.

A financial compliance monitoring may include the following:

- An organizational chart showing titles and lines of authority for all individuals involved in approving or recording financial (and other) transactions
- Written position descriptions that describe the responsibilities of all key employees
- A written policy manual specifying approval authority for financial transactions and guidelines for controlling expenditures
- Written procedures for the recording of transactions, as well as an accounting manual and a chart of accounts
- Adequate separation of duties to ensure that no one individual has authority over an entire financial transaction
- Hiring policies to ensure that staff qualifications are equal to job responsibilities and that individuals hired are competent to do the job
- Access to accounting records, assets, blank forms, and confidential records is adequately controlled, such that only authorized persons can access them
- Procedures for regular reconciliation of its financial records, comparing its records with actual assets and liabilities of the organization
- Accounting records/source documentation
- Cash management procedures
- Cost allocation plans
- Procurement procedures
- Property controls
- Annual Audit

In order to ensure DHCD monitoring processes are compliance with Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), domestic violence service providers must adopt a formal check request policy to ensure appropriate use of grant funds. The grantee must use a Check Request form as the primary method of requesting checks or cash in connection with an authorized expense incurred on behalf of grant-funded programs or project participant expenses. Check requests describe the expense, list the amount of the expense, and should follow the following steps:

1. Use a standardized Check Request form to include a description of the expense, the title of the corresponding eligible grant activity, the amount of the expense, and the payee.
2. Get requisite approval from supervisor.
3. Attach receipts and/or invoices. Make sure the amount requested matches the amount to be spent or reimbursed.
4. Submit to appropriate finance personnel who will verify information provided, review back-up documentation, file documentation, and prepare check(s). Once filed, the Check Request forms and attached receipts and/or invoices must have any project participant-level personally identifying information redacted.

All check requests must have at least two signatures: the requestor and the authorizer. The authorizing signature must be a director or manager that has budgetary oversight for the program incurring the expense. All significant (over \$5,000), unusual, and nonrecurring transactions must be reported to the CEO.

Time Sheets

Employee time sheets must reflect actual hours (not percentages) worked based on the cost allocation plan. Time sheets must be signed and dated by the employee and the supervisor with first-hand knowledge of the work performed or equivalent electronic approval. If the expenditures are paid for by more than one source (e.g., federal, public, private) the split costs should be accurately tracked within the grantee's accounting system.

Hazard Pay

Grantees with staff who are working in frontline or essential services positions may elect to adopt a Hazard Pay policy. This policy must be formally adopted and written into the organization's employee policies manual. During an emergency crisis, the adoption of a Hazard Pay policy would allow grantees to increase pay for frontline or essential services staff for continuing their work during the crisis. If the grantee chooses to adopt a hazard pay policy, it should be reflected on employee time sheets to support the increase in payments.

Accounting Standards

In addition to establishing a system of accounting sufficient to accurately record and report transactions, adequate source documentation must be maintained as support for these transactions. Source documentation includes but is not limited to the following:

- Purchase Requisitions
- Purchase Orders
- Contracts
- Contract Invoices
- Bank Statements
- Cancelled Checks
- Draw downs
- Payment Vouchers
- Employee Time Sheets
- Travel Advance Requests
- Travel Reimbursement Vouchers
- Vendor Invoices
- Journal Voucher Entries
- Cash Receipts

All source documents must be coded by a reference number so that a clear link exists between the fiscal records and these documents. Coding could include the check number used to make the payment, the journal entry in which transaction was recorded or the page number from the cash receipt journal. Purchase order numbers and payment voucher numbers may also be used to provide the necessary audit link.

Supporting documents can be copies or originals, but must be sufficient in detail to support the transaction and to justify it as an allowable grant expense.

The grantee must keep copies of the source documents, and be made available for HUD and/or DHCD review upon request for a minimum of five (5) years.

The grantee must maintain proof of cancellation (e.g. copy of check's backside, bank statement, or photocopy of check's cancellation) for all payments. While these are not required in the project participant files, they must be readily available for monitoring purposes.

Internal Controls

The grantee must have appropriate internal controls in place to:

- Safeguard assets;
- Prevent waste, fraud, and mismanagement;
- Promote efficiency of operations; and
- Whistleblower protections.

Effective internal controls to the extent possible must include the following procedures:

- Segregation of duties among employees to prevent one person from having complete control over all phases of any transaction
- Workflow procedures for processing all transactions from one employee to another. This must provide for a cross check of work, but not a duplication of effort
- Rotation of duties among employees to allow for control over any one given phase and ensure that other employees can fill in when a position becomes vacant
- The procedures used should be clearly detailed and documented for all individuals to follow and as an aid in training new employees
- All assets, records, and checks must be properly protected using locks, safes, and other measures to ensure security

Monitoring

DHCD is responsible for monitoring all program activities carried out by a grantee to ensure that the program requirements are met. Monitoring can include both programmatic and financial reviews. DHCD and HUD may monitor any funded project, as applicable. Grantees must make available organizational and project related records to both DHCD and HUD with notice.

Grantees are responsible for all programmatic and contractual terms. The grantee is responsible for ensuring that these terms and requirements are met regardless of partnership arrangements or MOUs with other organizations.

Results from the monitoring of grantees will be shared with the grantee's board of directors and CoC/LPG lead agency.

Conflicts of Interest

Grantees and partners must have conflict of interest policies that clearly prohibit personal gain or benefit and meet other program requirements.

Organizational Conflicts of Interest

The provision of any type or amount of assistance may not be conditional on a household's acceptance or occupancy of housing owned by the grantee, subgrantee, parent organization, or subsidiary. An organization may not both participate in decision-making related to determining eligibility and receive any financial benefit. For example, a grantee, subgrantee, parent organization, or subsidiary may not both administer rapid re-housing or prevention assistance and use the assistance for households residing in units owned by the entity.

A CoC/LPG may request a waiver for an organization to both administer rapid re-housing assistance and place households in units owned by the same organization, a parent organization, or subsidiary where critical local necessity can be demonstrated and where project participant evaluations will be provided by another unrelated organization. Waiver requests must be submitted in writing to DHCD prior to the provision of rapid re-housing assistance specific to the requested waiver. Waivers will not be granted for prevention administrators.

Individual Conflicts of Interest

Individual conflicts of interest apply to any person who is an employee, agent, consultant, officer, or elected or appointed official of the grantee or its subgrantee. For the procurement of goods and services, the grantee and/or its subgrantee must comply with the agency code of conduct and conflict of interest policies.

Individuals (employees, agents, consultants, officers, or elected or appointed officials of the grantee or subgrantee) may not both participate in decision-making related to determining eligibility and receive any financial benefit. This financial benefit may not be received by the

specific individual, any member of his/her immediate family or a business interest. The restriction applies throughout tenure in the position and for a one-year period following tenure.

Upon written request of the grantee, DHCD may grant an exception to the restrictions in the paragraph above on a case-by-case basis when it determines that the exception will serve to further the goals of the program and promote the efficient use of program funds. In requesting an exception, the grantee must provide a disclosure of the nature of the conflict, accompanied by an assurance that there has been public disclosure of the conflict and a description of how the public disclosure was made. In most cases, additional HUD waivers are required.

Property Standards

DHCD provides the Basic Habitability Checklist that must be completed, signed by all required parties, and included in all project participant records for rapid re-housing and prevention (new units only) assistance. The checklist must also be completed for each emergency shelter location and retained in agency administrative records. While the habitability standards do not require a certified inspector, the inspector must meet one of the following criteria:

- Program staff (grantee/subgrantee staff); or
- Staff from or hired by an agency of the grantee/subgrantee, such as a city department that is designated to conduct inspections, or a contractor hired for that task; or
- Staff from another subsidy program that is providing assistance and requires an inspection (e.g., Section 8, Public Housing).

The habitability standards are different from HUD's Housing Quality Standards (HQS). Housing that is occupied by families with children and that was constructed before 1978 must also comply with Lead Based Paint inspection requirements, per the Lead Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act. This requirement applies only to units that a family moves into with assistance. This does not apply to units currently occupied by project participants.

DHCD provides a Lead-Based Paint Visual Assessment form that must be completed and included in project participant records. Staff must complete an online training course before performing visual assessments.

The Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. 4801 et seq.), as amended by the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992 (42 U.S.C. 4851 et seq.) and implementing regulations at 24 CFR part 35, subparts A, B, M, and R shall apply to housing occupied by families receiving assistance through HOPWA.

HUD's lead-based paint rules apply to all housing units that a family with children moves into with assistance. Specifically, lead-based paint rules apply when:

1. Housing to be assisted was constructed before 1978; and
2. Residents will include a pregnant woman or a child 6 years of age or younger. Note: Studio units are exempt.

All housing meeting the above criteria must receive a lead-based paint visual assessment before assistance may be provided. Staff must complete an [online training course](#) before performing visual assessments and retain the certification on file.

Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Requirements

Grantees must comply with all applicable fair housing and civil rights requirements. In addition, grantees must make known that rental assistance and services are available to all on a nondiscriminatory basis and ensure that all citizens have equal access to information about and equal access to the financial assistance and services provided under this program. A statement

of such must be included in the Project Participant Agreement, signed by the project participant, and maintained in the project participant file.

Among other things, this means that each grantee must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to programs to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP), pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This may include providing language assistance or ensuring that program information is available in the appropriate languages for the geographic area served by the CoC/LPG and that LEP persons have meaningful access to this assistance.

Grantees have a duty to affirmatively further fair housing opportunities for classes protected under the Fair Housing Act. Protected classes include race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and familial status. In addition, Virginia's Fair Housing Law further protects "elderliness," individuals age 55 or older, from housing discrimination and the Virginia Values Act extends existing state non-discrimination protections for housing on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Examples of affirmatively furthering fair housing include: (1) marketing the program to all eligible persons, including persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency; (2) making buildings and communications that facilitate applications and service delivery accessible to persons with disabilities (see, for example, HUD's rule on effective communications at 24 CFR 8.6); (3) providing fair housing counseling services or referrals to fair housing agencies; (4) informing participants of how to file a housing discrimination complaint, including providing the toll-free number for the Housing Discrimination Hotline: 1-800-669-9777; and (5) recruiting landlords and service providers in areas to which housing choice is expanded. In addition, housing discrimination complaints may be reported to the Virginia Fair Housing Office at the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation at (888) 551-3247.

HSNH Ineligible and Prohibited Activities

Ineligible and prohibited activities include but are not limited to the following:

- Grantee past due taxes
- Grantee late fees
- Repayment of loans from the project participant to the grantee
- Return of utility or security deposits to the grantee not tracked as program income
- Construction or rehabilitation
- Project participant credit card bills or other debt
- Vehicle repair
- Medical or dental care and medicines (not applicable to HOPWA)
- Expenses related to drug and alcohol testing
- Clothing and grooming
- Home furnishings
- Pet care
- Renter's insurance
- Payment of third-party security deposits such as surety bonds
- Entertainment activities
- Project participant work or education related materials
- Cash assistance to project participants, including gift cards and gas cards
- Expenses to develop discharge planning programs from institutional settings
- Any payments made to project participants
- Any payments to ineligible third parties
- Any fees charged to the project applicant or participant
- Employee bonuses

Emergency Crisis Response System

How A Crisis Response System Can End Homelessness

An effective crisis response system is able to identify and quickly connect people who are experiencing or are at risk of experiencing homelessness to housing assistance and other services. It works because it aligns a community, its programs, and services around one common goal – to make homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

What Is a Crisis Response System?

The goals of an effective crisis response system are to identify those experiencing homelessness, prevent homelessness when possible, connect people with housing quickly, and provide services when needed. An effective crisis response system achieves those goals through the following:

Outreach: Outreach workers connect people at risk of or experiencing homelessness to coordinated entry, emergency services, and shelter. They work with other programs in the system to connect people to stable, permanent housing.

Coordinated entry: Coordinated entry is a process designed to quickly identify, assess, refer, and connect people in crisis to housing assistance and services.

Prevention: Prevention is an important component of a community's crisis response system and can help it reduce the size of its homeless population. Prevention assistance can aid households in preserving their current housing situation or prevent homelessness for people who are currently housed, but seeking shelter. This assistance helps them identify immediate alternate housing arrangements and, if necessary, connect them with services.

Emergency shelters and interim housing: People experiencing a housing crisis or fleeing an unsafe situation need to find a place to stay, quickly. Emergency shelter and interim housing can fill this role in a crisis response system. These interventions should be low-barrier and align their goals and program activities with the larger system's goals.

Permanent housing: A crisis response system must have the capacity to connect people experiencing homelessness with permanent housing programs, such as rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing, and other stable housing options.

Role of the CoC/LPG

The role of the CoC/LPG is to promote a communitywide goal of ending homelessness, provide funding for efforts to rehouse those who are homeless, promote access to mainstream programs, and optimize housing stabilization.

Each CoC/LPG must have a lead entity accountable for these goals and the responsibility to ensure effective communication to all stakeholders involved in the CoC/LPG's emergency crisis response system.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the CoC/LPG include governance and structure, system coordination and planning, designating and operating the HMIS, and designing a coordinated entry system.

Governance and structure

Each CoC/LPG is to have a board that represents the CoC/LPG and includes at least one homeless or formally homeless person. The responsibilities of the board depend on the

authority delegated to the board by the CoC/LPG and must be documented in the CoC/LPG's governance charter. Other committees should be identified in the charter to carry out the responsibilities of the CoC/LPG.

System coordination and planning

At a minimum, the system should include coordinated outreach and engagement, entry and assessment, shelter, permanent housing, supportive services, and homeless prevention strategies. Written system standards must be established to guide the implementation of all homeless assistance services.

Planning efforts must ensure a coordinated and "right sized" system by conducting a point-in-time count, annual gaps analysis, participation in consolidated plan development, and consultation with Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) recipients. In addition, the CoC/LPG must establish and monitor performance measures and take action against poor performers.

Designating and operating HMIS

Each CoC/LPG must designate a HMIS lead to carry out the day-to-day operations of the CoC HMIS.

Coordinated entry

CoC/LPG must operate a coordinated entry system that provides an initial, comprehensive assessment of households who are homeless and best connect them to the housing and services they need to return to, and stabilize in, permanent housing.

Virginia Housing Trust Fund: Homeless Reduction Grant

The goal of the Virginia Housing Trust Fund Homeless Reduction Grant program is to reduce homelessness in the Commonwealth of Virginia. DHCD will support Continuum of Care (CoC)/balance of state local planning group (LPG) strategies and homeless service projects that are or will be a part of an effective emergency crisis response system to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time.

The Homeless Reduction Grant program must be coordinated with other community-based activities. All CoCs, LPGs, and DHCD homeless services grantees use a local centralized or coordinated assessment/entry system. A local centralized or coordinated assessment/entry system is the best practice for a housing-focused approach targeted toward helping households experiencing homelessness quickly regain stability in permanent housing.

Background

The Virginia Housing Trust Fund is estimated to increase significantly this fiscal year. It is estimated that \$14,000,000 will be available for HTF Homeless Reduction Grants this fiscal year. This funding amount is subject to change. This funding provides grants for targeted efforts to reduce homelessness. Priority consideration will be given to efforts to reduce the number of youth and families experiencing homelessness. Funding will be awarded to projects best aligned with state and federal goals to end homelessness in communities throughout the commonwealth.

Eligible Grantees

Eligible grantees are units of local government, non-profit organizations, housing developers (non-profit and for-profit), Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs), single purpose organizations, or limited liability corporations (LLCs). The preferable grantee is the primary partner in the LLC, development team, or the individual organization that will have the ongoing responsibility for the project. Proposed projects that will leverage multiple partners and subcontracts are allowable.

The grantee is the entity responsible for compliance. DHCD may not enter into program contracts with any grantee with outstanding audit findings, IRS findings, DHCD monitoring findings or other compliance issues. However, DHCD will work with all interested parties toward the resolution of outstanding issues, as appropriate.

Grantee Requirements

Each grantee must adhere to the requirements set forth in the [Homeless and Special Needs Housing guidelines](#).

Eligible Activities

Eligible projects are designed to reduce homelessness, are located within Virginia, and include:

- Rapid Re-housing
- Underserved Populations Innovation Project
- Permanent Supportive Housing (housing stabilization services and rental assistance for chronically homeless)
- HMIS
- Administrative Costs

Rapid Re-housing

Rapid re-housing is an intervention designed to help individuals and families quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. Rapid re-housing assistance is offered without

preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety) and the resources and services provided are tailored to the unique needs of the household.

Core components:

1. Housing identification
2. Rent and move-in assistance
3. Rapid re-housing case management and services

Project Participant Eligibility

Rapid re-housing assistance is limited to literally homeless households. These are households who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes those currently residing in a shelter and those exiting an institution (where they resided temporarily for 90 days or fewer) with no housing resources.

Duplication of assistance is not eligible. Financial assistance cannot be made on behalf of eligible individuals or families for the same period of time and for the same cost types that are being provided through another federal, state, or local housing subsidy program.

All rapid re-housing financial assistance beyond six months requires recertification of eligibility. This recertification must then be completed every six months based on the household's project entry date for the duration of financial assistance. Recertification requires grantee documentation of the following:

- Project participant household income below 30 percent of AMI
- The household lacks the financial resources and support networks needed to remain in existing housing without Rapid Rehousing assistance
- Housing stabilization services are being appropriately implemented

Recertification Requirement	
Any Financial Assistance	Every six months
Services/Case Management Only	Every 12 months

Requirements

Provision of any financial assistance should be needs based, meaning that grantees should determine the amount of assistance based on the minimum amount needed to maintain housing stability in the near term. This will allow communities to use program resources efficiently to serve as many households as possible.

When households are moved into a new unit, the rent must be Reasonable.

Rent reasonableness means that the total rent charged for a unit must be reasonable in relation to the rents being charged during the same time period for comparable units in the private unassisted market and must not be in excess of rents being charged by the owner during the same time period for comparable non-luxury unassisted units. To make this determination, the grantee should consider (a) the location, quality, size, type, and age of the unit; and (b) any amenities, housing services, maintenance and utilities to be provided by the owner. If the gross rent for the unit exceeds either the rent reasonableness standard, grantees are prohibited from using VHSP funds for any portion of the rent, even if the household is willing and/or able to pay the difference.

Grantees must not make payments directly to project participants, but only to landlords or property management companies. In addition, an assisted property may not be owned by the grantee or their parent, subsidiary or affiliated organization (see [Conflict of Interest](#)).

Monthly housing-focused case management is required but participation in all program services must be voluntary. Grantees must provide the appropriate level of case management in order to ensure housing stability.

Required Documentation:

- All project participants must receive an initial screening
- Certification form signed by the project participant stating that the project participant has received a copy of the grantee's grievance policy
- All project participants must receive initial eligibility certification using DHCD's *VHSP Rapid Re-housing Project Participant Eligibility Requirements*.
- All households must have strength-based housing barriers assessments and housing plans.
- Grantees must use [HUD Published Income Limits](#) for determining income limits
- A copy of the [HSNH Rent Reasonableness Worksheet](#) must be completed and included in the project participant file.
- A copy of the completed utility allowance worksheet must be included in the project participant file. Grantees must utilize the appropriate utility allowance for any utilities that are paid by the project participant separate from rent. The grantee may use the local housing authority's or [Virginia Housing's](#) appropriate regional allowances in order to calculate the rent standard.
- Rapid re-housing financial assistance requires that the project participant head of household have the valid lease with a landlord or a master lease agreement that is in compliance with tenant/landlord laws in their name. For master lease agreements, these must be legally binding for a duration of at least 6 months and participation in any program or service must not be a requirement for tenancy. A copy of the lease must be included in the project participant file.
- Monthly housing-focused case management is required. Grantees must provide the appropriate level of case management in order to ensure housing stability.
- Grantees must have written agreements with both the project participant and the landlord that identify the terms of the rapid re-housing assistance. This should specifically provide the landlord with guidance for addressing issues which could impact housing stability and must include:
 - A provision requiring the owner to give the grantee a copy of any notice to the project participant to vacate the housing unit, or any complaint used under state or local law to commence an eviction action against the project participant.
 - The same payment due date, grace period, and late payment penalty requirements as the project participant's lease.
 - The term of the rental assistance agreement for the period of time they anticipate providing assistance.

Expenses

Eligible rapid re-housing costs include:

- Rent assistance
- Rent arrears
- Housing stabilization financial assistance
- Housing stabilization case management
- Housing search and placement
- Housing stabilization services

- Service location costs

Rental Assistance and Rent Arrears

Rental assistance is tenant-based rental assistance that can be used to allow individuals and families to obtain and remain in rental units. Funds cannot be used for mortgage assistance.

Grantees must determine the amount of rental assistance provided, such as shallow subsidies (payment of a portion of the rent), payment of 100 percent of the rent, or graduated/declining subsidies. Grantees may require a project participant to share in the costs of rent, however inability of a project participant to contribute to the rent should not be a determination for termination from the program.

No project participant may receive more than 12 months of assistance. Assistance with any portion of rent during a month counts as a month toward the 12 month limit.

Payment of rent arrears consists of a one-time payment for up to six months in arrears, including any late fees on those arrears. Rental arrears may be paid if the payment enables the project participant to obtain a housing unit.

If funds are used to pay rental arrears, arrears must be included in determining the total period of the project participant's rental assistance, a period not to exceed 12 months. While the payment of rent arrears is a lump sum and recorded as such in HMIS, each month and the number of months must be noted in HMIS and counted toward the total rent assistance limit of 12 months.

Any individual or family currently receiving assistance must be recertified as eligible every six months.

Assistance should be needs based, meaning that grantees should determine the amount of assistance based on the minimum amount needed to help the project participant maintain housing stability in the near term. Grantees in collaboration with project participants will be responsible for developing a housing plan that determines the level of assistance for the household. Adjustments to housing plans should be identified during case management meetings. This will allow communities to use program resources efficiently to serve as many households as possible.

Funds may not be used to pay damage costs incurred by the tenant.

The rental assistance to move into a new unit cannot exceed the actual rental cost, which must be in compliance with HUD's standard of rent reasonableness.

Rental assistance or arrears to pay for a lot on which a manufactured or mobile home is located is an eligible expense as long as the household is otherwise eligible.

Rental assistance provided toward rent for a housing unit owned by a grantee, related entity, or partner is prohibited.

Housing Stabilization Financial Assistance

Funds may be used to provide financial assistance to help project participants quickly access housing. The housing relocation and stabilization services financial assistance includes:

- Security and utility deposits
- Last month's rent

- Utility payments and arrears
- Moving costs
- Application fees

Funds may be used to pay security deposits and utility deposits when the participant is eligible and not receiving the same assistance from another source. Payments must be made directly to the landlord, property manager, or utility provider.

Grantees may not recapture deposit assistance from participants. If a deposit is returned to the grantee and the return is unavoidable, it must be recorded and reported to DHCD as program income and used for eligible activities.

Funds may be used for up to 12 months of utility payments per participant within any three-year period, provided:

The participant or a household member has an account in their name; and

They are not receiving utility assistance from another source for the same period.

Utility assistance may include up to six months of arrears per utility service, and arrears count toward the 12-month limit.

Grantees must use the Virginia Housing or local housing authority utility allowance to determine reasonable payment limits.

Partial payments count as a full month of assistance. Past due months also count toward the 12-month limit. Payment of one or more basic utilities per month counts as one month of utility assistance towards the 12 month limit. Eligible utilities include water/sewer, heating oil, gas, and electricity.

If the exact number of months covered is difficult to determine, grantees may use reasonable estimates. The basis for any estimate must be documented in the client file.

Funds may be used for reasonable moving expenses, such as truck rental or hiring a moving company, when needed to support housing stability.

Funds may be used to pay lease or apartment application fees when necessary and when no other source of assistance is available.

Housing Stabilization Case Management

Funds may be used for housing stability case management. These are the costs of assessing, arranging, coordinating, and monitoring the delivery of individualized services to facilitate housing stability for project participants residing in permanent housing or to assist a project participant in overcoming immediate barriers to obtaining housing. Project participants must receive housing-focused case management at least once a month.

This assistance cannot exceed 12 months during the period the project participant is living in permanent housing.

These costs include:

- Conducting initial assessments

- Counseling
- Facilitating access to mainstream services
- Monitoring and evaluating project participant progress
- Coordination with and referrals to other providers
- Developing and adjusting individualized housing and service plans
- Fees for use of auxiliary aids and language services

Rapid re-housing funds can be used for housing-focused case management alone. Although rental assistance cannot be provided independent of case management, case management can be provided independent of rental assistance. For example, case management could be provided after the term of a project participant's rental assistance expires, as long as the 12 month cap for each type of assistance is not exceeded.

"Stand alone" case management or other services can also be provided to support project participants who receive rental assistance through non-VHSP funds, as long as the individual or family is eligible for VHSP assistance at the time of the intake evaluation.

Housing Search and Placement

Housing search and placement funds may be used for services or activities designed to assist individuals or families in locating, obtaining, and retaining suitable housing. Component services or activities may include staff costs related to: tenant counseling, assisting individuals and families to understand leases, securing utilities, making moving arrangements, representative payee services concerning rent and utilities, and outreach and negotiation with property owners related to locating or retaining housing. Costs also include expenditures associated with assessing housing unit compliance with property standards, lead requirements, and rent reasonableness. Costs associated with staff in the role of housing locator would be eligible housing search and placement costs.

Housing Stabilization Services

Funds may be used for services that are targeted to assist project participants to maintain housing. These may include critical skills related to household budgeting, money management, accessing a personal credit report, and resolving personal credit issues. If grantees elect to conduct credit checks on project participants, they must do so for all project participants so as not to violate Fair Housing Law or otherwise discriminate among project participants. Grantees may not use these funds to reimburse landlords for their costs associated with conducting credit and/or background checks. Credit may not be used to determine program eligibility. Payment of debt is an ineligible expense.

Service Location Costs

Funds may be used for service location costs, such as rent for office space, printer/copier costs, and utilities for an office.

Underserved Populations Innovation Project

The purpose of the Underserved Populations Innovation Project is to support innovative local efforts to serve members of an underserved population experiencing homelessness and pilot new models of assistance to determine the array of interventions necessary to serve the target population.

Client Eligibility

The Underserved Population Innovation Project targets members of an underserved population that are experiencing homelessness.

Underserved populations are defined by a lack of resources targeted towards providing culturally appropriate and trauma-informed services for a vulnerable population.

Examples of underserved populations include but are not limited to:

- Persons 60 years of age or older
- Unaccompanied youth aged 18 to 24
- Persons identifying as LGBTQ+
- Persons with disabilities, including physical or cognitive impairments, or substance use disorder
- Persons living in rural areas
 - “Rural” encompasses all population, housing, and territory not included with an urban area as indicated by the U.S. Census Bureau’s [2020: Virginia Core Based Statistical Areas and Counties Map](#).

Projects serving monolithic groups based on race, color, national origin, or religious ideologies will not be permitted for the use of HTF – HRG funding.

All projects, unless otherwise stated, must utilize the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Category 1 definition of literal homelessness.

Literal Homelessness is defined as:

Any individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- (i) Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation;
- (ii) Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); or
- (iii) Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution

Grantees targeting unaccompanied homeless youth may choose to employ the following two definitions of homelessness:

1. U.S. Department of Education (ED)

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines homeless children and youths as follows: The term “**homeless children and youths**”—

- A. means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 11302(a)(1) of this title); and
- B. includes—
 - i. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
 - ii. children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 11302(a)(2)(C) of this title);

- iii. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- iv. migratory children (as such term is defined in section 6399 of title 20) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii). 42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines unaccompanied youth as follows: The term “**unaccompanied youth**” includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. 42 U.S.C. § 11434a(6)

2. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Category 1: Literally Homeless - Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- (iv) Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation;
- (v) Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); or
- (vi) Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution

Housing solutions assistance must be offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety).

Eligible Activities

There are three categories of Underserved Populations Innovation Project activities:

- Innovative Project Planning
- Homeless Underserved Populations Outreach/Engagement
- Housing Solutions

All HTF – HRG – Underserved Populations Innovation Projects must include the Innovative Project Planning activity and may or may not include Homeless Underserved Populations Outreach/Engagement, and/or Housing Solutions.

Innovative Project Planning

Innovative Project Planning funds may be used to develop and/or pilot new models of assistance to best meet the needs of underserved populations experiencing homelessness. All projects must be designed to meet the unique needs of the target population in their community.

Requirements

The project must be designed to meet at least one of the following core components:

1. Effectively identify and engage members of the underserved population at risk of or experiencing homelessness and connect them with trauma-informed, culturally appropriate, and developmentally and age-appropriate interventions;
2. Intervene early when members of the underserved population do become homeless and work to divert the individual or household from the experience of homelessness when safe and appropriate;
3. Develop coordinated entry systems to identify members of the underserved population for appropriate types of assistance and to prioritize resources for the most vulnerable;

4. Ensure access to safe shelter and emergency services when needed;
5. Ensure assessments respond to the unique needs and circumstances of members of the underserved population and emphasize strong connections to and supported exits from mainstream systems as needed;
6. Create individualized services and housing options tailored to the needs of each individual or household, and include measurable outcomes across key indicators of performance, including education and employment;
7. Perform a needs assessment of the capacity of the current local crisis response system and existing projects to serve members of the underserved population;
8. Develop an assessment to determine the level of housing and supportive services needs of members of the underserved population experiencing homelessness. This should include a recommendation for type of housing intervention to be utilized based on the individual or household's level of need;
9. Review opportunities in the local crisis response system and system's existing projects to implement best practices that are specifically focused on helping members of the underserved population to stabilize in housing and implement the types of housing interventions which are most successful in resolving the housing crisis and setting up the individual or household for an enhanced quality of life (i.e. addressing connections to healthcare and mitigating social isolation);
10. Maintain an inventory of the community's resources to support members of the underserved population, especially those that assist with stabilization;
11. Develop a collaborative partnership to address discharge planning with institutions such as jails or other corrections facilities, hospitals, addiction treatment facilities, child welfare facilities, or mental health programs; AND/OR
12. Establish an inter-disciplinary coalition between the CoC/LPG leadership, community homeless services projects, and mainstream resources that serve members of the underserved population.

All projects must provide opportunity for involvement by members of the underserved population. Members of the underserved population including homeless and formerly homeless individuals, must be involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Innovative Project Planning and any input must be implemented to the extent that is appropriate for the project and feasible within statutory and regulatory guidelines.

All projects must also review opportunities to raise funding and create proposals that establish new Housing First projects or expand existing projects that support housing-focused solutions for members of the underserved population experiencing homelessness.

Expenses

Eligible costs include coordination activities, project planning and design activities, consulting fees, project evaluation, and training related to the pilot project. Stipends and consulting fees as compensation for individuals with lived experience for their participation and shared expertise are eligible expenses.

Homeless Underserved Populations Outreach/Engagement

Homeless Underserved Populations Outreach/Engagement includes essential services related to identifying and engaging members of the underserved population at risk of, or experiencing homelessness, and connecting them with trauma-informed, culturally appropriate, and developmentally and age-appropriate interventions.

Outreach services should coordinate a comprehensive set of strategies, spanning the homeless crisis response system, other systems of care, and mainstream resources as appropriate for the

underserved population. For example, projects designed to serve unaccompanied homeless youth aged 18 to 24 should work with schools, the child welfare system, the criminal processing system, drop-in centers, hotlines, and 2-1-1 Virginia.

Whenever possible, outreach services should employ prevention and diversion strategies, and otherwise secure immediate access to low-barrier crisis housing and services for members of the underserved population should they so choose. Prevention and diversion strategies may include: connecting and/or reunifying individuals with members of their family or other natural supports (as defined by each household).

Requirements

All outreach efforts must be client-centered and tailored to the unique needs of the underserved population.

Required Documentation

- Individualized service plan, to include housing options
- Evidence of connection with the community's coordinated entry process (as appropriate)
- Coordination with mainstream resources

Expenses

Eligible Homeless Underserved Populations Outreach/Engagement costs include:

- Essential Services – Case Management
- Essential Services - Limited Support Services (requires DHCD pre-approval)
- Service location costs
- Other (requires DHCD pre-approval)

Essential Services – Case Management

Funds may be used for engagement and housing-focused case management. These are the costs of locating, identifying, and building relationships with youth experiencing homelessness and the cost of assessing housing and service needs, arranging, coordinating, and monitoring the delivery of individualized services to meet the needs of the youth program participant. Costs include staff expenses related to:

- Connecting with centralized or coordinated assessment system;
- Actively connecting and providing information and referrals to programs targeted to people experiencing homelessness and mainstream resources and housing programs;
- Conducting and documenting an initial assessment of needs and eligibility;
- Providing crisis counseling;
- Addressing urgent physical needs;
- Completing a strength-based housing barriers assessment and corresponding individualized housing and service plans;
- Assisting a program participant in overcoming immediate barriers to housing; and
- Monitoring and evaluating program participant progress.

Essential Services - Limited Support Services

Includes the transportation costs of travel by outreach workers, social workers, medical professionals, or other service providers are eligible, provided that this travel takes place during the provision of services eligible under this section. The costs of transporting unsheltered people to emergency shelters or other service facilities are also eligible. These costs include the use of public transportation and rideshare programs by the project participant.

Service Location Costs

Funds may be used for service location costs, such as rent for office space, printer/copier costs, and utilities for an office.

Housing Solutions

Members of the underserved population experiencing homelessness should be connected to appropriate and choice-driven service options and swiftly moved into time-limited (Host Homes-only) or permanent or non-time-limited housing options. All services and housing options should be: individualized and tailored to the needs of each individual or household, trauma-informed, culturally and linguistically appropriate, and developmentally and age-appropriate.

All housing solution financial assistance beyond six months requires recertification of eligibility. This recertification must then be completed every six months for the duration of financial assistance. Recertification requires grantee documentation of the following:

- Program participant household income below 30 percent of AMI;
- The household lacks the financial resources and support networks needed to remain in existing housing without financial assistance; AND
- Housing stabilization services are being appropriately implemented.

Recertification Requirement	
Any Financial Assistance	Every six months
Services/Case Management Only	Every 12 months

Eligible housing solutions activities include:

- Host Homes
- Rapid Re-housing (including Shared Housing)
- Innovative Permanent Housing Solutions
- Housing-Stabilization Case Management

Host Homes

Host homes is a model in which a family agrees to permit an individual or household to reside in the home with them. While staying in a host home, the individual or household are able to engage in housing stabilization services and work toward self-determined goals.

Requirements

In order to be eligible, the residence must be in a community-based setting, the family may or may not be related to the individual or household, and the length of stay may or may not be time-limited.

Grantees must establish a host home screening and training process. All prospective host families must complete the screening and training process prior to hosting the individual or household in their home. The screening must include a background check, an interview with the prospective host family, and a home visit. The training must be a comprehensive training program, conducted in-person or via webinar, to orient host families to the host home program, review program requirements, and discuss expectations of the host home. The training program should also provide training on issues related to, among others:

- Homelessness in your community, to include details specific to the experience of homelessness among the underserved population
- Personal biases
- Cultural competency
- Communication and conflict resolution
- LGBTQ+

- Trauma and resiliency

Grantees must not make payments directly to project participants, but only to host home head of household.

Required Documentation

- Grantees must have written agreements with the host family that states their willingness to house the project participant. If there are additional expectations set by the host home, this must be documented.
- Grantees must document how household costs are determined and employ the same method for all program participants (ex. pro-rata, compare costs before and after the project participant joined the household, etc.).
- Grantees must certify completion of host home screening and training process for each host family.
- Monthly housing-focused case management is required. Grantees must provide the appropriate level of case management in order to ensure housing stability.

Expenses

Eligible Host Home expenses include:

- Host home support
- Host home recruitment
- Temporary housing placement (hotel or motel)
- Housing stabilization services
- Service location costs
- Other (requires DHCD pre-approval)

Host Home Support

Recognizing that the addition of another person in the home may increase costs to the family, funding may be used to subsidize the additional costs attributable to housing the project participant. Costs may include:

- Food
- Basic needs support
- Transportation
- Utilities

Host Home Recruitment

Funds may be used for host home recruitment. This includes the costs of recruiting host homes, conducting background checks and host home interviews, and developing and providing the host home training program.

Temporary Housing Placement

When an appropriate emergency shelter placement is unavailable, funds may be used for hotel/motel vouchers only until the desired housing placement is available. The need for temporary housing placement must be documented in the program participant's file.

Housing Stabilization Services

Funds may be used for services that are targeted to assist project participants to maintain housing. These may include critical skills related to household budgeting, money management, accessing a personal credit report, and resolving personal credit issues. If grantees elect to conduct credit checks on project participants, they must do so for all project participants so as not to violate Fair Housing Law or otherwise discriminate among project participants. Grantees may not use these funds to reimburse landlords for their costs associated with conducting credit

and/or background checks. Credit may not be used to determine program eligibility. Payment of debt is an ineligible expense.

Service Location Costs

Funds may be used for service location costs, such as rent for office space, printer/copier costs, and utilities for an office.

Rapid Re-housing (including Shared Housing), and Innovative Permanent Housing Solutions

Funds may be used to provide tenant-based rental assistance. Innovative Permanent Housing Solutions means any permanent housing solution that does not fall within the definitions of host homes or rapid re-housing (including shared housing). Examples of Innovative Permanent Housing Solutions are the use of residential care homes for older adults and master leasing units. The permanent housing solution, including any innovative permanent housing solution, must meet all of the requirements listed below.

Requirements

Provision of any financial assistance should be needs-based, meaning that grantees should determine the amount of assistance based on the minimum amount needed to maintain housing stability in the near term. This will allow communities to use program resources efficiently to serve as many households as possible.

When households are moved into a new unit, the rent must meet Rent Reasonableness. Rent reasonableness means that the total rent charged for a unit must be reasonable in relation to the rents being charged during the same time period for comparable units in the private unassisted market and must not be in excess of rents being charged by the owner during the same time period for comparable non-luxury unassisted units. To make this determination, the grantee should consider (a) the location, quality, size, type, and age of the unit; and (b) any amenities, housing services, maintenance and utilities to be provided by the owner. Grantees must not make payments directly to program participants, but only to landlords or property management companies.

Required Documentation

- Initial screening
- Certification form signed by the project participant stating that the project participant has received a copy of the grantee's grievance policy
- Strength-based housing barriers assessments and housing plans.
- A copy of the [HSNH Rent Reasonableness Worksheet](#) must be completed and included in the project participant file.
- A copy of the completed utility allowance worksheet must be included in the project participant file. Grantees must utilize the appropriate utility allowance for any utilities that are paid by the project participant separate from rent. The grantee may use the local housing authority's or [Virginia Housing's](#) appropriate regional allowances in order to calculate the rent standard.
- Rapid re-housing financial assistance requires that the project participant head of household have a valid lease with a landlord that is in compliance with tenant/landlord laws in their name. A copy of this lease must be included in the project participant file. If grantee is master leasing, the grantee must have a sublease with the head of household. A copy of the master lease as well as a copy of the sublease must be included in the project participant file.
- Monthly housing-focused case management is required. Grantees must provide the appropriate level of case management in order to ensure housing stability.

- Grantees must have written agreements with both the project participant and the landlord that identify the terms of the rapid re-housing assistance. This should specifically provide the landlord with guidance for addressing issues which could impact housing stability and must include:
 - A provision requiring the owner to give the grantee a copy of any notice to the project participant to vacate the housing unit, or any complaint used under state or local law to commence an eviction action against the project participant.
 - The same payment due date, grace period, and late payment penalty requirements as the project participant's lease.
 - The term of the rental assistance agreement for the period of time they anticipate providing assistance.

Expenses

Eligible rapid re-housing (including shared housing) and innovative permanent housing solutions costs include:

- Rental assistance
- Rent arrears
- Housing stabilization financial assistance
- Housing search and placement
- Housing stabilization services
- Temporary housing placement
- Service location costs
- Other (requires DHCD pre-approval)

Rental Assistance and Rent Arrears

Rental assistance is tenant-based rental assistance that can be used to allow individuals and families to obtain and remain in rental units. Funds cannot be used for mortgage assistance. Grantees must determine the amount of rental assistance provided, such as shallow subsidies (payment of a portion of the rent), payment of 100 percent of the rent, or graduated/declining subsidies. Grantees may require a program participant to share in the costs of rent, however inability of a project participant to contribute to the rent should not be a determination for termination from the program.

No program participant may receive more than 12 months of assistance.

Assistance with any portion of rent during a month counts as a month toward the 12 month limit.

Payment of rent arrears consists of a one-time payment for up to six months in arrears, including any late fees on those arrears. Rental arrears may be paid if the payment enables the program participant to obtain a housing unit.

If funds are used to pay rental arrears, arrears must be included in determining the total period of the program participant's rental assistance, not to exceed 12 months. While the payment of rent arrears is a lump sum and recorded as such in HMIS, each month and the number of months must be noted in HMIS and counted toward the total rent assistance limit of 12 months.

Any individual or family currently receiving assistance must be recertified as eligible every six months.

Assistance should be needs based, meaning that grantees should determine the amount of assistance based on the minimum amount needed to help the program participant maintain housing stability in the near term. This will allow communities to use program resources efficiently to serve as many households as possible.

Funds may not be used to pay damage costs incurred by the tenant.

The rental assistance to move into a new unit cannot exceed the actual rental cost, which must be in compliance with HUD's standard of Rent Reasonableness.

Rental assistance or arrears to pay for a lot on which a manufactured or mobile home is located is an eligible expense as long as the household is otherwise eligible.

Housing Stabilization Financial Assistance

Funds may be used to provide financial assistance to help program participants quickly access housing. The housing relocation and stabilization services financial assistance includes:

- Security and utility deposits
- Last month's rent
- Utility payments
- Utility arrears
- Moving costs
- Food costs
- Transportation
- Application fees

Funds may be used to pay security deposits and utility deposits when the participant is eligible and not receiving the same assistance from another source. Payments must be made directly to the landlord, property manager, or utility provider.

Grantees may not recapture deposit assistance from participants. If a deposit is returned to the grantee and the return is unavoidable, it must be recorded and reported to DHCD as program income and used for eligible activities.

Funds may be used for up to 12 months of utility payments per participant within any three-year period, provided:

The participant or a household member has an account in their name; and

They are not receiving utility assistance from another source for the same period.

Utility assistance may include up to six months of arrears per utility service, and arrears count toward the 12-month limit.

Grantees must use the Virginia Housing or local housing authority utility allowance to determine reasonable payment limits.

Partial payments count as a full month of assistance. Past due months also count toward the 12-month limit. Payment of one or more basic utilities per month counts as one month of utility assistance towards the 12 month limit. Eligible utilities include water/sewer, heating oil, gas, and electricity.

If the exact number of months covered is difficult to determine, grantees may use reasonable estimates. The basis for any estimate must be documented in the client file.

Funds may be used for reasonable moving expenses, such as truck rental or hiring a moving company, when needed to support housing stability.

Funds may be used to pay lease or apartment application fees when necessary and when no other source of assistance is available.

Funds may be used for emergency food to assist an eligible household with obtaining and maintaining permanent housing. Costs for food may include delivery services if no other food source is available. Documentation of connection to mainstream resources such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and/or local food banks should be documented in the project participants' file.

Funds may be used for transportation to obtain and maintain permanent housing. Transportation expenses are limited to ride share, bus passes, or other methods of public transportation.

Housing Search and Placement

Housing search and placement funds may be used for services or activities designed to assist individuals or families in locating, obtaining, and retaining suitable housing. Component services or activities may include staff costs related to: tenant counseling, assisting individuals and families to understand leases, securing utilities, making moving arrangements, representative payee services concerning rent and utilities, and outreach and negotiation with property owners related to locating or retaining housing. Costs also include expenditures associated with assessing housing unit compliance with property standards, lead requirements, and rent reasonableness. Costs associated with staff in the role of housing locator would be eligible housing search and placement costs.

Housing Stabilization Services

Funds may be used for services that are targeted to assist project participants to maintain housing. These may include critical skills related to household budgeting, money management, accessing a personal credit report, and resolving personal credit issues. If grantees elect to conduct credit checks on project participants, they must do so for all project participants so as not to violate Fair Housing Law or otherwise discriminate among project participants. Grantees may not use these funds to reimburse landlords for their costs associated with conducting credit and/or background checks. Credit may not be used to determine program eligibility. Payment of debt is an ineligible expense.

Temporary Housing Placement

When an appropriate emergency shelter placement is unavailable, funds may be used for hotel/motel vouchers only until the desired housing placement is available. The need for temporary housing placement must be documented in the program participant's file.

Service Location Costs

Funds may be used for service location costs, such as rent for office space, printer/copier costs, and utilities for an office.

Housing Stabilization Case Management

Funds may be used for housing stability and housing-focused case management. These are the costs of assessing, arranging, coordinating, and monitoring the delivery of individualized

services to facilitate housing stability for project participants residing in permanent housing or to assist a project participant in overcoming immediate barriers to obtaining housing.

This assistance cannot exceed 12 months during the period the project participant is living in permanent housing.

These costs include:

- Conducting initial assessments
- Counseling
- Facilitating access to mainstream services
- Monitoring and evaluating project participant progress
- Coordination with and referrals to other providers
- Developing and adjusting individualized housing and service plans
- Fees for use of auxiliary aids and language services

Clients must receive housing-focused case management at least once per month.

Rapid re-housing funds can be used for housing-focused case management alone. Although rental assistance cannot be provided independent of case management, case management can be provided independent of rental assistance. For example, case management could be provided after the term of a project participant's rental assistance expires, as long as the 12 month cap for each type of assistance is not exceeded.

“Stand alone” case management or other services may also be provided to support project participants who receive rental assistance through non-HTF – HRG funds, as long as the individual or household is eligible for HTF – HRG assistance at the time of the intake evaluation.

Permanent Supportive Housing (Housing Stabilization Services and Rental Assistance for Chronic Homeless)

Permanent supportive housing (PSH) for chronic homelessness is an evidence-based housing intervention that combines decent, safe, and affordable community-based housing, non-time-limited affordable housing assistance, and wrap-around supportive services for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. In PSH, individuals and households are ensured the rights of tenancy under state and local landlord tenant laws while being linked to voluntary and flexible supports and services designed to meet tenants' needs and preferences. The goal of PSH is to assist individuals and households in achieving housing stability.

To be eligible, the CoC/LPG must have adopted HUD's notice ([CPD-16-11](#)) prioritizing persons experiencing chronic homelessness and other vulnerable persons experiencing homelessness in permanent supportive housing.

Project Participant Eligibility

Permanent Supportive Housing program targets individuals and families who meet the HUD definition of chronic homelessness:

- Chronic homelessness: individuals and families who have been homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter continuously for at least one year or on at least four separate occasions in the last three years that total 12 months; and, have an adult head of household (or a minor head of household if no adult is present in the household) with a diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability (as defined in Section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15002)), post-traumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from a brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of two or more

of those conditions. For further clarification, see the [HEARTH: Defining “Chronically Homeless” Final Rule](#).

Core Components

- Individually tailored and flexible supportive services that are voluntary, can be accessed 24 hours a day/7 days a week, and are not a condition of ongoing tenancy;
- Leases that are held by the tenants without limits on length of stay; and
- Ongoing collaboration between service providers, property managers, and tenants to preserve tenancy and resolve crisis situations that may arise.

Key Outcomes and Objectives

Permanent Supportive Housing projects are evaluated and monitored on how well they are achieving key project outcomes and objectives. Outcomes are measured at both the community- and project-level and include:

- Households served and length of assistance
- Percentage households stabilized in the permanent supportive housing project
- Percentage households exited to a permanent destination (efficacy of the grantee's Move On strategy)

Requirements

All programs must adhere to a housing first approach focused first on moving project participants into the permanent supportive housing project as quickly as possible and second on obtaining and maintaining housing stability. Projects must use housing stabilization support services and mainstream resources as needed to ensure housing stability.

Monthly housing-focused case management is required but participation in all program services must be voluntary. Grantees must provide the appropriate level of case management in order to ensure housing stability. All services must be designed and implemented to ensure project participants remain independently housed. All services must be individualized to meet the needs of the project participant.

Projects must strive to meet a participant to case manager ratio of no greater than 15:1 to ensure effective and appropriate provision of case management and supportive services. Projects that are unable to meet this expectation must provide a written description of how they will ensure effective and appropriate provision of case management and supportive services, and, if applicable, how they will work toward meeting this goal in the future.

Grantees must ensure coordination with mainstream resources and community-based supports to improve housing stability of project participants. Mainstream resources are publicly funded programs that provide services, housing and income supports. They include federal, state, and local programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicare, Medicaid, and Housing Choice Vouchers, that provide housing, health care, income supports, and other forms of assistance. Community-based supports include formal and informal programs and resources offered by faith-based organizations, nonprofit agencies, members of the community, and other institutions.

Grantees must establish a sustainability plan to ensure program services, including supportive services and rental assistance, are able to continue once Housing Trust Fund – Homeless Reduction Grant funding ends.

Provision of any financial assistance should be needs based, meaning that grantees should determine the amount of assistance based on the minimum amount needed to maintain housing

stability in the near term. This will allow communities to use program resources efficiently to serve as many households as possible.

A program participant must be the tenant on a lease (or sublease) for an initial term of at least one year that is renewable and is terminable only for cause. Further, leases (or subleases) must be renewable for a minimum term of one month. Permanent supportive housing is permanent housing with indefinite leasing or rental assistance paired with supportive services.

When households are moved into a new unit, the rent must meet Rent Reasonableness. Rent reasonableness means that the total rent charged for a unit must be reasonable in relation to the rents being charged during the same time period for comparable units in the private unassisted market and must not be in excess of rents being charged by the owner during the same time period for comparable non-luxury unassisted units. To make this determination, the grantee should consider (a) the location, quality, size, type, and age of the unit; and (b) any amenities, housing services, maintenance and utilities to be provided by the owner.

If the gross rent for the unit exceeds either the rent reasonableness standard, grantees are prohibited from using VHSP funds for any portion of the rent, even if the household is willing and/or able to pay the difference.

Grantees must not make payments directly to project participants, but only to landlords or property management companies.

Move-On Strategies

Grantees must develop and implement Moving On strategies aimed at identifying permanent supportive housing project participants who may no longer need or want the intensive services offered in PSH but continue to need assistance to maintain their housing. Moving On strategies must include partnerships between the CoC/LPG, grantee, and mainstream housing programs such as public housing, the Housing Choice Voucher program, and HUD-funded multifamily housing providers.

Termination of Assistance

The grantee may terminate assistance to a project participant who violates project requirements or conditions of occupancy. Termination under this section does not bar the grantee from providing further assistance at a later date to the same individual or household.

In terminating assistance to a project participant, the grantee must provide a formal process that recognizes the rights of individuals receiving assistance under the due process of law. This process, at a minimum, must consist of:

1. Providing the project participant with a written copy of the program rules and the termination process before the participant begins to receive assistance;
2. Written notice to the project participant containing a clear statement of the reasons for termination;
3. A review of the decision, in which the project participant is given the opportunity to present written or oral objections before a person other than the person (or a subordinate of that person) who made or approved the termination decision; and
4. Prompt written notice of the final decision to the project participant.

Grantees that are providing permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless must exercise judgment and examine all extenuating circumstances in determining when violations

are serious enough to warrant termination so that a project participant's assistance is terminated only in the most severe cases.

Required Documentation

- Initial screening
- Documentation of referral of project participant from the CoC/LPG's coordinated entry system to the PSH project
- Strength-based housing barriers assessments and housing plans
- Monthly housing-focused case management is required. Grantees must provide the appropriate level of case management in order to ensure housing stability.
- Grantees must have written agreements with the project participant to identify the terms of the permanent supportive housing project. This should specifically provide guidance for addressing issues which could impact housing stability
- Evidence of coordination with mainstream resources and community-based supports
- Grantees must certify (at least annually) that appropriate housing stabilization services are being implemented
- Permanent supportive housing rental assistance requires that the project participant head of household have a valid lease (or sublease) with a landlord that is in compliance with tenant/landlord laws in their name. A copy of this lease must be included in the project participant file. The lease must have an initial term of at least one year that is renewable and is terminable only for cause. Further, leases (or subleases) must be renewable for a minimum term of one month.
- For project participants receiving rental assistance, grantees must have written agreements with both the project participant and the landlord that identify the terms of the financial assistance. This should specifically provide the landlord with guidance for addressing issues which could impact housing stability and must include:
 - A provision requiring the owner to give the grantee a copy of any notice to the project participant to vacate the housing unit, or any complaint used under state or local law to commence an eviction action against the project participant.
 - The same payment due date, grace period, and late payment penalty requirements as the project participant's lease.
 - The term of the rental assistance agreement for the period of time they anticipate providing assistance.

Expenses

- Housing stabilization services
- Housing stabilization financial assistance
- Rental assistance

Housing Stabilization Services

The costs of assessing, arranging, coordinating, and monitoring the delivery of individualized services to facilitate housing stability for project participants residing in permanent supportive housing.

These costs include:

- Conducting initial assessments
- Housing search and placement
- Provision of case management and housing stabilization services
- Counseling
- Facilitating access to mainstream resources and community-based supports
- Monitoring and evaluating project participant progress

- Coordination with and referrals to other providers
- Developing and adjusting individualized housing and service plans

Housing Stabilization Financial Assistance

Funds may be used to provide financial assistance to help project participants quickly access housing. The housing relocation and stabilization services financial assistance includes:

- Security and utility deposits
- Last month's rent
- Utility payments and arrears
- Moving costs
- Application fees

Funds may be used to pay security deposits and utility deposits when the participant is eligible and not receiving the same assistance from another source. Payments must be made directly to the landlord, property manager, or utility provider.

Grantees may not recapture deposit assistance from participants. If a deposit is returned to the grantee and the return is unavoidable, it must be recorded and reported to DHCD as program income and used for eligible activities.

Funds may be used for up to 12 months of utility payments per participant within any three-year period, provided:

The participant or a household member has an account in their name; and

They are not receiving utility assistance from another source for the same period.

Utility assistance may include up to six months of arrears per utility service, and arrears count toward the 12-month limit.

Grantees must use the Virginia Housing or local housing authority utility allowance to determine reasonable payment limits.

Partial payments count as a full month of assistance. Past due months also count toward the 12-month limit. Payment of one or more basic utilities per month counts as one month of utility assistance towards the 12 month limit. Eligible utilities include water/sewer, heating oil, gas, and electricity.

If the exact number of months covered is difficult to determine, grantees may use reasonable estimates. The basis for any estimate must be documented in the client file.

Funds may be used for reasonable moving expenses, such as truck rental or hiring a moving company, when needed to support housing stability.

Funds may be used to pay lease or apartment application fees when necessary and when no other source of assistance is available.

Rental Assistance

Rental assistance is tenant-based or project-based rental assistance that may be used to enable individuals and families to obtain and remain in permanent supportive housing rental units. Funds must not be used for mortgage assistance.

Under tenant-based rental assistance, project participants select any appropriately sized unit within the CoC or LPG's geographic service area, although grantees may restrict the location under certain circumstances to ensure the availability of the appropriate supportive services.

Under project-based rental assistance, project participants reside in a housing unit owned or leased by a grantee and the rental assistance is dedicated to that unit.

Grantees must determine the amount of rental assistance provided, such as shallow subsidies (payment of a portion of the rent), payment of 100 percent of the rent, or graduated/declining subsidies, based on the unique needs of the project participant. Grantees may require a project participant to share in the costs of rent, however inability of a project participant to contribute to the rent should not be a determination for termination from the program.

Grantees must not request reimbursement for any portion of the rent paid for by the project participant under the HTF-HRG grant.

Assistance should be needs based, meaning that grantees should determine the amount of assistance based on the minimum amount needed to help the project participant maintain housing stability in the near term. This will allow communities to use program resources efficiently to serve as many households as possible.

Funds may not be used to pay damage costs incurred by the tenant.

The rental assistance to move into a new unit cannot exceed the actual rental cost, which must be in compliance with HUD's standard of rent reasonableness.

All project participants receiving rental assistance must be offered the appropriate housing stabilization and supportive services necessary to maintain their permanent supportive housing or engage in Move On strategies.

HMIS

Reasonable and appropriate costs associated with operating a HMIS for purposes of collecting and reporting data required under this program and analyzing patterns of use of funds are eligible. Eligible costs include the purchase of HMIS software and/or user licenses, leasing or purchasing needed computer equipment for providers and the central server, costs associated with data collection, entry and analysis, and staffing associated with the operation of the HMIS, including training.

For DV shelter service providers, costs associated with a comparable system are eligible.

Administrative Costs (limited to three percent of total HTF-HRG budget)

Administrative costs may include accounting for the use of grant funds, preparing reports for submission to DHCD, obtaining program audits, similar costs related to administering the grant after the award, and associated staff salaries. Administrative costs may also include staff training for program and case management, as long as this training is directly related to the provision of an emergency crisis response system.

As with all billed expenditures, billing for administrative costs must be based on actual costs incurred during a particular period.

No more than three percent of the requested funding amount may be spent on administrative costs.

While it is not necessary to detail administrative costs on reimbursements, grantees must be able to document all administrative costs and will be required to produce said documentation at the time of either on-site or desk monitoring.

Application Notification

Please note: For FY 2027, HB 1043 requires DHCD to review and notify applicants of award or denial within 90 days of the application submission deadline. DHCD staff are unable to answer inquiries about application status between this submission deadline and the ninety day notification date.

The Office of the Governor of Virginia formally approves the Housing Trust Fund – Homeless Reduction Grant program funding awards often accompanied by the publication of a press release.

Following the approval of HSNH Program awards, DHCD staff will notify each project's Primary Contact, as listed in CAMS, via email. This notification will include either an award confirmation or a notice of denial.