

Homelessness Prevention and Re-Housing

Congress is set to pass an economic recovery bill that now appears likely to include \$1.5 billion for homelessness prevention and re-housing. This funding will be distributed quickly, and communities should begin preparing immediately.

Basics. Although the final legislation has not passed and HUD has not developed guidance, the following are likely to be part of the final package:

- Funding will likely go to cities, counties, and states using the Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) formula.
- Funding will not be used for traditional ESG activities of operating emergency shelters; instead, it will be used for homelessness prevention and re-housing people who became homeless as a result of the economic crisis.
- The amount of funding will likely be approximately 9 times a jurisdiction's normal allotment for ESG.
- Likely eligible activities:
 - short-term or medium-term rental assistance
 - housing relocation and stabilization services
 - housing search
 - mediation or outreach to property owners
 - legal services
 - credit repair
 - security or utility deposits
 - utility payments
 - rental assistance for a final month at a location
 - moving costs assistance
 - other appropriate homelessness prevention and rehousing activities
- Grantees will have approximately 2 years to spend the money.
- There will probably be no match requirement, but communities should begin planning how it may complement other services.

- Jurisdictions receiving funding will probably need to submit an action plan to HUD.
- Information will likely have to be tracked in HMIS or comparable data system. HUD will determine how much data will be required.
- The process will move quickly. A reasonably likely timeline has Congress appropriating funding in mid-February, HUD issuing guidance in March, and communities submitting their plans to HUD by April and operating their programs in May.

Preparation. Homeless assistance providers, city, county, and state officials who administer ESG and who administer homelessness funding and services, homeless advocates, community-based agencies that serve people at risk of homelessness, and entities that administer the Continuum of Care should begin right away to plan how they will utilize funding. Key questions include–

- What are the fundamental goals – what outcomes does the community want to see as a result of this funding and how will they be tracked?
- How will the community identify the people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who will be served?
- Who can administer short- or medium-term rental assistance and other financial assistance?
- Who will provide housing location and stabilization services, including outreach to landlords? How will they be selected?
- How will information be tracked in HMIS or another data system?

Opportunities. In the midst of the worst economy in decades, the homelessness prevention funding gives communities the opportunity to put what they've learned to work, making their homelessness prevention and assistance more effective and taking their plans to end homelessness to a scale sufficient to confront this challenge. The National Alliance to End Homelessness is developing additional information and helpful tools, which will be posted on the website below.

www.endhomelessness.org