

## Eligible and Ineligible Activities

### A. Eligible Activities

Grant funds must be used for eligible activities as described in this Notice. There are four categories of eligible activities for the HPRP program: financial assistance, housing relocation and stabilization services, data collection and evaluation, and administrative costs. These eligible activities are intentionally focused on housing - either financial assistance to help pay for housing, or services designed to keep people in housing or to find housing. Generally, the intent of HPRP assistance is to rapidly transition program participants to stability, either through their own means or through public assistance, as appropriate. HPRP assistance is not intended to provide long-term support for program participants, nor will it be able to address all of the financial and supportive services needs of households that affect housing stability. Rather, assistance should be focused on housing stabilization, linking program participants to community resources and mainstream benefits, and helping them develop a plan for preventing future housing instability. Grantee programs should therefore ensure that there is a clear process for determining the type, level, and duration of assistance for each program participant.

1. **Financial Assistance.** Financial assistance is limited to the following activities: short-term rental assistance, medium-term rental assistance, security deposits, utility deposits, utility payments, moving cost assistance, and motel and hotel vouchers. Grantees and subgrantees must not make payments directly to program participants, but only to third parties, such as landlords or utility companies. In addition, an assisted property may not be owned by the grantee, subgrantee or the parent, subsidiary or affiliated organization of the subgrantee.

#### a. Rental Assistance.

(1) Short-and medium-term rental assistance are tenant-based rental assistance that can be used to allow individuals and families to remain in their existing rental units or to help them obtain and remain in rental units they select. Short-term rental assistance may not exceed rental costs accrued over a period of 3 months. Medium-term rental assistance may not exceed actual rental costs accrued over a period of 4 to 18 months. No program participant may receive more than 18 months of assistance under HPRP. After 3 months, if program participants receiving short-term rental assistance need additional financial assistance to remain housed, they must be evaluated for eligibility to receive up to 15 additional months of medium-term rental assistance, for a total of 18 months. HUD is requiring grantees and subgrantees to certify eligibility at least once every 3 months for all program participants receiving medium-term rental assistance. HUD additionally encourages grantees and subgrantees to provide ongoing case management, as needed, to all program participants receiving rental assistance in order to transition them to independence, including permanent housing arrangements (subsidized or unsubsidized).

(2) The grantee determines the amount of short-term and medium-term rental assistance provided, such as "shallow subsidies" (payment of a portion of the rent), payment of 100 percent of the rent charged, or graduated/declining subsidies. A grantee may also set a maximum amount of assistance that

## Eligible and Ineligible Activities

a single individual or family may receive from HPRP funds, or may set a maximum number of times that an individual or family may receive assistance, as long as the total amount of assistance that any individual or family receives does not exceed an amount equal to 18 months of rental assistance. Grantees may require program participants to share in the costs of rent, utilities, security and utility deposits, moving, hotel or motel, and other expenses as a condition of receiving HPRP financial assistance. For example, a program may require a program participant to pay a portion of the rent expense for a unit. HPRP assistance should be "needs-based," meaning that grantees and/or subgrantees should determine the amount of assistance based on the minimum amount needed to prevent the program participant from becoming homeless or returning to homelessness in the near term. This will also help communities to utilize program resources efficiently to serve as many households as possible.

(3) Rental assistance may also be used to pay up to 6 months of rental arrears for eligible program participants. Rental arrears may be paid if the payment enables the program participant to remain in the housing unit for which the arrears are being paid or move to another unit. If HPRP funds are used to pay rental arrears, arrears must be included in determining the total period of the program participant's rental assistance, which may not exceed 18 months.

(4) The rental assistance paid cannot exceed the actual rental cost, which must be in compliance with HUD's standard of "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 or subgrantee 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. Comparable rents can be checked by using a market study, by reviewing comparable units advertised for rent, or with a note from the property owner verifying the comparability of charged rents to other units owned (for example, the landlord would document the rents paid in other units). For more information, see HUD's worksheet on rent reasonableness at: [www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/library/forms/rentreasonablechecklist.doc](http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/library/forms/rentreasonablechecklist.doc)

(5) Rental assistance payments 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. Cost types are the categories of eligible HPRP financial assistance: rent, either the client portion or the subsidy; security deposits, utility deposits, utility payments, moving cost assistance, and hotel/motel vouchers.

b. **Security and utility deposits.** HPRP funds may be used to pay for security deposits, including utility deposits, for eligible program participants. In contrast to the requirements regarding rental assistance payments, security and utility deposits covering the same period of time in which assistance is being provided through another housing subsidy program are eligible, as long as they cover separate cost

## Eligible and Ineligible Activities

types. One example of this would be providing a security deposit for a participant in the HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program, which provides rental assistance and services. A program description of HUD-VASH can be found at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/vashindex.cfm>

c. **Utility payments.** HPRP funds may be used for up to 18 months of utility payments, including up to 6 months of utility payments in arrears, for each program participant, provided that the program participant or a member of his/her household has an account in his/her name with a utility company or proof of responsibility to make utility payments, such as cancelled checks or receipts in his/her name from a utility company.

d. **Moving cost assistance.** HPRP funds may be used for reasonable moving costs, such as truck rental, hiring a moving company, or short-term storage fees for a maximum of 3 months or until the program participant is in housing, whichever is shorter.

e. **Motel and hotel vouchers.** HPRP funds may be used for reasonable and appropriate motel and hotel vouchers for up to 30 days if no appropriate shelter beds are available and subsequent rental housing has been identified but is not immediately available for move-in by the program participants.

2. **Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services.** HPRP funds may be used for services that assist program participants with housing stability and placement. These services are limited to the following eligible activities:

a. **Case management.** HPRP case management funds may be used for activities for the arrangement, coordination, monitoring, and delivery of services related to meeting the housing needs of program participants and helping them obtain housing stability. Component services and activities may include: counseling; developing, securing, and coordinating services; monitoring and evaluating program participant progress; assuring that program participants' rights are protected; and developing an individualized housing and service plan, including a path to permanent housing stability subsequent to HPRP financial assistance.

b. **Outreach and engagement.** HPRP funds may be used for services or assistance designed to publicize the availability of programs to make persons who are homeless or almost homeless aware of these and other available services and programs.

c. **Housing search and placement.** HPRP 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: tenant counseling; assisting individuals and families to understand leases; securing utilities; making moving arrangements; representative payee services concerning rent and utilities; and mediation and outreach to property owners related to locating or retaining housing.

## Eligible and Ineligible Activities

d. **Legal services.** HPRP funds may be used for legal services to help people stay in their homes, such as services or activities provided by a lawyer or other person(s) under the supervision of a lawyer to assist program participants with legal advice and representation in administrative or court proceedings related to tenant/landlord matters or housing issues. Legal services related to mortgages are not eligible.

e. **Credit repair.** HPRP funds may be used for services that are targeted to assist program participants with critical skills related to household budgeting, money management, accessing a free personal credit report, and resolving personal credit issues.

### 3. Data Collection and Evaluation.

a. **Data Collection.** The Recovery Act requires that data collection and reporting for HPRP be conducted through the use of Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) or a comparable client-level database. Therefore, reasonable and appropriate costs associated with operating an HMIS for purposes of collecting and reporting data required under HPRP and analyzing patterns of use of HPRP 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. HMIS activities that are ineligible include planning and development of HMIS systems, development of new software systems, and replacing state and local government funding for an existing HMIS. Only those jurisdictions that do not have an HMIS already implemented may use a portion of these funds for HMIS implementation or start-up activities.

b. **Evaluation.** Grantees and subgrantees must comply if asked to participate in HUD-sponsored research and evaluation of HPRP. HPRP funds are eligible for costs to the grantee of participating in HUD research and evaluation of the program.

### 4. Administrative Costs.

a. **Administrative costs may be used for:** pre-award administrative costs, as defined in section b. below; accounting for the use of grant funds; preparing reports for submission to HUD; obtaining program audits; similar costs related to administering the grant after the award; and grantee or subgrantee staff salaries associated with these administrative costs. Administrative costs also include training for staff who will administer the program or case managers who will serve program participants, as long as this training is directly related to learning about HPRP. Administrative costs *do not* include the costs of issuing financial assistance, providing housing relocation and stabilization services, or carrying out eligible data collection and evaluation activities, as specified above, such as grantee or subgrantee staff salaries, costs of conducting housing inspections, and other operating costs. These costs should be included under one of the three other eligible activity categories.

b. **Pre-award administrative costs.** Given the urgent need in many communities for this funding and the short timeframe set forth in section V.A.I. for obligation to grantees, grantees will need to act quickly to

## Eligible and Ineligible Activities

prepare the HPRP substantial amendment and to undertake other administrative actions. Therefore, HUD is granting permission to grantees receiving a direct allocation of HPRP funds (see Attachment A) to incur pre-award costs in accordance with OMB Circular A87, Attachment B, paragraph 31 (24 CFR part 225, Appendix B, paragraph 31). All costs and activities funded with pre-award HPRP funds must comply with the Recovery Act statutory language relevant to HPRP, and they must comply with the requirements of HPRP as described in this Notice. Eligible pre-award costs that grantees may incur are costs that are directly related to preparing the application for submission to HUD, starting with the publication of this Notice and ending with the submission of the substantial amendment or, if applicable, the revised substantial amendment. This includes, but is not limited to, staff costs for preparing the substantial amendment and publication, other costs related to the public comment process, or costs related to participation in HUD-sponsored HPRP training.

c. **Limitations on administrative costs.** No more than 5 percent of the total HPRP grant to the grantee may be spent on administrative costs, whether by the grantee or subgrantee(s). In addition, all administrative costs must be incurred, and all funds for administrative costs must be drawn down from IDIS (defined in section V.B.), prior to the 3-year expenditure deadline (described in section V.A.2).

d. **Sharing of administrative funds.** Grantees shall share a reasonable and appropriate amount of their administrative funds with subgrantees.

### B. Ineligible and Prohibited Activities

1. **Coordination with Recovery Act Resources.** Grantees are strongly encouraged, as part of local planning, to maximize all resources that may be available with Recovery Act funds other than HPRP (see chart on Recovery Act resources located at [www.hudhre.info](http://www.hudhre.info)). A grantee's local plan for spending HPRP funds should coordinate closely with other Recovery Act funding streams, so that eligible activities under other Recovery Act programs are aligned with HPRP funds to create a comprehensive package of housing and service options available to eligible program participants. The intent of HPRP is to provide funding for housing expenses to persons who are homeless or who would be homeless if not for this assistance. Therefore, financial assistance or services to pay for expenses that are available through other Recovery Act programs, including child care and employment training, are not eligible. Case managers should work to link program participants to these other resources.

2. **Mortgage Costs are Ineligible.** Financial assistance may not be used to pay for any mortgage costs or costs needed by homeowners to assist with any fees, taxes, or other costs of refinancing a mortgage to make it affordable.

3. **Other Ineligible and Prohibited Activities.** HPRP funds may not be used to pay for any of the following items: construction or rehabilitation; credit card bills or other consumer debt; car repair or other transportation costs; travel costs; food; medical or dental care and medicines; clothing and grooming; home furnishings; pet care; entertainment activities; work or education related materials; and cash assistance to program participants. HPRP funds may not be used to develop discharge planning

## **Eligible and Ineligible Activities**

programs in mainstream institutions such as hospitals, jails, or prisons. Finally, while training for case managers and program administrators is an eligible administrative cost as long as it is directly related to HPRP program operations, HPRP funds may not be used to pay for certifications, licenses, and general training classes. Programs may not charge fees to HPRP program participants. Any HPRP funds used to support program participants must be issued directly to the appropriate third party, such as the landlord or utility company, and in no case are funds eligible to be issued directly to program participants. If funds are found to be used for ineligible activities as determined by HUD, the grantee will be required to reimburse its line of credit.