

**State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless Commission (HTF),
Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), &
Georgia Housing and Finance Authority (GHFA)
Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) Program
SFY 2010**

A. Purpose

To provide shelter and supportive services to homeless persons throughout the state by making available State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless Commission (HTF) funds and Federal HUD Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) Program funds to nonprofit organizations and local government entities operating homeless housing and/or providing supportive services to persons experiencing homelessness. This program is principally designed to be the first step in a continuum of assistance that will enable homeless individuals and families to move toward independent living. Other purposes of this program are to prevent the homelessness of persons, and to reduce recidivism by providing housing support in order to stabilize homeless persons with disabilities.

B. Eligible Applicants

Local units of government are eligible to apply. To the extent determined under State law by HTF and DCA, private, secular and faith-based nonprofit organizations are also eligible to apply for funds. Agencies must demonstrate collaboration with local mainstream service providers and local homeless providers. Agencies must also participate in continuum of care planning appropriate to the jurisdiction where their activities are located and their applications must be approved by local government(s).

C. Eligible Activities

The following activities are eligible for funding:

1. Emergency Shelter Operations and Services -- provided at one or more emergency shelters reserved exclusively for "homeless persons," as defined by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Emergency Shelter Operations and Services shall receive the highest priority for funding. The term "emergency shelter" means a form of supportive housing in which a structure, or a clearly identifiable portion of a structure, meets the following criteria:

- 1) Serves the immediate needs of all homeless persons who would otherwise spend the night outdoors or in places not meant for human habitation;
- 2) Provides beds and services either on site or in cooperation with other shelter providers;
- 3) Typically, but not always, serves hard-to-reach homeless persons who have severe mental illness, are frequently homeless, and have been unable or unwilling to participate in supportive services;
- 4) Participates in coordinated outreach, intake, referral, case management, housing support, and other systems of care within the service area and continuum in order to provide housing and supportive services that will enable homeless persons to end their homelessness while maximizing self-sufficiency;
- 5) Provides 24-hour access to beds and services either on site or in collaboration with other providers;
- 6) Without regard to the above limitations, provides 24-hour access to beds and services for all who are in danger due to minor illnesses that do not require professional care, those in danger due to weather conditions, or for any other likely reason, as determined by the participating continuum; and
- 7) Stays may or may not include consecutive nights, and generally do not exceed 30 consecutive days with a maximum stay of 90 consecutive nights.

An Emergency Shelter (depending upon its role in the Continuum of Care) may also provide supportive services to eligible persons who are not residents on a drop-in basis. An emergency shelter recognizes that for many homeless persons, the transition to permanent housing is best made in stages, starting with a small, highly supportive environment where an individual can feel at ease, out of danger, and subject to limited supportive service and occupancy requirements. While all participants may be required to comply with “house rules,” emergency shelters typically do not require full participation in services (other than intake and assessment) and referrals as a first condition of occupancy. Emergency shelters typically serve as an entry point to the service system and provide first access to basic services such as outreach, referral, obtaining ID, food, clothing, bathing facilities, telephones, storage space, and mailing addresses.

Eligible “Emergency Shelter Operations” activities include repairs (less than \$5,000), maintenance, operations, rent, security, fuel, equipment, insurance, utilities, food and furnishings. Staff salaries (including fringe benefits) attributable to operations (excluding maintenance and security salary costs) but not devoted to client services are limited to not more than 10% of the grant amount.

Eligible “Emergency Shelter Services” include, but are not limited to, activities such as housing placement and supportive service planning, health services, transportation, child care, and other services essential for achieving independent living. Services should be focused on increasing the housing stability of the persons served. Applicants must demonstrate that services requested are not available through the mainstream, and total service costs may not exceed 30% of the grant amount.

Salaries and associated costs for are only available to personnel who are 100% dedicated to agency programs. Persons who perform general administrative duties (executive director, fundraising staff, bookkeepers, etc.) may not be compensated with ESG funds.

2. Transitional Housing Operations and Services -- provided at one or more transitional facilities reserved exclusively for *homeless persons*, as defined by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The term “transitional housing” means a form of supportive housing in which a structure or a clearly identifiable portion of a structure, or program provides overnight accommodations as part of a short or long-term program with clear and enforceable program participation and supportive service requirements agreed upon by the homeless client prior to program entry. Transitional housing stays range from 90 days to 2 years, dependent upon the housing and supportive service needs of the client, and the programs offered by the supportive housing agency.

Eligible operations and services activities are the same as those specified for emergency shelter (C.1. from previous section).

3. Rapid Re-Housing -- Rapid Re-Housing Programs are designed to help homeless people transition more rapidly out of the shelter system or to avoid a shelter stay altogether. The primary goal is to stabilize a client in permanent housing as quickly as possible. The funding and services provided should assist clients in addressing their barriers to housing stability. The immediate and primary focus is on helping homeless people quickly access and then sustain housing—put simply, housing comes first, then services. A Rapid Re-Housing approach rests on two central premises: a) re-housing is the central goal of working with people experiencing homelessness; and b) providing housing assistance and follow-up case management services after a family or individual is housed can significantly reduce the time people spend in homelessness. Agencies should assist clients in quickly identifying barriers and providing assistance to overcome those barriers. Programs should provide time-limited flexible funds to secure permanent housing partnered with in-home housing support. Programs should be designed to rapidly place families in permanent housing, shortening or eliminating the amount of time that families stay in emergency housing. The programs should incorporate plans to utilize existing housing stock, coordinate use of

existing public and private rental housing, target direct financial assistance to prevent repeated episodes of homelessness, and describe how the organization will leverage other resources to address the needs of homeless individuals and families. Programs may not pay to operate emergency, transitional or permanent supportive housing or be used to pay more than 12 months of rental assistance for a family.

The target population for the programs should be individuals and families that fit the HUD definition of homelessness and who have moderate barriers to housing stability but who can obtain self-sufficiency with time-limited support. Therefore, clients should be employed or employable. Individuals or families with severe and chronic disabilities requiring ongoing support and rental assistance should be served through Shelter Plus Care or other Permanent Supportive Housing programs rather than a Rapid Re-Housing program.

There are two categories of eligible activities under Rapid Re-Housing:

I) Housing Placement - Housing Placement provides flexible, time-limited financial assistance for rent, security deposit, moving costs, furnishings, utility payments or other housing costs. Applicants are encouraged, however, to maximize leverage from landlords and other partners to reduce program costs. The funding should be flexible in nature in order to fit the needs of each individual family. In limited cases, the agency may want to be the leaseholder on the apartment initially and transition the lease into the family's name as they progress through the program. Ideally, the family is the leaseholder from the start. Agencies should have strong relationships with private landlords and housing providers in the community so that they can assist with securing permanent housing for a family quickly.

II) Housing Support Services -- Housing Support Services must be present to provide intensive services including assessment, housing stability plan development, connection to mainstream resources and services, coordination with other providers, monitoring of progress and advocating on behalf of the client. Services should also focus on building a set of supports that can help prevent the recurrence of housing crisis; developing a financial plan; identifying community resources/supports; ensuring that the consumer has the proper furnishings, dishes, groceries, personal products or other items to reside in the housing; developing relationships and ability to troubleshoot problems before a crisis. Services should be provided initially to clients upon entry into the program and gradually reduced as their needs are met. Services should be provided in a manner that transfers greater responsibility to the client over time while focusing on collaboration with family and other providers. Agencies should demonstrate that they have productive relationships with other providers in the community. This includes agencies or organizations that assist with housing as well as private landlords.

4. Supportive Services Only (named in Section C.1.) to *homeless persons*.

To receive a grant for stand-alone supportive services, such services must be provided by an organization with demonstrated capability to provide professional services in a coordinated manner with mainstream providers and other homeless service providers in their service area and Continuum. Supportive service grants are generally limited to organizations that directly serve homeless clients, participate in Continuums and provider work groups, and are in full compliance with DCA's Housing Support Standards and HMIS policy. Supportive services grants are limited to organizations that either do not house clients, or those that house clients but have limited access to necessary services (as determined by DCA). Eligible service activities include the following:

Housing Support Services (HSS) –Housing Support Service programs include supportive services aimed at increasing a client's housing stability and self-sufficiency. Services should include: assessment,

housing stability plan development; acting as a liaison to secure and maintain housing; connection to mainstream resources and services; coordination with other providers; monitoring of progress; and advocating on behalf of the client. Goals established should emphasize housing stability and access to mainstream services. Services should also focus on building a set of supports that can help prevent the recurrence of housing crisis. Specific populations and HSS practices must be identified. Typical costs might include personnel, HMIS implementation, transportation, etc.

Outreach - This program might include (but is not necessarily limited to) professional outreach teams consisting of peer support personnel, trained case managers, MH/AD professionals, etc. to work with persons in **unsheltered** environments, engagement of homeless persons at day centers (non-ESG funded), soup kitchens, etc. Typical ESG costs would include personnel, transportation, HMIS and other related expenses.

Day Centers - Programs designed to serve persons living on the street or in emergency shelter. Day centers might offer meals, laundry services, clothing, counseling, services to obtain birth certificates, identification, etc. Day centers might also offer direct assistance to clients, such as food pantry, clothing, furniture distribution, transportation, deposits to establish apartments, etc. Typical ESG costs would include property rents or maintenance, HMIS, personnel, insurance, food, etc., as well as direct assistance costs. Activities should be directly related to increasing the housing stability of the individuals and families served.

Child Care – Programs designed to serve children (generally younger than 6) of families that are currently homeless or very recently placed into housing (past 3 months) who are not enrolled in K-12 schools. Typical ESG costs would include property rents or maintenance, personnel, HMIS, insurance, food, etc., or in lieu of these costs, tuition. Program should be collaborating with other providers serving the family in order to help them obtain alternative sustainable childcare through child care vouchers, affordable providers, etc. as well as connect them with mainstream resources.

Health Care – Programs designed to serve persons living on the street or in emergency shelter who do not have health insurance coverage and are not eligible to receive Medicaid/Medicare. Health Care programs may also serve persons living in respite shelter. Agencies should connect clients with mainstream resources. Typical ESG costs would include medical personnel, medical supplies, testing services, equipment, rent, HMIS, maintenance, etc. Consult DCA for guidance if prescriptions are proposed.

Mental Health/Substance Abuse Programs – Programs for persons living only in shelter and transitional housing that are not eligible for DHR core specialty services and for whom alternative services are not available. Generally, DHR core and specialty providers are not eligible to receive ESG funds for MH/SA programs. Typical costs would include personnel (salaried or consulting), rents, utilities, HMIS, insurance, etc.

Employment Programs – Programs to assist homeless individuals with obtaining competitive employment. Programs should include aspects such as: job assessment; one on one job counseling; partnerships with employers; specialized job training; and job placement. Agencies should demonstrate that mainstream programs do not exist or are insufficient to meet the needs of the population to be served. Employment programs should demonstrate how they are tailored to the needs of homeless individuals specifically. Costs might include personnel, rents, utilities, salaries, HMIS, insurance, etc.

Other Services – Other programs designed to address other key issues confronting homeless individuals or families that do not fit in the above categories. Examples include legal services or furniture

distribution. Agencies should demonstrate why this service is essential to increasing housing stability and is not available through mainstream resources.

In addition to other program costs (facilities, materials, etc.), any staff time charged to supportive service program costs must be fully devoted to client service. Persons who perform general administrative duties (executive director, fundraising staff, bookkeepers, etc.) may not be compensated for service-related functions, even if they perform these functions. To the maximum extent possible, applicants must procure services from mainstream service providers in lieu of requesting or receiving ESG funds for services. Applicants must be able to demonstrate a) that this service is directly related to increasing housing stability; b) not available through any other providers or mainstream agencies in the community and c) related to the overall mission of the agency. All services should ultimately focus on increasing the housing stability of the individual or family being served.

In 2009, preference will be given to dedicated housing supportive service (HSS) programs that assure, to the extent feasible, that clients who are homeless and have a disability attain and retain stable housing and do not return to the street or to shelters.

5. Homeless Prevention -- activities or programs designed to prevent the incidence of homelessness among *eligible persons* (see below), including but not limited to: (1) Short-term subsidies to defray rent and utility arrearages for families that have received eviction or utility termination notices; (2) security deposits or first month's rent to permit an eligible family to move to a new location if their current location is no longer affordable or available; (3) mediation programs for landlord-tenant disputes; (4) payments to prevent foreclosure on a home; and (5) other innovative programs and activities designed to prevent the incidence of homelessness.

New this year, a portion of prevention funding can be used to support staff time dedicated to assisting eligible persons only (see definition below) in addressing other issues that may compromise their ability to maintain stable housing. Providers should utilize practices prescribed through DCA's Housing Support Standards. This includes assessment of needs, tenant rights education, budgeting assistance, assistance with housing retention or locating more appropriate housing, assistance with landlord/tenant mediation, and other activities aimed at preventing homelessness. If agencies intend to use a portion of the prevention funding for staff services they should describe the job duties involved as well as the other funding sources for the position.

Eligible persons for prevention activities include those who have received eviction notices or notices of termination of utility services if -

- (A) The inability of the family to make the required payments is due to a sudden reduction in income;
- (B) The assistance is necessary to avoid eviction, foreclosure or termination of services;
- (C) There is a reasonable prospect that the family will be able to resume payments within a reasonable period of time; **AND**
- (D) The assistance will not supplant funding for pre-existing homelessness prevention activities from other sources.

6. Project Homeless Connect – Applicants may receive funding to coordinate and sponsor a one-day, one-stop Project Homeless Connect event to deliver services to people experiencing homelessness in the community. At a minimum, the event should provide an array of social services including healthcare, legal aid, housing assistance, job opportunities, benefits enrollment opportunities and quality of life resources with the underlying idea to get as many as possible on a track to self-sufficiency and, ultimately, into permanent housing.

General administration is not an eligible activity.

D. Funding Terms

General funding limits are as follows: Emergency Shelter - \$50,000 per facility; Transitional Housing - \$25,000 per facility; Rapid Re-Housing – \$40,000 per program; Supportive Services - \$25,000 per program (maximum of 2 programs per agency), Homeless Prevention - \$25,000 per program, Project Homeless Connect - \$3,000. S+C sponsors renting from themselves or from affiliated entities, as well as HOPWA/S+C grantees targeting HIV are generally not eligible for Supportive Services funding. Agencies implementing HUD-designated “Samaritan Projects” may receive up to \$50,000 for a single Supportive Services program.

E. Funds Authorized

Net Federal FY 2009 funds available under the HUD ESG Program are expected to be approximately \$2 million dollars. State HTF Commission funds available are estimated to be not less than \$2 million dollars; an approximate total of \$4 million dollars.

F. Funding Notice

Applications will be solicited by means of a notice of availability of State ESG Application Guidelines for the 2009 – 2010 Program Year. This notice will be mailed and/or emailed to all known homeless service and housing providers, local governments, and other interested parties. Regional workshops to discuss application requirements will be conducted by staff beginning in February 2009.

G. Funding Award Factors

DCA staff is directed to develop and implement a points system in this funding round to ensure that the limited pool of funding received is used in the most effective way possible.

Individual scores by program may be assessed for completeness of the grant application, past performance (including bed utilization and reporting), implementation strategy (narrative describing need, clients served, local coordination, goals, outputs, outcomes, etc.), procurement of outside resources, extent to which programs result in increased housing stability for clients, organizational development and experience, budgeting and financial reporting, efficient and effective use of HMIS, adherence to DCA Housing Support Standards, and other relevant factors. Applicants requesting funds for multiple programs may receive funds for some, but not all, programs.

In addition, there are certain considerations that may result in an application being automatically rejected without being scored. These threshold requirements include, but are not limited to, incomplete grant applications, the extent to which the program serves exclusively (100%) homeless persons; 501c3 status for nonprofit agencies, and outstanding or repeated findings of noncompliance (including noncompliance with the DCA HMIS policy).

H. Funds Disbursement

All payments will be made on a reimbursement basis.

I. Matching Requirements

All ESG Shelter, Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, Homeless Prevention and Supportive Services applicants must provide 50% of the cost of each program with other cash, in-kind services or donations. The matching requirement may be waived at the discretion of DCA on a case-by-case basis.

J. Application Deadline

The application deadline is Monday, April 6, 2009. Late applications will not be accepted. Funding announcements are expected by June 30, 2009 for applications that are complete when submitted on or before the April 6, 2009 deadline.

K. Award Authority

The Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs or staff designated by the Commissioner shall have the authority to make awards from funds allocated by HUD or reserved by the HTF Commission in concurrence with this program description.

L. Application Requirements

Applications must be submitted on forms provided by DCA. The applicant must provide required certifications and provide all supporting documentation requested by DCA. Each applicant must demonstrate to the satisfaction of DCA that it is in compliance with Federal, State and local laws and regulations, and that it is capable of carrying out applicable programs. All returning grantees must be in full compliance with existing DCA contract agreements.

M. Funding Agreements

For housing and services agreements, awarded funds will generally cover the period beginning on July 1, 2009 and ending on June 30, 2010.

N. Reporting

Each participant must report periodically and annually on the units of service delivered, the number of persons served and any other program performance data requested by DCA. Grantees (other than domestic violence grantees) may be required to report through HMIS. Grantees must also meet Federal and State financial and other reporting requirements.

O. State Financial Reporting/Audit Requirements for Non-profit Agencies

On July 1, 1998 Senate Bill 474 became effective as law (OCGA Title 50, Chapter 20) in Georgia. This chapter is entitled Relations with Non-profit Contractors. The law states that "The intent of this chapter is to provide auditing and reporting requirements for non-profit organizations which provide services and facilities to the state, to ensure the financial accountability of non-profit contractors, and to develop adequate information concerning non-profit contractors. The General Assembly finds that the state has a

right and a duty to monitor non-profit organizations which contract with the state to ensure that their activities are in the public interest and to ensure that public funds are used for proper purposes.”

According to the State law, “non-profit organization” means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; is not organized primarily for profit; and uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand its operations. The term non-profit organization includes non-profit institutions of higher education and hospitals. For financial reporting purposes guidelines issued by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants should be followed in determining non-profit status.

As a result and among other requirements, DCA must obtain minimum organizational and financial information from non-profit organizations in order to establish the viability of the non-profit organization and to report award and funding amounts to the State Department of Audits.

In return for funds, and among other requirements, non-profit organizations must make appropriate reports to the state auditor and to each state agency from which it received funds for each fiscal year within 180 days from the close of the non-profit organization’s fiscal year. Reporting formats vary based upon the amount of “state funds” received by non-profit organizations during the organization’s fiscal year.

This law also sets forth responsibilities of the state auditor and covers measures to be taken by state agencies if there are matters of non-compliance. For further compliance information non-profit applicants are encouraged to first contact their own internal auditors. Additional information may be obtained from the State Office of Audits as follows: Georgia Department of Audits, Non-Profit and Local Government Audits Division, 270 Washington Street, SW, Atlanta, GA 30334-8400. Contact Mr. Edward Blaha; phone (404) 651-5115, Email: npo@mail.audits.state.ga.us.

P. Georgia Open Records Act

All records created as a result of the submission of an Application to participate are subject to disclosure under the Georgia Open Records Act and the applicant expressly consents to such disclosure. The Applicant agrees to hold harmless the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless, the Georgia Housing and Finance Authority and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs against all losses, costs, damages, expenses, and liability of any nature or kind (including but not limited to attorney’s fees, litigation and court costs) directly or indirectly resulting from or arising out of the release of any information pertaining to the Applicant’s submission of an Application and implementation of any activities as a result of funding under this program, pursuant to a request under the Georgia Open Records Act.

Q. Governing Statute and Regulations

In addition to all other Federal, State and local laws and regulations, all activities must be implemented in full compliance with HUD ESGP program regulations published at 24 CFR § 576.

R. Local Government Approval(s)

As per Federal regulations and Department of Community Affairs' policy, each applicant must obtain approval(s) from appropriate local government jurisdictions for each activity on formats prescribed by or otherwise approved by DCA. Documentation of approval should be included in the application.

S. Program Monitoring

Program monitoring will occur periodically, as determined by DCA, through on-site visits and/or desk audits of reimbursement requests. With the exception of domestic violence only agencies, DCA may review compliance with HMIS and HSS policies through documentation in Pathways.

T. Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) Compliance

With the exception of organizations that exclusively serve victims of domestic violence, applicants with existing DCA ESG, HOPWA or S+C awards must be in compliance with DCA's HMIS policy, as updated from time to time and posted on the DCA website. New applicants must be in full compliance prior to grant agreement and drawdown of funds. Any grantees failure to meet DCA's HMIS policy requirement will result in an automatic failure of funding application.

U. Housing Support Services (HSS) Standards

DCA staff is authorized to develop standards and practice for the provision of Housing Support Services. All ESG applicants and grantees must comply in order to receive and retain funds. These requirements will be posted on the DCA website and are updated from time to time by DCA staff.

These standards require participation in coordinated outreach, intake, referral, and case management systems within the continuum of care in order to provide, in conjunction with other providers, appropriate housing and supportive services to better enable homeless persons to achieve success and end their homelessness. These standards require most grantees to: a) assess consumer needs and barriers to housing; b) work to move homeless individuals into transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, or other permanent housing; c) document and track referrals to housing and service providers; and d) track participant progress and outcomes. Organizations will be required to document these efforts through the Pathways COMPASS system unless they are exempt from participating in HMIS, in which case they will document these efforts through an alternative method.

Agencies providing critical need services only (soup kitchens, clothes closets, etc.) may be exempt from adhering to these standards on a case by case basis as determined by DCA staff.

Information regarding the Housing Support Standards and how to implement them can be found on the DCA website at <http://www.dca.state.ga.us/housing/specialneeds/programs/HousingSupportStandards.asp>