

PY 2015 Homeless Crisis Response Program

Application Guidelines

Prepared By:
Ohio Development Services Agency
Community Services Division
Office of Community Development

Program Year 2015 Homeless Crisis Response Program Guidelines

1. Overview

The Homeless Crisis Response Program (HCRP) is designed to prevent individuals and families from entering homelessness, provide for emergency shelter operations and rapidly move persons from homelessness to permanent housing. HCRP consists of two components: 1) emergency shelter operations; and 2) housing stability which includes homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing activities.

The grant period will be two years and will start on January 1, 2016. The Office of Community Development (OCD) reserves the right to award one-year grants.

Emergency shelters that received a two-year PY 2013 HCRP award or a one-year PY 2014 HCRP award are eligible to receive a renewal allocation based on their previous award amount. Those programs are eligible for renewal of 85 percent of their previous grant, with additional funding available through a competitive evaluation, based on available funding levels. Funding is expected to remain consistent with previous award amounts, unless the agency has expanded or increased the capacity of its funded program.

Award recipients significantly reducing their shelter capacity as part of a plan to transform the local homeless systems and facilitate a more long-term approach to ending homelessness, may receive funding based on the emergency shelter activities the applicant intends to offer over the grant period.

Increased emphasis will be placed on decreasing length of shelter stay with the goal of shelter stays of up to 30 days for all households. In addition, programs are expected to provide some level of essential services designed to move persons to appropriate permanent housing. **For the purposes of this program, shelters that restrict admission to victims of domestic violence are not eligible to apply for Homeless Crisis Response Program funds.**

Emergency shelters not currently funded by OCD may apply competitively through the PY 2015 HCRP application process. However, OCD does not anticipate funding many, if any, new emergency shelters or shelter expansions because of the availability of homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing funds through this program..

Housing Stability awards will be granted on an allocation basis to Ohio Balance of State Homeless Planning Regions and entitlement communities that received a two-year PY 2013 HCRP award or a one-year PY 2014 HCRP award for Housing Stability activities.

Housing Stability grantees may coordinate with other "partner" organizations within the Homeless Planning Region in providing homelessness prevention and/or rapid re-housing assistance. However, the grantee cannot enter into a subrecipient agreement with partner agencies and will remain responsible for administering the grant. Grantees will be responsible for verifying client eligibility and determining the eligibility of expenses prior to the payment of HCRP funds. Therefore, grantees cannot advance funds to partner agencies for the future payment of HCRP expenses. Grantees are required to remain in compliance with OCD Policy 15-01, effective July 1, 2015.

Grantees can reimburse partner agencies for payments made by the partner agency once the grantee verifies that those expenses are eligible. Alternatively, prior to any payments being made on behalf of clients, partner agencies can forward eligibility documentation and expense requests to the grantee for review and payment.

Housing Stability applicants are reminded that the HCRP prioritizes providing rapid re-housing to move persons from homelessness to permanent housing, over providing homelessness prevention to persons that are already housed. Applicants must maximize the amount of funds targeted to rapid re-housing with the expectation that funding targeted towards this activity be increased above the previous grant award.

OCD understands that certain Ohio Balance of State Homeless Regions may allocate a large percentage of its funds towards homelessness prevention, since they do not have many emergency shelters to provide rapid re-housing referrals. However, those regions need to ensure that funds are targeted to those most likely to become homeless such as doubled-up families. As a general expectation, homelessness prevention funds should not be used if there is unmet demand for rapid re-housing assistance. OCD reserves the right to reduce funding to homeless planning regions that do not comply with these priorities.

Housing Stability applicants requesting more than 30 percent of their rapid re-housing and/or homelessness prevention funds for supportive services must demonstrate that they are serving high-need populations and that those services are essential for the success of the program.

Waiver Requests: PY 2014 Homeless Crisis Response Program (HCRP) award recipients that received a two-year award for emergency shelter activities are **not** eligible to apply for PY 2015 Homeless Crisis Response Program funds for emergency shelter, unless a waiver is requested and approved by OCD. Those award recipients may request a waiver if the applicant: opened a new emergency shelter or expanded an existing OCD-funded emergency shelter after January 1, 2015, and/or the agency is planning to open a new emergency shelter or expand an existing OCD-funded emergency shelter prior to December 31, 2016. Those award recipients may also request a waiver based on other factors which place future operations in jeopardy.

All waiver requests must be submitted in writing and received by OCD to the attention of Patrick Hart, Supportive Housing Specialist, on or before **June 8, 2015 by 5 p.m.** to 77 S. High Street, 26th Floor, Columbus, OH 43215.

The Ohio Development Services Agency is prohibited by state law from awarding more than 20 percent of the Ohio Housing Trust Fund allocation for Supportive Services. Consequently, HCRP applicants are strongly encouraged to keep requests for this activity to a minimum.

The PY 2015 Homeless Crisis Response Program application submission deadline is July 1, 2015 at 11:59 p.m.

2. Maximum Award Amounts

Funding requests must be cost effective and reasonable based on community need, historical funding from OCD, cost per household served, cost per outcome, etc. For projects currently funded by OCD, requests should be consistent with the current funding level. Agencies requesting significantly more funds than they received in the past must demonstrate an increased need for Homeless Crisis Response Program funds based on factors such as program expansion, increased program utilization, etc. Applicants for programs that have not previously been funded by OCD should contact the OCD for guidance in determining request amounts that take competitive factors into consideration. Due to the limited amount of funding available, OCD will most likely award funds consistent with previous years.. **Funding requests that demonstrate cost effectiveness and reasonableness will receive higher points during the review process.** OCD reserves the right to fund applicants for less than the requested amount.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Maximum Award</u>	<u>Grant Period</u>
Emergency Shelter:	\$350,000 per shelter	Two Years
Emergency Shelter (Youth Shelter):	\$200,000 per shelter	Two Years
Homelessness Prevention & Rapid Re-housing:	By formula allocation	One or Two Years

3. Required Match

Emergency shelter applicants must provide match of at least one dollar in local public or private resources for every two dollars in Homeless Crisis Response Program funds.. Please note that there is no match requirement for homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing activities. Grants or loans from the Ohio Development Services Agency cannot be used as match. An applicant may use any of the following as match, provided the match is properly documented:

- Applicant organization's cash resources;
- Cash in the form of a grant or donation from a third party, including private sector, nonprofit sector, and federal, state and local government sources;
- Rental income;

- In-kind contribution of a leasehold interest in property;
- Volunteer time, at a value of \$5.00 per hour for Emergency Shelter activities and \$10.00 per hour for all other activities. Volunteers providing professional services such as medical or legal services are valued at the reasonable and customary rate in the community. Staff support or supportive services provided on-site by other local nonprofit agencies may be valued at a cost verified in writing by the providing agency; and
- Contributed materials needed for program implementation.

4. **Threshold Requirements**

- Proposals for emergency shelter activity funds must be included in the Regional Homeless Service Coordination Plan to be considered for funding.
- Applicants must be participating in the appropriate Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and meet minimum data quality standards. If not a current OCD grantee, applicants must agree to participate if awarded funding.
- Proposals must include documentation verifying the commitment of sufficient matching funds to meet the match requirements.
- All programs must be targeted to individuals or families who are literally homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness by federal definition, as appropriate. Homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing programs must be targeted at individuals and families below 30 percent of area median income. Income verification, as an eligibility factor, for homelessness prevention is required at intake. While income verification for rapid re-housing is required at entry (for data entry purposes), it is not an eligibility factor until 90 days after initial intake unless the applicant demonstrates that various standards, as determined by OCD, are met in which case it is an eligibility factor at the 12-month mark.
- For Youth Shelters, the parent organization must be accredited by a recognized accreditation organization such as Council on Accreditation (COA), Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), or the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) or be licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to provide emergency shelter for youth.
- Only complete applications, including all essential exhibits, will be reviewed.

5. **Rating Criteria**

OCD will rate applications based on the following criteria:

1. **Proposal Content:** The proposal must clearly identify the problem to be addressed, population group(s) to be served and the activities to be undertaken, described in detail. Applicants must include an outline of intended goals and outcomes, including the projected impact on local homeless needs. If the project is designed to serve targeted subpopulations, applicants should address how the needs of other populations are being met within the community.
2. **Outcomes:** Based on data entered into HMIS, applicants must demonstrate acceptable performance. Specific performance measures for emergency shelters include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Number of persons and households served;
 - Occupancy rates (viewed in relation to shelter's role in community's strategy to end homelessness) ;
 - Average length of stay;
 - Percentage of leavers exiting to a permanent destination;
 - Percentage of leavers employed at exit;
 - Percentage of leavers receiving at least one source of non-cash benefit at exit;
 - Number of households provided rapid re-housing assistance.

For new applicants applying competitively, determinations in this category will be based on the extent to which the program design is clearly defined, built on evidence-based practice and likely to achieve stated outcomes.

Specific performance measures for homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Number of persons and households served;
 - Length of time to house;
 - Number/percentage of households that return to homelessness;
 - Other factors outlined in application.
3. **Collaboration:** Applicants should demonstrate strategic partnerships that would strengthen the program model's success. Examples of partnerships could include referring agencies, supportive service providers, local government agencies, mainstream service providers and existing rapid re-housing funds. Applications including letters of support and detailed partner agency agreements from these partners will rate higher than those only providing narratives.
 4. **Targeting and Need:** For all programs, applicants must demonstrate the method used for determining current demand for services in their community.
 - Emergency shelter applicants must describe their plan for diverting individuals and families from shelter stays where possible and appropriate.
 - Homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing applicants must describe their targeting method for determining which families and individuals are most appropriately served with this program, including self-sufficiency criteria to determine which families and individuals are likely to experience homelessness without intervention services.
 5. **Capacity:** Projects will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant demonstrates the organization's ability to implement proposed activities. Items taken into consideration include the organization's history and descriptions of key staff involved in the project.
 6. **HMIS Data Quality:** All applicants are required to meet HUD-minimum HMIS data requirements and quality standards to be considered for funding. To earn points in this criterion, the applicant's data quality must exceed minimum standards consisting of, but not limited to, null and missing values, according to a point scale detailed in the funding application. Additional performance measures will be detailed in the application.
 7. **Effectiveness:** Applicants should demonstrate how the program is cost effective.

Note: OCD will establish rating criteria that measure consistency with local continua of care standards for entitlement areas and with Balance of State Continuum of Care standards to the extent possible. Emergency Shelters will be expected to demonstrate effectively coordinating with and accessing rapid re-housing resources.

6. Definitions

Chronically Homeless Person – Individual who is homeless and lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and has been homeless and living in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or a shelter continuously for at least one year OR on at least four separate occasions in the last three years, where the cumulative total of those occasions is at least one year.

Congregate Facility – A facility used to provide emergency shelter in which residents share common living space.

Continuum of Care – A planning process that helps communities plan for and provide a full range of emergency shelter, supportive housing, permanent supportive housing and supportive service resources to address the various needs of homeless persons.

Disabling Condition – A diagnosable substance abuse disorder, serious mental illness, HIV/AIDS, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of two or more of those conditions.

Diversion – When intervention occurs with clients seeking shelter and alternative housing options are found so that they do not enter homelessness.

Emergency Shelter – Any facility with the primary purpose to provide temporary accommodations and essential services for homeless individuals and/or families in general, or for specific populations of the homeless, that meet the conditions and requirements of Ohio’s Basic Standards for Emergency Shelters (<http://www.cohio.org/pdf/OHbasicstandardsforshelters.pdf>). Emergency shelters have a maximum length of stay of up to 90 days, with the expectation that households remain in shelter for the minimum time needed to obtain permanent housing.

Entitlement Communities – Those counties that receive McKinney-Vento Emergency Shelter Program funds directly from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Entitlement areas in Ohio include: Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, Mahoning Montgomery, Stark and Summit counties.

General Administration (Emergency Shelter only) – The costs to administer the Emergency Shelter portion of the Homeless Crisis Response Program grant only. Eligible costs include activities necessary to comply with the Homeless Crisis Response Program, such as audit costs, costs of preparing reports and other necessary forms. These expenses do not include the administrative costs to operate the agency/program. **General Administration requests cannot exceed 5 percent of the total Emergency Shelter portion of the Homeless Crisis Response Program grant award.**

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) – A computerized database that allows organizations that provide services to people experiencing homelessness to collect client information electronically and easily produce required reports.

Homeless Person – HUD’s definition includes the following four categories:

1. Literally homeless individuals/families
 - a. Literal homelessness is further defined as homeless individuals/families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
 - i. Sleeping in a place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation
 - ii. Living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing designated to provide temporary living arrangements
2. Individuals/families who will imminently (within 14 days) lose their primary nighttime residence with no subsequent residence AND no resources or support networks
3. Unaccompanied youth or families with children/youth who meet the homeless definition under another federal statute and three additional criteria
4. Individuals/families fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence with no subsequent residence, resources or support networks

Category 3 is not recognized as homeless for purposes of the state’s Homeless Crisis Response Program.

Key People – Staff persons primarily responsible for supervising, managing or delivering the provider agency’s program(s) and reaching the proposed performance targets.

Rental Assistance – Rent payments to support the supportive housing operation, and permanent supportive housing projects. **Households served under this activity must be homeless and at or below 30 percent of area median income at time of entry into the program.**

Rental Assistance Agreement – An agreement between the landlord and the agency where the landlord must let the agency know a client is getting kicked out of housing before doing so. This is different than a lease and is only valid while assistance is given to the client. It is a protective measure for the client.

Shelter Night – A one-night stay by each person in residence at an emergency shelter. For instance, a family of three staying one night at an emergency shelter would equal three shelter nights. For agencies funded to provide day shelter services only, a shelter unit of service would equal a person receiving services at the day shelter during a single day.

Shelter Operations – Costs associated with the physical operation of an emergency shelter, including, but not limited to, costs of maintenance, rent, equipment, insurance, food, furnishings and supplies. **Due to the recent change in activities, Shelter Operations also includes the following: Services designed to successfully move persons from emergency shelter to permanent housing. These services include, but are not limited to, assessment, limited case management/coordination, goal setting, service referrals, budgeting, and permanent housing placement.**

Youth Shelter – Any facility with the primary purpose to provide temporary accommodations and essential services for homeless youth ages 10 through 17 that meet the requirements of Ohio’s Basic Standards for Emergency Shelters. Youth shelters must be targeted to the following populations: youth who are homeless, runaways, pushed out of their homes, and/or who have no safe place to sleep; youth for whom emergency shelter is critical for family stabilization; and youth who are not in the custodial care of the child welfare, juvenile justice and/or other public agency. Youth shelters should have a maximum length of stay of 90 days and are expected to provide some level of essential services designed to move persons to appropriate permanent housing, including family reunification.

- Youth shelters must operate in accordance with Basic Center Program Performance Standards as described by the Federal Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) in the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA).
- The parent organization must be accredited by a recognized accreditation organization such as Council on Accreditation (COA), Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), or the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), or be licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to provide emergency shelter for youth.
- The program will not use Homeless Crisis Response Program funds for youth placed in the shelter by court order, or placed in the shelter by another public agency that has custody of the youth or are otherwise mandated to assume financial responsibility for the youth’s placement.
- The program may provide emergency shelter care through various means, including, but not limited to, congregate shelters or host homes as defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families.
- Congregate shelters serving unaccompanied youth must show evidence of round-the-clock, awake supervision to ensure the youth’s safety and protection.
- Programs must show a working relationship with their school system and must show evidence of their familiarity with the McKinney-Vento Act in relation to those actions relating to education for homeless youth.

7. Submission Instructions

Interested eligible applicants should fully and concisely complete the HCRP application through the OCEAN System and upload the required attachments. The HCRP application and instructions are available online at ocean.ohio.gov. The application is designed so that applicants complete most narrative portions of the application using Microsoft Word and upload them as attachments in OCEAN. Applicants must use a 10-point or larger font size to complete the application attachments. The OCEAN portion of the application includes formulas that automatically calculate and fill in budget totals and totals for program specific charts and tables. Applicants will be responsible for printing the OCEAN application and attachments for their own records, if they so desire.

Applicants must submit the application through OCEAN. The application deadline is July 1, 2015 at 11:59 p.m.