

## *New Prevention and Re-Housing Resources Coming to a Town Near You!* Steps in Planning: Checklist

Your state, city, and/or county is about to receive a remarkable amount of new homelessness prevention and re-housing resources from the recently-enacted economic recovery act. The Homelessness Prevention and Re-Housing Program (HPRP) funds will be distributed via the Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) program funding formula but will not be used to operate emergency shelter. The new money can prevent increases in homelessness due to the recession and offers a major opportunity to get your community on track for truly *ending* homelessness. Below is a checklist of steps to guide state and local coalitions, Continuums of Care (CoC), provider organizations, advocates, and others interested in ending homelessness through the planning process. **Keep in mind that you are the program expert—key decision-makers rely on your expertise to spend this money effectively.**

### *Timing*

It is critical that together communities communicate recommendations to local ESG administrating offices as quickly as possible. HUD issued its program notice, providing the guidelines for this program, on March 19. States, cities, and counties must submit a substantial amendment to their consolidated plan regarding use of funds by May 18, HUD must approve of the plans within 45 days of submission, and agreements between grantees and sub-grantees must be signed by September 30.

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## Planning Steps: Checklist

- Identify the amount of funding available to your community and state.
  - Know specifically what the funding can and cannot do.
  - Identify key decision-makers.
  - Contact key decision-makers to participate in the planning process.
  - Include key stakeholders in the planning process.
  - Lead efforts to consider existing capacities and identify priorities for use of new resources.
  
  - Be prepared for “pushback.”
  - Contact us with ANY questions and concerns.
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### **Identify the amount of funding available to your community and state.**

HUD is making available \$1.5 billion to cities, counties, and states through the economic recovery act. Figures were released for each state's allocation of funds. To view your

community's allocation, visit the link below. *Note: Some communities will receive more than one grant, as funds will go to the state, city, and county.*

<http://www.hud.gov/recovery/homelesspreventrecov.xls>

The legislation also includes funding for a number of other housing and homeless assistance programs. Visit this link for information about funding for other programs related to preventing and ending homelessness:

<http://endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2179>

### **Know specifically what the funding can and cannot do.**

Funding cannot be used for traditional ESG activities of operating emergency shelters; instead, funds can be used to prevent homelessness, divert people from shelter, and rapidly re-house those who become homeless. To read an overview of the funding and its eligible uses, visit this link:

<http://endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2171>

You should also visit the Alliance's Prevention and Re-housing Resources webpage for additional information on eligible uses:

<http://endhomelessness.org/section/tools/prevention>

### **Identify key decision-makers.**

How? Call the government offices of your city, county, and or state listed in the allocations released by HUD (<http://www.hud.gov/recovery/homelesspreventrecov.xls>). (The funds will be distributed using the Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) formula, but some communities that do not normally receive ESG funds did receive HPRP Funds.) Ask them specifically who the staff person is who will be working on administering these funds.

\*Also, identify those with whom the administering staff people have relationships, as well as leaders in the homeless movement who might advocate on your behalf throughout the planning process—agency heads, mayor's offices, councilmen, faith leaders, and philanthropic figures. Educate them on the opportunities that the new funding brings and gain their support. You may also want to involve those allies in the planning process.

### **Contact key decision-makers to participate in the planning process.**

The funding will be distributed to ESG administrators, so the staff may not be familiar with alternatives to emergency shelter interventions. Advocates and providers should showcase their expertise and involve themselves in the planning process. Call or meet with staff immediately, regardless of whether you have a program proposal.

\*Describe your program and how it relates to the recommended uses of the new funds. Send them a copy of the Alliance's *Creating a Plan for the Homelessness Prevention Fund*, designed for administering offices and advocates:

<http://endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2185>

\*Develop a plan *for* them. Staff will have a lot of decisions to make in a short amount of time about SEVERAL resources in the recovery package. They may really need your help!

\*Ask key questions. For example, “Does your office have an internal deadline for completing a plan?” “How can I (or our community) be involved in the development of your plan?” “What local information do you need (such as local data, information on programs currently administering relevant rent assistance programs, etc)?”

\*Set up another time to meet SOON, after you have made decisions with key stakeholders about how the funds should be used.

### **Identify key stakeholders and include them in the planning process.**

Many states and localities have plans to end homelessness. This new funding is an opportunity to take those plans to scale. How? Make sure those implementing and administering the plan are involved in *this* planning process. It is easier to gain consensus when those involved have an opportunity to provide input. Educate everyone involved on exactly what this funding can do.

\*If you are a state-wide organization, host meetings and conference call(s) with state and local Ten-Year Plan and Continuum of Care (CoC) coordinators, state and local coalitions, Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) boards, advocates, lead providers administering prevention and re-housing programs, and those with the experience of homelessness.

\*Local organizations should coordinate with state-wide organizations and other stakeholders listed above. Also contact the local Ten-Year Plan coordinator and present information at the next CoC, ICH, and other related meetings.

\*Funds will go further when they are used in conjunction with existing housing and support services AND mainstream services. Think about those organizations and agencies that provide services to people at risk of homelessness, including TANF, Head Start, Health Clinics, Public Housing Agencies, Property Managers, and churches.

\*Resource directories already available in your community might be useful in identifying potential partners (by service area and by agency expertise). Host meetings or attend meetings hosted by the potential partners as an opportunity to provide information about the new funding. See the Alliance’s *Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing: Key Partnerships* on the Prevention and Re-Housing Resources webpage: <http://endhomelessness.org/section/tools/prevention>

### **Lead efforts to consider existing capacities and identify priorities for use of new resources.**

Partner with key stakeholders to develop a longer-term “vision”—this new funding gives your community the opportunity to significantly advance a local plan to end homelessness.

Identify what prevention and homeless assistance strategies are in place and areas with development needs. Can the new funds address those needs? How do the systems identify people who are or are at risk of homelessness? Are the strategies truly preventing and ending homelessness? Research suggests that many prevention strategies target people who would not become homeless without the intervention. The Alliance has resources available to help you answer some of these questions:

<http://endhomelessness.org/section/tools/prevention>

### **Be prepared for “pushback”.**

It may be difficult to get “buy-in” from both providers and administering offices for a new and different prevention and re-housing strategy. Develop arguments for a strong case.

*\*Some may want to use the money for emergency shelter:* Fully educate them on the eligible uses. Shelter is not an option. Point out alternatives to shelter. See the Alliance’s *Overview of HUD HPRP Notice*:

<http://endhomelessness.org/section/prevention>

*\*Some may argue that a new strategy doesn’t make sense with funds that will run out in two years:* Make a case for how your proposal will leverage and maximize resources to create a sustainable, community-wide system and prevent increases in homelessness during the recession. Discuss:

- The intervention—it is based on models that have achieved reductions and this money can jump-start or continue prevention and re-housing best practices;
- The need to collect strong data— Good outcomes will build a case for directing future resources toward this model;
- How your strategy involves collaboration among community-based partners;
- The link between new funds and existing local Ten Year planning efforts; and
- How you might use the funds with other new resources gained in the stimulus bill, those can be found here:

<http://endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2179>

\*Also, ask existing and new allies to advocate on your behalf. If the *administering office* is pushing back, you might find allies in the offices of your Members of Congress, mayor, local elected officials, a business owner, or faith leader.

### **Contact us with ANY questions, suggestions, or concerns.**

*\*Contact information:* Sarah Kahn, Director of Field Mobilization, [skahn@naeh.org](mailto:skahn@naeh.org), 202-942-8259.