

## **Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions**

On March 17, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom signed SB 89, which was approved unanimously by the state Legislature. SB 89 authorized a total appropriation of up to \$1 billion to provide assistance to help fight the spread of COVID-19. On March 18, 2020, Governor Newsom's Administration allocated \$150 million in emergency funding from SB 89 to local governments to help protect homeless Californians and reduce the spread of COVID-19 by safely getting individuals into shelter and providing immediate housing options. Also on March 18, 2020, the Governor signed Executive Order N-32-20, which removes restrictions from using Homeless Emergency Aid Program funds for COVID-19 response.

### **COVID-19 Emergency Homelessness Funding FAQs**

**Q: What are the guidelines for the \$100 million emergency funding being administered by the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency?**

**A:** Allocations for the \$100 million were distributed to local governments (13 largest cities and all 58 counties) and all 44 Continuums of Care to invest in COVID-19 prevention and containment efforts for those experiencing homelessness. This emergency funding is for immediate solutions to combat COVID-19. While eligible uses for funding are broad and should be determined based on the need of the jurisdiction, suggested uses include but are not limited to:

- Isolation Capacity – support for the acquisition/lease of hotels, motels, trailers, and other alternative isolation placements.
- Emergency Shelter Operations – furnishings, medically-indicated services and supplies, and equipment needed to maintain a sanitary shelter environment for clients and staff.
- Shelter Capacity – support for increasing shelter capacity and the acquisition of new shelters.
- Street Outreach – supplies and equipment needed to protect staff engaging with unsheltered from COVID-19 and to meet the urgent physical needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- Transportation – support for the transportation of those experiencing homelessness to and from shelters and medical care.
- Staffing – support for additional staff for infectious disease preparedness and case management for clients.

Additional information on recommended strategic approaches and guidance for COVID-19 response for individuals experiencing homelessness can be found on [HCFC's COVID-19 webpage](#). HCFC strongly encourages collaboration between overlapping jurisdictions, county public health departments, county human services departments and county emergency management offices to ensure funding is being used as effectively and efficiently as possible. Many of these efforts, including [non-congregate sheltering](#), may be FEMA reimbursable.

**Q: Is the funding for the COVID-19 funding connected to the HHAP award we received?**

**A:** No, the emergency funding administered by HCFC is not a part of the HHAP distribution, nor is it bound by the statutory requirements of HHAP. It is a separate appropriation that was calculated using the same formula allocation as HHAP in response to the COVID -19 outbreak to protect the health and safety of those experiencing homelessness.

**Q: What is the administrative cost percentage that can be used for the COVID-19 Emergency Homelessness Funding?**

**A:** COVID-19 Emergency Homeless Funding may not be used to pay for administrative costs. These are true emergency funds that are intended to be spent entirely on COVID-19-related relief. Grantees are encouraged to leverage their existing programs and administrative capacity to push these dollars towards the most impactful services currently available.

**Q: Does the 8% youth set aside apply to the COVID-19 Emergency Homelessness Funding?**

**A:** No, there is no specific percent of funding required to be spent on serving youth experiencing homelessness. However, grantees are permitted to use a portion of their funding exclusively on COVID-19 prevention and containment efforts for youth experiencing homelessness.

**Q: Does COVID-19 Emergency Homelessness Funding need to follow Housing First core components?**

**A:** Yes, Senate Bill (SB)1380 (Mitchell, Chapter 847, Statutes of 2016) requires all state-funded programs providing housing or housing-based services to people experiencing homelessness to incorporate the core components of Housing First as enumerated in Welfare and Institutions Code Section [8255](#). Jurisdictions receiving COVID-19 Emergency funding should administer to ensure compliance with the core components of Housing First.

This includes providing services with few to no treatment preconditions, behavioral contingencies, or other barriers. Housing First providers offer services as needed and do not make housing contingent on the participation in services. (e.g., sobriety, engagement in treatment, service participation requirements).

**Q: What are the rules surrounding reimbursement for COVID-19 funds?**

**A:** Jurisdictions may use COVID-19 funds to reimburse themselves for expenditures as of March 18, 2020, the date of the [Governor's announcement of the funding](#).

**Q: What are the expenditure deadlines for the COVID-19 Emergency Homeless Funding?**

**A:** Pursuant to Assembly Bill 74, Statutes of 2019, Chapter 23 (Budget Act of 2019) SEC. 1.80, funds must be encumbered by June 30, 2020 and fully expended by June 30, 2022.

**Q: How do we get more information on the additional \$50 million available from the state to protect those experiencing homelessness from COVID-10, including leasing hotels and motels, and purchasing trailers?**

**A:** The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is administering the \$50 million for purchasing trailers and leasing hotels and motels. For more information about this funding, please contact CDSS directly by emailing [housing@dss.ca.gov](mailto:housing@dss.ca.gov).

## Executive Order N-32-20 FAQs

**Q: How does the Governor’s Executive Order (EO) N-32-20, signed on March 18, 2020, provide more flexibility for the Homelessness Emergency Assistance Program (HEAP) during COVID-19?**

**A:** HEAP program funds *“shall be expended on one-time uses that address homelessness, including, but not limited to, prevention, criminal justice diversion programs to homeless individuals with mental health needs, and emergency aid.”* (Healthy and Safety section 50214 (a)). While the EO does not substantially change the original flexibility of the program, the EO allows for the funding to serve the same statutorily-defined target population and to expand HEAP funds to be spent on preparing for and addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on homeless individuals. This includes implementing guidance from the Department of Public Health on hand and respiratory hygiene and protective congregate living protocols and providing isolation and quarantine capacity.

Please note that all other statutory requirements for HEAP remain in effect including all reporting requirements, the five percent cap on programs funds being used for administrative costs, and the five percent minimum of total allocation to be spent to establish or expand services meeting the needs of homeless youth or youth at risk of homelessness.

**Q: How does EO N-32-20 provide for more flexibility for the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention Program (HHAP) during COVID-19?**

**A:** The EO does not change the eight eligible uses allowed for HHAP funding as stated in the Health and Safety Code 50219 (c).

However, HHAP funds can now also be used for preparing and addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on homeless individuals, including through expanding shelter and housing services and capacity. That includes measures to bring unsheltered Californians safely indoors, expand shelter capacity, maintain health and sanitation standards and institute medical interventions, and add new isolation and quarantine capacity to the shelter and housing inventory to slow the spread of the pandemic.

Please note that all other statutory requirements for HHAP remain in effect including all reporting requirements, the seven percent cap on programs funds being used for administrative costs, and the eight percent minimum of total allocation to be spent to establish or expand services meeting the needs of homeless youth.

**Q: How long will EO N-32-20 in effect?**

**A:** The EO is in effect throughout the duration of the California State of Emergency. Once the State of Emergency has ended, the statutory waivers described in the EO will no longer be in effect and grantees for HEAP and HHAP will need to ensure that program funding they spend after that date complies with all statutory requirements.

**Q: What authority does EO N-32-20 provide by waiving Division 13 of the Public Resources Code?**

**A:** In accordance with the EO, HEAP and HHAP-funded projects, as well as the COVID-19 Emergency Homeless Funding, are not required to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the duration of the State of Emergency.