HOMELESS EMERGENCY AID PROGRAM (HEAP)

Frequently Asked Questions

Supplemental

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Supplemental

This document is intended to provide additional information and clarification on HEAP. It supplements the FAQs dated September 1, 2018.

HEAP Applications

Q: **Can we submit our application if we have not completed our local process and have not determined who the subgrantees will be?**

A: Yes. Copies of the subgrantee agreements are not required when the HEAP application is submitted. Applicants can broadly identify the amount they plan to allocate to each of the program activities: services, rental assistance or subsidies, capital improvements, youth set-aside, administrative, and other. However, for an application to be deemed complete and an award to be made, proof of collaboration must be submitted, as well as crisis shelter declarations for jurisdictions wanting to be a direct recipient of funds or for jurisdictions with plans for capital improvement, rental assistance or subsidies that include master leasing, holding units, motel vouchers, and other related types of rental assistance.

Q: **Is an application "deemed complete" once it is submitted to HCFC?**

A: No. An application is not considered complete at the time of submission. Once the application is submitted through the online portal the applicant will receive an e-mail that includes a tracking number and a list of required documents that must be submitted to the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC). HCFC staff will conduct a preliminary review of the application and required documents and notify the applicant if documents are missing, incomplete, and/or incorrect. HCFC will conduct a final review and notify the applicant when the application is deemed complete.

Shelter Crisis Declaration

Q: **Is the shelter crisis declaration required at the time the application is submitted or at the time of award?**

A: An application may be submitted without the shelter crisis declaration(s). However, an award cannot be made until a shelter crisis declaration for each participating

jurisdiction is received by HCFC, as stated in Health and Safety Code Section 50212(a). Not all jurisdictions within a Continuum of Care (CoC) must declare a shelter crisis for an application to be submitted or to be awarded funds. However, only the jurisdictions that have declared a shelter crisis are eligible to be a direct recipient of HEAP funds.

Q: **If a CoC qualifies for a waiver from the shelter crisis declaration requirement, can HEAP funds be used for capital improvements?**

A: Yes. If a CoC qualifies for a waiver, cities within the CoC are not required to declare a shelter crisis. All cities within the CoC are eligible to receive and expend HEAP funds in all program activity categories: services, rental assistance or subsidies, capital improvements, youth set-aside, administrative costs, and other. CoCs that have fewer than 1,000 homeless people, as reported in the 2017 Housing and Urban Development (HUD) point in time (PIT) count, qualify for a waiver.

Q: **If a jurisdiction (city, county, or city that is also a county) does not declare a shelter crisis, who is eligible to be a direct recipient of funds?**

A: The CoC can award HEAP funds to a nonprofit organization or county to provide services, which may be delivered to residents in a geographic area of a jurisdiction that has not declared a shelter crisis. Additionally, nonprofit organizations physically located in the geographic area of a jurisdiction that has not declared a shelter crisis are eligible to be direct recipients of funds;, however, they cannot provide services exclusively to residents of that geographic area. Services must be provided to residents throughout all geographic areas encompassed by the CoC.

Q: **What can HEAP funds be used for in jurisdictions (city, county, or city that is also a county) that do not declare a shelter crisis?**

A: Services are the only eligible activity in jurisdictions that do not declare a shelter crisis. Services include but are not limited to outreach, education, homelessness prevention and intervention, health and safety, and criminal diversion. Capital improvement and rental assistance or subsidies that include master leasing, holding units, motel vouchers, and other related types of rental assistance are **not** eligible.

Disbursement of HEAP Funds

Q: **What is the timeline for the applicant to receive the disbursement of HEAP funds?**

A: HCFC continues to be committed to disbursing HEAP funds within 60 days of the date the application is deemed complete. HCFC is following a 15-30-15-day schedule. Once the application is deemed complete, HCFC will prepare and mail the award letter and standard agreement to the applicant/awardee within 15 days. The applicant/awardee will have up to 30 days to review and return the signed standard agreement and Request for Funds Form (RFF). Once HCFC receives the signed standard agreement and RFF from the applicant/awardee, funds will be disbursed within 15 days.

Q: **What if the standard agreement and RFF are not returned within 30 days?**

A: Awardees that take more than 30 days to review and return the signed standard agreement and RFF may experience a delay in receiving HEAP funds beyond the 60-day timeline.

Q: **Is it allowable to reimburse or issue retroactive payments to subgrantees for eligible uses of HEAP funds?**

A: No. HEAP funds may not be obligated or expended prior to the effective date of the standard agreement or prior to receipt of HEAP funds, whichever date is later, even if it is for an eligible use under the statute.

Eligible Uses of HEAP Funds

Q: **Please clarify the administrative costs allowed with HEAP funds.**

A: The administrative entity (AE) is eligible to use up to five percent of its HEAP allocation for the purposes of administering the grant. Administrative costs include tasks such as running the local collaborative process, monitoring, reporting, technical assistance to subgrantees, and overhead costs. The AE may share any funds available for administrative costs with subrecipients.

For the purposes of this program, staff and overhead costs directly related to carrying out service or programmatic activities (and the associated overhead costs) will be considered activity-delivery costs and not subject to the cap on administrative costs.

Q: **Can HEAP funds be used to coordinate the upcoming PIT count?**

A: No. While an accurate PIT count is important, the intent of HEAP funds is to provide services that immediately and directly assist individuals or families who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.

Homeless Youth Set-Aside

Q: **Can the homeless youth set-aside be combined with the rest of the HEAP allocation to provide program services or capital improvements for youth as part of the overall services or capital improvements being provided?**

A: The HEAP homeless youth set-aside is intended to provide a dedicated funding stream and emphasize the importance of establishing or expanding programs that are specifically oriented to address the needs of youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Services and capital improvements designed to address the needs of homeless adults are generally not appropriate for youth. It is possible to devote some activities or units (for example) to meet the needs of youth within a larger program, as long as it can be clearly shown that services provided are appropriate and meet the needs of youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Recipients of HEAP funds will need to demonstrate that the activities funded with the homeless youth set-aside were used specifically for this target population.

Q: **Are programs that serve homeless youth able to apply for HEAP funds that exceed the homeless youth set-aside?**

A: Yes. The five percent homeless youth set-aside is a **minimum** amount designated to establish or expand programs that service youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. A CoC may award additional funds to providers to serve youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Reporting Requirements

Q: **When are the annual reports due and what will the reports need to include?**

A: HCFC will provide annual reporting forms, which are due by January 1, 2020 and January 1, 2021. A final report is due by September 30, 2021. The annual report must include information for each activity (i.e. services, capital improvements, rental assistance, etc.), program type (i.e. emergency shelter, rapid re-housing, outreach, etc.) and subpopulation (chronically homeless, homeless veterans, unaccompanied homeless youth, homeless persons in families with children) served by HEAP funds. Detailed reports will include information on the following:

1. Amounts awarded to subrecipients with activity(ies) identified.
2. Contract expenditures.
3. Unduplicated number of homeless persons or persons at imminent risk of homelessness served.
4. Number of instances of service (defined in September 5, 2018 HEAP NOFA).
5. Increases in capacity for new and existing programs.
6. The number of unsheltered homeless persons becoming sheltered.
7. The number of homeless persons entering permanent housing.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

Q: **Is HCFC requiring login access to confidential data in HMIS for each CoC?**

A: There is a requirement in Exhibit D of the HEAP Standard Agreement that states the following: "The Contractor agrees to provide the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency access to Homeless Management Information System ("HMIS") data collected and entered into the Contractor's HMIS, upon request, and to participate in any statewide data initiative as directed by BCSH including but not limited to, a statewide data integration environment." HCFC, however, is not requiring login access to any HMIS managed by CoCs. Client-level data is also not required in the reporting components of HEAP (though client-level data will need to be analyzed and aggregated at the CoC level to report on some of the requested indicators).

Q: **Is HCFC developing a statewide HMIS?**

A: HCFC is exploring the potential creation of a statewide homeless data warehouse and possible state-level HMIS to improve the amount and quality of homelessness-related data accessible to the state. Currently, California does not collect or have direct access to data on the demographics or needs of people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness in the state. HCFC is exploring whether

it would add value for CoCs to be able to opt-in to this state-level HMIS. HCFC is in the exploration and development states of this project, and representatives from CoCs and local service providers are invited to participate in ongoing discussions and provide feedback to HCFC.

If you have any additional questions about this project, the HEAP contract requirement, or would like to participate in the discussions, please contact the project manager for the Data Systems Development Project, KC Mohseni at KC.mohseni@bcsh.ca.gov.

For additional questions or comments regarding HEAP, please contact Daniel Castillo, HEAP Grant Manager at Daniel.castillo@bcsh.ca.gov or Lahela Mattox, Local Government Liaison at Lahela.mattox@bcsh.ca.gov.