

# Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP)

## ASK A QUESTION (AAQ)

HCD will be updating the AAQs until November 1, 2018; the AAQ sheet will be posted on the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) page of the County of Santa Barbara Housing and Community Development page. It will also be made available through Zoom Grants.

### **NEW posted 11.2.18**

**QUESTION:** *On question 14, does “Services: Shelter Diversion” refer to keeping individuals from shelters or diverting them to shelters?*

**ANSWER:** Diversion is a strategy that attempts to problem solve housing barriers prior to someone entering the shelter/ homeless assistance system.

**QUESTION:** *Does question 22 refer to the lead agency only, or may we include the partner agencies as well in the response to this question?*

**ANSWER:** Any agency/staff documenting homelessness and providing direct service could be included in question 22.

**QUESTION:** *The attachments section requests resumes from project staff. Would bios fulfill this requirement or should they be formal resumes?*

**ANSWER:** While this is not a required attachment, you can upload bios or resumes for key project staff.

**QUESTION:** *For question 29, can you clarify what is meant by “system performance?” Does this refer to improving the entire system-of-care across the community or the impact our program will have in these area(s)?*

**ANSWER:** Question 29 is directly related to the performance measures outlined in question 28. For example, how does the project reduce the length of time a person experiences homelessness? The CoC is responsible for improving system performance in 7 key areas. See HUD Exchange for detail.

**QUESTION:** **Is there specific language required for the Certificates of Insurance upload?**

**ANSWER:** While this is not a required attachment for application, Certificates of Insurance will be required prior to agreements being executed with awarded applicants. Please use the list

in the NOFA of required attachments not Zoom Grants for what to upload based on type of entity.

**QUESTION:** *Would you be able to provide us with sample grant reporting financial templates.*

**ANSWER:** HCD has uploaded a sample packet to the ZoomGrants Library. All expenses require back up.

**QUESTION:** *Is there a way to submit supplemental attachments?*

**ANSWER:** I have added a line for supplemental documents to be uploaded, please only add documents directly relevant to the scoring criteria. This is not an area to add narrative. If you need additional character space, I can adjust a question. HCD has attempted to make the application process concise for applicants and reviewers.

**NEW posted 10.26.18**

**QUESTION:** *Can a project manager position be funded?*

**ANSWER:** Staff costs directly related to carrying out program activities are eligible. A staff person managing project activities and staff would be eligible. Administrative costs are not eligible to sub-recipients/applicants.

**QUESTION:** *Can a temporary shelter be funded if the organization refuses service to individuals actively using drugs or alcohol on site?*

**ANSWER:** Selection practices that promote accepting applicants regardless of their sobriety or use of substances is included in the State's Housing first policy. Therefore, being under the influence cannot be grounds for refusing service. Violent and disruptive behaviors or illegal activity can be grounds for refusing service. Housing First encompasses an approach to service more than a single rule.

From Housing First policy (WIC Ch. 6.5 Div. 8 Sec 8255 (b)) Services are informed by a harm-reduction philosophy that recognizes drug and alcohol use and addiction as a part of tenants' lives, where tenants are engaged in nonjudgmental communication regarding drug and alcohol use, and where tenants are offered education regarding how to avoid risky behaviors and engage in safer practices, as well as connected to evidence-based treatment if the tenant so chooses.

**QUESTION:** *Can you confirm that the Written Standards of Care will not be updated before Nov 16<sup>th</sup>?*

**ANSWER:** HCD is proposing revisions to the Written Standards to the CoC Board on November 8 for RRH, Homelessness Prevention and Street Outreach. There will likely be further revisions based on activities funded.

**QUESTION:** *Can we get an estimate of the expected start of project if the BOS will not approve until Jan or February? The NOFA indicates January 1, 2019.*

**ANSWER:** Please budget for the 30 month period. The state has been expediting the HEAP contracts very quickly so we want to be prepared for the earliest possible start date.

**QUESTION:** *Can a vehicle be purchased with HEAP funds?*

**ANSWER:** Transportation costs including a vehicle could be funded with HEAP. Applicants must clearly address how the vehicle or transportation costs are assisting to meet the needs of homeless persons or reduce homelessness in the community. The two –step review process will be triggered for capital housing and rehabilitation projects. A vehicle could be included in the application and be funded under the CoC Rank and Review Process without further review by the Capital Loan Committee.

**QUESTION:** *Do in-kind contributions count as leverage: evaluation, research, administrative overhead etc.?*

**ANSWER:** Yes, describe all contributions to the project in application.

**QUESTION:** *Is the capital application process for funding recommendations date correct in that it is not until February 14, 2019? How would this be allocated if funding has already been awarded on November 29?*

**ANSWER:** Capital housing projects will go through a two-step process. If recommended for funding by the CoC Rank and Review panel and approved by the CoC Board on November 29. The capital housing project will be included/allocated in the State Application. The capital project will then need to complete a 15 year proforma and full housing application, Exhibit B, for the Capital Loan Committee. The Capital Loan Committee will provide a technical review to determine viability.

### **Distributed at Applicant Training Workshop 10.18.18**

**QUESTION:** *Are partnerships required? By partnering do you mean who does the agency work with or who is a formal partner in the grant app?*

**ANSWER:** Points in the rank and review scoring process are awarded for coordination and collaboration. Formal partnerships are not required. Partnering could be either who you work with to address homelessness and/or a formal partner. A formal partner would be a named sub-recipient where an MOU or agreement is in place.

**QUESTION:** *If an agency partners with another agency/department on the grant application, and the committee doesn't like the partnership, will they reject the whole grant or can they reject that part of the grant?*

**ANSWER:** The Rank and Review Panel will be encouraged and trained to score applications based on the scoring criteria outlined in Exhibit A in NOFA, not on whether they like a project or partnership.

**QUESTION:** *If an agency works with a partner/sub-contractor, can they be a partner/sub-contractor for someone else also, or even a primary applicant?*

**ANSWER:** An agency may be part of multiple applications. County HCD encourages all applicants to consider the capacity of sub-recipients participating in multiple applications. County HCD is responsible to the state for compliance and monitoring, all sub-recipients must meet all program requirements.

**QUESTION:** *Could The Rank and Review Committee modify an application?*

**ANSWER:** The job of the Rank and Review Panel is to score applications and present funding recommendations, not to modify the content of an individual application. Depending upon the overall number of requests and scoring, the R&R Panel may recommend less funding than requested. If an applicant receives less funding than requested, the applicant would need to decide on the viability and design of the project with the reduced funding amount.

**QUESTION:** *Would a sub-contractor's staff have to submit time sheets for reimbursement just like the applicant agency?*

**ANSWER:** When multiple agencies or departments partner in one application, all agencies' staff members will be required to submit time activity sheets. A sub-recipient who is a contractor will need to submit documents based on the fee-for-service they are providing. The sub-contractor's contract and invoices should be included as documentation for invoicing.

**QUESTION:** *Would a sub-contractor/partner agency have to use HMIS, or could the main applicant do it for them?*

**ANSWER:** All clients served must be entered in HMIS regardless of which agency/department served them. Deciding who will enter data into HMIS is the responsibility of the applicant.

**QUESTION:** *Is scattered site master leasing an eligible activity? Is this what is called "Rental Assistance: Leasing" in the grant application?*

**ANSWER:** Master leasing could be an eligible activity and would be included in the rental assistance category. The choice to use master leasing rather than time limited, tenant-based rental assistance implies an on-going expense. The application must clearly address how the lease will be paid post-HEAP funding.

**QUESTION:** *Does an applicant have to identify the units to master lease in a grant application, or could rental assistance funds be later allocated to master lease a unit/s?*

**ANSWER:** Specific units do not have to be identified in the ZoomGrants application.

**QUESTION:** *Can HEAP be used for homelessness prevention funds?*

**ANSWER:** The definition of *Homeless* included in the state HEAP NOFA, makes the use of HEAP dollars challenging for homelessness prevention. Prevention is an eligible activity so long as the beneficiary meets the HEAP homeless definition. Imminent risk of homelessness will have to be documented for eligibility. CESH can serve the *At Risk of Homelessness* population, which is more broadly defined, and more easily documented than Imminent Risk, making CESH better suited for homelessness prevention activities, especially when the existing tenancy is attempting to be preserved. Refer to 24 CFR 578.3. Sample documentation required to establish eligibility will be posted to the ZoomGrants Library.

**QUESTION:** *Can HEAP be used to pay for rental arrears?*

**ANSWER:** Arrears are eligible to preserve tenancy. A maximum amount in arrears will be included in a revised version of the CoC Written Standards.

**QUESTION:** *To cut down on the number of applications an applicant submits, can we ask for all of our funding from HEAP?*

**ANSWER:** One HEAP application per primary applicant is allowed. There is no requirement or points awarded for an agency/department to apply for multiple funding sources.

The Combined NOFA is intended to encourage applicants to be strategic in utilizing the best applicable funding source for a project. There is no requirement to apply for multiple funding sources and no known advantage to spreading around “the ask”. The funding sources serve different populations and fund different activities.

**QUESTION:** *Can I include multiple types of services in one application?*

**ANSWER:** An agency can only submit one primary application representing all proposed activities.

**QUESTION:** *I understand from the NOFA that landlord financial incentives will only be considered on a case-by-case basis?*

**ANSWER:** Going above rent reasonableness for rent amount will be considered on a case-by-case basis, as this will likely affect the tenant's ability to maintain housing once the funding has ended. One-time availability payments to landlords, risk mitigation funds, and other monetary incentives that do not impact ongoing rent do not need to be approved case-by-case by County HCD. HCD will recommend guidelines for incentives in the Continuum of Care (CoC) Written Standards. Regional coordinated housing location services is a prioritized activity.

**QUESTION:** *I don't see a place for landlord incentive money in the budget template. Should I not include it as a part of our grant app/budget?*

**ANSWER:** Line items can be added to the budget, including landlord incentives such as availability payments, risk mitigation funds, and other monetary incentives.

**QUESTION:** *Do we have to provide an agency budget for the next 2.5 years or just the project budget? Should the current annual budget include the full amount of HEAP funding proposed?*

**ANSWER:** Budgets must include the 30-month grant period. The HEAP budget is not annual, but should represent the entire HEAP request for the 2 ½ year (30-month) period of the grant.

**QUESTION:** *Do referrals have to come from the Coordinated Entry System (CES) only?*

**ANSWER:** Participation in the CES as an Entry Point is required for project types including but not limited to emergency shelter, navigation centers, street outreach services, and pre-housing, stand-alone supportive service activities.

For transitional housing, rental assistance, flexible housing subsidy pools, permanent housing, and capital housing projects, all referrals will come through CES per the prioritization scheme, matching, and referral processes outlined in the CoC's CES Policies and Procedures and Written Standards.

Homelessness Prevention services will work in collaboration and coordination with CES to ensure families most at risk of homelessness will be served and avoid duplication of services and assistance.

**QUESTION:** *Is there a specific way costs are invoiced to the County?*

**ANSWER:** A sample Expenditure Summary and Payment Request Form (ESPR) has been added to the ZoomGrants library for review by applicants. Back up documentation is required for all expenditures including time activity sheets for staff. County HCD encourages applicants to review ALL items in the ZoomGrants Library. Awards will be on a cost reimbursement basis, invoices are submitted quarterly to County HCD.

**Posted on 10.19.18**

**QUESTION:** *How can the State require Housing First in shelters with children?*

**ANSWER:** Shelter providers will need to consider implications of a Housing First model as described in WIC Ch. 6.5 Div. 8 Sec 8255(b) with mixed populations. The Housing First policy does not require shelter operators to tolerate violent or criminal behavior. The policy describes sobriety, in and of itself, not being a reason to screen someone out or terminate residency.

**QUESTION:** *Are emergency shelters prioritized?*

**ANSWER:** Operating support for Emergency Housing Interventions is an established local priority. Navigation Centers offering temporary room and board are synonymous with Emergency Shelters offering services to link persons to housing opportunities and other critical services. Therefore, emergency shelters are part of the established local priority.

**QUESTION:** *Does supplanting apply to non- government funded entities?*

**ANSWER:** The state has provided guidance that prohibits supplanting. Supplanting in this case applies to replacing federal, state, local or agency funds with Homeless Emergency Aid Program funds for the same component or activity. If an agency has had a recent loss in funding that will result in decreased services or beds, the situation should be carefully described including dates of the loss in funding. HEAP funds are best used to expand existing activities or create new projects.

**QUESTION:** *Will pursuing or providing additional funding benefit an application?*

**ANSWER:** Resources to address homelessness are critically needed in Santa Barbara County. The ability to leverage public or private funds for the project is advantageous to the community and will result in additional scoring points as suggested in the scoring criteria described in Exhibit A. The Zoom Grants Application Question # 25 reads *“Describe resources that will be leveraged to enhance the effectiveness and longevity of the proposed activity.”*

**QUESTION:** *What do we do at the end of the funding? Do we just put people back on the streets?*

**ANSWER:** The Homeless Emergency Aid Program is one-time funding. Applicants must carefully consider projects that do not require on-going funding or can be funded by other resources at the end of the program on June 30, 2021. The State of California has given no indication that HEAP will be considered for additional funding. HEAP was funded out of a budget surplus. Question #25 in the ZoomGrants Application asks applicants to describe how the project will close out with the least negative impact on participants.

**QUESTION:** *What do we do if a client refuses to participate in HMIS?*

**ANSWER:** Agencies must collect the required data for reporting. The following are the reporting elements for each activity:

- Number of homeless persons served
- Number of instances of service
- Increases in capacity for new and existing programs
- Number of unsheltered persons becoming sheltered
- Number of homeless persons entering permanent housing

The above elements must also be broken down by the following sub-populations:

- Homeless Veterans
- Unaccompanied Homeless Youth
- Homeless Persons in families with children
- Chronically Homeless

HMIS is the method for data collection for non-victim service providers.

If a person refuses to sign the Release of Information for HMIS entry or provide identifying data, their information will either not be entered into HMIS or entered without visibility.

Participants are not denied services for not sharing data. *The data elements above would still need to be collected.*

**QUESTION:** *Does an acquisition project require site control?*

**ANSWER:** No, site control is not required at this stage in the review process. Applicants are encouraged to provide information that demonstrates capacity and experience in housing development. Describe all actions being taken to secure site control including obtaining political will on behalf of the jurisdiction for the project.

**QUESTION:** *With the cost reimbursement process, can start up funds or another process be considered to not restrict cash flow of agency?*

**ANSWER:** County HCD will look into ways to assist applicants who need an alternative process to launch a project on a case by case basis once awarded funding.