Purpose: The purpose of this form is to provide potential Applicants to the RFA#005 COVID Housing 2020 – NPS information about the community priorities for Homelessness Prevention, Diversion and Rapid Rehousing to use when considering program design.

Funding requirements are defined in the regulations appropriate to each funder. For eligible project types, activities and details specific to the solicitation, consult the Scope of Work.

I.   Centralized Funding Pool for Prevention and Diversion

The Centralized Funding Pool provider must develop agreements with services providers who will work with applicants through existing programs, including the Coordinated Entry system access points. These agreements will include requirements for eligibility, documentation, staff training, and supportive services. The Centralized Funding Pool provider must

- Have sufficient administrative capacity to comply with fiscal and compliance requirements
- Be able to disperse payments quickly to landlords (within 2 business days of complete and eligible application)
- Develop user-friendly processes for services providers to submit applications and documentation for assistance
- Use HMIS to track program participants and performance metrics
- Develop clear protocols on targeting financial assistance and achieving optimal leverage of other community programs/services
- Provide training on application processes to services providers
- Establish feedback and quality improvement systems for program beneficiaries, landlords, and services providers

A. Homelessness Prevention (HP) component of Centralized Funding Pool

HP Eligible Population
        Households at risk of entering literal homelessness who are recently exiting literal homelessness
HP Identification Strategy
- Households currently enrolled in RRH or PSH and with active rental arrears in instances wherein the source rental assistance funding cannot be extended and the Landlord has provided a Notice to Evict OR has an active case (cases wherein landlords are requesting court action) with the Travis County Justice of the Peace
OR
- Households who have exited from a RRH or PSH project within the last 2 years and are unable to pay current rent or arrearages and a Notice to Evict and/or have active cases (cases wherein landlords are requesting court action) with the Travis County Justice of the Peace
OR
- Households who have experienced literal homelessness within the past 24 months as documented in HMIS and are unable to pay current rent or have arrearages and a Notice to Evict and/or have active cases (cases wherein landlords are requesting court action) with the Travis County Justice of the Peace

HP Housing Stability Goals – providing through service provider agreements
HP housing planning is geared towards client self-sufficiency (ability to maintain housing without on-going housing programming) and include:
- Returning to good standing with current housing placement
- Working on identifying ways for clients to increase income
- Building out community supports and connecting clients to other community resources outside of the homeless response system
- Addressing any other barriers to ongoing housing stability

HP Intervention Duration – providing through service provider agreements
- Programming is intended to follow a Progressive Engagement Model of service so the duration of financial assistance and case management will vary to meet specific client need with the intent to provide the lightest touch service possible.
- Maximum intervention duration- 3 months
- Minimum intervention may be as brief as one week

HP Program Design Case Management – providing through service provider agreements
- HP program case management should be strengths based and highly solution focused towards client stabilization.
- HP program case management may be provided by existing RRH or PSH support service team
- All services providers staff to have an HMIS license and record all program activity in HMIS Staff performing Homelessness Prevention services should also have an HMIS license. This access ensures that staff have access to all relevant information from other Homelessness Response System providers that could be used in the housing planning process, as well as improving data availability and data quality for those other programs to potentially use in their own planning conversations. Programs may also use additional databases in addition to HMIS, but all staff should have access to HMIS (Victim Services Providers may be restricted to only Read Only access by VAWA, but should have all access that is allowable).

HP Program Design Financial Assistance
Rental assistance through PH is intended to be time limited with clients ultimately taking over their full rental responsibility.
- Financial assistance offered to households currently enrolled in PSH or RRH programming may not exceed 3 months (inclusive of arrearages)

Eligible housing expenses include:
- Past due and current rent

Eligible other financial expenses include:
- Utility Assistance
- Utility Arrears
- Utility Assistance Landlord fees
- Moving expenses
- Background check
- Employment certifications and licenses
- Interpreter services
- Transportation

- Work supplies

B. Diversion Component of Centralized Funding Pool

Diversion Target Population
- Households at immediate risk of entering homelessness (same day/night) whose homelessness can be avoided with minimal one-time programmatic support
  OR
- Households already experiencing homelessness (sheltered or unsheltered) who have a potential pathway into a non-programmatic permanent housing opportunity with little to no ongoing programmatic support after move-in

Intervention Duration – provided through service provider agreements
- Financial Assistance can not be provided past 30 days

Engagement Strategy – provided through service provider agreements
- Diversion conversations should occur at every entry point with individuals entering the homelessness response system
- Rapid Exit conversations dependent on clients' locations prior to project entry
  - Shelters/ProLodge Clients – Assigned Navigators or Shelter Case Managers engaging clients individually
  - Unsheltered Clients – Street Outreach workers or drop-in/center staff engaging clients individually
- Problem-solving conversations can be either one-time opportunities within day to day interactions or an individual staff can own pursuing the ongoing process

Navigation/Diversion Support – provided through service provider agreements
- Diversion conversation should occur before referral to formal programming
- Goal is to identify pathways to permanent housing that do not require formal programmatic intervention from the homelessness response system
- Staff should make attempts at shelter/transitional housing connections where applicable/desired (if permanent housing can't be obtained immediately)
- Barrier removal and navigation needs should focus on creating pathways to specific permanent housing opportunities

Diversion/Rapid Resolution Housing Planning. – provided through service provider agreements
Diversion/Rapid Resolution Housing Planning is geared towards identifying and planning client self-sufficiency in specific housing opportunities with an expectation of little to no programmatic assistance available after move-in (ability to maintain housing without on-going housing programming).

Conversations can and should also include identifying support service needs from other programs (such as childcare, employment, or mental health services) and creating pathways to connect to those non-housing services that still support housing stability post move-in.
- What housing options/opportunities is the household interested in (and able to) pursue?
  - For Diversion, usually this is trying to return to the place the person stayed last night
  - These options can include places that normally don't formally participate in the Homelessness Response System (such as non-dedicated affordable housing like HUD

Senior housing and Community First) and placement options that can't normally be utilized by our traditional programs (like family reunification, board and care homes, or placements outside of the Austin/Travis County area)

- Once the specific housing option is identified, then the conversation should focus on specific steps and resources that could make that move-in happen successfully.
    - o Should include building out community supports and connecting client to other community resources (self-directed conversation with the client, with the understanding that all steps will need to be pursued by client on their own)
    - o Can also include identifying ways for clients to increase income (where applicable) to open up additional options or to best ensure success after move-in
    - o Can also include long-term waitlists like HACA (that won't immediately solve the crisis, but will help ensure success after the client has left the Homelessness Response System
    - o Some options may also require specifically skilled intervention (like formally trained mediation) to become feasible

Diversion/Rapid Resolution Housing Planning can be provided by staff who are trained and experienced on these overall steps and processes (dedicated staff and/or clinical training is helpful, but not required).

Skills and trainings recommended for all staff providing Diversion/Rapid Resolution Housing Planning:
- Diversion/Rapid Resolution (ECHO preparing to provide on May 28th)
- Harm Reduction/Substance Use, Strengths Based, Motivational Interviewing, Housing First, Progressive Engagement, Psychopathology/Mental Health First Aid, Landlord Mediation, WRAP – Wellness Recovery Action Planning, Diversity/Cultural Competency, Equity Training, Case Management, De-escalation

Staff performing Diversion/Rapid Resolution Housing Planning services should also have an HMIS license, and it should be included in the program budget. This access ensures that staff have access to all relevant information from other Homelessness Response System providers that could be used in the housing planning process, as well as improving data availability and data quality for those other programs to potentially use in their own planning conversations. Programs may also use additional databases in addition to HMIS, but all staff should have access to HMIS (Victim Services Providers may be restricted to only Read Only access by VAWA, but should have all access that is allowable).

Diversion/Rapid Resolution Financial Assistance
Financial assistance through Diversion/Rapid Resolution is intended to be very time limited (often one-time) with clients leaving with a plan to immediately take over their own housing costs with little to no future support or assistance from the Diversion/Rapid Resolution program

Ideally the system would include a deliberate, expedited pathway into the Prevention system if a placement destabilizes after move-in.
- Funding should ideally be as flexible as possible so that any resource need identified through these problem-solving conversations can be provided quickly and directly by program (creative problem-solving conversations often identify seemingly unusual needs that make sense in context, but are hard to predict ahead of time)

- Rental assistance NOT be capped at a set dollar amount, but expectation should be set that this is the only rental assistance coming from this program
- Outside of direct rental assistance, other specific costs often include:
  - Transportation Assistance
  - Grocery Assistance/Gift Cards
  - Gas Cards
  - Utility Debts (prior to housing) & Utility Deposits (upon move in)
  - Rental Arrears (can occur as part of navigation process)
  - Application Fees & Deposits
  - Household Items
  - Moving costs
  - Employment Expenses
  - Medical Expenses
  - Cellphones

II.   **Rapid Rehousing Project Type**
RRH Eligible Population
Literally homeless (Cat 1) or Fleeing DV (Cat 4)

RRH Housing Stability Goals
RRH Housing Planning is geared towards client self-sufficiency (ability to maintain housing without on-going housing programming) and RRH housing stability goals include:

- Focusing on what must happen to assure clients' barriers to securing and maintaining new housing are addressed and overcome.
  - The degree to which those barriers are likely to impede obtaining housing or undermine housing stability will determine the action steps in the Case Management plan
- Working on identifying ways for clients to increase income (where applicable)
- Finding housing that best fits clients' individual needs
- Referring and ensuring successful connection to community supports and resources (i.e. focus on building out a strong support network for when clients are no longer in the RRH program)

RRH Program Design Case Management

RRH Case Management should be provided by an interdisciplinary team of professionals to meet client need and should be strengths based and client driven while working towards client stabilization.

- RRH Case Management Teams should consist of:
  - Program Manager, Housing Stability Case Managers, Community Housing Specialist(s), Peer Support(s), Employment Specialist(s), & SOAR Specialist(s)

Job Title	Responsibilities
Program Manager	Will support in written standards, compliance activities, program reporting, staff oversight, program budget and monthly monitoring.

Housing Stability Case Manager	Provides holistic case management services using a progressive engagement model. Enter case notes in HMIS, intake paperwork, required income and service assessments. Responsible for meeting at least once a month with client (does not need to be in-person meeting), updating housing plan, budget using progressive engagement.
Community Housing Specialist	Location of units, inspections, lease, payment of housing fees (application, deposit, rent). Works with HSCM to coordinate rental portions from program and participant portion based on progressive engagement and ongoing changes throughout duration of program. Community Housing Specialist will be expected to facilitate, on average, 10 move-ins a month.
Employment Specialist	Screening and assessment of employment opportunities, resources needed for employment readiness (resume, clothing, transportation), facilitates referrals to community agencies and programs when needed. Recommendation: Staff member be a part of program design. If unable to support FTE, project must MOU with community employment services provider with comprehensive employment contract with direct referrals to support case management staff be funded.
SOAR Services Specialist	Screening and assessment of SOAR need, navigating medical supports for SOAR documentation, SOAR applications, applying for insurance (private or other) Ability to demonstrate the clients will have access to SOAR services as needed or though contracted services
Peer Support Specialist	Client-driven support, credentialed as a Mental Health Peer Support or Recovery Support Peer Specialist, trained to effectively use their story and life experience to help others achieve their own needs, wants, and goals. The Peer Support Specialist provides non-clinical services that decrease physical and social isolation, combat stigma, instill hope, and support access to resources Recommendation: Staff member be a part of program design. If unable to support FTE, comprehensive employment contract w/ direct referrals to support case management staff be funded.

Program Managers should assess their Housing Stability Case Managers' caseloads on-going and adjust caseload size to fit the needs of the clients and the capabilities of their Housing Stability Specialists
Intensity/frequency of RRH Case Management will be adjusted pre & post housing, following Progressive Engagement & Critical Time Intervention models of service
- Minimum of weekly client meetings while client is still in crisis
- Minimum of monthly client meetings once client is housed & further into stabilization

- Client meetings do not necessarily need to be in-person (can be via phone appointment, teleconference etc.)
- Housing Stability Case Managers will regularly assess the needs of their individual clients and adjust the intensity of case management to best fit client needs

Housing Stability Case Managers are expected to provide education and skill building to clients around:
- Maintaining housing and communicating with landlords
- Budgeting
- Creating community connections and supports

Community Housing Specialists are expected to provide education to landlords around the population being served and will provide support to landlords throughout participants' duration in programming.
- Skills and trainings expected of ALL RRH Staff (not required prior to hire, part of on-going staff development):
  - Harm Reduction, Strengths Based, Motivational Interviewing, Housing First, Progressive Engagement, Mental Health First Aid, Landlord Mediation, Diversity/Cultural Humility, Equity Training, De-escalation, Trauma Informed Care, Problem Solving Therapy and/or Solution Focused Therapy
- Skills & trainings expected of RRH Program Managers (not required prior to hire, part of on-going staff development):
  - Program Evaluation & Planning for Outcomes, Participant Feedback Training, Program Budgeting, Process Improvement/Root Cause Analysis, rules and regulations for federally funded programs including CoC, ESG, CDBG, HOME, SSVF funding sources, HUD HMIS 2020 Data Standards, local Austin/Travis County CoC HMIS Policy and Procedures
- Skills & trainings expected of Community Housing Specialists (not required prior to hire, part of on-going staff development): Knowledge of local rental market, Landlord/Tenant law, Fair Housing, Eviction Prevention, Property Management basics
- Skills & trainings expected of Peer Supports (not required prior to hire, part of on-going staff development): Critical Time Intervention (CTI), Trauma Informed Peer Support, Peer Specialist Whole Health and Resiliency Training, Co-occurring Disorders for Peer Specialists, WRAP Facilitator Training, & Certifications as either a Mental Health Peer Specialists or Recovery Support Specialists
- RRH Program Managers & Housing Stability Staff will be provided HMIS licenses and be expected to enter their own HMIS data.

RRH Program Design Financial Assistance
Rental assistance through RRH is intended to be time limited with clients ultimately taking over their full rental responsibility.
- Rental assistance offered through RRH will follow Progressive Engagement models and will be tapered down (or up) to meet client need, working towards clients taking full responsibility for their rental responsibility before the program participant exits the program or reaches the full amount of time allowed in the program.
  - Amount of rental assistance will NOT be capped at a set dollar amount (based around small area fair market rent). Instead, rental assistance will be tied to duration of programming as determined by client need and housing plan.

Program participants will be informed of how long the program can assist with Rental Assistance and provided a sample budget of how much the client's rent portion will increase leading up to the maximum amount of time allowed in program. At program enrollment, the program participant and case manager will have an established Rental Assistance plan that outlines the rent portion to be paid each month by the participant and program throughout the estimated timeframe of services (e.g., 1 year). The rental assistance plan will be reviewed monthly and adjusted accordingly based on household stabilization while in PH

- Outside of direct rental assistance, RRH program will also be able to assist participants with paying:

ESG-CV Eligible Costs:
- Rental Application Fees
- Security Deposit/Last Month's Rent
- Utility Assistance Payments/Deposits
- Utility Arrears
- Rental Arrears
- Moving Costs
- HMIS License

Leveraged Costs
- Renter Insurance
- Household Items
- Employment Expenses
- Medical Expenses
- Childcare expenses
- Cellphones