

PY'2009 EMERGENCY SHELTER GRANTS PROGRAM

Action Plan
(Amended 12/1/2008)

The State of Rhode Island will be allocated (an estimated) 350,005 through the Emergency Shelter Grants Program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In accordance with program regulations at 24 CAR Part 576, published on Tuesday, November 7, 1989, and revised through streamlining regulations published on October 2, 1996, the State will distribute these funds to Rhode Island cities and towns, private nonprofit organizations and Indian Tribes to help improve the quality of existing emergency shelters for the homeless, to help make available additional emergency shelters, to help meet the costs of operating emergency shelters and of providing certain essential social services to homeless individuals, and to help restrict the increase of homelessness through the funding of preventive programs and activities.

Eligible Activities

Grants may be used for one or more of the following activities related to emergency shelters for the homeless:

1. Renovation, major rehabilitation or conversion of buildings for use as emergency shelters.
2. Up to 30 percent of the State's allocation may be used for the provision of essential services including but not limited to those concerned with employment, health, substance abuse, education, food or assistance in obtaining housing. Provision of essential services as limited by the rule at 24 CAR 576.21(b)(2).
3. Payment of maintenance and operations (including rent, repair, security, fuels, equipment, insurance, utilities and furnishing). Staff costs may also be provided up to ten percent of the State's allocation.
4. Homeless prevention assistance may be provided up to a maximum of 30 percent of the state's allocation.

Grant Requirements

1. Every city and town in Rhode Island is eligible to apply for a grant as well as private non-profit organizations and Indian Tribes who are eligible to apply directly to the Office of Housing and Community Development provided that the unit of local government certifies approval of the project.
2. Local governments may distribute all or part of their grant amount to non-profit recipients to be used for emergency shelters.

3. In accordance with the ESGP streamlining regulations published on October 2, 1996, the State is required to award it's funds to subrecipients within 65 days of its award from HUD, or in this instance May 5, 2009. State recipients are required to obligate funds made available to them within 180 days of the date on which the State made the grant amounts available to the recipient. Recipients with homeless prevention activities must obligate grant amounts within 30 days of the date on which the State made the grant amounts available to them. Each State recipient must spend all of its grant amounts within 12 months of the date on which the State made the grant amounts available to the State recipient. In the case of homeless prevention activities, State recipient must spend such sums within 6 months of the date on which the State made the grant amounts available to the recipient.
4. Any building for which emergency shelter grants are used for rehabilitation must be maintained as a shelter for the homeless for not less than a three year period, or for not less than a 10 year period if the grant amounts are used for major rehabilitation or conversion of buildings. If funds are used or the provision of services, maintenance or operating costs, the building must continue to be used as shelter for the duration of the grant agreement.
5. Any building for which emergency shelter grants are used for renovation, conversion or major rehabilitation must meet the local government standards of being safe and sanitary.
6. Homeless individuals should be given assistance in obtaining supportive services including permanent housing, medical and mental health treatment, counseling, supervision and other services essential for achieving independent living and other federal, state, local or private assistance available for the homeless.
7. Grant recipients must certify compliance with the certifications and assurances in the regulations at 24 CAR Subpart 585 - Subpart C.
8. Grants must be administered in compliance with the regulations at 24 CAR Part 576.

Method of Distribution

Funds will be made available to the State of Rhode Island by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Emergency Shelter Grants Program of which 5% may be set aside for program administration. This program will be administered by the Department of Administration, Division of Planning, Office of Housing and Community Development, One Capitol Hill - 3rd Floor, Providence, R.I. 02908-5873. At the discretion of the Office of Housing and Community Development, administration funds may, in whole or in part, be made available to fund emergency situations serving the homeless.

Administration funds may be shared with local governments to the extent that they participate in administering the program. Each of the state's 39 cities and towns as well as private non-profit organizations and Indian tribes are eligible to apply for funding. In order to insure timely distribution of these funds, the Office of Housing and Community Development will mail requests for proposals to each of the cities and towns as well as to each of the shelters, Community Action agencies and Indian Tribes in the State. Each city, town or agency may submit one application. There is no restriction on the maximum amount an applicant may request.

Priority will be given to application from non-formula cities and towns. However, consideration will be given to applications from formula cities which demonstrate that they have insufficient funding to meet their needs. Funds will be granted to nonprofit organization and Indian Tribes only when the local government certifies that it approves the proposed project.

Among municipalities subject to the provisions of subsection 45-53-3(ii) of State Rhode Island General Laws, priority will be provided to applicants with an approved affordable housing plan.

Homeless Prevention

In order to assist in preventing homelessness, the State may distribute up to 30% of its grant to assist in preventing families from becoming homeless. A total amount up to 30% of the State's allocation may be made available to implement homeless prevention activities.

If funds are used for homeless prevention efforts to assist families that have received eviction notices or notices of termination of utility services, the following conditions must be met.

1. The inability of the family to make the required payments must be the result of a sudden reduction in income or sudden increases in non-recurring expenses.

2. The assistance must be necessary to avoid eviction of the family or termination of services to the families.
3. There must be a reasonable prospect that the family will be able to resume payments within a reasonable period of time.
4. The assistance must not supplant funding for pre-existing homeless prevention activities from any other sources.

Review Process

The State will appoint a Review Committee which will consist of minimally representation from the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, the Governor's Policy staff, Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation, Housing Resource Commission, Office of Homelessness and Affordable Housing and the Office of Housing and Community Development or his/her designee. At the State's discretion, a public member with expertise in housing/homelessness issues may also be member of the application review committee. Applications will be rated by OHCD based on the following criteria:

1. Number of clients served/Dollars requested.
2. Population served (preference given to shelters/service providers which serve homeless families and to those agencies serving the chronically homeless)
3. Services provided within shelter and to those agencies effectively utilizing mainstream services/resources (preference given to shelters which most comprehensively meet the supportive service needs of the homeless).
4. Location of shelter (preference given to applications from non-formula cities/towns and to those cities which have an elevated need)
5. Extra consideration will be given to applications which facilitate a quantifiable increase in the services/bed capacity of the agency.
6. Extra consideration will be given to applications which fill gaps identified in the Statewide continuum of care system and the Consolidated Plan/10-year plan to end homelessness.
7. Extra consideration will be given to applicants who document employment of homeless individuals.
8. Extra consideration will be given to those agencies which have been effective in their discharge of clients/consumers.
9. Vacancy rates for agencies will be considered in the evaluation process.

Following rating and review by the Office of Housing and Community Development staff for compliance with state and federal program requirements, all proposals will be evaluated by the Review Committee. The Committee will recommend funding to the Governor, who will then make the grantee awards.

Priorities

- Projects which include the provision of services or the coordination of services for the homeless towards establishment of a continuum of care system.
- Projects that address shelter and related needs for homeless families and individuals.
- Proposals to fund activities which are not eligible for funding from other sources.
- Projects which will provide additional beds/services to areas currently inadequately served.
- Emergency situations which require immediate funding.
- Funding necessary to meet documented code deficiencies.
- Prevention of homelessness.

Ineligible Activities

1. Acquisition or construction of an emergency shelter for the homeless.
2. Rehabilitation services performed by the staff of the grantee or recipient, such as preparation of work specifications, loan processing, or inspections.

Matching Funds

Each recipient under this subtitle that is a state shall be required to supplement the assistance provided under this subtitle with an amount of funds from sources other than this subtitle equal to the difference between the amount received under this subtitle and \$100,000. If the amount received by the State is \$100,000 or less, the State may not be required to supplement the assistance provided under this subtitle. A grantee may comply with this requirement by providing the supplemental funds itself, or through supplemental funds or voluntary efforts provided by any state recipient or nonprofit recipient. Therefore, recipients may be required to match their grant. In calculating the amount of supplemental funds, there may be included the value of any donated building or material, the value of a lease on a building, any salary paid to staff of the grantee or to any state recipient in carrying out the emergency shelter program, determined at the rate of \$5 per hour. The match requirement will be waived for those agencies least capable of providing additional funds.

Definitions

"Emergency Shelter" means any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary or transitional shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless.

"Homeless" means:

1. An individuals or family which lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; or
2. An individual or family which has a primary nighttime residence that is:
 - (a) A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters and transitional housing for persons with mental illness);
 - (b) An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
 - (c) A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. The term does not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to an Act of the Congress or a State Law.

Employment of Homeless Individuals

Grantees shall, to the maximum extent practicable, involve homeless individuals and families in constructing, renovating, maintaining and operating facilities and in providing services for occupants of facilities assisted under this program.

Recipient Review/Monitoring

The State utilizes a risk-based approach to monitoring its subrecipients under the McKinney Emergency Shelter Grants Program. Recipient programs are tracked in-house through the completion of annual progress reports and review of information funded agencies have provided to other State/quasi-governmental agencies, as appropriate. Regular interaction is maintained with those recipients which receive sizable awards. On-site monitoring of recipients is completed as deemed necessary by State CD staff and is often coordinated with the efforts of the State's McKinney Continuum of Care performance reviews.

Coordination with Other Resources, Consolidated Homeless Fund

The State will take actions to coordinate its program and distribution system with other State/local homeless programs. Funds will be distributed utilizing a common application and cycle.