



## **Community Development**

### **Emergency Solutions Grant Funds**

## **Policy and Procedures**

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## **I. Program Description**

ESG funds are awarded by HUD under the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009 (HEARTH Act). The HEARTH Act improves administrative efficiency and enhances response coordination and effectiveness in addressing the needs of homeless persons. The Act adds short- and medium-term rental assistance and services to rapidly re-house homeless people, and places greater emphasis on helping people quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis and/or homelessness. In addition, the HEARTH Act provides grantees with the programmatic framework to maximize communitywide planning and strategic use of resources, and to improve coordination and integrate with mainstream services to increase efficiency, including services funded by other programs targeted to homeless people.

HUD drew from its recent program experience with the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP), a temporary program, to establish the regulations for the ESG program, a permanent program. **These funds must exclusively be used for Street Outreach, Emergency Shelter, Homelessness Prevention Assistance, Rapid Re-housing Assistance, Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS), and Administration.**

## **II. Grant Terms**

Grants will begin on October 1st and end on September 30<sup>th</sup>. It is required that 100% of the funds be expended by September 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **III. Target Population**

This program is targeted to individuals and families who “but for” this assistance will become or remain homeless. The Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, KS is requiring file documentation to verify need, as defined on the Homeless Certification, Form No. 2, and At Risk of Homeless Certification, Form No. 3. The amount of funds that will be available to recipients will likely not be enough to serve all persons at risk of homelessness; communities must prioritize funding as follows:

### **Rapid Re-housing: Target**

1. Homeless Individual with a Disability, as defined by HUD. (See ESG Form No. 4)
2. Chronically Homeless (See ESG Form No. 2)
3. General Homeless (See ESG Form No. 2)
- **Zero income individuals and families can and should be assisted with ESG for rapid re-housing.**

### **Prevention:**

#### ***Target***

1. Those closest to going to a shelter, car, or the street.
  - Risk factors for those most in need would include:
    - Extremely low incomes;
    - Criminal histories;
    - Behavioral health issues;
    - Poor employment histories.

Risk factors that make finding and maintaining housing more challenging should be used to screen people into assistance rather than screening them out.

## **IV. Use of the Funds:**

There are six categories of eligible activities for these funds:

1. Street Outreach
2. Emergency Shelter
3. Homelessness Prevention Assistance
4. Rapid Re-housing Assistance



- 5. HMIS
- 6. Administrative

These eligible activities are intentionally focused on housing—either financial assistance to help pay for housing or services designed to keep people in housing or to obtain housing. This assistance is *not* intended to provide long-term support for program participants, nor will it be able to address all of the financial and supportive services needs of households that affect housing stability. Rather, assistance should be focused on housing stabilization, linking program participants to community resources and mainstream benefits, and helping participants develop a plan for preventing future housing instability.

### **Street Outreach**

- Essential Services: services related to reaching out to unsheltered homeless individuals and families, connecting them with emergency shelter, housing, or critical services, and providing them with urgent, non-facility-based care. Eligible costs include engagement, case management, and transportation for outreach staff.

### **Emergency Shelter**

- Essential Services: Case management related to emergency shelter, *referrals* to employment, healthcare, substance abuse and related services within the community. (Note that *referrals* can be provided, however, **direct case management** for employment, health, substance abuse and other related services cannot be provided with these funds).
- Shelter Operations: including maintenance, rent, repair, security, fuel, insurance, and utilities.

### **Homelessness Prevention Assistance**

- \*\* Housing relocation and stabilization services (case management).
- Leasing assistance, as necessary, to prevent the individual or family from becoming homeless when the assistance is necessary to help program participants regain stability in their current permanent housing or move into other permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing. Eligible costs include housing search and placement, housing stability case management, rental arrearages, leasing assistance, security deposits, utility deposits, utility arrearages, mediation, and cost for obtaining identification.

### **Rapid Re-housing Assistance**

- \*\* Housing relocation and stabilization services (case management).

Leasing assistance as necessary to help individuals or families living in shelters or in places not meant for human habitation to move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing. Eligible costs include housing search and placement, housing stability case management, leasing assistance, security deposits, utility deposits, utility arrearages, mediation, and cost for obtaining identification.

Both Prevention & Rapid Re-housing funds can be utilized for short-term and medium term assistance.

1. Short-term rental assistance is assistance for up to 3 months of rent.
2. Medium-term rental assistance is assistance for more than 3 months but not more than 24 months of rent.
3. Payment of rental arrears consists of a one-time payment for up to 6 months of rent in arrears, including any late fees on those arrears.

*Rent restrictions.* (1) Rental assistance cannot be provided unless the rent does not exceed the Fair Market Rent established by HUD, as provided under 24 CFR part 888, and complies with HUD's standard of rent reasonableness, as established under 24 CFR 982.507.

**\*\* Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services** - Funds must be used to create and implement a comprehensive, easily accessible service and housing response system that addresses the needs of those who are homeless or at serious risk of homelessness.

**Eligible activities include:**

- Housing stabilization services include arranging, coordinating, linking and monitoring the delivery services that assist participants to obtain and sustain housing stability; this includes the salary of the Housing Resource Specialist(s)/Case Manager;
- Transportation/travel for supportive housing stabilization services, i.e. visit a participant;
- Costs associated with cell phones to support housing stabilization services.

**HMIS/Data Collection and Evaluation** will be conducted via HMIS. Cost associated with data collection is limited to one percent (1%) of the total grant amount. The HEARTH Act requires that data collection and reporting for ESG be conducted via HMIS.

- When providing utility assistance only, a utility service entry must be made in HMIS. If providing case management along with the utility assistance, an entry/exit must be entered in HMIS.
- Children residing in the household must be entered into HMIS.
- Eligible costs. (1) The recipient or sub recipient may use ESG funds to pay the costs of contributing data to the HMIS designated by the Continuum of Care for the area, including the costs of:
  - a. Purchasing or leasing computer hardware;
  - b. Purchasing software or software licenses;
  - c. Purchasing or leasing equipment, including telephones, fax machines, and furniture;
  - d. Obtaining technical support;
  - e. Leasing office space;
  - f. Paying charges for electricity, gas, water, phone service, and high-speed data transmission necessary to operate or contribute data to the HMIS;
  - g. Paying salaries for operating HMIS, including:
    - 1) Completing data entry;
    - 2) Monitoring and reviewing data quality;
    - 3) Completing data analysis;
    - 4) Reporting to the HMIS Lead;
    - 5) Training staff on using the HMIS or comparable database; and
    - 6) Implementing and complying with HMIS requirements;
  - h. Paying costs of staff to travel to and attend HUD-sponsored and HUD-approved training on HMIS and programs authorized by Title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act;
  - i. Paying staff travel costs to conduct intake

**Administrative Costs** are limited to seven percent (7.5%) of the total grant amount. The Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, KS retain all administrative funds. Eligible expenses include:

- Space costs (office space, utilities);
- Communication costs (printing, telephone, copying, postage);
- Supplies (paper, files, office supplies);
- Staff training for ESG related activities;
- Supervisor's pay only if directly relates to supervision of ESG staff;

Documentation for administrative costs includes timesheets or a log of hours spent working on ESG administrative activities, invoices for supplies/materials, phone bills, utilities etc.

**Financial Assistance** is available for persons who are income eligible, have a demonstrated housing crisis, and lack necessary resources. Funds must be targeted based upon individual assessments of personal need. Each program participant must have a *Housing Plan* developed that identifies defined goals, outcomes, and timelines that provides a framework for achieving housing stability. Financial assistance includes: rental assistance, rental arrearages, security deposits, utility deposits and utility arrearages.

The following criteria **must be met** for people who are homeless or those who are at risk of homelessness to qualify for resources and/or support under this program:

- An initial consultation with a Housing Resource Specialist/Case Manager to determine need must be held and entered in HMIS and in the participant's file. The households must meet the following circumstances:
  - a) No appropriate, subsequent housing options have been identified; **AND**
  - b) Lacks the financial resources and support networks needed to obtain immediate housing or remain in their existing housing, **AND**
  - c) Have **income below 30% AMI** for prevention assistance.

The Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, KS will grant ESG funds for Domestic Violence (DV) shelters to be used for shelter operations and case management services. The Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, KS will determine agency funding and amounts. **DV service providers receiving these funds must be a participating member in the CoC Planning Body.**

#### **V. Roles and Responsibilities of CoC and Sub-grantees**

**Continuum of Care (CoC) Body:** The CoC will:

- Develop a CoC culture that teaches and makes decisions based upon outcomes.
- Analyze your CoC's portfolio of grants to determine if you have the right mix of housing and services to meet the needs of the homeless households that present for assistance. Determine whether funding for some projects, in whole or in part, should be reallocated to make resources available for new efforts.
- Prioritize the use of ESG funds for proven strategies, especially rapid re-housing for those experiencing chronic homelessness. Note: people **cannot** be denied rapid re-housing because of zero income.
- Explore partnerships with mental health or substance abuse providers to provide the "support" for permanent supportive housing.
- Partner with programs that serve veterans in your community; link them to VA services and supports.
- Require ESG grantees to embrace strength-based case management.
- Community develops a system of care plan that specifically addresses assisting individuals and families living in chronic homelessness, how the plan will be monitored, and what the outcomes are.
- Provide Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, KS with annual Point in Time (PIT) Chart.
- Provide meeting minutes and e-mail minutes, notices, and agendas to the CoC membership body.
- DV agencies funded through Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, KS ESG funds must participate in CoC meetings.
- Develop a Coordinated Entry System wide policy

**Sub-grantees will be responsible for:**

- Administering **all** financial assistance dollars for prevention and rehousing.
- Practicing shelter diversion.
- Embracing rapid re-housing; (Note: people with zero income cannot be denied rapid re-housing);
- Employing staff to function as a Housing Resource Specialist/Case Manager (see Definitions)
- Practicing strength-based case management (see Definitions);
- Working with the CoC Body to ensure quality service delivery.
- Entering client information on HMIS.
- Use of the Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT);

- Routinely review and correct HMIS data quality issues and monitor outcome performance.
- Providing services and/or make referrals to other service agencies as needed.
- Submitting Annual Performance Reports (APR) that address specific performance outcomes supported by HMIS data to the ESG Program Coordinator.
- Establishing office hours in the counties that are served.
- Work with the CoC and Program Coordinator to re-align program dollars, where possible, to fill gaps to end homelessness.
- Embrace strength-based case management.
- Providing allowable services as defined within this NOFA and as specified in their contract;
- Entering client information on HMIS (Domestic Violence Agencies use alternative system);
- Routinely review and correct HMIS data quality issues and monitor outcome performance.
- Maintain financial and client level records to support billings. Retain records for six years.
- Request payment and provide necessary supportive documentation to the grant Program Coordinator.
- Ensure compliance with grant terms and provide the grant Program Coordinator access to financial and programmatic records.
- **Confidentiality - Must develop & implement written procedures to ensure:**
  - **All records containing personally identifying information (as defined in HUD's standards for participation, data collection, and reporting in a local HMIS) of any individual or family who applies for and/or receives ESG assistance will be kept secure and confidential.**
  - **The address or location of any domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking shelter project assisted under the ESG will not be made public, except with written authorization of the person responsible for the operation of the shelter; and**
  - **The address or location of any housing of a program participant will not be made public, except as provided under a preexisting privacy policy of the recipient or subrecipient and consistent with state and local laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality.**
  - **The confidentiality procedures of the recipient and its subrecipients must be in writing and must be maintained in accordance with this section 24 CFR 576.500(x)**

#### **Housing Resource Specialist/Case Manager Duties**

- **Must** meet with the program participant **monthly**. If the participant does not attend, the agency may terminate assistance. Federal policy states: this should be done only in extreme cases, and the termination process must include: 1) written notice; 2) review of decision in which the participant can document any objections; 3) final notice.
- Provide housing stabilization services that include arranging, coordinating, linking and monitoring the delivery of services that assist participants to obtain and sustain housing stability.
- Monitoring program participant progress.
- Assuring that the rights of participants are protected.
- Development of individualized housing plans for each program participant.
- Assist participants in locating and obtaining housing.
- Credit counseling, when needed;
- If leasing assistance is provided, costs associated with completing Housing Habitability Standards and Lead-Based Paint inspections and determining FMR's;
- File documentation of three rent comparables if providing financial assistance (rental assistance, rental arrearages, security deposits, utility deposits and utility arrearages).
- Mediation and legal services (court eviction fees) combined cannot exceed \$100 per household. Legal fees must be used to help people stay in their homes.



## Access, Assessment, Prioritization, & Referral Process

ESG funded agencies must adhere to the CoC, Greater Kanas City Coalition on Ending Homelessness (GKCCEH), Coordinated Entry System policy. You may find the updated policy at <http://www.endkchomelessness.org/index.html>

1. Access refers to how people experiencing a housing crisis learn that coordinated entry exists and access crisis response services. It is comprised of all entry points to a local housing and service system, which includes physical front doors, outreach teams, hotlines, virtual access, after-hours access, etc.
2. Assessment is the process of gathering information about the person presenting to the crisis response system. It includes documenting information about the barriers a person faces to being rapidly rehoused and any characteristics that might make the person more vulnerable while homeless. The assessment process must also appropriately triage the person by asking about immediate needs, accurately evaluating the person's vulnerability and barriers to housing, and providing information to support accurate referrals.
3. Prioritization refers to the process that takes place after a person experiencing a housing crisis has been assessed. Prioritization is used to determine the person's priority for housing and supportive services; the person's prioritization status then drives the referral process.

The GKCCEH CoC utilizes a prioritization process that aligns with existing CoC Program and ESG Program written standards established under HUD regulations 24 CFR 578(a)(9) and 24 CFR 576.400(e).

4. Referral describes the process of referring persons experiencing homelessness to housing and/or service openings, utilizing the CoC prioritization policy. Essentially, it is a match that coordinated entry makes between the needs and prioritization level of the person experiencing a housing crisis and the housing and supportive services projects that are available in the crisis response system.

## Housing Plan

A Housing Plan **must** be completed for all individuals that receive a housing assessment **and** are determined eligible for services. (If the household does **not** meet program eligibility, e.g. over income, a housing plan does **not** need to be done). The Housing Plan is intended to be a guide for both the household and the service agencies. Housing Plans must be framed to include:

- A focus on obtaining or maintaining housing;
- Defined goals, outcomes and timelines, as well as documentation of frequency of meetings for follow-up;
- An identification of needed community resources;
- Referrals to mainstream services, as needed;
- An attached copy of the housing assessment.

The Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, KS has not prescribed a time limit for households to find housing. These funds are targeted as shown in Section III: Target Population and then utilized on a first-come/first-serve basis until exhausted. The expectation is that housing resource specialists/case managers will work closely with households to secure housing.

Individual(s) receiving rental assistance may receive housing stabilization services (such as credit repair/mediation and housing search/placement) if they meet ESG eligibility criteria and without stabilization services would become homeless.

Homeowners and renters living in condemned property are at risk of homelessness and may be eligible for Prevention assistance if the unit meets Habitability Standards Inspections, if not, they are eligible for Rapid Rehousing services.

## Ineligible Activities

These funds cannot be used to expand the number of beds in an existing shelter, to supplant existing mainstream resources or for mortgage payments. Payments can only be made to third parties, such as landlords; payments cannot be made to

program participants. In addition, an assisted property may not be owned by the grantee, sub-grantee or the parent, subsidiary or affiliated organization of the sub-grantee.

**ESG funds cannot be used for:**

- Pay for foreclosure prevention;
- Pay rental assistance for rent to own/lease to purchase;
- Set aside money for individual(s) who may be at risk of losing their job;
- Assist the homeless or those at risk of becoming homeless to expunge and/or pardon their criminal records or for re-entry advocacy to help ex-offenders get jobs;
- Pay utilities and/or rent for tenants renting a unit owned by a family member.
- Mortgage payments or mortgage refinancing costs to make housing affordable;
- Rental assistance payments cannot be made on behalf of eligible individuals or families for the same period of time and for the same cost types that are being provided through another federal, state or local housing subsidy program.
- Furniture (sub-grantees are encouraged to use existing community sources);
- Pet Care.
- Credit card bills or other consumer debt.
- Car repair for program participants.
- Food (Emergency Shelter is eligible)
- Medical or dental care and medicines.
- Clothing and grooming.
- Entertainment activities.
- Work or education related materials.
- Cash assistance to program participants.
- Development of discharge planning programs in mainstream institutions such as hospitals, nursing homes, jails, or prisons. *However*, persons who are being imminently discharged into homelessness from such public funded institutions are eligible to receive financial assistance through ESG;
- Payment of licenses, certifications, and general classes (classes not specifically related to these funds);

**VI. Eligibility Determination and File Documentation**

**Participant Files** - The agency is required to maintain all Financial Records of their ESG participants; partnering agencies may retain the participant's file information. All participant files must be documented using the forms provided by the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/ City, KS as outlined on the Participant File Checklist. The Intake, Assessment, and Housing Plan must be completed in HMIS. These documents can be stored electronically or a copy in the participant's file. Electronic copies must be made available upon demand. Files must also contain case management notes.

**In according to 24 CFR 576.500(B) -Homeless status. The subrecipient must maintain and follow written intake procedures to ensure compliance with the homeless definition in § 576.2. The procedures must require documentation at intake of the evidence relied upon to establish and verify homeless status. The procedures must establish the order of priority for obtaining evidence as third-party documentation first, intake worker observations second, and certification from the person seeking assistance third. However, lack of third-party documentation must not prevent an individual or family from being immediately admitted to emergency shelter, receiving street outreach services, or being immediately admitted to shelter or receiving services provided by a victim service provider. Records**

contained in an **HMIS** or comparable database used by victim service or legal service providers are acceptable evidence of third-party documentation and intake worker observations if the **HMIS** retains an auditable history of all entries, including the person who entered the data, the date of entry, and the change made; and if the **HMIS** prevents overrides or changes of the dates on which entries are made.

#### **Identification Documentation**

There must be identification documentation for all household members whether receiving case management and/or financial assistance. Documentation must be a copy of **one** of the following:

- Driver's License
- Social Security Card
- Medicaid Card (as a last resort *for children only*)
- Birth Certificate
- Passport

#### **Release of Information Form – HMIS**

A Release of Information form must be signed by each household member age 18 or older with a copy in file.

#### **214 Status – ESG Form No. 1 (Prevention and Re-housing)**

ESG assistance is available only to individuals who are US citizens, US nationals, or noncitizens that have eligible immigration status. *At least one family member must be a citizen, national, or noncitizen with eligible immigration status in order for the family to qualify for assistance.* All household members must be listed on the form. Parent or guardian must sign their own name for family member(s) under 18 years of age.

#### **Homeless Certification - ESG Form No. 2**

Must complete the Homeless Certification indicating current living situation and provide the appropriate documentation as indicated on the form. Category 1 is eligible for Re-housing assistance; Category 2 is considered “homeless” but receive Prevention assistance; Category 3 is eligible for both Prevention and Rapid Rehousing services; Category 4 is eligible for both Prevention and Rapid Re-housing assistance.

#### **At Risk of Homelessness – ESG Form No. 3**

Must complete the At Risk of Homelessness Certification indicating current living situation, and provide the appropriate documentation as indicated on the form. Participants at “risk of homelessness” are eligible for Prevention assistance.

#### **Disability Certification – ESG Form No. 4 (Re-housing and Prevention)**

Must complete the Disability Certification to prioritize those receiving Re-housing assistance.

#### **Self-Certification – ESG Form No. 5 (Prevention and Re-housing)**

Must be completed if required verifications/documents cannot be provided and self-certification is the only way to verify information to determine program eligibility.

#### **Staff Affidavit - ESG Form No. 6 (Prevention and Re-housing)**

ESG staff and supervisor must sign the Staff Affidavit certifying the person/household meets all requirements to receive ESG assistance and all of the information provided is true and complete to the best of their knowledge. It further certifies that the person(s)/household receiving assistance has not resulted, nor will result, in a personal or financial interest or benefit for Agency Staff or for anyone with whom they have family or business ties.

#### **Verification of Income**

All sources of household income (including zero income households) for each household member age 18 or older, must be verified and documented at intake and every three (3) months to determine program eligibility. To be eligible for



assistance, gross household income must be below 30% area median income (AMI) for the county in which the household resides (Prevention Assistance). For earned income, household must provide two (2) pay stubs, dated within 60 days of receiving assistance.

	<b>Verify and Document Income</b>	
	<b>Intake/Screening</b>	<b>3 month re-certification</b>
ESG Homelessness Prevention	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
ESG Rapid Re-housing	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

Income must be verified and documented for the following household members:

<b>Whose Income is Counted?</b>		
<b>Members</b>	<b>Employment Income (earned income)</b>	<b>Other Income (unearned income including income from assets)</b>
Head	Yes	Yes
Spouse	Yes	Yes
Co-Head	Yes	Yes
Other Adult(s)	Yes	Yes
Dependents	No	Yes
<b>Non-Members</b>		
Foster Child	No	No
Foster Adult	No	No
Live-in Aide	No	No

#### **Verification Tracking of Income – ESG Form No. 7 (Prevention and Re-housing)**

Income must be verified for all household members age 18 or older. Agencies must record all attempts (phone logs, email correspondence, copies of certified letters etc.) to obtain required verifications in the order specified on the form. Staff must provide an explanation on the form if utilizing verification out of the hierarchy sequence. Household member(s) age 18 or older with zero income must complete Step 5 of the form.

#### **Verification of Income – ESG Form No. 8 (Prevention and Re-housing)**

If household income cannot be verified with third-party source documents (provided by the participant), the Agency must request the income information from income source (i.e. employer/bank etc.).

#### **Calculation Worksheet - ESG Form No. 9 – (Prevention and Re-housing)**

The Calculation Worksheet must be completed at intake and every three (3) months to determine eligibility for ESG assistance. To be eligible for ESG assistance the gross annual household income must be **below 30% AMI (Prevention Assistance)**. Income is annualized to project gross annual income; there are no allowances/deductions from the household's gross income. **The Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, KS and HUD are not requiring the household to pay any part of their income towards rent. However, a CoC can decide what percent of the household's income is paid toward rent.** If the participant is required to pay any portion of their rent, it must be approved by Homeless Assistance Specialist/Case Manager and included in the community's financial assistance guidelines. **Remember, zero income must be served.**



**Income Inclusions and Examples of Acceptable Documentation:**

- Earned Income (Wages and Salary)
  - Payment statement
  - Statement of income from employer/source of income
- Self-Employment/Business Income
  - Most recent Financial Statement
- Interest and Dividend Income
  - Most recent interest or dividend income statement
- Pension/Retirement Income
  - Most recent benefit notice, pension statement or other payment statement from pension provider
- Armed Forces Income
  - Payment statement
  - Statement of income from government official/agency
- Unemployment and Disability Income
  - Most recent benefit or disability income notice from SSI
  - Statement from SSI
- Public Assistance, including TANF
  - Most recent benefit or income notice from public assistance administrator
  - Statement from public assistance administrator
- Alimony and Child Support
  - Court Order
  - Most recent payment statement
- No Income Report
  - Self-certification

**Income Exclusions:**

- Food stamps;
- Foster children and foster adult care payments;
- Scholarships and Grants;
- Resident Service Stipend—not to exceed \$200/month (if more than \$200/month the entire stipend (including the \$200) is included as income.

**Calculating Income:**

The requirements for determining whether a family is eligible for assistance requires intake staff to project or estimate the annual income the household expects to receive. Generally, current circumstances must be used to estimate income, and annual income is projected by annualizing current income.

**Convert all income to an annual figure by multiplying the pay rate by the frequency of payment:**

- Multiply hourly wages by the number of hours worked per year. Full-time employment (40 hours a week and no overtime) is 2,080 hours (40 hrs. X 52 weeks = 2080 hours). (10 hours a week X 52 weeks = 520 hrs. per year).
- Multiply weekly wages by 52.
- Multiply bi-weekly wages by 26.
- Multiply semi-monthly wages by 24.
- Multiply monthly wages by 12.
- Multiply daily wages by 260 (full time/no overtime).
- To convert monthly amount to weekly, divide by 4.3.
- Round up to the nearest dollar at .50 and above (except SS payments, which are always rounded down).

- Unemployment compensation should be calculated assuming current circumstances will last a full 12 months. If changes occur later in the year, an interim recertification can be conducted to change the family's rent.

### **Calculating Income from Assets:**

When calculating income from assets, include assets of all household members *including assets of minor children*. **Income earned from assets is included in the gross income calculation (not the actual value of the asset).** If a program participant has a savings account with a \$500.00 balance, earning 1% interest, \$5.00 would be added as household income

#### Assets Include:

Bank Accounts  
Life Insurance policies  
Lump sum additions  
Personal Property held as Investments  
Retirement/Pension funds  
Trusts  
Assets disposed of for less than Fair Market Value  
Stocks, Bonds, Mutual Funds, etc.  
IRA, Keogh, Annuities and Similar Retirement Accounts

#### Assets Exclude:

Necessary Personal Property  
Assets not Accessible to Family  
Business or Farming Operation Assets  
Interest in Indian Land trusts  
Equity in Cooperatives & Manufactured Homes  
Vehicles/Special Equipment for Disabled

The calculation to determine the amount of income from assets to include in annual income considers both of the following:

- The total cash value of the family's assets; and
- The amount of income those assets are earning or could earn.

The rule for calculating income from assets differs depending on whether the total cash value of family assets is \$5,000 or less, or is more than \$5,000.

If the total cash value of the family assets are:

- Less than or equal to \$5,000:
  - Use the actual income earned from assets (i.e., interest and dividends); or
- Greater than \$5,000, use the greater of:
  - Actual income earned from assets, or
  - Imputed income from assets based upon passbook rate approved by HUD (0.06%). (Imputed Income is HUD's approved passbook rate multiplied by the total cash value of assets).

### **Checking/Savings Accounts**

- The cash value of a checking and savings account is the current balance.

## **VII. Housing Documents**

### **Lease**

A lease is required for households receiving financial assistance. Financial assistance includes: rental assistance, rental arrearages, security deposits, utility deposits, and utility arrearages. All household members must be listed on the lease and a copy of the lease must be maintained in the participant file. For individuals moving into a new unit, the unit must meet habitability standards before the lease is signed and the household moves in. For households already residing in a unit, the unit must meet habitability standards before financial assistance can be provided.

If rental and utility arrearages are paid, the participant must have had a valid lease in place covering the arrearage period. The rental arrearage amount paid each month cannot exceed the FMR.

If the Landlord agrees to lower the rent to comply with the FMR, a new lease or lease addendum must be signed stating the new rental amount and a copy placed in the file. The rent amount charged after the household's leasing assistance has ended is between the landlord and the tenant.

### **Utility Arrearages from a Previous Address for Re-housing Participants**

Utility arrearages for a previous address may be made, regardless if it was not the household's last address.

- **Before making payment for utility arrearages**, the case manager must document in the participant's file with either verbal or written documentation from the utility company that by paying a specified amount, the utilities will be turned on for the household by the utility company at the new address.
- A copy of the disconnection notice must be in the participant file.
- ESG funds may pay for up to 24 months of utility payments per program participant, per service, including up to 6 months of utility payments in arrears, per service. A partial payment of a utility bill counts as one month. This assistance may only be provided if the program participant or a member of the same household has an account in his or her name with a utility company or proof of responsibility to make utility payments. Eligible utility services are gas, electric, water, and sewage. No program participant shall receive more than 24 months of utility assistance within any 3-year period.

### **Rent Reasonableness - ESG Form No. 10 (Prevention and Rehousing)**

Rent comparables are required for all households receiving financial assistance (i.e. rental assistance, rental arrearages, security deposits, utility deposits, and utility arrearages). ESG assisted units must rent for a reasonable amount, compared to rents charged for comparable, unassisted units. Sub-grantees must document the basis for their rent reasonableness determinations. The prescribed form provides a rent analysis for three (3) comparable unassisted units. Although it is acceptable to use three (3) unassisted units in the same apartment complex, it is recommended that two comparable units be located in other complexes/locations. Kansas Housing Locator ([www.kshousingsearch.org](http://www.kshousingsearch.org)) or [www.kcmetrohousing.org](http://www.kcmetrohousing.org)) may also be used to determine rent reasonableness.

### **Prevention and Re-housing**

All units must be inspected before financial assistance can be provided (i.e. rental assistance, rental arrearages, security deposits, utility deposits, and utility arrearages). Landlords and tenants must be notified of the date and time of the inspection and the tenant or the landlord or an adult representative **must be present** at the housing unit during the inspection.

### **Habitability Standards Inspection Form – ESG Form No. 12 (Prevention and Re-housing)**

All units **must** meet Habitability Standards before financial assistance (i.e. rental assistance, rental arrearages, security deposits, utility deposits, and utility arrearages) can be provided. For individuals moving into a new unit, the unit must meet Habitability Standards before a lease is signed and the household moves into the unit. If water/utilities are not on at the time of initial inspection, a follow-up inspection must be done within 10 days of the water/utilities being turned on. If sub-grantees do not have the staff available to conduct inspections Form No. 11 must be completed.

### **Lead-Based Paint Inspection - ESG Form Nos. 11 and 12 (Prevention and Re-housing)**

Lead-Based Paint Inspection is required for properties built before 1978 and if a child age 6 or younger or a pregnant woman will be residing in the unit. The inspection may be visual; however, if the child age 6 or younger has been identified with an Identified Environmental Intervention Blood Lead Level, the inspection must be done by a Certified Lead-Based Paint Risk Assessor (ESG Form No. 11). **All households must be provided with the HUD pamphlet, *Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home (Form 14)*. Receipt of this pamphlet must be documented utilizing ESG Form No. 13.** If sub-grantees do not have the staff available to conduct Habitability Inspections or Lead-Based Paint Inspections, Form No. 11 must be completed.

### **Rental Assistance Agreement – ESG Form No. 15 (Prevention and Re-housing)**

This Agreement covers ESG “Tenant-Based” Rental Assistance and must be completed by the case manager and Landlord when providing rental assistance under both the homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing components of the ESG Program. When paying rental arrears only a Rental Assistance Agreement is required as arrears are considered rental assistance. The Rental Assistance Agreement does not take the place of the lease between the program participant and landlord.

## **VIII. Program Support Information**

### **Occupancy Standards**

The Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, KS has developed occupancy standards that comply with HQS requirements and outline how the number of bedrooms required by the household will be determined. The following basic standards can be modified to take into consideration specific household composition and circumstances (i.e., pending child custody cases, chronic illnesses, family member who is absent most of the time).

- No more than two persons are required to occupy a bedroom.
- Persons of different generations (i.e., grandparents, parents, children), persons of the opposite sex (other than spouses/couples) and unrelated adults are not required to share a bedroom.
- Children of the same sex (regardless of age) and couples co-habiting (whether or not legally married) must share the same bedroom for purpose of assigning the number of bedrooms.
- A live-in care attendant who is not a member of the family is not required to share a bedroom with another household member.
- Individual medical problems (i.e., chronic illness) sometimes require either separate bedrooms for household members who would otherwise be required to share a bedroom or an extra bedroom to store medical equipment;
- In most instances, a bedroom is not provided for a family member who will be absent most of the time, such as a member who is away in the military.

Occupancy standards are used to provide consistent criteria for determining the unit size for which the household is eligible and thus, the amount of assistance to be provided. Fair housing rules permit a household to select smaller units that do not create seriously overcrowded conditions. A tenant may select a larger unit if it meets the FMR for the actual number of bedrooms for which they are eligible according to the eligibility guidelines. Tenants are not allowed to give the landlord additional funds for larger units.

- ***Undersized Units:*** If a family elects to occupy a unit with fewer bedrooms than specified in the Occupancy Guidelines, the FMR is based on the *actual* number of bedrooms;
- ***Oversized Units:*** If a family elects to occupy a unit with more bedrooms than specified in the Occupancy Guidelines, the FMR is based on the number of bedrooms specified in the Occupancy Guidelines.

If an additional bedroom is required for an individual who would normally be required to share a room, the reason must be documented in the file. For example: If an additional room is needed because of a medical condition, documentation may be a note from their doctor; otherwise, if the case manager determines an additional room is needed (medical condition, care-giver, medical equipment etc.) the case manager must document the reason in the case management notes.

In cases where college students and children staying only for weekends etc., the amount of time spent in the unit should be taken into consideration before assigning additional bedroom(s). ESG assistance is short-term and a smaller unit is acceptable if it does not create serious overcrowding; a living room can be counted as a sleeping room. If student/children will be in the unit the majority of the time and future rent will not be a burden, then an additional bedroom can be assigned.

A separate bedroom cannot be issued for an unborn child. Once the baby is born a second bedroom can be issued unless the baby has an older, same sex sibling who has already been issued a bedroom.

### **Single Room Occupancy, Efficiency or Studio Units, Mobile Home or Trailers, Manufactured Housing**

#### **Single Room Occupancy**

Single room occupancy (SRO) unit provides living and sleeping space for the exclusive use of the occupant but requires the occupant to share sanitary and/or food preparation facilities with others. No more than one person may occupy an SRO unit.

- ESG assistance may be provided using SRO Fair Market Rent + utilities.
- When providing ESG assistance in an SRO unit, there **must** be a lease in place.
- Because no children live in SRO housing, the Housing Quality Standards applicable to lead based paint do not apply.
- **However, additional Habitability Standards do apply:**

**Access:** Access doors to the SRO unit must have working locks for privacy. The occupant must be able to access the unit without going through any other unit. Each unit must have immediate access to two or more approved means of exit from the building, appropriately marked and leading to safe and open space at ground level. The SRO unit must also have other means of exit required by State or local law.

**Fire Safety:** All SRO facilities must have a sprinkler system that protects major spaces. Major spaces are defined as hallways, common areas, and any other areas specified in local fire, building or safety codes. SROs must also have hard-wired smoke detectors, and any other fire and safety requirement required by state or local law. Sanitary facilities and space and security standards must meet local code requirements for SRO housing. In the absence of local code standards the requirements discussed below apply [24 CFR 982.605]:

**Sanitary Facilities:** At least one flush toilet that can be used in privacy, a lavatory basin and a bathtub or shower in proper operating condition must be provided for each six persons (or fewer) residing in the SRO facility. If the SRO units are leased only to men, flush urinals may be substituted for up to one half of the required number of toilets. Sanitary facilities must be reasonably accessible from a common hall or passageway, and may not be located more than one floor above or below the SRO unit. They may not be located below grade unless the SRO units are located on that level.

**Space and Security:** An SRO unit must contain at least 110 square feet of floor space, and at least four square feet of closet space with an unobstructed height of at least five feet for use by the occupant. If the closet space is less than four square feet, the habitable floor space in the SRO unit must be increased by the amount of the deficiency. Exterior doors and windows accessible from outside the SRO must be lockable.

- All other ESG eligibility requirements apply.

#### **Efficiency or Studio Units**

**Definition:** A small apartment unit which combines living room, bedroom, and kitchenette into a single room. Efficiency apartments are sometimes smaller than studio apartments.

- ESG assistance may be provided based on 0-bedroom size at Fair Market Rent + utilities.
- All other ESG eligibility requirements apply.



Mobile Home or Trailers: a structure that is transportable in one piece and can be moved from one place to another. The term 'mobile home' or 'trailer' is often used interchangeably.

ESG funds may assist with these recognized housing units as long as they are securely attached to a stationary pad, i.e. tied down. The pad may be either a poured basement, concrete slab on grade or, must be securely anchored to the site; the unit may or may not have a 'tongue' removed; the unit may or may not be 'skirted'. Many of these conditions are dependent upon local code requirements.

- ESG will not pay for any unit that can be attached to a vehicle and readily moved from location-to-location.
- ESG will not pay for units that are intended for recreational purposes such as campers or tents.

Housing Resource Specialists/Case Managers shall use discretion when committing ESG funds for the use of these units and documentation must be in the file.

- In order to provide ESG assistance a lease must be in place.
- ESG assistance may be made for the unit size FMR amount and may include the lot rent if it is written in the lease as such.

***FMR amount + lot rent amount should NOT be added together to obtain FMR.*** It is one or the other, not both. (Utilities would also need to be considered as part of the FMR.)

- Persons receiving ESG assistance may not pay the 'difference' in order to 'qualify' under FMR amounts.
- ESG may assist those who own units but cannot afford to pay lot rent.
- All other ESG eligibility requirements apply.
- Rent Reasonableness is based on comparable units taking into consideration location and size of unit.
- Units may be in a community setting or on private property.
- **Additional Habitability Standards do apply:**

**Security:** A mobile home or trailer must be placed on the site in a stable manner and must be free from hazards such as sliding or wind damage. The home must be securely anchored by a tie-down device that distributes and transfers the loads imposed by the unit to appropriate ground anchors to resist overturning and sliding.

Manufactured Housing - A manufactured home is a manufactured structure transportable in one or more parts that is built on a permanent chassis and designed for use as a principal place of residence.

### **Fair Market Rent and Rent Reasonableness**

To provide rental assistance with ESG funds, the rental rate plus utilities cannot exceed both HUD's published FMR and/or the rent reasonableness standards, i.e. the three rent comparables. Otherwise stated, Contract Rent + Utilities = Gross Rent. The Gross Rent cannot exceed the FMR or the three (3) rent comparables provided in the file. Grantees must:

- Calculate the utility allowance for tenants paying their own rent using KCK Section 8 Utility Allowance Schedule. Add the rental rate and utilities together to determine the gross rent. The rent + utilities cannot exceed FMR. Again, contract rent + utilities = gross rent, which cannot exceed the FMR.
- Complete the revised Rent Reasonableness Checklist and Certification. The rents shown as comparable must be equal to or less than **the gross rent** of the proposed rental.

### **Calculating Gross Rent**

- ***If tenants are responsible for paying their own utilities, the monthly utility allowance must be added to the contract rent amount to calculate gross rent,*** to determine whether the unit meets the FMR and rent reasonableness standards. Utility costs may include gas, electric, water, sewer, and trash. Telephone, cable or satellite television service and internet service are not included in FMRs and are not allowable costs under ESG. The Utility Allowance Schedule is posted on the KCK Housing Authority Section 8 Website at [KCK Section 8 Utility Allowance Schedule](#).

To determine whether rent is acceptable for ESG rental assistance, the **gross rent** (rent + utilities) for the current or new unit **must first be compared with FMR limits**. If the unit's gross rent is at or below FMR limits, then the gross rent must be used to determine rent reasonableness.

- If the gross rent for the unit is below both the FMR and the rent reasonableness standard, then ESG funds may be used to pay rent for the unit.
- If the gross rent for the unit exceeds **either FMR or rent reasonableness standard**, ESG funds **cannot be used to pay any portion of the rent**.
- If the reasonable rent for a specific unit in a community is lower than the FMR, then the rent for the unit assisted with ESG funds must not exceed the **lesser** of the FMR or the rent reasonableness standard.
- If the gross rent for the unit exceeds either the rent reasonableness standard or FMR, ESG recipients are prohibited from using ESG funds for **any** portion of the rent, even if the household is willing and/or able to pay the difference.

### **Deposits**

Security deposits. ESG funds may pay for a security deposit that is equal to no more than 2 months' rent; utility deposits are an eligible activity if needed. Deposits will remain with the household.

### **Participation in Support Services**

Support services cannot be mandated for individual(s) receiving ESG assistance. Households who are income eligible but fail to make an effort to find employment, secure income, apply for other rental assistance programs etc. although they demonstrated the ability to sustain housing at the time of entry cannot have their assistance terminated based on this criterion. Participants enter as eligible for three (3) months; they cannot be promised any certain length of assistance (i.e., assistance will be offered/paid month-by-month within the qualifying limits).

### **CFDA Number**

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number for ESG is 14.231.

### **Insurance Coverage**

All recipients of ESG funds must carry General Liability Insurance. The Grantee must maintain documentation of insurance coverage from sub-grantees.

### **Grant Management**

***Eligible expenses incurred prior to October 1<sup>st</sup> will not be paid.*** The billing start date must not be prior to HUD's fiscal start date.

**Grant Amendments:** Changes to the budget must be submitted by August 31<sup>st</sup> for Grants ending September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Recaptured funds:** If funds are recaptured, next year's Grant will be reduced by 50% of the recaptured amount (if \$10,000 is recaptured, next year's Grant will be reduced by \$5,000).

#### **Budget Deviations:**

- For changes within a budget component (ex: Re-housing Financial Assistance – moving funds from leasing assistance to security deposit) and changes between budget components (ex: moving funds from Prevention Financial Assistance to Re-housing Financial Assistance)- a letter of request must be submitted to the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, KS ESG Program Coordinator; a review of the request will be approved by the Director of Community Development.

*\*Note: Review ESG Recapture and Reallocation Policy can be found at <http://www.wycokck.org/CommDev/Programs.aspx>*



## **Records Management**

- **File Retention:** ESG client files, financial records to support billings, and homeless preference documentation must be retained for six (6) years after the grant has been closed.

## **Monitoring Protocol**

Unified Government sub-recipient monitoring guide can be requested.

## **Program Participant Termination – Formal Due Process**

Sub-grantees terminating a program participants' ESG assistance for violating program requirements must provide a formal termination process that recognizes the rights of individual(s) to due process of law. ***The formal process is only required after a participant has received assistance and is then terminated from receiving continued assistance.*** This process, at a minimum, must consist of the following:

- Written notice to the program participant containing a clear statement of the reasons for termination;
- A review of the decision, in which the program participant is given the opportunity to present written or oral objections before a person other than the person (or a subordinate of that person) who made or approved the termination; and,
- Prompt written notice of the final decision to the program participant.

If a participant is deemed ineligible to receive ESG assistance, Sub-grantees must document the reasons for denial and inform the applicant(s) in writing of the denial. Assistance to a program participant who has been terminated from the program may resume at a later date. ESG assistance will be determined on a case-by-case basis for individual(s) who have lost their Section 8, TBRA, or Shelter Plus Care vouchers due to program violations, eviction, or misconduct eligibility. Housing resource specialists/case managers may contact their Homeless Assistance Specialist, CoC or ESG Program Coordinator for guidance.

## **Fraud Procedures**

When an agency finds or hears of fraudulent use of ESG funds, they are required to report the situation via e-mail or letter form to the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, KS ESG Program Coordinator.

## **Annual Performance Reports**

- The Project Annual Performance Matrix Report is due annually.

Reporting Period	Submission to UG Deadline
October 1 <sup>st</sup> – September 30 <sup>th</sup>	October 31 <sup>st</sup>

The Grantee must also submit a final Cumulative Report covering period October 1<sup>st</sup> – September 30<sup>th</sup>. This report is due by October 31<sup>st</sup> via IDIS.

## **IX. Other Federal Requirements**

Recipients must comply with the following other federal requirements: Fair Housing Act; Uniform Administrative Requirements; Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs; Age Discrimination Act; American's with Disabilities Act; Equal Employment Opportunity Programs; Monthly Business Enterprises; Women's Business Enterprise; Drug Free Workplace; Debarred, Suspended, Ineligible Contractors; Affirmative Outreach; Section 6002 of the Solid Waste Disposal Act, as amended by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.



## **X. Definitions**

**Area Median Income:** The area median divides the household income distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median household income and one-half above the median.

**By-Name List (BNL)** – The BNL is a list of households experiencing homelessness, who have been prioritized based on assessed need. The BNL comprises the entire geography of the CoC, and serves as the primary referral and placement source for CoC and ESG funded PH programs.

**Case Management** - Case management refers to a collaborative and planned approach to ensuring that a person who experiences homelessness gets the services and support that they need to maintain a better quality of life. Case management is strengths based & trauma informed. A client-centered case management approach ensures that the person who has experienced homelessness has significant input in identifying goals and service needs, and that there is shared accountability. The goal of case management is to empower people, draw on their own strengths and capabilities, and promote an improved quality of life by facilitating timely access to the necessary supports and thus reduce the risk of homelessness and/or help them achieve housing stability.

**Chronic Homelessness** – An individual or family is defined as chronically homeless when the following conditions have been met: 1) Head of household or minor head of household has a documented disabling condition, AND 2) The household has either been continuously homeless for a period of 12 or more months (1 year or more) OR has had at least four distinct & documented episodes of homelessness (each 30 days or longer) in the previous 3 year period and where each break is 7 days or longer, which cumulatively equal 365 days or more.

**Client Choice** – Client choice means clients are actively making their own decisions in regard to receipt of services, treatment options, types of programs to participate in, and where they choose to live.

**Continuum of Care (CoC)** – A CoC is a regional or local planning body comprised of agencies, organizations & individuals who have an interest in ending & reducing homelessness, that coordinates policies, strategies, targeted funding processes, and activities toward ending homelessness for a defined geographic area set by the department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). Its work includes gathering and analyzing information in order to determine the local needs of people experiencing homelessness, implementing strategic responses, educating the community on homeless issues, providing advice and input on the operations of homeless services, and measuring project and system level CoC performance.

**Continuum of Care (CoC) Lead Agency** – The Continuum of Care (CoC) Lead is the agency that is designated to carry out the activities of the CoC or CoC planning grant including fiscal and compliance activities. Regular administrative tasks include, but are not limited to: management of the annual HUD application process, coordination of other funding opportunities, project and system monitoring, meeting management, etc.

**Coordinated Entry (CE)** – Mandated by the **2009 HEARTH Act**, Coordinated Entry is a centralized process through which people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness can access the crisis response system in a streamlined way. Once entered into the C.E. system, clients will have their strengths and needs quickly assessed, so they may be more efficiently and effectively connected to appropriate housing and supportive services within the community. Centralization of this process enables households to more readily access the best options to address their needs, and emphasizes participants' choice over evaluation for a single program within a complex matrix of systems. Through the Coordinated Entry process, the most intensive and readily accessible interventions are prioritized for those with the highest vulnerability and severity of need.

### **Coordinated Entry processes help:**

- communities prioritize assistance based on vulnerability and severity of service needs

- provide information about service needs and gaps to help communities plan strategies that more effectively target the distinct needs of their population

Individuals in the CoC's geographic area can expect fair and equal access to the Coordinated Entry process, regardless of where or how they present for services. The commitment to fair and equal access means the process for accessing help is well-known and understood to both homeless service providers and those experiencing homelessness. Individuals may obtain access to the Coordinated Entry system in person, by phone, or through identifying themselves as homeless when speaking with a homeless service provider .

CoCs may have different processes for assessing clients for Coordinated Entry, including different access points and assessment tools for the following populations: (1) adults without children, (2) adults accompanied by children, (3) unaccompanied youth, or (4) households fleeing domestic violence. CE assessment tools should be brief and require a short amount of time to utilize. Tools should also be easily-administered by non-clinical staff including outreach workers, and easy for those being assessed to understand.

**Emergency Shelter (ES)** - Any facility with overnight sleeping accommodations, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary shelter for the homeless.

**Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)** - A Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a local information technology system. This system is used to collect and aggregate client-level data regarding the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families, as well as to persons at risk of homelessness. Each Continuum of Care is responsible for selecting an HMIS software solution that complies with HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards. Agencies receiving HUD and/or HHS funds through CoC, ESG, RHY, PATH, SSVF, etc. are required to participate in HMIS. GKCCEH encourages the use of HMIS by all members and service providers within the CoC, regardless of funding sources.

**Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead Agency** – The HMIS Lead Agency is the entity, organization or government department designated by the CoC to administer and manage the HMIS. The HMIS Lead Agency is evaluated by the CoC on an annual basis.

**Housing First (HF)** - Housing First is a low-barrier homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing people experiencing homelessness with permanent housing as quickly as possible. The Housing First model is grounded in the belief that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to activities such as finding employment, addressing substance use issues, or participating in counseling or life skills classes. Housing First is a strengths-based approach to improving the quality of life of individuals experiencing homelessness, which places a strong emphasis on valuing client choice-- in housing preference, defining goals and associated tasks, and participation in supportive services. What is most critical to the Housing First approach is that it does not mandate participation in services before obtaining housing or as a condition of program participation.

**Housing First is mandated for CoC/ESG-funded Permanent Housing programs, and strongly encouraged for Transitional Housing and Emergency Shelter programs.**

#### **Levels of Housing First Intervention:**

**All programs should offer voluntary, but engaged services**, meaning supportive services are proactively offered to help clients achieve and maintain permanent housing, but do not require clients to participate in services as a prerequisite or condition of housing.

- **No-barrier admission policy** - Programs that provide individuals with private or semi-private accommodations for an unspecified duration with no treatment demands or requirements. Such programs provide a housing environment that is safe, stable, and flexible, and offer (not require) services non-intrusively and as the resident is ready.

- **Low-barrier admission policy** – Homeless programs having low-barrier admission policies are those who place the fewest possible expectations on participants upon entry. Policies should be designed to “screen-in” rather than “screen-out” applicants with the greatest barriers to housing, such as having no or very low income, poor rental history, past evictions, severe and persistent mental illness, disability, and/or criminal records.
- **Few to no programmatic prerequisites to housing** – Clients are offered permanent housing with no programmatic preconditions such as demonstration of sobriety, completion of drug, alcohol or mental health treatment, or agreeing to comply with a treatment regimen upon program entry.

**Housing Locator:** The Kansas Housing Locator identifies affordable housing and can be found at [www.KSHousingSearch.org](http://www.KSHousingSearch.org) or [KCMetroHousing.org](http://KCMetroHousing.org). The Housing Locator may be helpful in rapidly re-housing people.

**Housing Plan:** A Housing Plan must be completed for all individuals accepted into the ESG program. The Housing Plan is intended to be a guide for both the household and the service agencies.

**Housing Resource Specialist:** Recognized worker steeped in housing with a basic understanding of rental assistance programs such as TBRA and Shelter Plus Care. This worker knows the local rental housing stock and its turnover rate, area landlords, and the condition of their property.

Housing Resource Specialists must receive training to make the centralized intake and housing assessment process effective. Activities performed by a Housing Specialist include: intake; assessment; creation of a Housing Plan that includes a path to permanent housing stability subsequent to these funds; arrangement, coordination, monitoring, and delivery of services to assist participants to obtain housing stability. Component activities may include: housing counseling, developing, securing, and coordinating services, monitoring and evaluation of program participant progress, and assuring that the program participants’ rights are protected.

**Key Partners include:** CoC Body, Greater Kansas City Coalition on Ending Homelessness (GKCCEH).

**Leasing Assistance:** Units cannot exceed the FMR standards. Leasing payments must be made directly to the Landlord.

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** A document to define the roles between all parties. Sharing of information is required. (See Participant Releases definition above.)

**Participant Releases:** Releases that reflect the MOU’s to assure all parties charged with caring for participants may share information. A single “Community Release” may be appropriate. This agreement/MOU defines the local sharing practice and is required to allow interagency sharing through HMIS (Domestic Violence Agencies use alternative system). Signatories on the agreement include those agencies who are working collaboratively with the person(s) receiving assistance.

**Partners:** organizations, agencies and members of the public who fund programs or interact regularly with people in crisis, poverty, or at risk of homelessness. These may include the following:

- Head Start and Early Head Start Agencies;
- Department of Human Services; Child Welfare Agencies; Unemployment Offices;
- WIC Agencies; Hospitals and Health Clinics; Mental Health Agencies;
- Public Housing Agencies; Public Housing Tenant Associations; Property Managers/Landlords;
- Utility Companies;
- Substance Abuse Treatment Programs; Domestic Violence Programs;
- Food Banks; Community Action Agencies; Help Lines (and 211 lines);
- Police; Jails; Prisons; and Probation Offices; Courts;



- Culturally Specific Organizations; Shelters and Homeless Assistance Providers; Veterans Services Organizations; Legal Aid Agencies; School Homeless Liaisons; Community Resource Centers;
- Family Support Centers; Businesses; Workforce Centers;
- Churches and other Faith-Based Organizations

**Prevention Assistance-** Prevention Assistance is the practice of providing short to medium-term supportive services and financial assistance to households at-risk or at imminent risk of homelessness. Prevention connects people with the care and support needed to maintain their housing.

**Progress Engagement:** Providing just enough assistance to help a household get by each month while providing case management that leads to self-sufficiency.

**Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) -** RRH Programs provide temporary, time limited financial assistance, including rental and utility subsidies, offering supportive services to help those who are experiencing literal homelessness to be quickly re-housed and stabilized in permanent rental housing of their choosing. Consumers must meet criteria for Category 1,3 or 4 of the HUD Definition for Homelessness.

**Residency:** ESG assistance must be based upon an individual(s) county of residence; individual(s) cannot receive assistance based on their county of employment. There is no minimal time limit for residency in order to be considered for ESG assistance.

**Strengths Based Approach -** A theory utilized in social work practice that emphasizes people's self-determination and strengths to deploy empowerment. It is a philosophy and a way of viewing clients as resourceful and resilient in the face of adversity. The goal is to work with people with a focus on their natural abilities and capabilities with the assumption that people already have various competencies and resources that may be used to improve their situation.

**Subsidized Housing -** Subsidized housing is a private or government sponsored economic assistance program aimed towards alleviating housing costs and expenses for people with low to moderate incomes; all or part of client rents are paid by for by the assistance program.

**Subsidy –** A subsidy is a payment made on behalf of a client related to housing needs such as rent, utilities, or arrears. Subsidy payments may be part or all of an amount owed by the client, determined by the providing agency, typically based on client need. Subsidies are typically provided either on a one-time or pre-determined ongoing basis.

**Uniform Administrative Requirements (UAR):** Local governments: see OMB Circular A-87; and non-profits: see OMB Circular A-122. These circulars establish principles and standards to provide a uniform approach for determining allowable costs when working with federal grants. Go to [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov).

**VAT – Vulnerability Assessment Tool** The VAT provides a structured way of measuring an individual's vulnerability to continued instability. By rating an individual's level of functioning or severity of condition across 10 domains, a comprehensive assessment of vulnerability can be reached and then compared with vulnerability assessments of other people experiencing homelessness. The assessment process entails a structured interview followed by completion of the rating scales. The tool is designed for use by service workers accustomed to interacting directly with individuals experiencing homelessness, and training is required to ensure reliable application of the tool .VAT allows providers to do two things: 1) to develop an objective sense of an individual's vulnerability to continued instability; 2) to distinguish among the many adults experiencing homelessness in the community who have also had a vulnerability assessment.