

Public Comment Notice

FFY2021 Goals and Action Steps

for ESG and HOPWA Programs

The State of Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is currently preparing its FFY2021/SFY2022 Annual Action Plan for the 2018-2022 Consolidated Plan for the State fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021.

There will be no annual competition for the FFY 2021 ESG and HOPWA funds. Only existing sub-grantees will be considered this year. Existing sub-grantees will be required to submit a Letter of Intent after the thirty (30) day public comment period on the Method of Distribution has expired. Funds will also be distributed to supplement existing programs demonstrating high performance, for prioritized homeless services efforts, or for any other eligible activities determined by DCA to further local systemic homeless responses.

As a result, DCA has prepared a draft of the FFY2021 action steps for each project along with other project specific requirements including the proposed methods of funding distribution and the project priorities for funding. Comments regarding these and other issues will be accepted for a 30-day period for review and consideration prior to the beginning of these application submission periods.

The State encourages citizens and other interested parties to review the draft document and to submit their written comments no later than **April 2, 2021 at 5:00 PM**. All written comments should be emailed to harvinder.makkar@dca.ga.gov or mailed to:

FFY2021 ESG and HOPWA Method of Distribution
Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Office of Homeless and Special Needs Housing
Attn: Dr. Harvinder Kaur Makkar
60 Executive Park South NE
Atlanta, GA 30329-2231

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Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)
Proposed Federal FY2021/ State FY2022
Goals and Action Steps for the
Emergency Solutions Grants
and
Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS Programs

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANTS PROGRAM (ESG)

The Georgia Housing and Finance Authority (GHFA) is the recipient of the State's ESG allocation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). GHFA contracts with DCA to administer the ESG program for the State of Georgia.

Purpose

The HEARTH Act and resulting ESG Interim regulation (ESG Interim Rule) renamed and significantly modified the Emergency Solutions Grants (HUD ESG) program. The revised program maintains support for a crisis response system through emergency shelters but places an emphasis on identifying and preventing homelessness and returning those who experience homelessness back into the community as quickly as possible.

Federal ESG Regulations

This program design is based upon an analysis of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended by S. 896 the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009 and the ESG Interim Rule. Interim regulations went into effect in January 2012. As a result, actual implementation of this program may further be defined by final regulations, HUD's interpretations of these regulations, as well as other directives or guidance issued by HUD at a later date.

Eligible Service Areas

Congress has authorized the State of Georgia, through the Georgia Housing and Finance Authority (GHFA) and Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to use HUD McKinney Act (modified through the HEARTH Act) ESG funds to primarily serve 151 of Georgia's 159 counties. The eight (8) excluded counties are Augusta-Richmond, Macon-Bibb, Savannah-Chatham, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, and Gwinnett. These Entitlements receive ESG funds directly from HUD. To the maximum extent practicable, as determined by DCA, HUD ESG funds will be expended for programs to serve the State of Georgia's ESG Non-Entitlement.

In addition to the HUD ESG program, DCA will develop and implement an expanded ESG program utilizing funds made available through Georgia's State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless Commission (HTF). This HTF ESG program will substantially mirror and compliment the HUD ESG program, except that eligible activities will be expanded to include hotel/motel vouchers, supportive

services, and others defined herein. Further, HTF ESG funds are not prioritized to service providers operating in the State of Georgia ESG Non-Entitlement but are available to sub-grantees across the state. Priorities for this funding are listed in Part F of this document.

HUD ESG Eligible Activities

Activities eligible using HUD ESG funds include:

- (1) Emergency Shelter - maintenance, operation, insurance, provision of utilities, and provision of furnishings related to emergency shelter.
 - (a) Essential Services - the provision of essential services related to emergency shelter or street outreach, including services concerned with employment, health, education, family support services for homeless youth, substance abuse services, victim services, or mental health services.
- (2) Rental Assistance – the provision of tenant-based, short-term or medium-term payments for rents and/or utilities and other services directed towards securing permanent housing as designated by HUD. Beneficiaries may include homeless individuals or families (rapid re-housing), or individuals or families at risk of homelessness (homelessness prevention).
 - (a) Stabilization Services – associated with rental assistance, to include housing search, mediation or outreach to property owners, legal services, credit repair, providing security or utility deposits, utility payments, rental assistance for a final month at a location, assistance with moving costs, or other activities that are effective at:
 - (i) stabilizing individuals and families in their current housing (homelessness prevention); or
 - (ii) quickly moving such individuals and families to other permanent housing (rapid re-housing).
- (3) HMIS - to pay the costs of contributing data to the HMIS in support of the efforts of an emergency shelter, permanent housing program, or centralized assessment hub. Eligible costs include data entry, obtaining HMIS technical assistance and training, reporting, monitoring and reviewing data quality. These funds are reserved for Balance of State Continuum of Care or Georgia ESG Non-Entitlement areas for ESG programs with large implementations; those serving a high volume of clients or programs with particularly demanding HMIS requirements.
- (4) Street Outreach – funds may be used for costs of providing essential services necessary to reach out to unsheltered homeless people; connect them with emergency shelter, housing, or critical services; and provide urgent, non-facility-based care to unsheltered homeless people who are unwilling or unable to access emergency shelter, housing, or an appropriate health facility. Eligible costs include engagement, case management, emergency health services, emergency mental health services, transportation, and services for special populations.

HTF ESG Eligible Activities

In addition to the HUD ESG Eligible Activities named in the preceding section, HTF ESG Eligibility Activities may also include:

- (1) Hotel/Motel Vouchers – to be used (a) in the absence of shelter (b) in the absence of adequate or appropriate shelter based upon documented needs, particularly in areas where rapid re-housing and street outreach programs exist or (c) as temporary placement for individuals who have been through the Coordinated Assessment process when emergency shelter beds are at capacity. Programs awarded with this funding must have a direct connection to a rapid re-housing or other program making placements into permanent housing.
- (2) Supportive Services - the provision of essential services, limited to transportation, childcare, and case management. These programs must be directly connected to programs moving clients into permanent housing.
- (3) Training for Sub-grantees – funding to provide ESG recipient agencies with opportunities for technical assistance and training related to the administration of the grant. Training may include sessions conducted by DCA staff or external subject matter experts.
- (4) Coordinated Entry – costs defined by DCA associated with implementation of a Coordinated Entry system, as required by the HEARTH Act, in areas without other local resources for such costs

Funding Priorities

Priorities for Federal ESG funds for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2021 are rapid re-housing and homeless prevention (rental assistance and stabilization services), emergency shelter (operations and essential services), street outreach, and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data entry activities associated with Coordinated Entry. DCA reserves the right to emphasize funding for Georgia ESG Non-Entitlement communities.

Priorities for State Housing Trust Fund (HTF) dollars are hotel/motel vouchers and supportive services,

Definition of “Homeless” Individual or Family

- (1) A “homeless” individual or family is generally defined as follows:
 - a. an individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence;
 - b. an individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;
 - c. a *homeless, as defined above*, individual or family *immediately thereafter* living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including hotels and motels paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations, and congregate shelters);
 - d. an individual who resided in a shelter or place not meant for human habitation [*see a. and b. above*] and who is exiting an institution where he or she ... resided *less than 90-days*;
 - e. an individual or family who—

- (i) will imminently lose their housing, including housing they own, rent, or live in without paying rent, are sharing with others, and rooms in hotels or motels not paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations, as evidenced by:
 - (ii) a court order resulting from an eviction action that notifies the individual or family that they must leave within 14 days;
 - (iii) the individual or family having a primary nighttime residence that is a room in a hotel or motel and where they lack the resources necessary to reside there for more than 14 days; or
 - (iv) credible evidence indicating that the owner or renter of the housing will not allow the individual or family to stay for more than 14 days, and any oral statement from an individual or family seeking homeless assistance that is found to be credible shall be considered credible evidence for purposes of this clause;
 - (v) has no subsequent residence identified; and lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing; and unaccompanied youth and homeless families with children and youth defined as homeless under other Federal statutes who—
 - (A) have experienced a long-term period without living independently in permanent housing,
 - (B) have experienced persistent instability as measured by frequent moves over such period, and
 - (C) can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse, the presence of a child or youth with a disability, or multiple barriers to employment.
- (2) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, any individual or family who is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions in the individual's or family's current housing situation, including where the health and safety of children are jeopardized, and who have no other residence and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.
- (3) Exclusion – Eligible persons do not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to an Act of the Congress or a State law.

Definition of “At Risk” Individual or Family

An “at risk” individual or family is generally defined as follows:

- (1) has a *family* income below 30 percent of median income for the geographic area;
- (2) has insufficient resources immediately available to attain housing stability; and
- (3) meets one or more of the following criteria:
 - (i) has moved frequently because of economic reasons;
 - (ii) is living in the home of another because of economic hardship;
 - (iii) has been notified that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated;
 - (iv) lives in a hotel or motel;
 - (v) lives in severely overcrowded housing;

- (vi) is exiting an institution; or
- (vii) otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness.

Such term includes all families with children and youth defined as “homeless” under other Federal statutes.

Definition of “Chronically Homeless” Individual or Family

- (1) The term ‘chronically homeless’ means a homeless individual with a disability who:
 - i lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and
 - ii has been homeless and living as described in paragraph (1)(i) for at least 12 months OR on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years, as long as the combined occasions equal at least 12 months and each break in homelessness separating the occasions is at least 7 consecutive nights of not living as described in paragraph (1)(i). Stays in institutional care facilities for fewer than 90 days will not constitute as a break in homelessness, but rather such stays are included in the 12 month total, as long as the individual was living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or an emergency shelter immediately before entering the institutional care facility;
- (2) An individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility, including a jail, substance abuse or mental health treatment facility, hospital, or other similar facility for fewer than 90 days and met all of the criteria in paragraph (1) before entering that facility;
- (3) A family with an adult head of household (or if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all of the criteria in paragraph (1) or (2) of this definition, including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless.

Definition of “Homeless Individual with a Disability”

The term ‘homeless individual with a disability’ means an individual who is “homeless,” as otherwise defined herein, and has a disability that meets all four of the following criteria:

- (1) is expected to be long-continuing or of indefinite duration;
- (2) substantially impedes the individual's ability to live independently;
- (3) could be improved by the provision of more suitable housing conditions; and
- (4) is either
 - (A) a physical, mental, or emotional impairment, including an impairment caused by alcohol or drug abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, or brain injury; OR
 - (B) a developmental disability, as defined in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15002); OR
 - (C) the disease of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) or any condition arising from the etiologic agency for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.

PROCESS FOR MAKING SUB-AWARDS

Method of Distribution

As a threshold consideration, all current sub-grantees must demonstrate that their housing or service projects directly serve persons who are homeless as defined by HUD and demonstrate how the housing and services provided will improve housing stability for those persons. Sub-grantees must have a method of verifying homelessness, and track outputs and outcomes (stable housing) for persons served.

Both HUD-funded and State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless (HTF)-funded ESG funds are available to currently funded sub-grantees (including community and faith-based organizations), quasi-governmental agencies like Community Service Boards, and local government entities. Agencies must be collaborating with local mainstream service providers and local provider groups that are dedicated to housing and service interventions that serve persons experiencing homelessness. Agencies must also participate in HUD-mandated Continuum of Care planning appropriate to the jurisdiction where their activities are located.

Existing sub-grantees will be required to submit a Letter of Intent after the thirty (30) day public comment period on the Method of Distribution has expired. Funding decisions will be based on factors, including but not limited to, Homeless Management Information Service (HMIS) data quality, housing placement rates, monitoring results, participation in Coordinated Entry efforts, and the timeliness and rate of financial spending and submission of reimbursements. Funds will also be distributed to supplement existing programs demonstrating high performance, for prioritized homeless services efforts, or for any other eligible activities determined by DCA to further local systemic responses to homelessness.

DCA reserves the right to distribute ESG and HTF funds outside of an annual competition process. This will be the case in FFY 2021 since there will be no annual competition and instead only currently funded sub-grantees will be considered for funding.

Matching Requirements

All sub-grantees are expected to provide at least a 100% match for HUD funds consisting of documented non-McKinney resources. Match may include the value of any lease on a building, any salary paid to staff to carry out the program, and the value of the time and services contributed by volunteers to carry out the program at a rate determined by DCA. DCA reserves the right to decrease the required match percentage for sub-grantees providing high priority services in areas with demonstrated need for such services. Exceptions may be considered by DCA on a case-by-case basis.

Deadlines and Award Authority

Existing sub-grantees will be required to submit a Letter of Intent after the thirty (30) day public comment period on the Method of Distribution has expired. Funding announcements will be made on or about August 1, 2021. The Commissioner of DCA or staff designated by the Commissioner shall have the authority to make awards from funds allocated by HUD or reserved by the HTF Commission. Awards are made at the sole discretion of DCA.

Application Notice and Submission Requirements

There will be no annual competition for the FFY 2021 ESG funds. Only existing sub-grantees will be considered this year.

Rating and Selection

Existing sub-grantees will be required to submit a Letter of Intent after the thirty (30) day public comment period on the Method of Distribution has expired. Funding decisions will be based on factors,

including but not limited to, Homeless Management Information Service (HMIS) data quality, housing placement rates, monitoring results, participation in Coordinated Entry efforts, and the timeliness and rate of financial spending and submission of reimbursements. Funds will also be distributed to supplement existing programs demonstrating high performance, for prioritized homeless services efforts, or for any other eligible activities determined by DCA to further local systemic homeless responses.

Funding decisions could also include the following considerations:

- Geographical location;
- Past performance (outputs/outcomes);
- Past performance with DCA agreements, DCA ESG policies and rules, Federal/state/local laws, regulations, policies;
- Compliance and past performance with Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) requirements. Family violence agencies must demonstrate performance through the HMIS comparable database designated by DCA;
- Need based on data from the local Homeless Point in Time (PIT) count, and any other relevant data, as determined by DCA;
- Project strategy;
- Organizational structure, operating processes, and capacity;
- The extent to which the organization operates under the authority of a diversified, involved, volunteer, community-based board of directors;
- Professional management;
- The consistency of the organization's identity or its mission to the provision of homeless services;
- The consistency to which the organization utilizes networks and partnerships within the community to avoid duplication of housing and services;
- Participation in meetings and other activities of the appropriate local Continuums of Care;
- Direct cash match provided for ESG activities;
- The value of other non-cash contributions;
- The priorities established by the local Continuum of Care;
- Sound operating procedures, accounting policy and controls;
- Organizational and financial policy, stability and capacity; and,
- Location in an ESG Entitlement jurisdiction which receives federal ESG funds directly from HUD. These jurisdictions include: City of Atlanta, Augusta-Richmond County, Macon-Bibb County, City of Savannah, Clayton County, Cobb County, DeKalb County, Fulton County, and Gwinnett County;
- Participation in local Coordinated Entry efforts;
- Organizations serving Domestic Violence and Youth populations;
- For Emergency Shelter Projects, bed utilization rate and enrollment dates in HMIS and DV Comparable Database
- Limiting the Case management and Housing Search and Placement line items to no more than 25% of the grant award amount.

DCA reserves the right to fund any project if such project is determined to directly address DCA priorities including, but not limited to, geographic distribution of funds and furthering a systemic homeless response.

In addition to all other federal, state and local laws and regulations, all activities must be implemented in full compliance with pertinent HUD ESG Program regulations published at 24 CFR §576.

Local Approval and Certification of Consistency with Consolidated Plans

The Letter of Intent will include instructions on how to obtain local approval and Certification of Consistency with Local Consolidated Plans which must then be submitted to DCA prior to the issuance of a contract. In accordance with Federal law governing the ESG program, all nonprofit sub-grantees for emergency shelter projects must obtain approval(s) from appropriate local government jurisdictions. All approvals must be made in formats prescribed by DCA. Documentation of approval must be included prior to the execution of a contract. Projects that do not adequately address local approval will not be accepted for renewal.

Collaboration

Sub-grantees must participate in CoCs appropriate to their project(s). There are nine CoCs in Georgia. Sub-grantees must also participate in coordinated intake/assessment, referral, and case management systems established by the local CoC(s) within their service area to provide, in conjunction with other providers, appropriate housing and supportive services to better enable homeless persons to achieve success and end their homelessness. The expectation is that each sub-grantee or its community partner:

- a) assesses consumer needs and barriers to housing stability;
- b) seeks the prevention of homelessness for non-homeless consumers;
- c) works to move homeless individuals into rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, or other affordable housing appropriate to the needs of the consumer;
- d) documents and tracks referrals to housing and service providers; and
- e) tracks participant progress and outcomes, including post-discharge follow up contacts recorded in HMIS.

Organizations will be required to document these efforts through DCA's HMIS implementation in partnership with Eccovia Solutions. Family violence agencies must not participate in HMIS, but instead, must document these efforts through the Domestic Violence Comparable Database. Sub-grantees must also adhere to DCA's published Housing Support Standards (HSS). Information regarding these Standards and how to implement them can be found on the DCA website at the following link:

https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/housing_support_standards.pdf

Coordinated Entry

All sub-grantees are required by the ESG Interim Rule to participate in the Coordinated Entry system for the local Continuum of Care, as defined by the HEARTH Act. In areas where Coordinated Entry is still under development, sub-grantees are expected to actively participate in system development. Further requirements for participation, as determined by DCA, may be outlined in contracts for sub-grantees. Additionally, DCA may, at its discretion, define higher levels of required participation in Coordinated Entry for ESG sub-grantees.

Minimum Compliance Criteria

The Letter of Intent must be submitted electronically on forms provided by DCA and according to the schedule established by DCA. The sub-grantee must provide required certifications and provide all supporting documentation requested by DCA prior to contracting. Each sub-grantee must demonstrate to the satisfaction of DCA that it complies with Federal, State, and local laws and regulations, and that it is capable of carrying out applicable programs. All returning sub-grantees must be in substantial compliance with existing DCA agreements. DCA reserves the right to sanction individuals and organizations with a history of non-compliance.

Funding Guidelines

Subject to final federal and state appropriations, approximately \$4 million dollars is expected to be available for projects funded under the HUD ESG program. 80% of Federal funding to be spent within the Georgia ESG Non-Entitlement area.

The following amounts have been established as guidance for funding requests. All of the “Rating and Selection” factors, including distribution by “Eligible Service Area” will be considered in evaluating funding requests. DCA will make minimum grant awards of \$30,000 for Street Outreach, Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention.

Maximum grant amounts are as follows:

- Emergency Shelter - \$60,000 per project
- Street Outreach - \$50,000
- Supportive Services - \$25,000 per project
- Hotel/Motel Vouchers - \$60,000. Awards for agencies outside of the Georgia Non-Entitlement will vary based on reasonably necessary display of need.
- HMIS - \$40,000

DCA reserves the right to establish maximum amounts for new applicants and returning agencies with a history of underspending.

Monitoring

In accordance with program regulations, all ESG sub-grantees will have an on-site or remote review of their homeless housing and/or service program(s). Program monitoring is an ongoing process of reviewing a sub-grantee’s performance in meeting goals, identifying program deficiencies, and enhancing management capacity through technical assistance or other corrective actions.

DCA will review the performance of each sub-grantee in carrying out its responsibilities whenever determined necessary. In conducting performance reviews, DCA will obtain financial and programmatic information from the sub-grantee’s records and reports and, when appropriate, its sub-recipients, as well as information from onsite monitoring and electronic data sources, including HMIS. Where applicable, DCA may also consider relevant information pertaining to the recipient's performance gained from other sources, including the application for funding, reimbursement requests, audits, and

annual reports. Reviews to determine compliance with specific requirements of the ESG program will be conducted as necessary, with prior notice to the sub-grantee.

If DCA determines that the sub-grantee, or one of its sub-recipients, has not complied with an ESG program requirement, DCA will give the sub-grantee notice of this determination and an opportunity to demonstrate, within the time prescribed by DCA and on the basis of substantial facts and data that the sub-grantee has complied with ESG requirements.

Remedial actions and sanctions for a failure to meet an ESG program requirement will be designed to prevent a continuation of the deficiency; mitigate, to the extent possible, its adverse effects or consequences; and prevent its recurrence. If the sub-grantee fails to demonstrate to DCA's satisfaction that the activities were carried out in compliance with ESG program requirements, DCA will take one or more of the remedial actions or sanctions.

DESCRIPTION OF COC

The Georgia Balance of State Continuum of Care (BoS CoC) is made up of 152 counties, both urban and rural. Jurisdictions in Georgia outside of the Georgia BoS CoC include: Athens-Clarke County, City of Atlanta, Augusta-Richmond County, Cobb County, Columbus-Muscogee County, DeKalb County, Fulton County, and City of Savannah. All other jurisdictions are included within the BoS CoC.

The collaborative applicant for the BoS CoC is the Department of Community Affairs. The collaborative applicant has an established Governance Charter and is establishing a coordinated assessment system to enable homeless households to access the best fit intervention available. This has been implemented.

CONSULTATION WITH COC

Allocation of ESG funds each year

The Georgia Non-Entitlement staff hosts annual discussions with the Continuums of Care (CoCs) concerning the needs of each Continuum. The Continuums are asked to rank the eligible activities according to their local need and submit these to the Georgia Non-Entitlement. This local priority ranking is reflected in the Georgia Non-Entitlement's scoring of applications and award recommendations.

In addition, Georgia Non-Entitlement stakeholders - such as the CoC leads, local government officials and non-profit organizations serving the homeless - will meet with Non-Entitlement staff to review the Non-Entitlement's vision and plans for the forthcoming year.

Developing funding, policies, and procedures for the operation and administration of the HMIS

The Georgia HMIS Implementation is a regional collaborative effort to implement HMIS across eight of the nine Georgia Continuums of Care. The Georgia Housing and Finance Authority (GHFA) serves as the Lead Agency for the Georgia HMIS Implementation that has designated DCA to administer the homeless assistance programs.

The governing body for the GA HMIS Implementation is the GA HMIS Steering Committee. This Committee is made up of representatives from each of the eight Continuums of Care and the DCA HMIS Project Manager. The role of this committee is to oversee the HMIS implementation and ensure compliance with the HUD CoC Program Interim Rule 578.51.

As the administrative agent of the HMIS Lead Agency, DCA is responsible for soliciting feedback from agencies and stakeholders and communicating that feedback to the Steering Committee.

The funding for HMIS includes a Data Quality Analyst specifically focused on identifying, training and improving data quality for programs for funded CoC Programs including the DCA ESG program. This funding and these efforts have been integral in providing a baseline for evaluation of the ESG project.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH AIDS (HOPWA)

Method of Distribution

The Georgia Housing and Finance Authority (GHFA) is the recipient of the State's HOPWA allocation. GHFA contracts with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to administer the programs funded by the HOPWA allocation. The HOPWA Program provides resources and incentives to devise long-term comprehensive strategies for meeting the housing needs of low-income Persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). HOPWA funding is sub-awarded to regional Project Sponsors including nonprofit agencies or health departments directly working with PLWHA within their communities. To the extent determined under State law, DCA may also fund private, secular or faith-based nonprofit organizations. These agencies are responsible for designing their own rules for programs, however their program policies and design must be within the scope of HOPWA regulations and guidance from HUD.

The HOPWA Modernization Act shifted the focus to the changing scenario where, with HIV treatment and care, an increasing number of people are living with HIV and not developing AIDS. States and metropolitan areas coordinate the use of HOPWA funds with their respective Consolidated Plans, a collaborative process, which establishes a unified vision for community development actions. In Georgia, HUD provides HOPWA formula funds to 3 jurisdictions, DCA for 125 counties, City of Atlanta for the Atlanta Eligible Metropolitan Statistical Area (EMSA) including 29 counties, and Augusta-Richmond County government for 5 Augusta MSA counties and 2 South Carolina counties.

The State of Georgia currently funds thirteen (13) regional programs. HOPWA Sponsors and areas covered are listed below.

Georgia HOPWA Project Sponsors and Area of Coverage

<u>Sponsor Name</u>	<u>Regional Location</u>	<u>Contact Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>
AID Atlanta, Inc.	LaGrange	Nicole Roebuck nicole.roebuck@aidatlanta.org	(404) 870-7720
AIDS Athens dba Live Forward, Inc.	Athens	Ms. Cassandra Bray cassandra@liveforward.org	(706) 549-3730
CSRA Economic Opportunity Authority, Inc.	Augusta	Sharon Scott sscott@csra.org	(706)722-0493
Ninth District Opportunity, Inc.	Gainesville	Michael Fisher Michael.Fisher@ndoccsbg.org	770-532-3191 x 2027
Homeless Resource Network, Inc.	Columbus	Ms. Elizabeth Dillard liz@homelessresourcenetwork.org	(706) 571.3399
Laurens County Board of Health	Dublin	Ms. Sarah Hough sarah.hough@dph.ga.gov	(478) 274.7605

Lowndes Co. Board of Health (a/k/a South Health District 8-1)	Valdosta	Ms. Terri Ball terri.ball@dph.ga.gov	(229) 245.8711 x207
Cherokee County BOH/North Georgia Health District	Dalton 1-2	Jeff Vollman Jeffery.Vollman@dph.ga.gov	(706) 281-2360 x 19500
North Central Health District	Macon-Bibb	Ms. Cyndi Johns Cyndi.johns@dph.ga.gov	(478) 464.0612 x 110
Promise Land	Augusta	Sheila Boazman sboazman@gmail.com	(706) 560-1022
Ware County Board of Health/ SE Health District	Waycross	Regina Renfroe Regina.Renfroe@dph.ga.gov	(912) 764-2402
Union Mission, Inc.	Savannah	Tommie Jones tjones@unionmission.org	(912) 238-2777
View Point Health	Norcross	Erika Hill Erika.Hill@VPHealth.org	(470) 367-3925

State of Georgia HOPWA Program

The HOPWA program is the only Federal Program dedicated to addressing the housing needs of persons living with HIV/AIDS. DCA follows the HOPWA program guidelines of Office of HIV Housing (OHH) with regard to program administration, performance evaluation, monitoring and reporting.

Funding Priorities

Funding priorities for federal fiscal year 2021 are listed below in the State's priority order of HOPWA Funding. Proposals to use HOPWA funds to provide services must give a full description of what is to be funded and offer clear justification for the use of HOPWA funds.

1. Permanent Housing Programs
 - a. Tenant Based Rent Assistance (TBRA)
 - b. Facility Based Housing (FBH)
2. Emergency and Short-term/ Transitional Housing
3. Homeless Prevention Services
 - a. Short-term Rent, Mortgage and Utility assistance (STRMU)
4. Supportive Services
 - a. Permanent Housing Placement (PHP)
5. Housing Information and Referral Services
6. Resource Identification

The HOPWA housing priority listed above is based on the changing needs of the community. In order to ensure that HOPWA services are able to meet the community members' needs, the goal is to have a full housing continuum in each community. Project Sponsors are encouraged to

participate in the Coordinated Entry system developed by the Continuum of Care (CoC) in the project areas. They are also required to utilize the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) database to document HOPWA beneficiaries, services provided, and to report project outcomes. The Housing First model should be adopted as a best practice in order to provide consumer-based services.

- Funding priorities will focus on incorporating these values in the programs. Agencies will be directed to create housing stability plans for HOPWA participants to ensure they do not become homeless upon discharge from the program. Agencies will also be directed to produce positive health outcomes based on client Viral Load and CD4 data. Agencies' financial management practices will also be assessed.
- DCA HOPWA Project Sponsors must use either HUD fair market rent (FMR) standards for their area, or they may also opt to use the local Public Housing Authority (PHA) rent standards.
- Continuous quality improvement is a process to ensure programs are systematically and intentionally improving services and increasing positive outcomes for the individuals and families served with HOPWA funds. Applicants must describe their methodology to incorporate the meaningful involvement of PLWHA, their input and feedback in program development, services, policies and procedures.
- Permanent Supportive Housing Program participants including those in both Facility Based Housing (FBH) and Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) must have annual assessments and certifications for renewal. They also must be assisted to create a housing stability plan to ensure housing upon discharge from the program. All the applicants must have written HOPWA policies and procedures that reflect these requirements.
- All HOPWA housing program beneficiaries should have access to supportive services helping them with case plans and housing stability plans. They must receive the support of a qualified case manager assisting them to access to HIV medical care, sustainable and affordable housing, and income generation.
- Within fifteen (15) days of the start of any HOPWA assistance, the beneficiaries with the help of the HOPWA case manager will develop and commit to an individualized Housing Stability Plan. The aim should be to assist beneficiaries with attaining self-sufficiency outside of HOPWA assistance. All the client services and case notes, along with the individualized case plan, should be documented in each client's case file and in the HMIS system. Applicants must submit with the application a job description for each case manager.

Compliance Criteria

Non-profit organizations must demonstrate collaboration with local mainstream service providers and local homeless and HIV/AIDS provider groups. The applicants are encouraged to participate in the

Coordinated Entry process and participate in their Continuum-of-Care (CoC) to access all available resources for the HOPWA beneficiaries.

The successful applicant will be responsible for the collection and maintenance of records and information necessary to identify the number of unduplicated program recipients, the types of services provided, the dates of service delivery, and other data elements as specified by DCA. All the client data must be entered in the HMIS so that the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) data can be retrieved from it.

Grantees must comply with the HUD HOPWA Program Regulations at 24 CFR Part 574, as amended. Program requirements include, but are by no means limited to, the following:

- 1) Costs requested for reimbursement via automatic deposit by DCA must be “reasonable and justifiable,” and are only eligible to the extent that they are consistent with the program approved by DCA.
- 2) All funds will be reimbursable to sub-grantees based upon actual program expenses with supporting documentation (retained by sub-grantee) and subject to monitoring by HUD and DCA.
- 3) Expenses are only eligible to the extent that they benefit “eligible persons” under the HOPWA program, as defined herein.
- 4) Environmental - All grants are subject to environmental review in accordance with the federal regulations governing HOPWA program.
- 5) All grants to non-profit organizations are subject to the administrative requirements and cost principals outlined in OMB Circulars A-110 and A-122. These requirements for local governments are outlined in 24 CFR, Part 85 and OMB Circular A-87.
- 6) Sponsor administrative costs are limited to 7% of the grant amount.
- 7) All agencies funded must comply with the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and have a Language Accessibility Plan (LAP) for the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) population as per HUD guidelines.
- 8) All agencies must participate in Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) by DCA to enter client level data as required by HUD.

Compliance with House Bill (HB) 87

The "Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement Act of 2011" signed into law by Governor Nathan Deal on May 13, 2011, for contracts signed on or after July 1, 2011 requires DCA and GHFA to only contract with entities that are registered with the e-verify program and to obtain an affidavit from the entity certifying participation in the e-verify program. Any subsequent subcontractors (or subcontractors of subcontractors) utilizing DCA or GHFA funds must also participate in the e-verify program and must provide a sworn Affidavit with the e-verify I.D. number. DCA-funded organizations must complete and execute a "*Contractor Affidavit under O.C.G.A. § 13-10-91(b)(1)*." Note that this Affidavit must be executed by the person that executes the DCA HOPWA application. It is necessary also that any subcontractors (and subcontractors of subcontractors) utilizing funds under the Agreement provide the "*Subcontractor Affidavit under O.C.G.A. § 13-10-91(b)(3)*."

Federal Reporting Requirements

Important notice regarding mandatory federal reporting requirements: The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 requires sub-recipients receiving federal funds to register with Dun and Bradstreet (**D & B**) to obtain a D-U-N-S number and complete or renew their registration in the System for Award Management (SAM). To find information on how to obtain a D-U-N-S number and register in SAM please visit the following websites:

- <https://www.dnb.com/duns-number.html>
and
<https://sam.gov/SAM/pages/public/index.jsf>

Completing these registration processes is free, but may take up to 10 days to complete. A D-U-N-S number and confirmation that your agency is active in SAM is required as part of the application. No awards will be made without this information.

Compliance with Fair Housing Laws

All HOPWA project sponsors are expected to comply with the fair housing requirements including all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (Title 42, United States Code Sections 12101–12213) and implementing regulations at Title 28, CFR, Part 35 (States and local government grantees) and Part 36 (public accommodations and requirements for certain types of short-term housing assistance).

Eligible Activities

Eligible activities are those named in current HUD regulations (24 CFR 574.300) for the HOPWA Program that include but are not limited to the following: housing or fair housing information, acquisition, rehabilitation, limited new construction, project or tenant-based rental assistance (including shared housing), homelessness prevention, supportive services (to include health, mental health, assessment, permanent housing placement, drug and alcohol, day care, personal assistance, nutritional services, etc.), general case management, housing operating costs, technical assistance and administrative expenses. DCA reserves the right to exclude any of the above activities based on funding availability.

HOPWA Program Goals

The goal of the HOPWA Program is to provide allowable services to eligible persons through:

- Sound fiscal management
- Appropriate eligibility determination
- Suitable service access
- Proper documentation
- Improving access to HIV treatment and other healthcare support

- Utilization of HMIS
- Reducing the risk of homelessness among persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families
- Fostering long-term solutions to housing programs.

The Office of HIV/AIDS Housing (OHH) has established a set of values for implementing HOPWA Modernization, including,

1. No person should become homeless as the result of HOPWA Modernization;
2. All funds should be used to meet the needs of eligible households, with no funds recaptured from grants; and
3. Grantees should ensure their project designs meet the changing needs of the modern HIV epidemic, with the goal of positive health outcomes and reduced viral loads for HOPWA-assisted households.

Selection Process and Application Submission Requirements

There will be no annual competition for the FFY 2021 HOPWA program funds. Only existing sub-grantees will be considered this year based on their prior year's performance and the need in their service areas. HOPWA funds will be made available to all the currently funded HOPWA Sponsors. The Method of Distribution will be posted on DCA website for the thirty (30) day public comment period.

Existing sub-grantees will be required to submit a Letter of Intent after the thirty (30) day public comment period on the Method of Distribution has expired. Funding announcements will be made on or about August 1, 2021. The Commissioner of DCA or staff designated by the Commissioner shall have the authority to make awards from funds allocated by HUD at the sole discretion of DCA.

DCA reserves the right to fund any agency for the HOPWA program in order to address DCA priorities including, but not limited to, providing HOPWA services in geographical areas lacking adequate service coverage. DCA also reserves the right to distribute HOPWA funds outside of the annual application process based on changing needs and subject to funding availability. Funds may be distributed to currently funded agencies with additional service needs or to new or existing agencies that have the capacity to provide HOPWA services in service areas that have unmet needs.

Please direct questions regarding this process to Dr. Harvinder Kaur Makkar by email at harvinder.makkar@dca.ga.gov.

Maximum Grant Amounts and Funding Factors

The next funding cycle will correspond with FFY2021 from October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022. There are no minimum and maximum funding amounts established for this program, and there are no predetermined funding amounts by type of assistance. Applicants are advised to scale their requests based on housing need for eligible persons, organizational capacity, funding history, the types of activities proposed, number of counties served, participation in state or regional referral networks,

and other relevant factors as determined by the applicant and DCA. Efforts will be made to fund providers to cover all the DCA HOPWA jurisdiction counties.

Existing Project Sponsors can submit funding requests for Housing, Supportive Services, and Administrative Costs. All staff training is part of Administrative Costs unless otherwise indicated by HUD. Project sponsor administrative costs are limited to 7% of the grant amount.

All Project Sponsors are encouraged to have other funding sources as well to show the financial stability of the agency. Awards are made at the sole discretion of DCA. Funding decisions are final and not subject to appeal. If a project falls within DCA's Balance of State Consolidated Plan jurisdiction, then no certification needs to be submitted with the application and DCA will make the final determination regarding consistency.

Funding determinations under the HOPWA program will be made using a "threshold" method for selecting returning Project Sponsors. Some of the factors that may be considered include: the complexity or nature of the project; organizational development and capacity; the extent to which the organization operates under the authority of a diversified, involved, volunteer, community-based board of directors; professional management; the consistency of the organization's identity or its mission to the provision of HIV/AIDS (as applicable) services; the extent to which the organization utilizes networks to avoid duplication of housing and services; participation in appropriate Continua of Care; sound operating procedures, accounting policy and controls; and organizational and financial policy, stability and capacity.

All funded agencies will receive HOPWA Implementation training to explain the HOPWA contract, program activities, guidelines, requirements and expectations, HMIS usage and enrollment and financial reimbursement process. In addition, all agencies will also receive individual Technical Assistance for HOPWA program and HMIS guidance. All funded agencies can also access Technical Assistance as needed.

If all contract conditions are met, payments to recipient organizations will be made on a cost-reimbursement basis. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis by DCA staff.

HOPWA project sponsors will be expected to provide performance information (goals and actual outputs) for all activities undertaken during the operating year supported with HOPWA funds. Performance is measured by the number of households and units of housing that were supported with HOPWA or other federal, state, local, or private funds for the purposes of providing housing assistance and support to persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families. HOPWA project sponsors must also report the source(s) of cash or in-kind leveraged federal, state, local or private resources used in the delivery of the HOPWA program and the amount of leverage dollars. Project sponsors must also meet Federal, State financial, and other reporting requirements

All activities must be conducted in full compliance with program regulations published at 24 CFR § 574, as well as all Federal, State and local laws and regulations.

All records created as a result of the submission of an application to participate are subject to disclosure under the Georgia Open Records Act and the applicant expressly consents to such disclosure. The Applicant agrees to hold harmless the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless, the Georgia Housing and Finance Authority, and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs against all losses, costs, damages, expenses, and liability of any nature or kind (including but not limited to attorney's fees, litigation and court costs) directly or indirectly resulting from or arising out of the release of any information pertaining to the Applicant's submission of an application and implementation of any activities as a result of funding under this program, pursuant to a request under the Georgia Open Records Act.

Agencies receiving HOPWA funds must maintain (for a five-year period from the close of a grant) financial records and client files sufficient to ensure proper accounting and disbursing of amounts received from HOPWA funds and make the records available to HUD or DCA for inspection.

Monitoring

Effective oversight of sub recipients is an important function of the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Monitoring provides information about sub recipients that is critical for making informed judgments about program effectiveness and management efficiency. DCA approaches monitoring as a cooperative endeavor with sub recipients and an ongoing process of continuous communication and evaluation. DCA's monitoring policy adheres to and reflects 2 CFR § 200.331 (Requirements for pass-through entities) and 2 CFR § 200.501 (Audit requirements), and all regulations referenced therein. Additionally, 2 CFR § 200.501 mandates that any non-Federal sub recipient that expends more than \$750,000 during a fiscal year must have a single audit conducted in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.514 (Scope of audit) except when it elects to have a program-specific audit conducted in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.501(c).

Program monitoring is an ongoing process of reviewing the progress of HOPWA program in lieu of performance goals met by its funded sponsors. DCA will conduct on-site and/or remote review of the HOPWA housing programs and its financial expenditures to identify any gaps and needs and provide corrective actions.