

COVID-19 Emergency Housing Grant Guidelines

Questions & Answers

March 19, 2020

The Q&A is organized around the [Grant Guideline](#) sub sections.

Plan

1. **When do you need the Plan?** Plans are due when the first invoice is submitted. Grantees may submit updated Plans as often as needed.
2. **Who should develop the Plan?** County staff, public health staff, emergency management staff and homeless service providers should develop the Plan.

Allowable Operations, Services and other non-capital costs

1. **Contract language states this cannot be used for rental assistance. Is there any chance it could be used for rent for literally homeless family? Or, could it be used for a nonprofit to master lease housing and then provide housing?** Commerce will consider exceptions to this if a county can clearly define their need for isolation and quarantine beds in their Plan and that they can meet the need with the funds.
2. **Can we hire new staff?** Yes
3. **Are Porta Potties an eligible expense?** Yes
4. **Could it be used for case management programs in need of supplies?** Yes. And it can be used for case management too - people in isolation and quarantine beds will need still need support.
5. **Is it okay to pay for rooms (hold rooms) if they are vacant sometimes?** Yes
6. **Hotel/motel vouchers?** Yes
7. **Family sheltering expansion may involve leasing houses. Allowable?** Yes and describe in your plan.
8. **Can we use the funds to purchase food for people in isolation and quarantine?** Yes

9. **Is hygiene to unsheltered encampments allowed, such as handwashing stations and Porta Potties?** Yes

10. We are thinking about a shelter-in-place model to allow unsheltered to survive where they are at, by providing food and outreach and hygiene. **Would shelter-in-place activities fall under quarantine activities?** Describe this in your plan and yes.

Allowable Acquisition and Construction Costs

Reimbursement of actual costs

1. **How much Admin is allowable in the grant?** 15%. The allowable admin expenses will be the same as the Consolidated Homeless Grant and the Guidelines will be updated to include that information. See below for detail.

Please note that many staff services can be billed under Operations, which doesn't have a CAP. If a grantee is concerned about this limit, let us know.

Allowable administrative costs benefit the organization as a whole and cannot be attributed specifically to a particular program or to the homeless crisis response system. Administrative costs may include the same types of expenses that are listed in program operations (such as IT staff and office supplies), in the case that these costs are benefiting the agency as a whole and are not attributed to a particular program or the homeless system. Administrative costs may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ✓ Executive director salary and benefits
- ✓ General organization insurance
- ✓ Organization wide audits
- ✓ Board expenses
- ✓ Organization-wide membership fees and dues
- ✓ General agency facilities costs (including those associated with executive positions) such as rent, depreciation expenses, and operations and maintenance

All amounts billed to administration must be supported by actual costs. If actual costs in the contract period meet the budget cap, that amount may be charged in equal monthly amounts.

- ✓ Billed directly such as IT services that are billed by the hour.
- ✓ Shared costs that are allocated directly by means of a cost allocation plan.
- ✓ Costs related to executive personnel such that a direct relationship between the cost and the benefit cannot be established must be charged indirectly by use of an indirect cost rate which has been appropriately negotiated with an approved cognizant agency or by use of the 10 percent de minimus rate.

2. **What are the spending categories?** Administration, Leasing, Operations, Capital

3. **Are these state or federal funds?** State

4. **What if we overspend?** Technically you can't overspend. This is a reimbursement grant so we can only reimburse up to what was contracted.

5. **How do we submit billing?** Billing will be through the Commerce Contracts Management System (CMS). Commerce grant managers will help grantees set this up before it's time to submit the first invoices.
6. **What back up documentation is required with each invoice?** If a grantee has subgrantees, we will ask for a simple Voucher Detail Worksheet (similar to what is required in the Consolidated Homeless Grant.) If a grantee doesn't have a subgrantee, no additional paperwork will be required with invoices submitted in CMS.

Grantees must keep back up documentation for grant expenses per the Grant Terms and Conditions, Records Maintenance.

Eligible populations, documentation

1. **What about eligibility of housing status or income?** Documentation of the housing status of people housed or served by these funds is not necessary.

Reporting

1. **What additional reports will be required?** Commerce may need to collect some information about the number of isolation and quarantine beds for reporting purposes. We will get you updated information as we learn more. No initial HMIS data entry or secondary tracking is required at this time.

Other

2. **Do our beds need to be operational by April 1?** No. The WA State Department of Health recommends that counties have isolation and quarantine beds ready in early April.
3. **At what point after symptoms have subsided would participants no longer be eligible for shelter?** Commerce hopes the grant funds could support a move to stable housing. These are limited funds so long term planning with the local homeless provider about additional assistance is recommended.
4. **Should a screening process be developed for access to the quarantine and isolation beds?** You should work with your local health jurisdiction to make this determination.
5. **Can people self-identify for isolation and quarantine housing?** You should work with your local health jurisdiction to make this determination.
6. **Is the state intending to pursue federal reimbursement?** Unknown at this time.

7. **Who will provide medical staffing for quarantine and isolation beds?** You should work with your local health jurisdiction to make this determination. Staffing costs are reimbursable under this grant.

8. **Are shelter workers considered “first responders?”** We are working to get more information about this and will update soon.