



OHIO CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND- HOME RELIEF GRANT EMERGENCY SERVICES PROGRAM

October 2020

Funds from the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) will be utilized to serve Ohioans with the essential resources of rental, mortgage, and utility assistance

Program Purpose

The CRF was established under section 601 (a) of the Social Security Act, section 5001 Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The CRF provides for necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency. The Ohio Development Services Agency (Development), Office of Community Assistance (OCA) will utilize a portion of these funds to meet the needs of low-income Ohioans that were impacted by the public health emergency.

Program Overview

Total Allocation

- \$50,000,000 Direct Client Assistance
- \$5,000,000 Community Action Agency (CAA) administrative and operating costs
- \$200,000 Development Administrative costs

Award Period

- Grant period April 1, 2020 through December 30, 2020

Allocation Methodology

- Allocate to the 47 CAAs that serve all 88 Ohio counties. Each CAA will receive a portion of the \$55.2 million. The direct client amount would be based on the percent received from the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) CARES Act allocation.

Application Process

- Each CAA would submit a grant application to Development which includes a budget and scope of work.
- The grant application should indicate how the CAA will coordinate with other providers within their community to ensure clients can receive services conveniently. This could include subcontracts or Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with other providers to serve clients.

Data Entry/Reporting

- Each CAA would complete the client data entry in a specific CRF application in OCEAN.
- Reporting would be built into the system that would demonstrate client characteristics of those served, the type of assistance provided, and amount of funds provided.
- Each CAA would also be responsible for the reporting of any subcontracts or MOU agreements.

Allowable costs

- 10% of the CAAs' total for direct client assistance will also be provided to be used for administrative and operating expenses (fiscal processing, program management, case management, etc.). Any unused portion of the administrative and operating allotment should be used for additional direct client assistance.
- The CAA cannot use the direct client assistance funds to reimburse other program funds that may have provided a similar client benefit. CAAs can decide how much of the direct client assistance they would like to allocate to the following categories:
 - Rental Assistance

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- Homeless prevention/eviction prevention assistance
- Re-housing assistance
- Deposit Assistance
- Mortgage Assistance
- Utility Assistance
 - Allowable utilities are water and/or sewer. If the client receives a combination utility bill with more than the water or sewer bill included, the client is only eligible to receive funding in the amount required to maintain service or prevent shut off.
- A CAA that serves multiple counties will be provided a county-by-county allocation that added together creates a total direct client allocation. The multi-county CAA is directed to maintain the funds for services under this program within the county of allocation for 20 business days after the receipt of funds before utilizing the total allocation to target its services throughout its territory. For counting purposes, the date of receipt of funds shall not count towards the 20 business days.

Client Eligibility

- A household's annual income must be at or below 200% of the FPG (adjusted annually). Income calculations will adhere to the Energy Assistance Programs Guidelines.

CRF Emergency Services Program Administrative Policies

Grant Application Submission

Each grantee will be required to submit a grant application in order to receive funds. The grant application will outline the needs the community is experiencing based on the public health emergency. The grantee will describe how they will utilize the CRF Emergency Services Program within the allowable categories based on the needs identified. The grantee will also provide a projected number of unduplicated households to be served within each program within the grant period.

Financial Reporting

Monthly financial reports must be submitted by each grantee by the 3rd Friday of each month. A final financial report must be submitted by February 5, 2021 to close of the program.

Client Intake

Each grantee will be required to complete a client intake form for all households provided direct client assistance.

Income Calculation

Client income calculation and documentation requirements must adhere to Development's most recently approved and published Energy Assistance Programs Guidelines which can be located here: <https://development.force.com/OCAKnowledgeArticles/s/>.

Allowable Costs Overview

The grantee must demonstrate in the client file proof of hardship and need for the household related to the state of emergency declaration. This may include documentation of reduction in job hours or job loss, medical hardship, or other factors that caused a household to be unable to meet basic needs. A household can receive assistance in more than one category, but the assistance should only be provided once per category during the program. The CAA will need to verify to the that the client has not received additional rent, mortgage, or utility from another source for the time period that is intended to be covered.

Rental Assistance

Assistance may be provided to households that pay rent and have received an eviction or late notice from their landlord or are homeless or experiencing imminent homelessness and moving to a new residence. Rental arrears and fees back to April 1, 2020 may be paid. Rental assistance for those with an eviction or late notice may also be provided to cover their rent until the program ends on December 30, 2020. The grantee must pay the landlord directly and have verification of ownership and verification of accepting funds. The landlord must also agree to not evict the client after funds have been received for the past due arrearages.

Households that are homeless or will be imminently homeless may be provided deposit assistance and monthly assistance until the program ends on December 30, 2020. A household is considered homeless if they are currently residing in a temporary emergency shelter or other location not meant for human habitation (i.e. a vehicle). The grantee must verify the homeless status in the client file. A household is considered imminently homeless if they are living in a situation that is temporary and they cannot reside there any longer (i.e. couch surfing).

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Mortgage Assistance

A household that has been unable to pay their mortgage and has verification of past due payment are eligible for payments to be made to the lender (payment, taxes, and insurance). Households are eligible for assistance for past due amounts back to April 1, 2020 and their current mortgage payments until the program ends on December 30, 2020.

Utility Assistance

Households that have been disconnected, are in threat of disconnection or are behind on their utility bills can receive payment assistance for each utility during the program to allow the household to become current with their utility bill. Utility assistance will be for water and/or sewer bill payments. If the client receives a combination utility bill with more than the water or sewer bill included, the client is only eligible to receive funding in the amount required to maintain service or prevent shut off. Households are eligible for utility bill assistance for past due amounts back to April 1, 2020 and current utility payments until the program ends on December 30, 2020. Payments will be paid directly to the utility.

Required Client File Documentation

- Client intake form (see Appendix II for example). Other program intake forms may be used including those used for the CSBG, Energy Assistance Programs, or Homeless Crisis Response Program, as long as the form contains the following information:
 - Client and all household members names
 - Date of Birth
 - Social Security Number
 - Current or Previous address
- Copies of social security cards, or verification for each household member
- Proof of income for all household members 18 years or older for a minimum of the past 30 days
- Voucher and supporting documentation for amount of assistance provided
- Documentation of hardship

Rental Assistance Client File Documentation (in addition to above)

- Eviction or past due rent notice. Notice should include total amount due (including fees).
- If moving to a new location, justification for the move (i.e. currently homeless, living with another family and not sufficient space etc.)
- Landlord verification/proof of ownership and agreement to receive funds.
- Lease agreement

Mortgage Assistance Client File Documentation (in addition to above)

- Notice of late mortgage payment (including taxes and insurance)

Utility Assistance Client File Documentation (in addition to above)

- Copy of utility bill demonstrating the account has been shut off, is in disconnect status or is past due.

Client Appeal Process

Each grantee is required to ensure that all clients are advised of the right to appeal if denied assistance. The appeal process should be posted in areas that are accessible to clients. The grantee must also maintain a record of any client that was denied assistance and why they were denied.

Accounting and Financial Procedures

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All grantees are required to follow Generally Accepted Accounting Principles including 2 *CFR* 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. Additional financial reporting requirements can be found in the grant agreement.