

**COUNTY OF VENTURA
EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT PROGRAM (ESG)
FY 2021-22 GUIDE**

A. Eligible Activities

For the 2021-22 State ESG Program, all activities permitted under the federal ESG regulations shall be eligible except for renovation, conversion, or major rehabilitation activities under 24 CFR Part 576.102. Minor repairs to an ESG funded emergency shelter that do not qualify as renovation, conversion, or major rehabilitation are an eligible use of State ESG funds. The following additional activities and limitations apply:

- 1) 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) Maintenance, operation, insurance, provision of utilities, and provision of furnishings related to emergency shelter.
- 3) Provision of rental assistance to provide short-term or medium-term housing to homeless individuals or families or individuals or families at risk of homelessness. Such rental assistance may include tenant-based or project-based rental assistance.
- 4) Housing relocation or stabilization services for homeless individuals or families or individuals or families at risk of homelessness, including 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— (A) stabilizing individuals and families in their current housing; or (B) quickly moving such individuals and families to other permanent housing.
- 5) A maximum of 10 percent of ESG program funds may be used for actual costs for Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) activities, in accordance with 24 CFR Part 576.107 and 25 CCR 8408(c).

<u>Eligible Activities</u>	<u>Limitations (where applicable)</u>
<u>ESG COMPONENT 1: STREET OUTREACH</u>	
<p>For unsheltered individuals and families, meaning those who qualify under paragraph (1)(i) of the definition of “homeless”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement – includes initial assessment, crisis counseling, connecting and providing info and referral, addressing urgent physical needs (e.g. meals, blankets), etc. • Case Management – includes initial evaluation and documenting eligibility, counseling, coordinating services, help obtain benefits, monitoring progress, etc. • Emergency Health Services – Outpatient treatment of urgent medical conditions by licensed medical professionals. Includes assessing health problems and developing treatment plans, helping participants obtain appropriate emergency medical treatment, provide follow-up services. 	<p>Funds used for street outreach, in combination with emergency shelter activities, are limited to 60 percent of the total fiscal year grant awarded to the County by HUD.</p> <p><u>Minimum Period of Use</u> Street outreach services must be provided for at least the period of time for which ESG funds are committed for that purpose.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Mental Health Services – Outpatient treatment of urgent medical conditions by licensed medical professionals. Includes crisis interventions, prescription and management of psychotropic medications, etc. • Transportation – includes transporting unsheltered people to emergency shelters, costs of participant’s travel on public transit, staff transportation costs, etc. • Services to Special Populations – otherwise eligible Essential Services that have been tailored to address the special needs of homeless youth, victims of domestic violence and related crimes/threats, and/or people living with HIV/AIDS who are literally homeless. • Staff salaries related to carrying out street outreach activities are also eligible. 	
<p><u>ESG COMPONENT 2: EMERGENCY SHELTER</u></p>	
<p>For individuals and families who are homeless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential Services – includes Case Management, Child Care, Life Skills, Mental Health Services, Education Services, Employment Assistance and Job Training, Outpatient Health Services, Legal Services, Substance Abuse Treatment Services, Transportation, Services for Special Populations • Renovation – Renovating buildings to be used as emergency shelter for homeless individuals and families. Includes major rehabilitation of a shelter, conversion of a building into a shelter, labor, materials, tools, etc. • Shelter Operations – Includes minor maintenance repairs, rent, security, fuel, insurance, food, equipment, utilities, supplies, etc. • Assistance Required under “URA” – Assistance required under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970. • Staff costs related to carrying out emergency shelter activities are also eligible. 	<p>Funds used for street outreach, in combination with emergency shelter activities, are limited to 60 percent of the total fiscal year grant awarded to the County by HUD.</p> <p><u>Minimum Period of Use</u> Where ESG funds are used solely for essential services or shelter operations, services or shelter must be provided to homeless individuals and families at least for the period during which the ESG funds are provided.</p>
<p><u>ESG COMPONENT 3: HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION</u></p>	
<p>Individuals and families who are at imminent risk, or at risk, of homelessness – refer to homeless definition.</p>	<p>At least 40% of the ESG funds awarded to the County by HUD will be</p>

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<p><u>Short- and medium-term rental assistance and housing relocation and stabilization services</u>, which includes financial assistance (i.e. moving costs, rent application fees, security deposit, last month’s rent, utility deposit and payments) and services (i.e. housing search & placement, housing stability case management, mediation, legal services, and credit repair).</p> <p>Staff salaries related to carrying out homelessness prevention activities are also eligible.</p>	<p>used for Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing activities.</p> <p>Extremely low income individuals and families (household income below 30% of family AMI) at risk of becoming homeless and moving into an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation.</p>
<u>ESG COMPONENT 4: RAPID RE-HOUSING</u>	
<p>Individuals and families who are literally homeless – refer to homeless definition.</p> <p><u>Short- and medium-term rental assistance and housing relocation and stabilization services</u>, which includes financial assistance (i.e. moving costs, rent application fees, security deposit, last month’s rent, utility deposit and payments) and services (i.e. housing search & placement, housing stability case management, mediation, legal services, and credit repair).</p> <p>Staff salaries related to carrying out rapid re-housing activities are also eligible.</p>	<p>At least 40% of the ESG funds awarded to the County by HUD will be used for Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing activities.</p> <p>Literally homeless individuals and families (currently living in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation</p>
<u>ESG COMPONENT 5: HOMELESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (HMIS)</u>	
<p>Eligible costs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs of subrecipients contributing data to the CoC’s HMIS. • Costs of establishing and operating a comparable database for victim service providers • HMIS Lead Agency for establishing, hosting, customizing, and upgrading the HMIS. 	<p><u>Participation Requirement</u> The HEARTH Act makes HMIS participation a statutory requirement for ESG recipients and subrecipients.</p> <p>Victim service providers cannot, and Legal Services Organizations may choose to not, participate in HMIS. Providers that do not participate in HMIS must use a comparable database that produces unduplicated, aggregate reports instead.</p>

B. Project Level Performance Data Reporting

The impact and effectiveness of the project will be rated using data from HMIS for the duration of the program period. Victim Service Providers or Legal Assistance Providers may use data from a HUD-compliant comparable database. The information below should include all program participants (those assisted with State ESG and other funding):

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- a) Individual leavers are defined as persons who exited the project and are no longer enrolled in the project as of the last day of the reporting period. The method of determining a leaver is based on the client's last project exit.
- b) A permanent housing destination is a subsidized or unsubsidized housing situation, and also includes living with family or friends on a permanent basis. Program participants with the following destinations at exit should be included (based on HUD's HMIS Data Standards):
 - Owned by client, no ongoing housing subsidy
 - Owned by client, with ongoing housing subsidy
 - Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy
 - Rental by client, with VASH housing subsidy
 - Rental by client, with ongoing housing subsidy
 - Moved from one HOPWA funded program to HOPWA permanent housing program
 - PSH for formerly homeless persons
 - Staying or living with family, permanent tenure
 - Staying or living with friends, permanent tenure

The proposed project should also assist with the overall system performance within the Continuum of Care (CoC) by shortening length of time homeless, increasing exits to permanent housing, reducing returns to homelessness and preventing homelessness. The following measures will be included in the CoC performance:

- Measure 1: Length of Time Persons Remain Homeless
- Measure 2a: The Extent to which Persons who Exit Homelessness to Permanent Housing Destinations Return to Homelessness within 6 to 12 months
- Measure 2b: The Extent to which Persons who Exit Homelessness to Permanent Housing Destinations Return to Homelessness within 2 years
- Measure 3: Number of Homeless Persons
- Measure 5: Number of Persons who Become Homeless for the First Time
- Measure 7a: Successful Placement from Street Outreach
- Measure 7b: Successful Placement in or Retention of Permanent Housing

C. Participation Requirements

As required by McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Section 416 [42 USC 11375] and 24 CFR 576.400(f), the Applicant will collect and enter data on all persons served and all activities assisted under ESG into the applicable community-wide Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in the area in which those persons and activities are located, or a comparable database, in accordance with HUD's standards on participation, data collection, and reporting under a local HMIS and local CoC HMIS policies, procedures and participation requirements.

The Applicant participates in local CoC planning, governance, performance evaluation and management process. consult the Continuum of Care for planning and governance related to determining how to allocate ESG funds each program year; developing the performance

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standards for, and evaluating the outcomes of, projects and activities assisted by ESG funds; and developing funding, policies, and procedures for the administration and operation of the HMIS.

The Applicant participates in the local CoC's centralized assessment system or a coordinated assessment system in accordance with HUD requirements. If the CoC has not yet established a centralized or coordinated assessment system, the Applicant will participate after their respective CoC has devised and implemented such an assessment system.

All ESG-assisted projects shall operate in a manner consistent with housing first practices as reflected in the Continuum of Care Written Standards (consistent with subsections 1 through 5 below), and progressive engagement and assistance practices, including the following:

- 1) Ensuring low-barrier, easily accessible assistance to all people, including, but not limited to, people with no income or income history, and people with active substance abuse or mental health issues;
- 2) Helping participants quickly identify and resolve barriers to obtaining and maintaining housing; 22 State ESG Regulations Effective April 1, 2016
- 3) Seeking to quickly resolve the housing crisis before focusing on other non-housing related services;
- 4) Allowing participants to choose the services and housing that meets their needs, within practical and funding limitations;
- 5) Connecting participants to appropriate support and services available in the community that foster long-term housing stability;
- 6) Offering financial assistance and supportive services in a manner which offers a minimum amount of assistance initially, adding more assistance over time if needed to quickly resolve the housing crisis by either ending homelessness, or avoiding an immediate return to literal homelessness or the imminent risk of literal homelessness. The type, duration, and amount of assistance offered shall be based on an individual assessment of the household, and the availability of other resources or support systems to resolve their housing crisis and stabilize them in housing; and
- 7) Notwithstanding subdivision (6) above:
 - a) Rapid Rehousing activities funded within the same Continuum of Care Service Area shall follow the same program requirements for type, duration, and amount of assistance provided, unless sufficient written justification for any differences is provided by the Continuum of Care and approved by the Department; and
 - b) Homeless prevention activities funded within the same Continuum of Care Service Area shall follow the same program requirements for type, duration, and amount of assistance provided, unless sufficient written justification for any differences is provided by the Continuum of Care and approved by the Department. (8) Any other practices promoted or required by HUD

D. Compliance and Confidentiality

The Department may request information from the Applicant that demonstrates compliance with any of the program requirement and shall provide such information when requested.

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Religious Compliance - The Applicant agrees to provide all eligible activities under this Program in a manner that is in accordance with 24 CFR 576.406:

- a) It will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of religion and will not limit employment or give preference in employment to persons on the basis of religion;
- b) It will not discriminate against any person applying for shelter or any of the eligible activities under this part on the basis of religion and will not limit such housing or other eligible activities or give preference to persons on the basis of religion; and
- c) It will provide no religious instruction or counseling, conduct no religious worship or services, engage in no religious proselytizing, and exert no other religious influence in the provision of shelter and other eligible activities under this Project.

Confidentiality - As required by 24 CFR 91.325(c)(3) and federal ESG Regulations (24 CFR 576.500(x)) the Applicant has established and is implementing procedures to ensure the confidentiality of records pertaining to any individual provided family-violence prevention or treatment services under any project assisted under the ESG program, including protection against the release of the address or location of any family-violence shelter project, except with the written authorization of the person responsible for the operation of that shelter.

Environmental Requirements - As required by 24 CFR 576.407(d), all activities the Applicant undertakes with assistance under ESG will be consistent with the environmental review responsibilities as described under 24 CFR Section 576.407(d).

Equal Access Requirements - As required by 24 CDR 5.106, recipients must ensure that all individuals have equal access to shelter and programs in accordance with their gender identity. Providers that operate single-sex projects using funds awarded through HUD will now be required to provide all individuals, including transgender individuals and other individuals who do not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth, with access to programs, benefits, services, and accommodations in accordance with their gender identity without being subjected to intrusive questioning or being asked to provide documentation.

Accessibility of Services - As required under 24 CFR 576.407(b) the Applicant's Procedures meets the regulatory requirements relating to:

- 1) Access/Transportation – communicating with and ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to the location of assistance, services, and facilities.
- 2) Disability Accommodations – requests for Reasonable Accommodations
- 3) Linguistic Needs – ensuring meaningful access to programs and activities for LEP persons. Include a separate description for each Activity, if different.

For more information on the ESG Program, see the following webpage:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/esg/>

For more information on the Continuum of Care Program, see the following webpage:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/>