**Guidance Document No. 6**

**Supportive Housing Services Guidelines**

**Contract reference**

Section C-1.4.

**purpose**

The purpose of the Supportive Housing funding is to alleviate waitlists for shelter beds by assisting survivors in obtaining transitional housing or permanent housing. Housing supports will vary depending on the needs of the survivor. Housing supports may be used to prevent the need for shelter bed(s), to move a survivor out of shelter, or assist survivors in obtaining other stable housing.

**funding source**

During the 2024 Legislative Session, the Department was appropriated $10,012,500 in recurring general revenue funds to be allocated to the Centers. Centers may not use these funds to match any other state or federal program as the Department is utilizing these funds to match its Family Violence Prevention and Services Formula Grant.

Centers received base funding of $55,000 and the remaining funds were allocated using the funding formula. The base was allocated to ensure that Centers with smaller allocations would have funds for programmatic and administrative resources to support the implementation of providing Supportive Housing services.

**Priorties**

Housing support should prioritize survivors with children involved in the child welfare system, followed by individuals with children. Centers may set additional priorities as needed. *This funding may be used to assist survivors without children****.***

**Staffing**

Centers may use funding to cover up to two full time employees (FTE). This includes direct and indirect staff. The two FTEs can be a combination of part-time employees or any combination that equals up to two FTEs. Centers may determine how they allocate the FTEs depending on its needs. Centers are not required to use any of the funding for staff if they determine that it is not needed as part of its service delivery. There are no requirements on the salary for the positions.

**Reporting**

Centers will be required to report the number of survivors served with the funds monthly though Template 11 - Supportive Housing Services Report Form. This includes survivors receiving financial assistance and those supported by housing staff funded through this contract.

**Center Policy and Procedures**

It is strongly encouraged that Centers develop Policies and Procedures (P&Ps) for the use of these funds to ensure accountability. Such P&Ps may include, supporting documentation requirements, allowable uses of the funds, limits per survivor, number of months for rental payments or mortgage payments per survivor, process for accessing the funds, data collection and reporting requirements. Please do not hesitate to reach out for assistance with this process if needed.

**allowability of activiTIes**

Below are items that are considered allowable expenses using these funds. This list will not capture every unique need of survivors as this is not an exhaustive list. If a Center is not sure if an expense is allowable, they should contact its assigned Contract Manager for guidance.

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| **Allowable** |
| Survivor Financial Assistance pre-approved expenses consist of, but are not limited to:   * Afterschool programming * Bikes for transportation * Childcare * Computer/Tablet/Smart Phones * Credit Reports * Employment supplies – uniform, tools * Fees to get copies of necessary documents for housing (driver’s license, birth certificate, credit report, etc.) * First/last month rental payments * Food (outside the move in fee) * Homeowner Insurance * Hurricane Kits * Internet/Hotspots * Legal Aid for issues with past evictions or rental issues * Medical Bills * Mortgage payment assistance (current and arrears) * Move in items - Up to $500 per survivor for items including bedding, furniture, kitchenware, and other essential household items * *Moving trucks* to relocate already packed households. *This does not include movers.* * Pet Deposit Renters Insurance * Safety App for Survivors * Security deposits and application fees * Security systems/cameras/new locks * Short-term rental assistance (2 months, unless otherwise approved on a case-by-case basis) Sober Living housing unit * Storage fees/POD * Uber and Lyft for transportation to appointments (medical, employment, legal) * Utilities Assistance: water, gas, waste/trash, and electricity (current & arrears); * Utility deposits * Utility late fees and connection fees |
| Each survivor will have a unique set of needs. This is not an exhaustive list. Please contact your assigned Contract Manager for written approval for case-by-case situations. |

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| **Non-Allowable** |
| The following items are not approved for use of funds:   * Car payments or insurance * Debt related to driver license issues (past tickets, tolls, preventing them from renewing or instating their license) * Educational courses * Incentives for groups (gas or food cards or any other incentive items to get participants to come to group meetings * Small grants for starting a business |

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| **Requires Contract Manager Approval (on a case-by-case basis)** |
| The following items must be submitted in writing to the Contract Manager for prior approval:   * Budget Adjustments Repairs to residential property (in survivor’s name) * Minor car repairs * Minor repairs to homes that may impact housing stability * Transitional housing program needs * Veterinary Care |

**Frequently asked questions (FAQ’s)**

**Q: Can we serve participants who do not reside in shelter?**

A: Yes.

**Q: How is “served” being defined?**

A: As those receiving financial assistance or support from housing staff funded through this contract.

**Q: Can we serve participants with multiple evictions?**

A: Yes. The intent of this initiative is to support survivor’s housing stability reducing barriers which may impact credit worthiness.

**Q: Should we work with our local Continuum of Care?**

A: Yes. Your community’s “CoC” is the lead agency for homelessness services in your area. Your Center is likely a member of the local CoC but if further support is needed, please contact your assigned Contract Manager.

**Q: Who do we reach out to for Training and Technical Assistance?**

A: Please contact your assigned Contract Manager for support.

**Q: Can we use the funds for a “guard dog”?**

A: No.

**Q: Can we serve survivors without children?**

A: Yes. Although this funding is intended to prioritize survivors with children and who are involved with the child welfare system, survivors without children may still receive assistance.

**Q: Would a deposit for an RV or camper qualify for assistance under this program?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Should the documentation for this initiative be kept separate from the participant file?**

A: Yes. This should be outlined in the Center’s policies and procedures.

**Q: Can the funds be used to stop an eviction?**

A: Yes, it is encouraged to confirm that the landlord and court is willing to halt the eviction process before payment is rendered. This should be outline in the Center’s policies and procedures.

**Q: Would insurance for the shelter be allowable?**

A: No, insurance for the shelter would not be an allowable expenditure for the housing funds.

**Q: Can we assist a survivor moving out of county?**

A: Yes.

**Q: What documentation is required for housing and billing backup?**

A: The Center shall maintain records in accordance with generally accepted accounting procedures. The Department does not determine the specific documentation that should be maintained, but the Center is required to maintain information to support its expenditure should an audit be conducted. Such records should support that the expenditures were allowable, reasonable, and necessary. Please refer to The Center’s policies and procedures.

**Q: What does our accounting department need to submit for proof and backup to the department? For example, redacted copies of leases?**

A: The Office of Domestic Violence will not request survivor leases to be submitted.

**Q: When verifying income for housing assistance, what is the process? Should we accept self-reported information, review supporting documentation, or keep copies of documents such as bank statements?**

A: Please refer to The Center’s policies and procedures. If you need further support, please connect with one of the two designated training and technical assistance providers.

**Q: Can we assist survivors with the move in costs for a boating community for nontraditional housing?**

A: Yes, the same guidelines should apply for non-traditional housing solutions. Please refer to The Center’s policies and procedures.

**Q: Can we require individuals to have sufficient income to sustain their apartment or rent? If not, can we deny their application?**

A: There will likely be income guidelines to ensure housing stability. Please refer to The Center’s policies and procedures. If further assistance is needed, please contact your contract manager or designated training and technical assistance provider.

**Q: Is it permissible to require participants to complete our financial education courses to qualify for the program, provided it is empowering?**

A: Each center will develop their own guidelines to support survivor’s housing stability. Please refer to The Center’s policies and procedures.

**Q: Do we need to collect and store copies of personal documents like driver’s licenses, social security cards, or birth certificates for the housing project? If so, should these be stored by us or submitted to the Contract Manager as backup documentation? If verification is sufficient, how should we handle document storage?**

A: For this specific funding stream, this documentation is not required for backup. For Documentation storage Please refer to The Center’s policies and procedures for additional information.

**Q: How will file monitoring be conducted for compliance? Will it be separate from the program file, or will it be integrated?**

A: It will be separate from the participant file. Please refer to The Center’s policies and procedures for additional information.