

2024 ESG APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTION

FUNDING SOURCES

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) and the City of Pittsburgh's Office of Management and Budget (City OMB) are pleased to present our joint Application for Emergency Solutions Grant funds (ESG). This Application process is being utilized to solicit Applications for ESG funding¹ from a broad array of Applicants for new Shelter, Street Outreach and Rapid Rehousing (RRH) projects. DHS and the City will make funding awards from the following sources:²

- City of Pittsburgh's direct entitlement 2024 ESG allocation
- Allegheny County's direct entitlement 2024 ESG allocation
- Any future Federal or State allocations or awards of ESG funding received by either Allegheny County or the City of Pittsburgh

APPLICATION MATERIALS AND RELATED INFORMATION

All Application materials that are part of this Application process will be posted on the following websites:

- <https://pittsburghpa.gov/omb/grant-opportunities>
- [Solicitations \(RFP/RFQ/RFI\) \(alleghenycounty.us\)](https://alleghenycounty.us/solicitations)
- <https://alleghenycountydhs.bonfirehub.com>

Applicants may complete/apply for funding for one or both of the following:

- Shelter and Street Outreach
- Rapid Rehousing

IMPORTANT APPLICATION DATES AND DEADLINES

RFP Posting	Thursday, May 30, 2024
Questions Deadline	Friday, July 5 at 3 p.m. Eastern
Last Website and Q&A Update	Thursday, July 11 at 6 p.m. Eastern
Submission Deadline	Thursday, July 18 at 3 p.m. Eastern
Estimated Award Decision/Notification	August 2024

¹ Projects that currently receive ESG funds through DHS or City OMB do not need to submit an application in response to this solicitation to be considered for renewal.

² Additional funding sources may be used.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. The Overview section lists all known and potential funding that applies to the above Applications.
2. 2024 ESG funding (City and County) requires a minimum of a 1:1 match.
3. All Applicants must complete and submit the following:
 - a. Topic-specific Application (Shelter and Street Outreach, Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) or both).
 - b. Board Resolution
 - c. Budget Worksheet
 - d. Budget Narrative
 - e. Matching Funds Documentation
 - f. Proof of Insurance
 - g. Program and Financial Policies
 - h. Job Descriptions
4. New Applicants (those that have not been under contract with either Allegheny County or the City of Pittsburgh in the past 3 years) must attach 501(c)3 documentation and an Audit of Financial Statement.
5. All ESG funds are meant to serve those at greatest need with efficiency and effectiveness while following all related requirements and regulations.
6. Applications selected and approved for funding will enter into a contract with Allegheny County through its Department of Human Services (DHS) or with the City of Pittsburgh through its Office of Management and Budget (OMB). In order to enter into an Agreement with the County, Applicants must comply with all contract requirements and all standard terms and conditions contained in a County contract for provision of services to DHS and its offices. Additional details about contracting with Allegheny County are provided in the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](#).
7. **Applications must be submitted electronically by logging into or creating an account on Bonfire at <https://alleghenycountydhs.bonfirehub.com> and uploading the required submission documents to the appropriate [RFP Opportunity Page](#) no later than 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, July 18, 2024, to be considered for review. If you are having trouble making an account or uploading your documents, please contact Bonfire Support. You can also reach out to the DHS Procurement Team at DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us or (412) 350-6352.**
8. All Applications must be submitted before the deadline! Once the deadline has passed, the RFP Opportunity Page will no longer accept Applications. If an Application is late, it will be rejected and will not be presented to the Evaluation Committee (as described in Section 5 below) for review and scoring.
9. Applicants will receive an email acknowledging receipt of their Application. If an Applicant does not receive this notification within 48 hours of submission, please contact: DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.
10. If you have any questions about this RFP, please use the Vendor Discussion feature through the

DHS Bonfire Portal at <https://alleghenycountydhs.bonfirehub.com> on the [RFP Opportunity Page](#), or email us at DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.

- a. All content-related questions must be submitted by the Questions Deadline at 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, July 5, 2024.
- b. You may submit technical or logistical questions at any time, even after the Questions Deadline.

11. All information about the RFP, including answers to all content-related questions and any changes or amendments, will be posted on the [Bonfire RFP Opportunity Page](#) and on our Active Solicitations website at <https://solicitations.alleghenycounty.us/>. Through Bonfire, once you have created an account and indicated you are interested in this RFP, you will receive automatic email updates when any questions, changes or amendments are made available.

- a. Please check the DHS Bonfire Portal and the website regularly for answers to questions, additional information and changes to the RFP or the RFP process.
- b. The webpage will be updated only on Thursdays, with any new information visible after 6 p.m.
- c. The last Q&A and website update for this RFP will be on Thursday, July 11, 2024, at 6 p.m. We will make every effort not to post any new information after this time; however, we reserve the right to post new information in emergency circumstances.

HOW APPLICATIONS WILL BE EVALUATED

The evaluation process will consist of the below-outlined steps. Please note that in future years the County and City may update this process.

- a. DHS and the City will form an Evaluation Committee. The Evaluation Committee, which will be comprised of evaluators with expertise in the subject matter of this RFP, may include community members with lived experience, external subject matter experts or provider representative(s), representative(s) from key partners or funders, and DHS and City staff.
- b. All Evaluation Committee members will individually review and score each Application. Each Evaluation Committee member will award points utilizing their personal expertise and best judgment of how the Application submitted by that Applicant meets the objectives of the Contracted Services and can be effectively implemented. Scores will be awarded in the following categories:
 - Service Plan (20 points)
 - Organization and Personnel (20 points)
 - Budget (20 points)
 - Coordination/Partnerships (10 points)
 - Past Performance, where applicable (20 points)
 - Participation in Continuum of Care (CoC) activities (10 points)
- c. DHS will tally the average scores of the members of the Evaluation Committee and present a list of average scores to the entire Committee. The Committee will meet, consider the average scores, and arrive at a consensus as to which Applicant(s) can best provide the Contract Services in response to the RFP and the needs of the community. The Committee will have the discretion to proceed as follows: 1) to recommend that a reduced number of Applications be shortlisted for more extensive review through a formal oral presentation, interview or site visit to the Committee or 2) to recommend that DHS and the City request authorization for the

County/City to enter into an Agreement(s) with the Successful Applicant(s).

- d. As described in c above, DHS, on behalf of the County, and OMB, on behalf of the City, shall have the exclusive discretion to shortlist a reduced number of Applications for more extensive review. In this case, DHS and the City may request that shortlisted Applicants make a formal oral presentation to the Evaluation Committee. Each Committee member will individually score the oral presentation of the shortlisted Applicant using the following criteria and the scale outlined in 5.1b. The maximum score that a shortlisted Applicant's oral presentation can receive is 15 points:
 - Presentation demonstrates Applicant's ability to implement the Contract Services effectively. (5 points)
 - Applicant's answers to Evaluation Committee's questions demonstrate Applicant's ability to implement the Contract Services. (5 points)
 - Applicant's presentation is thoughtful and well prepared. (5 points)
- e. The average scores of the members of the Evaluation Committee to the shortlisted Applicants' formal oral presentations will be tallied and reported to the entire Committee. The Committee will meet, consider the scores and arrive at a consensus as to which Applicant(s) can best provide the Contract Services in response to the Application.
- f. Once the Committee has arrived at a consensus, it will:
 1. Submit its recommendation for award of an Agreement(s) with the County to the Director of DHS for approval.
 - a. The DHS Director will, in turn, submit a request to the County Manager for approval for the County to enter into an Agreement(s) with the Successful Applicant(s).
 2. Submit its recommendation of an Agreement(s) to the City for City Council's final approval.
- f. At any time during the evaluation process, DHS and the City may contact an Applicant to discuss any areas of the Application needing clarification or further explanation.
- g. At any time during the evaluation process, DHS and the City may contact an Applicant's references.
- h. As part of determining an Applicant's eligibility to enter into a contract with Allegheny County or the City, all Applicants' financial audits or other documentation will be reviewed by DHS fiscal analysts to ensure an Applicant's financial stability.
- i. **The County and City are under no obligation to award or enter into an Agreement with an Applicant as a result of this RFP. The County and the City reserve the right to reject any and all Applications.**
- j. All Applicants will be notified of the final decision as to which Applicant(s) will be awarded an Agreement.
- k. Applicants that are not awarded an Agreement but are interested in receiving feedback regarding their submission may request a phone call at DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.

OVERVIEW - ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL APPLICANTS

1. Regulatory Framework:

On May 20, 2009, the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009 was signed into law. [The HEARTH Act](#) amends and reauthorizes the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act with substantial changes, including:

- A change in HUD's definition of homelessness and chronic homelessness.
- An increase in prevention resources.
- An increased emphasis on performance.

The [Emergency Solutions Grants \(ESG\) Program Interim Rule](#) focuses on the regulatory implementation of the ESG Program.

All Applicants must be prepared to follow all HUD regulations and requirements and all DHS & City local requirements and program guidelines.

2. Eligible Program Components and Activities

Eligible activities include emergency shelter, street outreach and Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) activities.

Street Outreach: Essential Services related to reaching out to unsheltered individuals and families, connecting them with emergency shelter, housing or critical services, and providing them with urgent, non-facility-based care. Eligible costs include engagement, case management, emergency health and mental health services, transportation and services for special populations. See 24 CFR 576.101.

Emergency Shelter: Essential Services, including case management, childcare, education services, employment assistance and job training, outpatient health services, legal services, life skills training, mental health services, substance use treatment services, transportation and services for special populations. Shelter Operations, including maintenance, rent, repair, security, fuel, equipment, insurance, utilities, food, furnishings and supplies necessary for the operation of the emergency shelter. Where no appropriate emergency shelter is available for an unsheltered family or individual, eligible costs may also include a hotel or motel voucher for that family or individual. See 24 CFR 576.102.

RRH: Housing relocation and stabilization services and/or short- and/or medium-term rental assistance as necessary that help individuals or families living in shelters or in places not meant for human habitation move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing. See 24 CFR 576.104. Eligible costs include:

1. Financial Assistance
 - a. Rental Assistance – Rental assistance will be provided to landlords on behalf of eligible tenants, allowing participants to remain in existing rental units or to obtain and stay in rental units for a period of up to 12 months. This assistance will take the form of forward rent beginning with up to a 100% subsidy which will gradually decrease over the 12-month period. Participants will be recertified and/or reevaluated every 6 months to

ensure that financial assistance is still needed to maintain housing. Additional participant monitoring will be required throughout the program.

- b. Rental Arrearages – Participants may be eligible for up to 6 months of rental arrearages.
 - c. Security deposits – Funding may be used for security deposits as documented in the lease and in keeping with the landlord’s standard security deposit policies.
 - d. Utility Arrearages – ESG funds can be used for up to 6 months of utility arrearages.
 - e. Utility Payments – ESG funds can be used to pay for monthly utility payments, depending on the participant’s eligibility and need.
 - f. Moving Costs – ESG funds may be used for reasonable moving costs.
2. Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services
- a. Case Management – ESG funds may be used for case management services, including the arrangement, coordination, monitoring and delivery of services related to meeting the housing needs of program participants and helping them obtain housing stability. Case Management may include counseling; developing, securing and coordinating services; monitoring and evaluating progress; and developing an individualized housing and service plan leading to housing stability.
 - b. Housing Search and Placement – Assistance finding and retaining suitable housing, including tenant counseling, making moving arrangements, helping with leases, securing utilities, and providing mediation with and outreach to property owners.
 - c. Credit Repair – ESG funds may be used to assist program participants with critical housing-related skills such as household budgeting, money management and resolving personal credit issues.

Eligible program participants for emergency shelter, street outreach and RRH must meet HUD’s definition of homelessness:

A. Definition of Homelessness

1. An individual or family lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
 - i. An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for/not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport or camp ground.
 - ii. An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (e.g., congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state or local government programs for low-income individuals).
 - iii. An individual who is exiting an institution where they resided for 90 days or fewer and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.
2. An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:
 - i. The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance.
 - ii. No subsequent residence has been identified.
 - iii. The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks (e.g., family, friends

and/or faith-based or other social networks) needed to obtain other permanent housing.

3. Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age or families with children/youth who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:
 - i. Are defined as homeless under section 387 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5732a), section 637 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832), section 41403 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2), section 330(h) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b(h)), section 3 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012), section 17(b) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786(b)) or section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a).
 - ii. Have not had a lease, ownership interest or occupancy agreement in permanent housing at any time during the 60 days immediately preceding the date of application for homeless assistance.
 - iii. Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the 60-day period immediately preceding the date of applying for homeless assistance.
 - iv. 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 use, history of domestic or interpersonal violence (DV/IPV) or childhood abuse (including neglect), a family member under the age of 18 with a disability or two or more barriers to employment, including the lack of a high school degree or General Education Development (GED), illiteracy, low English proficiency, a history of incarceration or detention for criminal activity, and a history of unstable employment.
4. Any individual or family who:
 - i. Is fleeing, or attempting to flee, DV/IPV, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence.
 - ii. Has no other residence.
 - iii. Lacks the resources or support networks (e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks) to obtain other permanent housing.

B. Definition of At-Risk of Homelessness

1. An individual or family who:
 - i. Has an annual income below 30% of median family income for the area, as determined by HUD.
 - ii. Does not have sufficient resources or support networks (e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks) immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency shelter or another place, as described in 2A.
 - iii. Meets one of the following conditions:
 - a. Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days

- immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance
- b. Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship
 - c. Has been notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance
 - d. Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by Federal, State or local government programs for low-income individuals
 - e. Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which two or more people reside or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 people per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau
 - f. Is exiting a publicly funded institution or system of care (e.g., healthcare facility, mental health treatment facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correctional program or institution)
 - g. Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness, as identified in the recipient's approved consolidated plan
2. A child or youth who does not qualify as "homeless" under this section, but qualifies as "homeless" under section 387(3) of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5732a(3)), section 637(11) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832(11)), section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2(6)), section 330(h)(5)(A) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b(h)(5)(A)), section 3(m) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012(m)) or section 17(b)(15) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786(b)(15))
 3. A child or youth who does not qualify as "homeless" under this section, but qualifies as "homeless" under section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(2)), and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of that child or youth if living with them

Data Collections (HMIS)

Housing Management Information System (HMIS) participation is a requirement of ESG recipients (DV/IPV shelters cannot participate in HMIS but must use a comparable database to provide aggregate reports). Grant funds may be used for the costs of participating in the existing HMIS of the CoC where the project is located.

3. Match

Sub-recipients are required to match 100% of their grant request, which may include cash resources provided any time after the start date of the contract. Match contribution must meet all requirements that apply to ESG funds and must be expended in accordance with regulatory guidance.

Match may be obtained from any source, including federal (other than the ESG Program), state, local and private sources. However, the following requirements apply to matching contributions from a federal source of funds:

1. The recipient must ensure that the laws governing any funds to be used as matching

- contributions do not prohibit those funds from being used to match ESG funds.
2. If ESG funds are used to satisfy the matching requirements of another federal program, funding from that program may not be used to satisfy the matching requirements under this section.

The matching requirement may be met by one or both of the following:

1. **Cash contributions.** Cash expended for allowable costs, as defined in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars A-87 (2 CFR part 225) and A-122 (2 CFR part 230), of the sub-recipient or third-party contractor
2. **Non-cash contributions.** The value of any property, equipment, goods or services contributed to the sub-recipient's or third-party contractor's ESG Program, provided that if the sub-recipient or third-party contractor had to pay for them with grant funds, the costs would have been allowable
 - a. Non-cash contributions may also include the purchase value of any donated building. To determine the value of any donated material or building, or of any lease, the sub-recipient or third-party contractor must use a method reasonably calculated to establish the fair market value.
 - b. Services provided by individuals must be valued at rates consistent with those ordinarily paid for similar work in the sub-recipient's or third-party contractor's organization. If the sub-recipient or third-party contractor does not have employees performing similar work, the rates must be consistent with those ordinarily paid by other employers for similar work in the same labor market.
 - c. Some non-cash contributions are property, equipment, goods or services that, if the sub-recipient or third-party contractor had to pay for them with grant funds, would have been indirect costs. Matching credit for these contributions will be given only if the sub-recipient or third-party contractor has established, along with its regular indirect cost rate, a special rate for allocating the value of those contributions to individual projects or programs.

4. Housing First

Housing First is the guiding principle for the homelessness system. This approach is guided by the belief that people can better address complex life challenges (e.g., getting a job, budgeting properly, attending to unhealthy substance use) after their basic needs (e.g., food, a safe and permanent place to live) are met; stable housing can serve as a platform from which individuals can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life. A Housing First approach is a requirement for using ESG funds.

5. HMIS

All ESG-funded providers must enter client data into the HMIS or, in the case of IPV/DV providers, a comparable data management system.

6. Reporting Requirements

Applicants receiving ESG funds must report client level data, such as number of people served, demographic data and instances of services provided, in the HMIS. DV/IPV agencies must use a

comparable system to HMIS.

Awardees must provide required and/or requested data for HUD-required reports and any other reports requested or as needed by the funding entity(ies).

7. Monitoring

Monitoring of agencies will be done on a regular basis. This will include monthly and/or as-needed meetings with City and DHS representatives to report on program performance. City and County staff will conduct periodic site visits to review program files, client files, financial records and any other documentation pertaining to ESG.

8. Reallocation of Grant Funds

Agencies will be monitored on a regular basis to assess progress in the expenditure of funds. If an agency falls below the required percentage of expenditure, the City or County will determine whether funds can be properly expended. If funding can't be expended within the agreement period, steps may be taken to recapture the funds to reallocate to another agency. This reallocation of funds may be done through a separate RFP process, or funds may be awarded to another agency based upon performance.

9. Housing Quality Inspections (HQS), Fair Market Rent and Rent Reasonableness

Starting with the 2022 ESG Program Year, RRH providers will conduct Housing Quality Inspections (HQS), Fair Market Rent (FMR) analysis and Rent Reasonableness determinations on each program participant's unit per HUD standards and Local Policy.