

# Request for Proposals (RFP)

Projects aligned with the Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties CoC  
(FL-511) Strategic Plan

## **DCF State Unified Contract Competition (FY 2026)**

Funding Opportunity: Challenge, ESG, and TANF Programs

Issued by: Opening Doors Northwest Florida, Inc. on behalf of the Escambia and Santa  
Rosa Counties CoC (CoC FL-511)

### **Release Date**

Monday, May 4, 2026

### **Applications Due**

Monday, June 1, 2026, by 5 PM CDT

**Applications must be submitted by email to**  
[grants@openingdoorsnwfl.org](mailto:grants@openingdoorsnwfl.org)

Applications received after the submission deadline will not be considered.

## Overview

Opening Doors Northwest Florida, Inc. is soliciting proposals from qualified organizations to provide services under the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Unified Contract No. LP018 for FY 2025-2026. Funding is available through the following programs:

- Challenge Grant
- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)
- TANF Homelessness Prevention Grant

These funds support activities that prevent and reduce homelessness and promote housing stability within Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties.

## Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include:

- Nonprofit organizations [501(c)3]
- Local government entities (e.g., public housing agencies)
- Faith-based organizations

Applicants must meet all Minimum Eligibility Requirements outlined in Section 3 to be considered for funding.

## Minimum Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must meet the following minimum eligibility requirements. Failure to meet these requirements or provide required documentation may result in the application being deemed non-responsive.

Applicants must:

- Be an eligible entity authorized to operate in the State of Florida
- Provide services in Escambia County and Santa Rosa County
- Submit the organization's IRS Determination Letter confirming federally tax-exempt status
- Demonstrate financial capacity by submitting the most recent two (2) years of financial statements (audited)
- Demonstrate the ability to operate programs on a cost reimbursement basis and submit required supporting documentation for payment
- Demonstrate sufficient administrative and reporting capacity to meet program and contract requirements

Applicants must not be listed on the federal excluded parties list (System for Award Management – SAM.gov). Any applicant identified as debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded will be considered ineligible for funding.

## Contract Term

All awards issued under this RFP will operate under a uniform contract period:

Start Date: July 1, 2026

End Date: June 30, 2027

All funded activities and expenditures must occur within this period.

## Program Requirements

### Continuum of Care (CoC) Participation

Funded providers are expected to actively participate in the Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties Continuum of Care (FL-511). Participation in the CoC supports coordination across the homeless response system and provides access to resources, technical assistance, and funding opportunities.

Subrecipients are expected to maintain active CoC membership and engage in system-level activities, which include participation in CoC meetings, committees, and coordinated planning efforts.

### HMIS and Coordinated Entry

All applicants must participate in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and the Coordinated Entry Homeless Response System for the Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties Continuum of Care (CoC FL-511).

Applicants must:

- Be currently participating in HMIS or commit to onboarding prior to contract execution
- Comply with HMIS data quality and reporting standards
- Participate in Coordinated Entry, including accepting and documenting referrals

Programs must use HMIS for all required data collection unless exempt (e.g., victim service providers using a comparable database).

Failure to comply may result in disqualification.

## CoC Strategic Plan Alignment

All applicants must demonstrate how their proposed program aligns with and supports the Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties Continuum of Care (FL-511) Strategic Plan.

Applicants must:

- Identify specific goals or priorities from the CoC Strategic Plan that the program supports
- Describe how proposed activities contribute to system-level outcomes (e.g., reducing homelessness, increasing housing stability)
- Explain coordination with the broad homeless response system, including Coordinated Entry

Failure to clearly demonstrate alignment may result in a lower score or application rejection.

## Service Delivery Expectations

Funded providers must:

- Deliver eligible services aligned with Challenge, ESG, and/or TANF requirements
- Maintain required documentation for eligibility and services
- Submit timely and accurate reports and invoices
- Participate in monitoring and compliance activities

## Training Requirement

Selected applicants will be required to complete onboarding and compliance training prior to contract execution, including:

- Program requirements
- HMIS procedures
- Documentation and reporting standards

## Compliance with Federal and State Requirements

Funded providers must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

This includes:

- Federal administrative requirements under 2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Guidance), which govern how federal funds are managed and spent
- Program-specific requirements for ESG, Challenge Grant, and TANF funding

- Conflict of interest requirements (organizations must disclose any potential conflicts)
- Nondiscrimination and equal opportunity laws (services must be provided without discrimination)
- Accessibility requirements, including providing reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities

Additional requirements will be provided during onboarding and included in the subcontract agreement.

## Funding Information

### Challenge.Grant

Projected funding available: \$ 573,645.38

Administrative costs may be included up to 2% of the budget request.

Match.

Challenge requires a 25% match.

### Emergency.Solutions.Grant

Projected funding available: \$ 179,288.51

Administrative costs may be included up to 2% of the budget request.

Match

ESG requires a 100% match.

## Match Requirement

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds require a dollar-for-dollar (100%) match.

Challenge Grant funds also require matching contributions in accordance with state requirements.

Applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet all applicable match requirements. Match must be from eligible sources and must comply with program regulations.

### TANF.Grant

Projected funding available: \$ 31,258.59.

Only one applicant will be awarded.

Applicants must submit a budget that includes:

- Direct service costs
- Administrative costs

Administrative costs:

- Are capped at 1% of the total request
- Must be included within the total request (not added on top)

## Funding Availability and Adjustments

Funding awarded under this RFP is subject to the availability of federal and state funds and may be adjusted based on factors including, but not limited to, performance of the Continuum of Care (CoC) and changes in funding allocations from the Department of Children and Families.

While projected funding amounts are provided for planning purposes, actual award amounts may be increased, decreased, or eliminated. The issuing agency reserves the right to adjust individual awards or reduce funding levels as necessary.

Applicants acknowledge that funding is not guaranteed at the requested levels and agree to operate within the final amounts awarded.

Applicants are encouraged to propose scalable program designs that can be adjusted based on final funding levels.

## Application Requirements

Narrative

- Organizational overview and experience
- Description of proposed services
- Target population
- Staffing plan

CoC Strategic Plan Alignment

- Description of how the program aligns with the CoC Strategic Plan priorities
- Expected system-level outcomes

HMIS & Coordinated Entry

- Documentation of HMIS Participation or commitment to onboard

- Description of the Coordinated Entry participation process

#### Budget

- Detailed budget by funding source
- Budget narrative (itemized)

## Required Forms and Certifications

Applicants must submit all required forms and certifications. Applications missing required documentation may be deemed non-responsive.

Required forms include:

- Proof of nonprofit status
- SAM.gov registration and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure
- Most recent audit or financial statements
- Match Commitment Letter(s)

Additional documentation may be required prior to contract execution.

## Pre-Award and Contract Execution Requirements

Selected applicants must provide prior to contract execution:

- Completed Form W-9
- Proof of Commercial General Liability Insurance with minimum coverage of \$1,000,000 per occurrence (or as otherwise specified) and naming the Lead Agency and/or the State of Florida, Department of Children and Families, as additional insured, as applicable
- Worker's Compensation Insurance, as required by law
- Verification of active registration in SAM.gov (for federally funded programs, as applicable)
- Any additional documentation required for vendor setup

Depending on the scope of service, applicants may be required to maintain Cyber/Network Security and Privacy Liability Insurance when handling confidential or personally identifiable information.

All insurance must be maintained for the duration of the contract.

Failure to provide documentation may result in forfeiture of award.

By applying, applicants acknowledge their ability to meet these requirements.

## Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- Organizational capacity and experience
- Program design and effectiveness
- CoC Strategic Plan alignment
- HMIS participation and data quality capacity
- Coordinated Entry participation
- Budget and cost effectiveness

## Submission Instructions

Applications with all required documentation must be submitted electronically to:  
[grants@openingdoorsnwfl.org](mailto:grants@openingdoorsnwfl.org)

Applications must include page numbers. All pages of the application, including attachments, must be numbered consecutively (e.g., “Page 1 of X”).

Applications must be submitted as a single, consolidated PDF document.

Late submissions will not be accepted.

## Contact Information

For questions regarding this RFP, contact:

Martika Baker, Director of Programs

Email: [martikab@openingdoorsnwfl.org](mailto:martikab@openingdoorsnwfl.org)

Phone: (850) 281-3164

# Attachments

Each appendix serves a different purpose:

- Timeline
- Subrecipient Requirements Overview
- CoC Action Plan (FY 2026)
- DCF Homelessness Assistance Guide
- HUD Homeless Definitions
- HUD At Risk Homelessness Definitions
- Budget Template – Use the correct template for your application. Using the incorrect template will be considered missing documentation.
- Match Commitment Letter Template (Contributing Organization)
- Applicant Match Certification
- Applicant Conflict of Interest Disclosure

## Timeline

Date	Event
May 4 <sup>th</sup>	DCF Unified Competition RFP released
May 11 <sup>th</sup>	Release of CoC Action Plan (FY 2026) / RFP Addendum
May 12 <sup>th</sup> Time: 9 – 10:30 AM	Q&A Office Hours Session 1 Location: Opening Doors Northwest Florida Link: <a href="#">Q&amp;A Office Hours Session 1   Meeting-Join   Microsoft Teams</a>
May 26 <sup>th</sup> Time: 9 – 10:30 AM	Q&A Office Hours Session 2 Location: Opening Doors Northwest Florida Link: <a href="#">Q&amp;A Office Hours Session 2   Meeting-Join   Microsoft Teams</a>
June 1 <sup>st</sup> Time: 5 PM CST	<b>RFP Applications submission deadline</b> <b>Submit to:</b> <a href="mailto:grants@openingdoorsnwfl.org">grants@openingdoorsnwfl.org</a>
June 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Threshold requirements review - Deficiency notices issued
June 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup>	Cure window open - Applicant opportunity to make corrections - Rolling review of corrections as submitted
June 5 <sup>th</sup> – June 15 <sup>th</sup>	Rating and Ranking Committee Evaluation Period - Conflict of Interest disclosures - Individual scoring
June 16 <sup>th</sup> and 17 <sup>th</sup>	Rating and Ranking Committee Meeting (Discussion) - Scores compiled and awardee list finalized
June 18 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup>	Appeals window open (procedural issues only)
June 20 <sup>th</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup>	Appeals reviewed and resolved Final awardee list issued
June 23 <sup>rd</sup>	CoC Leadership Council Vote - Approval of final rankings and funding recommendations
June 24 <sup>th</sup> – June 30 <sup>th</sup>	Awards and Contracting - Award notifications issued - Subcontracts executed

## Subrecipient Requirements Overview

Funding awarded under this RFP is subject to federal and state requirements. The following summarizes key expectations for Subrecipients.

This is not exhaustive. Full requirements will be included in subcontract agreements.

By submitting an application, applicants acknowledge their ability to comply with these requirements.

1. Compliance

Subrecipients must comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and program requirements.

2. Financial Accountability

Subrecipients must maintain proper financial systems, document expenditures, and ensure costs are allowable.

Payments are contingent upon performance. Disallowed costs or overpayments must be repaid.

3. Monitoring and Oversight

Subrecipients will be subject to monitoring, audits, and record reviews.

4. HMIS and Coordinated Entry

Participation in HMIs and Coordinated Entry is required.

5. Insurance

Subrecipients must maintain required insurance coverage, including general liability insurance of at least \$1,000,000 per occurrence, prior to contract execution.

Policies may be required to name the Lead Agency and/or the State of Florida as additional insured. Depending on the scope of services, additional coverage such as cyber or data security liability insurance may also be required.

6. Staffing and Screening

Staff must meet applicable background screening and eligibility requirements.

7. Subcontracting

Subcontracting requires prior approval. Subrecipients remain responsible for all services provided. Subrecipients cannot subcontract to another subrecipient or provider.

8. Performance Expectations

Failure to meet requirements may result in corrective action, financial consequences, or termination.

## Application Submission Checklist & Page Reference

Applicants are strongly encouraged to use this checklist to ensure that all required components are included in their submission. Applicants should also indicate the page number where each component can be found.

Incomplete applications may be deemed non-responsive and may not be reviewed.

Submission Item	Page Number
Application for Funding	
Section 1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nonprofit Determination Letter of 501(c)3 status</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most recent two (2) years of financial statements</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SAM.gov Registration</li> </ul>	
Section 2: Funding Request	
Section 3: Organizational Overview	
Section 4: Proposed Program Description	
Section 5: Target Population	
Section 6: CoC Strategic Alignment	
Section 7: HMIS and Coordinated Entry	
Section 8: Staffing Plan	
Section 9: Budget Summary (itemize)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the appropriate budget tool</li> </ul>	
Section 10: Budget Narrative	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicants are encouraged to submit a separate budget narrative if additional space is needed.</li> </ul>	
Section 11: Match Requirements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Match Contribution Letter(s)</li> <li>Applicant Match Certification Form(s)</li> </ul>	

Failure to include required components or properly identify their location may result in the application being deemed non-responsive.

# Match Requirements Overview

## Challenge Grant & Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)

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### Purpose of Match Requirements

Match requirements ensure that funded programs leverage additional resources beyond federal or grant funds. Both Challenge Grants and ESG programs require recipients to contribute non-federal resources to support eligible activities.

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### Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Match Requirements

#### Match Ratio:

- ESG requires a **100% match** (dollar-for-dollar).
- Every \$1 of ESG funds must be matched with \$1 of non-ESG funds.

#### Eligible Match Sources:

- Cash contributions (state, local, or private funds)
- Donated funds from nonprofits or foundations
- Value of donated goods and services
- Volunteer services (valued at reasonable market rates)

#### Ineligible Match Sources:

- Other federal funds (unless specifically authorized)
- Program income generated from ESG activities (cannot count as match)

#### Key Rules:

- Match must be used for **eligible ESG activities**
  - Match contributions must be **verifiable and documented**
  - Must occur **within the grant period**
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### Challenge Grant Match Requirements

#### Match Ratio:

- Typically requires a **cash or in-kind match** (exact ratio depends on state/local program guidelines; often less strict than ESG)

### Eligible Match Sources:

- Local government funding
- Private donations
- Partner agency contributions
- In-kind services (staff time, supplies, facilities)

### Flexibility:

- Challenge Grants often allow **broader match categories** than ESG
- Some programs may allow **waived or reduced match** for certain applicants

### Key Rules:

- Must support **approved program activities**
  - Must be **properly documented and tracked**
  - Must align with the **grant agreement and budget**
- 

### Documentation Requirements (Both Programs)

All match contributions must include:

- Source of funds or service
  - Value and method of valuation
  - Date(s) of contribution
  - Proof of payment, donation, or service (e.g., invoices, timesheets, letters)
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### Best Practices

- Track match **in real time**, not retroactively
  - Maintain **separate accounting records** for match
  - Use standardized **valuation methods** for in-kind contributions
  - Regularly reconcile match to ensure compliance
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### Summary

- ESG requires a strict **100% match with detailed compliance rules**

- Challenge Grants offer **more flexibility**, but still require clear documentation
  - Strong tracking and documentation systems are essential for both
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**Prepared for:** Program Staff & Subrecipients

**Purpose:** Compliance guidance and audit readiness

Last Revised: 05/04/2026



## Homelessness Grant Program Guidance 1.0

### Purpose

#### BACKGROUND

This programmatic guidance document is designed to assist Continuums of Care (CoCs) in effectively implementing various homelessness grant programs distributed by the Office on Homelessness, ensuring compliance with state, federal, and contract requirements.

- Note: Nothing contained in this guidance overrules or changes Contract terms. The Contract remains the sole source for legal guidance.

For all grant programs, please see [reference-guide-for-state-expenditures.pdf \(myfloridacfo.com\)](#)

### Challenge and Challenge Plus Programmatic Guidance

#### OVERVIEW

The CoC may use the grant funds to fund any activity or project that is clearly and specifically identified in the written CoC Plan. The Plan should be sufficiently detailed to clearly denote the activity or project use. If the project is NOT included in the Plan, the CoC must submit an amendment to the Plan, detailing the project to be included.

The services and housing funded through the grant must be implemented through the continuum of care's coordinated entry system as provided in s. 420.6225(5)(b) and must be designed to assess and refer persons seeking assistance to the appropriate housing intervention and service provider. All grant funds shall go to activities that directly benefit homeless persons or persons at-risk of homelessness. Activities that do not directly benefit homeless persons may include, but are not limited to, public education, training, planning, and capacity building. Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) may be claimed to be a direct benefit used only to the extent that the system is used as a case management tool to coordinate services among two or more local agencies serving the homeless person.

The CoC's Plan must be filed with the Office on Homelessness. The plan may be the HUD Consolidated Plan, the local Annual Action Plan, or any plan that the CoC helped draft that addresses the homelessness needs in the specific area (including the activity to be funded). The CoC shall be fiscally responsible for all grant funds and for ensuring that funds are expended only for eligible activities in accordance with state expenditure guidance specifically relating to agreements for recipients/subrecipients of state or federal financial assistance.

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#### CHALLENGE PLUS ELIGIBLE POPULATIONS



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### Initiative #1 – Rapid Re-housing through Reunification of Families

This initiative is focused on rapid re-housing and prevention services for families with a primary goal of reunification. Each CoC shall demonstrate linkages with Community-Based Care Organizations (CBC) and ensure families are provided housing support needed for reunification.

### Initiative #2 – Employing Targeted Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Services

In collaboration with the Community-Based Care Organizations (CBCs) and/or Managing Entities (MEs) (depending on the individual), the CoCs shall dedicate housing resources to support Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for individuals contending with substance abuse and mental health disorders who may be at-risk of or facing homelessness. Each CoC shall demonstrate linkages with behavioral health and medical providers and ensure the availability of services that include intensive case management, substance abuse and mental health treatment, medication assisted treatment services, mobile response teams, medical services, supportive employment, recovery supports and leveraging technology to deliver telehealth services.

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### CHALLENGE AND CHALLENGE PLUS ACTIVITIES

Examples of activities to be provided that meet Housing, Program, and Service Needs with Challenge and Challenge Plus funds.

Housing Need
Client Financial Assistance to Prevent or End Homelessness. These activities consist of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Short-term rental assistance;</li><li>• First/last month rental payments;</li><li>• Security deposits and application fees;</li><li>• Mortgage payment assistance;</li><li>• Current and past due utility assistance;</li><li>• Utility late fees and connection fees;</li><li>• Utility deposits;</li><li>• Bridge housing;</li><li>• Hotel/motel vouchers;</li><li>• Inspection costs;</li><li>• Moving costs; and</li><li>• Minor repairs to homes</li></ul>

Program Need
Emergency Shelter Program Costs. These activities consist of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beds, pillows, and mattresses;</li><li>• Furniture including tables, couches, chairs, and desks;</li><li>• Towels and bedding;</li><li>• Food;</li><li>• Cleaning supplies;</li></ul>



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- Kitchen equipment, supplies, and appliances;
- Renovations;
- Furniture repair;
- Washers and dryers; and
- Landlines and hotlines for resident use.

Low-income Housing Maintenance.

Costs of Constructing Special Population Housing. These activities consist of:

- Appliances;
- Fire equipment; and
- Plumbing and electrical work.

Miscellaneous Program Operation Costs. These activities consist of:

- Staff salaries and fringe benefits;
- Staff training costs;
- Staff travel costs (i.e., mileage) including those incurred through outreach activities;
- HMIS purchase and maintenance costs, including licenses, user training, data entry, and data mining and reporting costs;
- Tablets and phones for outreach workers;
- Hotspots to conduct out of office assessments, applications, and case notes;
- Vehicle costs including purchase/lease, insurance, and fuel;
- Projector and educational computer station to assist youth with academics;
- Repair funds;
- Portable toilets; and
- Job readiness fund.

### Service Need

Case Management Services. These activities consist of:

- Applying for benefits such as food stamps and SSI/SSDI;
- EBT card replacement;
- Accessing healthcare; and
- Employment counseling.

Housing Stabilization Services. These activities consist of:

- Housing search and placement;
- Education on lease contracts;
- Housing stability case management;
- Mediation and advocacy with landlords; and
- Credit repair.

Life Skills Training. These activities consist of:

- Financial management;
- Conflict resolution;
- Shopping for food and other necessities;
- Nutrition;
- Parenting;
- Using public transportation; and
- Resume preparation and job search.

Street Outreach Services. These activities consist of:



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- Assessment and evaluation;
- Crisis counseling;
- Referral to coordinated entry and linkage to mainstream services;
- Provision of basic needs; and
- Follow-up assistance.

Client Assistance. These activities consist of: • Transportation costs (bus, taxi, gas vouchers, bicycle repair, etc.);

- Costs of obtaining ID cards, birth certificates, and other vital records;
- Basic necessities such as water, food, clothing, bug spray, hygiene kits, laundry/cleaning supplies, first aid, blankets, etc.;
- Medical, dental, and prescription copays;
- Household items/furnishings;
- Relocation assistance to access support from family/friends Employment and work-related supplies; and
- Childcare

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### ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

Section 420.622(4)(c), Florida Statutes, authorizes a CoC to spend a maximum of ten percent (10%) of its grant award on administrative costs. Administrative costs must be used by the CoC for staff salary, benefits, or operating expenses directly related to the management and oversight of this grant. In accordance with section 287.14, Florida Statutes, use of the Challenge Grant to purchase or continuously lease any motor vehicle is prohibited.

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### MATCH

The continuum of care lead agency shall also document the commitment of local government or private organizations to provide matching funds or in-kind support in an amount equal to 25 percent of the grant requested. Expenditures of leveraged funds or resources, including third-party cash or in-kind contributions, are authorized only for eligible activities carried out in connection with a project in which such funds or resources have not been used as leverage or match for any other project or program. The expenditures must be certified through a written commitment.

## Emergency Solutions Grants

### OVERVIEW

The relevant ESG regulations are [24 CFR Part 576](#).

Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) program authorized by subtitle B of title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11371–11378). The program authorizes the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to make grants to States, units of general purpose local government, and territories for the rehabilitation or conversion of buildings for use as emergency shelter for the homeless, for the



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payment of certain expenses related to operating emergency shelters, for essential services related to emergency shelters and street outreach for the homeless, and for homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing assistance.

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### DEFINITIONS

*Homeless means:*

- (1) An individual or family who lacks 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 or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;
  - (ii) An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including 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); or
  - (iii) An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less 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; and
  - (iii) The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, needed to obtain other permanent housing;
- (3) Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and 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;



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(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; and

(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 addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse (including neglect), the presence of a child or youth with a disability, or two or more barriers to employment, which include 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; or

(4) Any individual or family who:

(i) Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, 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; and

(iii) Lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, to obtain other permanent housing.

*At risk of homelessness means:*

(1) An individual or family who:

(i) Has an annual income below 30 percent 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 described in paragraph (1) of the "homeless" definition in this section; and

(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;



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(E) Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 persons reside per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau;

(F) Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a health-care facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution); or

(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)); or

(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 her or him.

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### Client Eligibility

Eligibility is limited to individuals and families who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking, or recently homeless and for whom providing rental assistance will prevent the family's homelessness or having high risk of housing instability.

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### ESG ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Each component is described in the tables below, accompanied by a list of corresponding ESG activities and eligible costs.

#### Street Outreach

Essential Services related to reaching out to unsheltered homeless 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.

Component: Street Outreach
These activities are designed to meet the immediate needs of unsheltered homeless people by connecting them with emergency shelter, housing, and/or critical health services. § 576.101
Activity type: Essential Services



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### Eligible costs:

- Engagement
- Emergency Mental Health Services
- Case Management
- Transportation
- Emergency Health Services
- Services for Special Populations

### Emergency Shelter

Renovation, including major rehabilitation or conversion, of a building to serve as an emergency shelter. The emergency shelter must be owned by a government entity or private nonprofit organization. The shelter must serve homeless persons for at least 3 or 10 years, depending on the type of renovation and the value of the building. Note: Property acquisition and new construction are ineligible ESG activities.

Component: Emergency Shelter.

These activities are designed to increase the quantity and quality of temporary shelters provided to homeless people, through the renovation of existing shelters or conversion of buildings to shelters, paying for the operating costs of shelters, and providing essential services. § 576.102

Activity type: Essential Services

### Eligible costs:

- Case management
- Child Care
- Education Services
- Employment Assistance and Job Training
- Outpatient Health Services
- Legal Services
- Life Skills Training
- Mental Health Services
- Substance Abuse Treatment Services
- Transportation
- Services for Special Populations

Activity type: Renovation (also includes Major Rehab and Conversion)

### Eligible costs:

- Labor
- Materials
- Tools
- Other costs for renovation (including rehab or conversion)

Activity type: Shelter Operations

### Eligible costs:

- Maintenance
- Rent
- Security
- Fuel
- Equipment
- Insurance



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Utilities</li> <li>· Food</li> <li>· Furnishings</li> <li>· Supplies necessary for shelter operation</li> <li>· Hotel/Motel Vouchers (When no appropriate emergency shelter is available for a homeless family or individual)</li> </ul>
Activity type: Assistance Required Under the Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970 (URA)
Eligible costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Relocation payments</li> <li>· Other assistance to displaced persons</li> </ul>

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 a homeless family or individual, eligible costs may also include a hotel or motel voucher for that family or individual.  
See 24 CFR 576.102.

### Rapid Re-Housing

Housing relocation and stabilization services and/or short-and/or medium-term rental assistance as necessary to 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.

Eligible costs include:

Rental Assistance: rental assistance and rental arrears

Financial Assistance: rental application fees, security and utility deposits, utility payments, last month's rent, moving costs

Services: housing search and placement, housing stability case management, landlord-tenant mediation, tenant legal services, credit repair

See 24 CFR 576.104

Component: Rapid Re-Housing. These activities are designed to move homeless people quickly to permanent housing through housing relocation and stabilization services and short- and/or medium term rental assistance. § 576.104
Activity type: Rental Assistance
Eligible costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Short-term rental assistance</li> <li>· Medium-term rental assistance</li> <li>· Rental arrears</li> </ul> **Rental assistance can be project-based or tenant based.
Activity type: Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services
Financial Assistance Eligible costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Rental Application Fees</li> <li>· Security Deposits</li> </ul>



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Last Month's Rent</li> <li>· Utility Deposits</li> <li>· Utility Payments</li> <li>· Moving Costs</li> </ul>
<p>Services Costs</p> <p>Eligible costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Housing Search and Placement</li> <li>· Housing Stability Case Management</li> <li>· Mediation</li> <li>· Legal Services</li> <li>· Credit Repair</li> </ul>

### Homelessness Prevention

Housing relocation and stabilization services and short-and/or medium-term rental assistance as necessary to prevent the individual or family from moving to an emergency shelter, a place not meant for human habitation, or another place described in paragraph (1) of the homeless definition.

The costs of homelessness prevention are only eligible to the extent that the assistance is necessary to help the program participant regain stability in their current housing or move into other permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing.

Eligible costs include:

Rental Assistance: rental assistance and rental arrears

Financial assistance: rental application fees, security and utility deposits, utility payments, last month's rent, moving costs

Services: housing search and placement, housing stability case management, landlord-tenant mediation, tenant legal services, credit repair

See 24 CFR 576.103.

<p>Component: Homelessness Prevention</p> <p>These activities are designed to prevent an individual or family from moving into an emergency shelter or living in a public or private place not meant for human through housing relocation and stabilization services and short- and/or medium-term rental assistance. § 576.103</p>
<p>Activity type: Rental Assistance</p>
<p>Eligible costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Short-term rental assistance</li> <li>· Medium-term rental assistance</li> <li>· Rental arrears</li> </ul> <p>**Rental assistance can be project-based or tenant based.</p>
<p>Activity type: Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services</p>
<p>Financial Assistance</p> <p>Eligible costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Rental Application Fees</li> <li>· Security Deposits</li> <li>· Last Month's Rent</li> <li>· Utility Deposits</li> </ul>



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· Utility Payments
· Moving Costs
Services Costs
Eligible costs:
· Housing Search and Placement
· Housing Stability Case Management
· Mediation
· Legal Services
· Credit Repair

### Data Collection (HMIS)

ESG funds may be used to pay for the costs of participating in and contributing to the HMIS designated by the Continuum of Care for the area. More information about using an HMIS is available on the HMIS page.

Component: HMIS
These activities are designed to fund ESG recipients' and subrecipients' participation in the HMIS collection and analyses of data on individuals and families who are homeless and at-risk of homelessness. § 576.107
Activity type: HMIS
Eligible costs:
· Contributing data to the HMIS designated by the CoC for the area;
· HMIS Lead (as designated by the CoC) costs for managing the HMIS system;
· Victim services or legal services provider costs to establish and operate a comparable database

### Administration

Up to 7.5 percent of a recipient's allocation can be used for Administrative activities. These include general management, oversight, and coordination; reporting on the program; the costs of providing training on ESG requirements and attending HUD-sponsored ESG trainings; the costs of preparing and amending the ESG and homelessness-related sections of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, and CAPER; and the costs of carrying out environmental review responsibilities.

State recipients must share administrative funds with their subrecipients that are local governments, and may share administrative funds with their subrecipients that are nonprofit organizations.

Administrative Activities. § 576.108
Eligible costs are broadly categorized as follows:
General management, oversight, and coordination
Training on ESG requirements
Consolidated Plan
Environmental review

Note: Administration is not a component, it is considered an activity.

The CoC's Plan must be filed with the Office on Homelessness. The plan may be the HUD Consolidated Plan, the local Annual Action Plan, or any plan that the CoC helped draft that addresses the homelessness needs in the specific area (including the activity to be funded). The CoC shall be fiscally responsible for all



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grant funds and for ensuring that funds are expended only for eligible activities in accordance with state expenditure guidance.

[reference-guide-for-state-expenditures.pdf](#) (myfloridacfo.com)

Always refer to the program regulations at 24 CFR Part 576 for complete information about all eligible costs and program requirements.

## ESG - Rapid Unsheltered Survivor Housing

### OVERVIEW

Generally, all ESG factors apply to ESG – RUSH except for special circumstances and client eligibility.

Three eligibility factors must be met:

1. Be homeless or at risk of homelessness
2. Have been residing in an area affected by a major disaster declared pursuant to the Stafford Act on or after December 20, 2019 (e.g., an area covered by DR-4673-FL, dated September 29, 2022); AND
3. Have needs that will not be served or fully met by the TSA Program (42 USC 5170b) and other existing Federal disaster relief programs (including both Federal and non-Federal cost share).

If the client is already found eligible for ESG prior to the disaster, households are not required to re-qualify as homeless or at risk of homelessness for assistance under RUSH.

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### ACTIVITIES

Per ESG regulations, RUSH RRH can be used for up to 24 months of rental assistance with a waiver available to exceed the 24-month limit. In a Disaster Rehousing model, communities will utilize RUSH for shorter term RRH. Activities may include:

- Application Fees
- Move in Costs (Deposit, Prorated rents)
- Short Term Rental Assistance (Three months full rental assistance)
- Relocation costs
- Supportive Services Client choice in all aspects is imperative
- Housing Navigation is an essential activity for RUSH funding and should be individualized to the household and may include:
  - Unit identification
  - Unit Inspections (note available habitability waiver)
  - Ongoing landlord connections



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### **ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE**

Supportive Services should be individualized and meet the needs of the participant.

In cases where a household moves to another community in Florida or another state, Case Management can be light touch.

Once per month Case Management engagement must be documented in HMIS - an engagement can be a phone call.

May require connections with CoC serving the geography where the client is moving.

When a participant requires more Case Management, creative solutions should be implemented.

Connect households to mainstream benefits.

#### [ESG Requirements - HUD Exchange](#)

The CoC's Plan must be filed with the Office on Homelessness. The plan may be the HUD Consolidated Plan, the local Annual Action Plan, or any plan that the CoC helped draft that addresses the homelessness needs in the specific area (including the activity to be funded). The CoC shall be fiscally responsible for all grant funds and for ensuring that funds are expended only for eligible activities in accordance with state and federal provisions.

## **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families**

### **OVERVIEW**

The relevant TANF regulations are [45 CFR Part 260](#).

To be eligible for assistance under the TANF grant, families must reside in Florida; have at least one household member who is a United States citizen or a lawful permanent resident; have a minor child living in the household full-time; and have a household income less than two hundred percent (200%) of the federal poverty level as annually published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

A minor child means a child under the age of eighteen (18); or if age eighteen (18), but not yet nineteen (19), is attending high school, a General Education Development (GED) program, a trade school, or other career training program on a full-time basis. A minor child cannot be married or divorced.

The adult who applies for the grant assistance must be either the parent, or the relative caregiver of the minor child residing in the household.

The household income means both earned and unearned income received in the month in which the family applies for assistance. Earned income is income received from employment or self-employment, including wages, salary, tips, commissions and bonuses.



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Unearned income is income received for which there is no performance of work, or provision of services as an employee or self-employed person. The income of all members of the household shall be reported in determining eligibility of the family for assistance.

The family's housing emergency shall be the result of a financial or other crisis, as documented by the lead agency, or its sub-recipient.

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### **TANF ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

Providers can assist with the following activities **ONLY**:

Past due rent or mortgage payments, not to exceed four (4) months of the client's rent or mortgage payment.

The providers can set a maximum dollar amount for assistance each client may be eligible to receive. However, this amount cannot be more than the total of 4 months of rent or mortgage payments.

Past due utility bills, not to exceed four (4) months of the client's arrears for electric, gas, water and sewer only. This does include reconnect fees.

The providers can set a maximum dollar amount for assistance each client may be eligible to receive. However, this amount cannot be more than the total of 4 months of past due utility bills.

Staff and operating costs for the providing mandatory case management services to clients assisted.

These are the costs of staff salaries who are providing the case management for clients assisted or operational costs associated with providing TANF assistance.

Administrative costs for the eligible applicant, up to a maximum of three percent (3%) of the grant award.

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### **ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE**

The lead agency must track, monitor, and report on each family assisted for a period of at least twelve (12) months after the last date of assistance was provided to the family. The lead agency shall report whether the family was able to avoid homelessness, as well as whether the family remains in permanent housing at the end of monitoring and reporting period.

If the lead agency is not the agency is not providing direct services, they are responsible for making sure this information is tracked and monitored.

The goal is that 85% of the families assisted will remain stably housed the year following the last date of assistance.

Providers must develop a case plan for each family that applies for assistance. For those families receiving assistance, the case plan should identify the amount of assistance the family will receive.



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Documentation should include copies of check payments made, household income/size, and the follow-up info of housing stability. For families not assisted, they income should be documented along with household size.

Providers must enter info on families assisted into HMIS.



# Homeless Definition

<b>CRITERIA FOR DEFINING HOMELESS</b>	<b>Category 1</b>	Literally Homeless	(1) Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation;</li> <li>(ii) Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); <u>or</u></li> <li>(iii) Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less <u>and</u> who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution</li> </ul>
	<b>Category 2</b>	Imminent Risk of Homelessness	(2) Individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;</li> <li>(ii) No subsequent residence has been identified; <u>and</u></li> <li>(iii) The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing</li> </ul>
	<b>Category 3</b>	Homeless under other Federal statutes	(3) Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes;</li> <li>(ii) Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application;</li> <li>(iii) Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during in the preceding 60 days; <u>and</u></li> <li>(iv) Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers</li> </ul>
	<b>Category 4</b>	Fleeing/ Attempting to Flee DV	(4) Any individual or family who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence;</li> <li>(ii) Has no other residence; <u>and</u></li> <li>(iii) Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing</li> </ul>



# Homeless Definition

## RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS



<p><b>Category 1</b></p> <p>Literally Homeless</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written observation by the outreach worker; <u>or</u></li> <li>• Written referral by another housing or service provider; <u>or</u></li> <li>• Certification by the individual or head of household seeking assistance stating that (s)he was living on the streets or in shelter;</li> <li>• For individuals exiting an institution—one of the forms of evidence above <u>and</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ discharge paperwork <u>or</u> written/oral referral, <u>or</u></li> <li>○ written record of intake worker’s due diligence to obtain above evidence <u>and</u> certification by individual that they exited institution</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Category 2</b></p> <p>Imminent Risk of Homelessness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A court order resulting from an eviction action notifying the individual or family that they must leave; <u>or</u></li> <li>• For individual and families leaving a <u>hotel</u> or <u>motel</u>—evidence that they lack the financial resources to <u>stay</u>; <u>or</u></li> <li>• A documented and verified oral statement; <u>and</u></li> <li>• Certification that no subsequent residence has been identified; <u>and</u></li> <li>• Self-certification or other written documentation that the individual lack the financial resources and support necessary to obtain permanent housing</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Category 3</b></p> <p>Homeless under other Federal statutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certification by the nonprofit or state or local government that the individual or head of household seeking assistance met the criteria of homelessness under another federal statute; <u>and</u></li> <li>• Certification of no PH in last 60 days; <u>and</u></li> <li>• Certification by the individual or head of household, and any available supporting documentation, that (s)he has moved two or more times in the past 60 days; <u>and</u></li> <li>• Documentation of special needs <u>or</u> 2 or more barriers</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Category 4</b></p> <p>Fleeing/ Attempting to Flee DV</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>For victim service providers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An oral statement by the individual or head of household seeking assistance which states: they are fleeing; they have no subsequent residence; and they lack resources. Statement must be documented by a self-certification or a certification by the intake worker.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>For non-victim service providers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Oral statement by the individual or head of household seeking assistance that they are fleeing. This statement is documented by a self-certification or by the caseworker. Where the safety of the individual or family is not jeopardized, the oral statement must be verified; <u>and</u></li> <li>○ Certification by the individual or head of household that no subsequent residence has been identified; <u>and</u></li> <li>○ Self-certification, or other written documentation, that the individual or family lacks the financial resources and support networks to obtain other permanent housing.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



# At Risk of Homelessness

<b>CRITERIA FOR DEFINING AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS</b>	<b>Category 1</b>	Individuals and Families	<p>An individual or family who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Has an annual income below <u>30%</u> of median family income for the area; <u>AND</u></li> <li>(ii) Does not have sufficient resources or support networks immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency shelter or another place defined in Category 1 of the “homeless” definition; <u>AND</u></li> <li>(iii) Meets one of the following conditions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) Has moved because of economic reasons 2 or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for assistance; <u>OR</u></li> <li>(B) Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship; <u>OR</u></li> <li>(C) Has been notified that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance; <u>OR</u></li> <li>(D) Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost is not paid for by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals; <u>OR</u></li> <li>(E) Lives in an SRO or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than 2 persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than one and a half persons per room; <u>OR</u></li> <li>(F) Is exiting a publicly funded institution or system of care; <u>OR</u></li> <li>(G) Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness, as identified in the recipient’s approved Con Plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<b>Category 2</b>	Unaccompanied Children and Youth	A child or youth who does not qualify as homeless under the homeless definition, but qualifies as homeless under another Federal statute
	<b>Category 3</b>	Families with Children and Youth	An unaccompanied youth who does not qualify as homeless under the homeless definition, but qualifies as homeless under section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and the parent(s) or guardian(s) or that child or youth if living with him or her.