

# *Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program GUIDE*



## **Introduction**

The primary goal of the Community Planning and Development Department (CP&D) is to provide decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing to extremely low and very low-income residents within the City of North Miami. The Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) has provided another means of delivering housing services to our community. The Recovery Act has allocated HPRP funds to the City of North Miami (Grantee). HPRP is focused on housing for homeless and at-risk households. Under the HPRP: Homelessness Prevention Program, participants must be homeless or would be homeless “but for” this assistance. Rapid Re-housing participants must be homeless (residing in emergency or transitional shelter or on the street). The CP&D Department through the Housing Division intends to utilize these strategies as the foundation for developing and implementing several housing activities in order to achieve its goals.

## **Eligible Activity Descriptions**

In an effort to serve the at-risk population in our Community, the City is implementing these activities under the HPRP: Financial Assistance, Housing Relocation & Stabilization Services, Data Collection & Evaluation and Administrative Costs. The maximum amount of direct assistance allowed is Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) per household.

1. ***Financial Assistance***- The various forms of financial assistance offered through the HPRP program are listed below.
  - a. **Rental and Utility Payment Assistance**- Provides a maximum of twelve (12) months of assistance which includes up to six (6) months of arrears. Rental assistance must comply with HUD’s “rent reasonableness” standard (. see attachment). In order to provide Utility assistance, a member of the household must have an account in his/her name with a utility company or proof of responsibility to make payments, such as cancelled checks or receipts in his/her name from a utility company.
  - b. **Security Deposits**
  - c. **Utility Deposits**

- d. **Moving Cost Assistance-** Covers reasonable moving costs, such as truck rental or hiring a moving company.
- e. **Storage-** Provides assistance up to three (3) months or until program participant is in housing, whichever is shorter.
- f. **Hotel/Motel Vouchers-** Provides assistance for reasonable and appropriate hotel and motel vouchers for up to thirty (30) days if no appropriate shelter beds are available and subsequent rental housing has been identified but is not immediately available for move-in by the program participant.

2. ***Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services-*** Along with financial assistance, HPRP funds also provides housing stability and placement services to program participants. These services are limited to the following eligible activities:

- a. **Case Management-** Arrangement, Coordination, Monitoring and Delivery of Services activities related to meeting the housing needs of program participants and helping them obtain housing stability. Activities may include counseling; developing, securing and coordinating services; monitoring and evaluating program participant progress; assuring that program participants' rights are protected; and developing an individualized housing and service plan, including a path to permanent housing stability after receiving financial assistance.
- b. **Outreach and Engagement-** Services or assistance to publicize the availability of this program to make persons who are homeless or almost homeless aware of these services.
- c. **Housing Search and Placement-** Services or activities to assist individuals or families in locating, obtaining and retaining suitable housing. Services or activities may include assisting individuals or families to understand leases; making moving arrangements; and mediation and outreach to property owners related to locating or retaining housing.
- d. **Legal Services-** Legal Services to help people stay in their homes, such as services or activities provided by a lawyer to assist program participants with legal advice and representation in administrative or court proceedings related to tenant/landlord matters and housing issues. Legal services related to mortgages are **NOT** eligible.
- e. **Credit Repair-** Services that are targeted to assist program participants with critical skills necessary for household budgeting, money management, and resolving personal credit issues.

### ***3. Data Collection and Evaluation***

- a. **Data Collection-** Recovery Act requires the data collection and reporting for the HPRP be conducted through the use of Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) or a comparable database. Therefore, reasonable and appropriate costs associated with operating an HMIS for purposes of collecting and reporting data required under HPRP and analyzing patterns of use of HPRP funds are eligible.
- b. **Evaluation-** Costs to the City of North Miami (Grantee) for participating in HUD research and evaluation of HPRP.

- 4. Administrative Costs-** Costs directly related to the administration of HPRP. Costs may include accounting for the use of grant funds, preparing reports for submission to HUD and training for staff who will administer the program or case manager who will serve program participants, but only if the training is directly related to learning about HPRP. Pre-award administrative cost, such as preparing the application for submission to HUD and costs related to the public comment process, are also eligible.

## **Selection Criteria**

Individual recipients are selected based on compliance with all eligibility requirements outlined in the HPRP and is served on a first-come, first ready basis. Applications will be reviewed and certified for eligibility every three (3) months as long as they are receiving assistance in accordance with HPRP Program Guidelines.

1. **Homelessness Prevention-** Eligible applicants must be homeless or about to become homeless and is required to:
  - a. Have an initial consultation to determine appropriate assistance
  - b. Income must be at or below 50% of the area median income
  - c. Have no other housing options
  - d. Have no other financial resources or support network to obtain housing
  
2. **Rapid Re-Housing-** Eligible individuals and/or families are those who are already homeless, such as those residing in emergency or transitional shelters or on the street and need temporary assistance in order to obtain housing and retain it. Applicants are required to:
  - a. Have an initial consultation to determine appropriate assistance
  - b. Income must be at or below 50% of the area median income
  - c. Have no other housing options
  - d. Have no other financial resources or support network to obtain housing

## **Qualification**

Services are made available to individuals or families already homeless or at risk of becoming homeless whose incomes do not exceed fifty Percent (50%) of the area median income. While the definition of homelessness is well-understood, it can be challenging to identify persons who are housed but have a very high risk of becoming homeless. A case-by-case analysis will be made in order to identify the risk factor(s) that would make this individual or family homeless **but** for this assistance. Potential risk factors for homelessness may include:

- a. Eviction within two (2) weeks
- b. Discharged within two (2) weeks from an institution in which the person has been a resident for more than 180 days

- c. Residency in housing that has been condemned
- d. Sudden and significant loss of income or increase in utility costs
- e. Mental health and substances abuse issues
- f. Physical disabilities and other chronic health issues
- g. Severe housing cost burden (greater than 50% of income for housing costs)
- h. Extremely low income (less than 30% of Area Median Income)
- i. Significant amount of medical debt
- j. Recent traumatic life event such as death of a spouse or primary care provider
- k. Young head of household (under 25 with children or pregnant)
- l. Current or past involvement with child welfare
- m. Pending foreclosure of rental housing
- n. High overcrowding (number of persons exceed the health and safety standards for the housing unit size)
- o. Past institutional care
- p. Credit problems that preclude obtaining of housing

## **Compliance**

All assistance must comply with regulations set forth in the HPRP under Title XII of the Recovery Act of 2009 and enforced by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development. These activities are to promote housing stabilization and to reduce or eliminate homelessness. Housing units are subject to annual compliance inspections.

The HPRP activities have no recapture provisions, as the funds are allocated as a grant.

## **Funding Source**

The City will be utilizing the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) funds to achieve this goal. These activities will be funded until funds are completely expended. CP&D will continue to seek other funding sources in order to expand and/or enhance these programs.