

Questions from the ESG Information Session

The following questions were asked at the ESG Information Session held on Wednesday, November 4, 2020. These questions are asked in relation to the following RFPs that are being funded with ESG funds: Tiny Homes Village Pilot, Tenant-Based Rapid Re-Housing for Households Without Children, Tenant-Based Rapid Re-Housing for Households With Children, - Shallow Rent Program, HOME\$200, Project-Based Rapid Re-Housing Opportunities, and Single Room Occupancy Program, SRO-Philadelphia.

- 1. Councilmember Gauthier told me that there will be an RFI released any day for the Tiny Homes village in her district- which will be a permanent housing model, unlike the current one for Henon's district that is transitional model- with community bathrooms, etc. Can you let us know when this will be available?**

There will be one RFP and one RFI out for the Tiny Homes Village. The RFI is from the Office of Homeless Services and the briefing on this will be next week on Wednesday, November 12. The City will be providing the land for the Tiny Homes Village. It will be based off the Tiny Home Village that is in Seattle, in which the Tiny Homes provide a bedroom with heat and electricity, and a communal bathroom and kitchen area. OHS will provide funding to operate the Tiny Homes Village. The other RFP will come from the Office of Planning and Development, this will be more of a 500 to 600 square foot unit, probably more like a manufactured housing unit. The operating funds for this project will come through a Project-Based Rapid Rehousing project. That briefing has not yet been scheduled but the RFP will go out by Friday, November 13.

- 2. When you say rental arrears and housing relocation costs, can the ESG CARES funding help with the 2,000 households that were in process for eviction prior to COVID?**

ESG CARES funding has been allocated to several organizations in Philadelphia to provide homeless prevention assistance to help anyone who is at-risk of homelessness. Additional resources for homeless prevention and diversion can be found here:

<http://philadelphiaofficeofhomelessservices.org/assistance-with-my-rent/>.

- 3. Please provide clarification in shelter services. Can the RFP be written to provide these services?**

A general list of services is in the SRO RFP and this presentation. A copy of this presentation will be provided.

- 4. Are any of the current or planned RFPs for permanent housing options vs. transitional/temporary?**

The RFP for the Shallow Rent Program, Home\$200, and the Rapid Re-Housing projects are all considered permanent housing option. The remaining RFPs that are open at this time are for temporary or emergency shelter.

5. Are folks going to be matched to all of these opportunities through CEABHRS/HMIS, or will there be a different referral/match process?

Correct, referrals for these projects will be through CEA-BHRS, OHS's Coordinated Entry System, for all of these projects except for Streets to Home, the program helping unsheltered individuals access Rapid Rehousing in order to support the Encampment Resolution.

6. How can we utilize this funding to ensure we are helping individuals towards a path of homeownership which is one of the primary ways to gain generational wealth? Philadelphia's homeownership rate is decreasing.

Rapid Rehousing programs are designed to help participants achieve housing stability, which will lead to increased homeownership. Exiting homelessness is the first step towards housing stability and to homeownership.

7. These landlords' incentives sound similar to the existing nationally known Rent Well Program which also specifies landlord responsibilities. Are we considering adopting that program for this funding?

OHS is not considering adopting the Rent Well Program at this moment, but will be happy to look into it, if more information could be provided.

8. Can you clarify the expectations for tiny homes comply with the habitability standards?

OHS is hosting a Tiny Homes Briefing on November 12, which will provide more information about the Tiny Homes RFI. The operation funds for the Tiny Homes village are federal, and anytime we received federal funding Housing Quality Inspections are required.

9. Will people need to be considered "COVID vulnerable" to be eligible for any of these options?

No, persons do not have to be COVID vulnerable, however, due to COVID, OHS has adjusted the prioritization factors used by CEA-BHRS to match people to projects. Currently, those who are vulnerable to COVID-19 (65 years or older or has a condition identified by the CDC that increases a persons' risk of COVID) and contracting severe adverse effects are prioritized first for housing opportunities. Separate programs for families with children have been made available, who may not be vulnerable COVID. Prioritization is intended to provide an equitable and transparent way to allocate resources.

10. How will landlords be notified about this opportunity, especially those currently serving low to moderate income families?

OHS will be putting out a call for new landlords, and OHS also relies on providers for landlord outreach. If providers host a landlord recruiting and engagement event, they can request a staff member from OHS to attend to provide information, arrange to publicly speak, and respond to questions or requests for additional resources in order to help recruit landlords.

11. What services does the provider need to offer for the Shallow Rent Program?

Participants will be provided with the services from a Tenant Service Coordinator that is assigned to each participant. The Tenant Service Coordinator will work with the participant on achieving housing stability by provide financial coaching, connecting the participant to benefits, and helping them to become acclimated to their neighborhood. All participations will also be connected with the Department of Behavioral Health, although not all participants will require services from the Department of Behavioral Health.

12. If a participant is on SSI and cannot receive any more income, what happens to the participant after the HOME\$200 program is over? How do they sustain income without that extra help?

HOME\$200 is a permanent housing project that provides housing for two years. After two years, OHS works with the participant to see if they would like to stay in the unit. If that is the case, there is price negotiating with the Landlord that will not exceed the Fair Market Rate (FMR). If the new rate is acceptable, the lease is signed for another two years.

13. Is there a long-term strategy for households who are not able to increase their income? For example, those on SSI or SSDI, there are many disabled and older individuals who fit into this category.

At this time, we have prioritized housing for these population groups because of their vulnerability to COVID. OHS is currently, and looks to the community for support with, advocating for any available City General Funds or Housing Trust Funds to be made available to provide assistance for those households. OHS also works to advocate to increase the amount of spending provided through SSI and SSDI.

14. I'm interested in opening a Single Room Occupancy (SRO). Are there grants available to start an SRO project?

Yes, OHS currently has one RFP open for SROs. Please visit <http://philadelphiaofficeofhomelesservices.org/about/funding-opportunities/> to view the RFP and how to apply.

15. Can you spell SEABREAS?

It is spelled 'CEA-BHRS' and it is the Coordinated Entry system required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This system ensures that the scarce resources that are provided to the Office of Homeless Services are allocated to the individuals and families experiencing homelessness who are the most vulnerable in a process that is equitable and transparent.

16. Will landlord incentives include working with participants past their 12th month, and/or in those cases of 24 months, to adjust the amount of rent participants pay in order to encourage longer leasing? For example, those Participants receiving \$800 per month Social Security.

Participants in Rapid Re-Housing are evaluated every three months to ensure that the participant is able to provide the necessary amount to stay in the housing unit. If prior to the 12th month mark, it is discovered that the participant is unable to pay for the unit after the project ends, referrals will be made to any permanent supportive housing or subsidized housing project that they may be eligible for. Additionally, OHS or the provider may work with the landlord so that they can afford the rent through price negotiations.

17. Is the Shallow Rent initiative for singles only?

Correct, the current SRO RFP is targeted for individuals.

18. Where would a person apply or get applications for the programs.

For a participant to apply for any project, they would need to reach out to any of the Access Points, which can be found at the link provided below, or call the Philadelphia Homeless Outreach Hotline 215-232-1984. <http://philadelphiaofficeofhomelesservices.org/emergency-and-temporary-shelter/>

19. In general, can you discuss how community engagement will be wrapped into these RFPs? Should providers be prepared to do neighborhood outreach? Our team is interested in doing Good Neighbor Agreements for example.

It's up to the provider how to incorporate community engagement, and it also depends on the project. If it's tenant-based, the persons are just renting units as everyone else, but it's project-based, then neighborhood engagement could be more helpful. Neighborhoods will often offer additional resources, such as donations and food. Since the pandemic, there has been an increased interest in addressing homelessness.

20. Are the SRO's funding opportunities more for organizations versus individual landlords?

Currently, OHS is looking for organizations as opposed to individual landlords for the SRO funding opportunities.

21. Is all the funding straight ESG or part ESG and part ESG CARES?

The funding for these projects is all from ESG CARES.