

**Houston Area HIV Services Ryan White Planning Council
Office of Support
2223 West Loop South, Suite 240, Houston, Texas 77027
832 927-7926 telephone; 713 572-3740 fax**

Memorandum

To: Members, Quality Improvement Committee
Denis Kelly, Co-Chair *Daniel Impastato*
Pete Rodriguez, Co- Chair *Marcelly Macias*
Kevin Aloysius *Nancy Miertschin*
Ahmier Gibson *Karla Mills*
Gregory Hamilton *Cecilia Oshingbade*
Tom Lindstrom *Angela Rubio*
Oscar Perez *Deborah Somoye*
Gloria Sierra
Crystal Starr
Andrew Wilson

Copy: Carin Martin Amber Harbolt
Heather Keizman Diane Beck
Tiffany Shepherd Ann Robison
Patrick Martin Gary Grier

From: Tori Williams

Date: Thursday, April 30, 2020

Re: Meeting Notice

Please note the following meeting information:

2:00 pm, Tuesday, June 2, 2020

Quality Improvement Committee Meeting

Meeting Location: Online or via phone – Please do not come in person

Join Zoom Meeting by clicking on this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87165845655?pwd=UzRnWXIWRDM1VII5TFJEZ05lWE1aQT09>

Meeting ID: 871 6584 5655

Password: 156099

Or, call this telephone number: 346 248-7799

If you haven't already, please RSVP to Rod, even if you cannot attend the meeting. She can be reached at: Rodriga.Avila@cjo.hctx.net or by telephone at 832 927-7926. We look forward to seeing you next week.

Houston Area HIV Services Ryan White Planning Council

Quality Improvement Committee

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Meeting Location: Online or via phone – Please do not come in person

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Agenda

* Indicates that the report will be provided at the meeting

-
- I. Call to Order Pete Rodriguez and
Denis Kelly, Co-Chairs
 - A. Moment of Reflection
 - B. Adoption of Agenda
 - C. Purpose of the Meeting Tori Williams

 - II. Public Comment
 (NOTE: If you wish to speak during the Public Comment portion of the meeting, please sign up on the clipboard at the front of the room. No one is required to give his or her name or HIV status. All meetings are audio taped by the Office of Support for use in creating the meeting minutes. The audiotape and the minutes are public record. If you state your name or HIV status it will be on public record. If you would like your health status known, but do not wish to state your name, you can simply say: "I am a person living with HIV", before stating your opinion. If you represent an organization, please state that you are representing an agency and give the name of the organization. If you work for an organization, but are representing your self, please state that you are attending as an individual and not as an agency representative. Individuals can also submit written comments to a member of the staff who would be happy to read the comments on behalf of the individual at this point in the meeting. Committee members are asked to remember that this is a time to hear from the community. It is not a time for dialogue. Committee members and staff are asked to refrain from asking questions of the person giving public comment.)

 - III. The FY 2021 How to Best Meet the Need (HTBMN)
 - A. Emergency Financial Assistance - Other
 - 1. Service definition with Ryan White (RW) COVID-19 funding Carin Martin
 - 2. Proposed service definition with RW or State Services funding Tori Williams

 - IV. New Business
 - A. Other

 - V. Announcements

 - V. Adjourn

Public Comment

In an effort to save paper, see attached two sided copies

PUBLIC COMMENT – 04–24-20

Esteemed Ryan White Planning Councilmembers,

I am writing in support of using, under the Emergency Financial Assistance service category, funds to provide rapid response financial assistance to People With HIV (PWH) impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and other disasters. Our current system is not built to act swiftly. Many PWH experience frustration when they need financial assistance and realize the monthly expenses owed tomorrow may not be available for two weeks to a month. And this is after the time taken to secure appointments, gather requested documentation, fill out paperwork, sign Consent forms, etc. "Rapid response" would need to be part of this service definition for processes to be developed which simplify or streamline eligibility and reduces the time between requesting and receiving help which resolves or alleviates the crisis. The community expects an emergency response when they reach out for emergency assistance, financial or otherwise. When our community hears "emergency" they anticipate a quick response as calls placed to the police, fire department or for an ambulance. Though such a response may not be feasible within our systems of care, it is a worthy goal and could yield better than a response which takes a couple of weeks to a month and does not meet the immediate need.

Some may consider such situations a result of poor planning, or an inability to maintain or cultivate a healthy support system. This may be the case for some. For many in our EMA, this situation may present itself as a result of COVID-19 ravaging their communities, disrupting their places of employment, schooling, even worship and interrupting their flow of funds to maintain housing, utilities and food needs; interrupting their plans for the future and career plans; and interrupt the very ability to be with others for comfort or solace as they scramble to help themselves and seek help from others..

We are rapidly approaching hurricane season and still do not know when we will be completely through the COVID-19 pandemic. These two could coincide and our area could experience what Polk County just did with dealing with COVID-19 and being hit by a destructive tornado. Some PWH in our area may not be eligible for federal relief funds at that point either for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to, being undocumented. Our current funded services may not cover some of their circumstances or needs. Imagine a PWH needing to relocate temporarily due to the presence of COVID-19 in their household. Or need supplies in order self-isolate due to exposure. What about PWH living out of motels due to the same situation? Moratoriums on evictions from homes or apartments do not cover motel stays. Our HOPWA funds do not prioritize emergency shelter vouchers so do not fund them. If we intend to prevent or minimize the impact of this pandemic or other disasters on People With HIV, being able to answer their calls for help and deliver that help with a rapid response could be the difference between a Person With HIV staying in or falling out of care. It could be the difference between being safe from acquiring another life-threatening virus or hospitalization with an uncertain outcome. It could be the difference between helping to flatten the curve and not, this one or a future one.

My hope, my request, and if necessary, my demand, is "support for increased demand for emergency housing for RWHAP clients"¹ via an Emergency Financial Assistance definition which allows a rapid response to emergency situations arising from events similar to what we are experiencing now with the COVID-19 pandemic. This service definition would need to be flexible enough to accommodate the unpredictable circumstances which may arise from the variety of events which affect our area and negatively impact our efforts to end the HIV epidemic. See the attached "PBS NewsHour" report for additional information.

– Steven Vargas, HIV Advocate and Long-Term Survivor, April 23, 2020

(continued on next page)

PUBLIC COMMENT – 04–24-20

1. Quoted from the “HRSA Website Questions and Answers from 04-15-20 Conference Call, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions” under the CARES Act Funding on the last page, ninth bullet from the top.

S. Vargas submission for Public Comment. Excerpts from the report on “PBS NewsHour” (4/20/2020). For the full report, please go to <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/millions-of-americans-are-receiving-relief-payments-this-week-but-who-is-being-left-out>

But tens of thousands of the country’s most vulnerable residents will not receive this form of financial assistance this week — or, in some cases, at all. Undocumented immigrants and adult dependents don’t qualify. Lower income individuals and those with disabilities will, in some cases, face extra hurdles in seeking to claim the money. And inconsistent communication about the legislation from lawmakers and the U.S. Department of Treasury has raised questions over who exactly qualifies for the relief and why certain groups are left out.

Beyond the potential challenges for those who are eligible in accessing the coronavirus aid, there are still others who have been completely left out and aren’t eligible. Adults claimed as dependents, including many students and people with disabilities, will not receive anything. Parents or guardians who claim adult children on their taxes also will not receive the \$500 credit provided to those with children under 17. On social media platforms, many are expressing their frustration with the decision to omit them.

Yazmin Franco, 25, came to the U.S. from Mexico as a child, but is temporarily protected from deportation under the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. Some DACA recipients like Franco who have social security cards are eligible for payments; Franco’s parents, however, are among the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States who aren’t eligible for the payment. Franco’s mother was recently laid off from a grocery store position, and her father also lost his job as a landscaper due to the pandemic. In addition to daily living expenses, Franco’s father has to pay for insulin to treat his diabetes without health insurance. “Having an underlying condition like my dad does, it’s such a horrible feeling to not be sure what would happen to him if he were to get sick with the coronavirus,” Franco said.

The legislation excludes “any nonresident alien” foreigners from receiving money. The law also denies the money to eligible taxpayers who either file a joint tax return with an undocumented person or claim an undocumented child, said Francine Lipman, a tax expert and professor with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas School of Law.

Many noncitizens who work and pay taxes, including undocumented immigrants and those with legal work visas, have lost jobs as a result of the pandemic. H-1, TN, and O-1 work visa holders are considered resident aliens and can receive aid only if they’ve been in the U.S. long enough to meet the “substantial presence” test.

[Here is the link to an additional report from National Public Radio:](#)

What Happens If Undocumented Immigrants Get Infected With Coronavirus? <https://www.npr.org/2020/03/29/823438906/what-happens-if-undocumented-immigrants-get-infected-with-coronavirus?sc=18&f=>

PUBLIC COMMENT – 04-23-20

Dear Ryan White Planning Council,


The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on the struggle and disproportionate burden that vulnerable populations face daily. The requests for financial assistance from our patients – who mainly come from underrepresented communities – has rocketed since the “Stay Home, Work Safe” order was put in place. Many have lost their jobs and cannot afford rent or buying essential goods.

Moreover, the fact that many residents are not eligible for federal financial assistance only makes matter worse. Undocumented people are not eligible, even though they pay taxes. Additionally, people who file their taxes jointly with an undocumented person, or claim an undocumented child, are also ineligible. People with work visas can only receive their stimulus check if they can prove “substantial presence” in the country. The obstacles do not stop there.

The financial crisis that is emerging in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affects those who have less access to healthcare, an impact that can be directly correlated with known social determinants of health. People are afraid to use public transportation and cannot afford ride share apps; affordable housing is becoming more and more problematic; and fear of exorbitant medical expenses continues to drive people away from care. On top of this, we are still researching the impact of this crisis on mental health – we foresee that mental health services, though costly, will emerge as a pivotal service.

There is a vulnerable population that is suffering in silence and fear. In extraordinary times like these, we need to lead with extraordinary example. Please, consider the use of emergency financial assistance funds as a rapid response aid for those ineligible for assistance.

Jonatan Gioia, MD
Research Associate
Preferred Pronouns: He/Him/His

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Williams, Victoria (County Judge's Office)

From: Richard Gamez <rcgamez@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 3:57 PM
To: Williams, Victoria (County Judge's Office)
Cc: Richard Gamez
Subject: Emergency Financial Assistance for those ineligible

Good afternoon, Ms. Williams,

Please include this report as support for the Emergency Financial Assistance funding as a rapid response aid for those ineligible for other more immediate assistance.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/04/05/undocumented-immigrants-coronavirus/>

Thank you.
Richard Gamez
Member of the Latino HIV Task Force



The Washington Post

Coronavirus

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Business

Undocumented workers among those hit first — and worst — by the coronavirus shutdown

By Tracy Jan
April 4

Evilin Cano was dismantling a rooftop skating rink in Manhattan's Seaport district when her construction crew was notified that the venue would be closing, along with much of New York — and that she would be out of a job.

The next night, the 33-year-old undocumented day laborer from Guatemala fell ill with a fever. Her head pounded. Her throat hurt. She could not stop coughing or vomiting. And she was short of breath. She does not know whether she has covid-19 because three hospitals told her not to bother coming in for testing unless she's gasping for air.

"They told me to stay at home, don't go out, and when I can no longer breathe, call 9-1-1 for them to pick me up," Cano said.

The collapse of the U.S. economy brought about by the coronavirus pandemic has exposed the extreme vulnerabilities of millions of undocumented workers like Cano, who are disproportionately employed in industries undergoing mass layoffs as well as high-risk jobs that keep society running while many Americans self-isolate at home.

Many of the undocumented, working in construction, restaurants and other service sectors, have already lost their jobs. Others, in industries like agriculture and health care that have been declared essential, work in jobs that typically require close quarters or interacting with the public, putting them at higher risk of getting sick.

Unlike many American workers, undocumented immigrants can't count on the social safety net if they lose their jobs or get sick. Most do not have health insurance or access to paid sick leave — putting them and the people they encounter at risk. Most aren't eligible for unemployment insurance or the cash payments included in the \$2 trillion relief package Congress passed last month — even if they pay taxes or their children are U.S. citizens.

"The government has announced it was going to support people affected by the coronavirus but that's for Americans — not for people like us who are undocumented," said Cano, who applied for asylum in November. "My fear is if I seek help, this country will see me as just trying to take advantage of the system."

Cano said she had been a police officer living a middle-class life in Guatemala when a gang tried to kidnap her teenage daughter, and she fled with her two eldest to New York.

She was just five days into a three-month job at the Seaport transforming what had been a temporary winterscape into a summer oasis when the contractor pulled her crew aside on March 20 and told them not to return.

Soon after Cano got sick, her daughter developed a fever, too. So did her boyfriend. Unable to seek care, Cano spent five days in bed and remains quarantined in her Brooklyn home.

Construction had been a step up for Cano. When she first came to the U.S. more than a year ago, she patched together a living at a Salvadoran restaurant, earning \$50 for 13 hours of overnight work cleaning and preparing pupusas for delivery. When the till came up short, she said, the cashier would dock the difference from Cano's earnings. One night, she made so little that she had to borrow the \$2.75 bus fare home.

Last June, she became a day laborer in construction — doing demolition work, painting and the finishing touches. She made \$150 per nine-hour shift — enough to support her 17- and 16-year-old and still send money back to the 11- and 7-year-old she left behind with her mother.

Now, she is broke — with no savings and no income. She felt heartsick during a recent phone call home, telling her mother that no money would be coming this month.

The Brooklyn community job center where Cano and other day laborers used to gather each morning is deserted, like similar centers around the country. New contracts, now fielded over the phone, have dropped from about 20 a week before the coronavirus crisis to around five, said Ligia Guallpa, executive director of the Worker's Justice Project, which runs the center.

"I'm trying to figure out how to find another job, but I'm not healthy — and there are no jobs," Cano said. "At this point, I'm looking for anything just to support my kids."

Once she recovers, Cano plans to sell homemade tamales for \$3 each — the way she supported her family over the winter when construction work was slow. She hopes it will be enough to cover their groceries.

"I cannot go back to Guatemala," Cano said. "I'd be sentencing my kids to death."

The 7 million immigrants without authorization to work in the United States make up just over 4 percent of the country's labor force, but account for at least 12 percent of workers in construction, 10 percent in hotels, and 8 percent in restaurant and food service — among the hardest hit sectors in the pandemic, according to an analysis of 2018 Census data by New American Economy. The analysis shows that undocumented immigrants also make up 14 percent of agricultural workers and 7 percent of home health aides, two industries considered critical to the health of the U.S. economy and its citizens during the coronavirus crisis.

Researchers and industry groups say undocumented laborers are significantly undercounted and comprise more than half of the workforce in some occupations, such as farmworkers.

"A lot of undocumented immigrants will be hit first — and worst — by this recession," said Orson Aguilar, director of economic policy at UnidosUS.

In the absence of a federal safety net, advocates from California to New York are pushing cities and states to provide economic relief to workers regardless of immigration status. Some have begun cobbling together funds to help undocumented workers pay rent and buy food.

Even workers who thought they had stability are discovering that no job is secure in the coronavirus-induced recession.

Juan, a 36-year-old head cook at a diner in Berkeley, Calif., saw his hours cut in half — to just five hours a day, for takeout and delivery only — once the governor ordered the state to shelter in place.

He donned a mask and gloves when he left for work and sanitized all equipment at the restaurant before touching it, fearful that he'd carry the virus home to his 9-year-old daughter, who has asthma.

Then last Friday, he learned that the restaurant was shutting its doors, even for takeout.

"I'm in shock," said Juan, who asked that only his first name be used because of his immigration status. "I was kind of afraid to go to work, but now I don't know what to do."

Others say their undocumented status prevents them from demanding protective equipment as they continue to go about their jobs.

An undocumented farmworker in northern Ohio, who spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of losing her \$10 an hour job, said she has been planting tomatoes, onions and other produce — without the protection of gloves and masks and without access to soap and running water.

The 36-year-old farmworker, who came to the U.S. from Monterrey, Mexico, when she was 15, brings her own liquid soap from home and uses drinking water to wash her hands during breaks.

She works alongside migrant workers who live in crowded quarters at a labor camp and who she fears wear the same dirty clothes all week because they don't have laundry facilities on site.

The county health department has instructed the farmworkers to work six feet apart — an edict she says is impossible to follow when they unload plants from the trailers to bring into the nurseries. For one week, her employer took workers' temperatures. But no longer.

The mother of four follows a strict routine when she returns from work — removing her shoes outside, washing her clothes daily, and not allowing her children to hug her until she's taken a shower "because I'm not sure if I have the virus or not."

The backdrop for many of the undocumented is the fear of deportation — despite a recent commitment from Immigration and Customs Enforcement to halt most enforcement during the coronavirus outbreak, especially near health-care facilities.

"That provides little comfort," said Anu Joshi, vice president of policy at the New York Immigration Coalition. "ICE field offices have a lot of leeway in moments of crisis to implement their own prioritization rules."

Others worry about jeopardizing their chances to gain permanent status in the U.S. The administration implemented a rule in February that would make it more difficult for low-income immigrants, including those who entered the country legally, to become permanent residents if they have received public benefits, including health coverage for the poor such as Medicaid. But it recently made an exception for those seeking medical attention for the coronavirus.

The most terrifying part of Lydia Nakiberu's day has become her two-hour commute — on two trains and a bus — to her job as a home health aide outside Boston.

She shoves her hands in her pockets so as not to touch anything, wears a mask, scrubs her hands every chance she gets — but worries about spreading the virus to the 86-year-old man she cares for. Or to her family.

"They tell us, 'When you get sick, you have to go to the hospital,' but all the undocumented domestic workers I know are so scared that ICE might get their information and come for them," said Lydia, 41, who does not have health insurance.

Both Lydia and her husband, Jerry, are undocumented immigrants from Uganda who have raised their children — ages 13, 12 and 8 — in the United States. Jerry spent three months in an immigration detention center in 2012 after losing an asylum case and missed the birth of his youngest son.

At the nursing home where Jerry works as a nurse, masks are rationed, with caregivers allotted just one for the entire day. They have gloves, but no protective gowns. He thinks the government should be doing more to help workers on health care's front line — even if they are not authorized to work.

"They need us more than ever before," said Jerry, 54.

Perhaps when this is all over, he said, the American public will recognize how undocumented immigrants risked their lives to help during a time of crisis. In another burst of optimism, he said he hopes that the government would grant legal status to parents of U.S. citizens and other immigrants who have long paid taxes.

But until then, Lydia said: "We are scared about the virus. We are scared about ICE. We are scared about almost everything right now."

Tracy Jan

Tracy Jan covers the intersection of race and the economy for The Washington Post, a beat she launched in December 2016. She previously was a national political reporter at the t

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Williams, Victoria (County Judge's Office)

From: James Williams <jastaswillias@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 3:58 PM
To: Williams, Victoria (County Judge's Office)
Subject: Support for Emergency Financial Assistance funds proposal

I am writing in support of the use of Emergency Financial Assistance funds for a rapid response to help those ineligible for other more immediate assistance. I was offended to hear that families with at least one person without a Social Security number would also not be eligible for COVID-19 Relief funds from our Republican government. Anything we can do to offset this misguided and unfair situation should be done. If any person is being cut-off for having at least one person without a SSN in their household is being deemed guilty by association. This is inherently wrong. I am grateful that the Ryan White Program is there to make things better for at least some suffering from this injustice.

-- James Thomas Williams



April 23, 2020

To: Ryan White Office of Support

From: Latino HIV Task Force

Latino HIV Task Force (LHTF) would like to express its concerns about how the Covid-19 has impacted the Latino community.

Harris County as a whole has 43% Hispanic, 29% White, 20% African American, and 7% Asian in population composition.

The Covid-19 breakdown as of April 21, 2020 is 25% Hispanic, 23% African American, 18% White, 4% Asian and 1% other.

As the Covid-19 continues to spread across Harris County and the City of Houston, the Latino communities are among those who will continue to be disproportionately affected by the virus. Barricading access to governmental programs; services; and benefits through means of discrimination on the basis of immigration status, socio-economic status, race, color, age, gender identification and sexual orientation will further exacerbate health and economic inequities.

Latino Children are affected by the following supportive services received by school districts. Many children will be impacted by lack of nutritional supplements provided by the school. They will suffer due to unavailable free lunch programs. Many children and youth access school facilitated health care, for vaccinations and mental health services. Children ages 5 – 17 years old will miss the WHO recommendation of 60 minutes a day of moderate-to-vigorous physical activities. This will increase their risk of establishing bad habits like increased TV or Video Games or other electronics' use. But also, snacking that can damage future cardiovascular and musculoskeletal health. In addition, the current situation impacts the health of our children and youth who suffer from living with HIV. Many of these children did not have the tools needed to complete their school-work because of the lack of internet access and most importantly their lack of laptops, computers or tablets.

Adolescents are impacted because of school closures and social distancing is challenging. Adolescents at this age are growing independent and begin to prioritize connections with peers over parents. They may grieve their rites of passage they were due to experience, like proms and graduations. Anxiety could increase in adolescents as they try to understand the Covid-19 pandemic.

In general, Latino seniors tend to seek less medical and counseling help than African-American and Anglo seniors do. Fearful of government policies with regard to the Latino communities, especially immigrants, they avoid dealing with governmental agencies and CBOs that might report them to immigration authorities. This reluctance to seek help is especially true for the undocumented, or those with undocumented family members. Many Latino seniors serve as the backbone of their families, caring for grandchildren and other children in their community while schools are closed; and these children may have been infected, which puts them at a higher risk of infection themselves. If these seniors become infected and do not get the help they need, the entire family structure will be disrupted, with huge social and financial repercussions to the greater society. This is why getting this financial aid is so very urgent.

Many in the Latino communities are ineligible for unemployment insurance or the \$1,200 stimulus check that the government just released. Our undocumented are unable to rely on the government's relief aid, some despite having paid taxes and living in the U.S. for more than two decades. If they are stricken with the Covid-19, they will question whether to seek medical attention because of facing deportation, or being separated from family. If they are not faced with being undocumented, many work as cooks, cleaners, janitors, industries which have been hit the hardest by the pandemic. The majority of this group do not have health insurance or are under insured. If living with HIV, many can access Ryan White Services. These will not cover loss of wages, or some high medical bills associated with treatment due to this Pandemic.

Many of our agencies have reached their limits in assisting clients with rental and utilities assistance. Transportation, while always a barrier, continues to be as such with the added dangers of acquiring COVID-19 from the need to use public transportation. Metro reports an increase of COVID-19 diagnoses for bus drivers, Quality Assurance staff, bus cleaners, etc. Access to Food Pantry has been challenging to more families than usual.

The Emergency Financial Assistance service category provided by Ryan White with COVID-19 Relief Funds, while a great help if no restrictions are put in place, will not assist the Latino community if they continue to uphold restrictions that discriminate and will be a tremendous negative impact on our communities if they do. But, if this category is created to provide a more equitable situation for those ineligible for other financial assistance, and maintains the flexibility and agility to respond quickly, then we will have finally created a financial relief category which truly serves ALL people with HIV in our area, including immigrants of undocumented status and the families which include them.

Gloria Sierra, Chair

Steven Vargas, Co-Chair

Richard Gamez, Secretary



PUBLIC COMMENT

- as of 04-15-20

From: Steven Vargas <sivargas68@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 15, 2020 12:28 PM
To: Williams, Victoria (County Judge's Office); Martin, Carin (PHS); Tana Brown; Barr, Melody
- HCD
Subject: Fwd: Coronavirus eviction rules don't always help people in motels

This is something I was thinking an emergency response fund could address and help alleviate.

I hope to be proven wrong, but I don't think HOPWA's STRUMA or TBRA programs would be able to assist in such cases.

Back in in 2006-2008, the Ryan White Program did fund temporary stays in motels for those returning to society from incarceration. This made it easier to assist with accessing medical care and more stable housing. At the time, PC members thought HOPWA would be able to do something similar and supplant those funds and recreate something similar.

I see similar functions for such funds for:

1. PWH returning from incarceration,
2. PWH needing temporary stay away from home due to something like COVID, whether the PWH needs isolating or need to be somewhere away from home where someone in their home has COVID or something similar
3. PWH needing a temporary stay if home is unlivable due to a fire or other disaster (hurricane, tornado, flood, infestation)

I have worked at two Houston ASOs and both have had to fund such stays for PWH during my tenure with them. Sometimes the agency had to use general funds to do so to address the need in a timely and useful fashion.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Stateline Daily <outreach@pewtrusts.org>
Date: Wed, Apr 15, 2020, 11:31 AM
Subject: Coronavirus eviction rules don't always help people in motels
To: <sivargas68@yahoo.com>

[View in web browser](#)

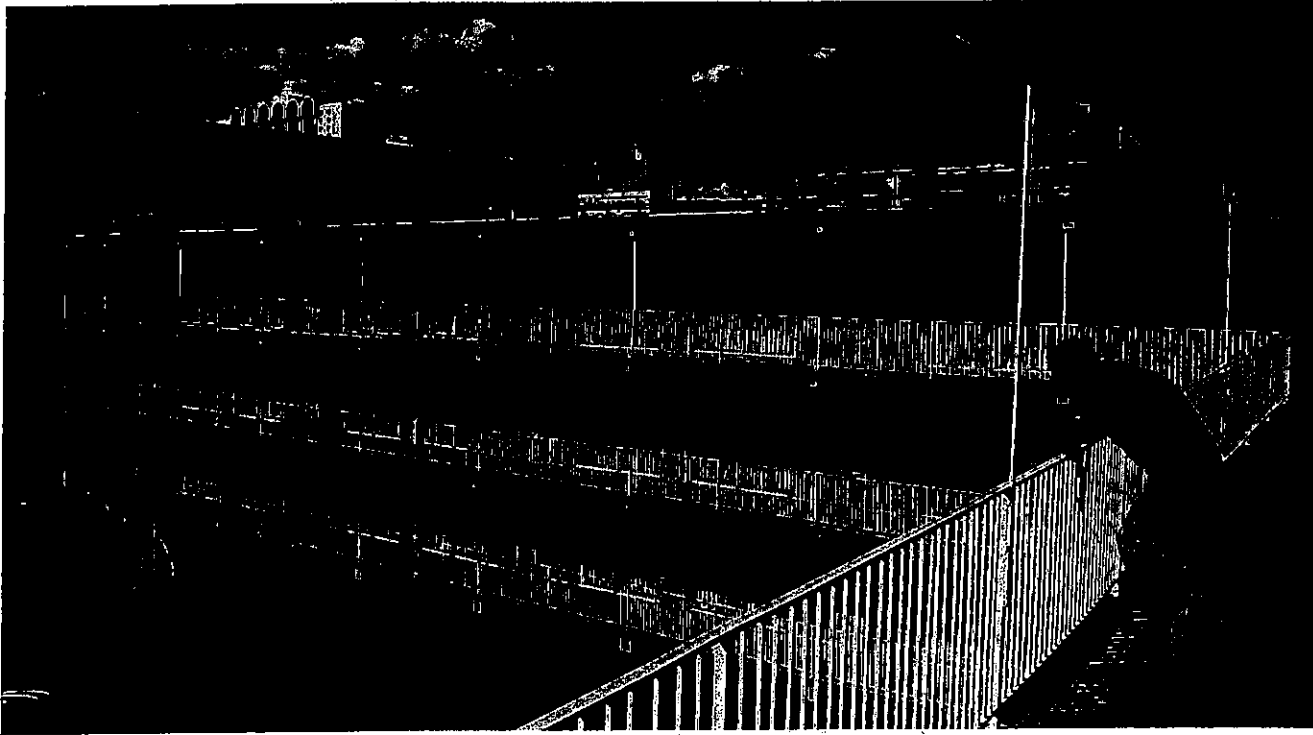
PEW

Stateline Daily

Stateline

Coronavirus Eviction Rules Don't Always Help People in Motels

STATELINE ARTICLE April 15, 2020 By: Teresa Wiltz Topics: Business of Government & Health Read time: 5 min



A man stands outside of his Reno, Nevada, motel room before the pandemic. Many families and individuals living in extended-stay motels are facing eviction during the pandemic.

John Locher/The Associated Press

Read *Stateline* coverage of the latest state action on coronavirus.

For the past few months, Stefanie Craft, her five kids and two pets, a cat and a dog, have been camped out in the Economy Inn and Suites in North Charleston, South Carolina. It wasn't her first choice: Black mold crawling up the walls of their rental house forced her hand.

Still, it's home, for now, so they're riding out the pandemic in one room with a "sink-sized kitchen."

Now Craft, 44, who says she has always paid her \$325 weekly motel rent on time, is facing eviction. She lost her job supervising a local car wash when the coronavirus shuttered her city. A local church paid her rent this week, she said, but she's terrified about what will happen next. The motel's manager could not be reached for comment about Craft's case.

"I have no clue what I'm going to do," Craft told *Stateline* in a telephone interview. "We have nowhere to go. That's why we're here."

States have reached different conclusions.

This month, North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein, a Democrat, ordered local motels and hotels to stop threatening to evict tenants during the pandemic.

Hotels have been devastated by the pandemic, said Lynn Minges, president and CEO of the North Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association. Eight out of 10 hotels in the state either were forced to close or are operating at less than 20% capacity, she said, adding that many are sheltering homeless families and individuals.

"We're clear that it is unlawful for a hotel to evict a guest if that is how they are finding shelter," Minges said. "They are still responsible for the payment of those rooms," but those are matters that can be resolved later, she said.

In neighboring South Carolina, however, the state's April no-eviction order does not apply to people living in motels.

And sometimes states and localities don't agree. In Michigan, for example, tenant protection laws do not cover motel residents.

But after Kent County, Michigan, motels evicted more than a dozen families and threatened to evict roughly 75 more last month, local officials got involved, said Casey Gordon, who works with homeless students and families for the Kent County Intermediate School District.

County officials, Grand Rapids city administrators and the county public health department told motel owners that they were essential businesses and evicting residents would violate the local eviction moratorium, Gordon said.

But many motels shut down anyway and kicked families out, according to Gordon, and some families ended up in shelters. Others are living in "doubled-up situations," couch-surfing with friends. Some ended up in other motels.

"It's getting really difficult," Gordon said. "Hotels are saying, 'We can't continue to provide staffing. People aren't coming into work.'"

In some places, evictions are happening at the same time that cities, in an effort to protect people who experience chronic homelessness, are commandeering empty motels to house them.

Many federal agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Education, consider people to be homeless if they're living in hotels or motels. But there are no clear statistics tracking this population.

Motel residents are a difficult population to pin down because they live in a motel when they can afford it and when they can't they often move to their cars or a friend's couch. Nor

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OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-7000

May 22, 2020

MEMORADUM FOR: All Community Planning and Development Field Office Directors,
Deputy Directors and Program Managers

FROM:  John Gibbs, Assistant Secretary, Acting, D

SUBJECT: Availability of Additional Waivers for Community Planning and
Development (CPD) Grant Programs to Prevent the Spread of
COVID-19 and Mitigate Economic Impacts
Caused by COVID-19

PURPOSE

This memorandum explains the availability of waivers of certain regulatory requirements and one NOFA requirement associated with several CPD grant programs to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to facilitate assistance to eligible communities and households economically impacted by COVID-19. This memorandum covers program-specific waivers for the following CPD programs:

- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA);
- Continuum of Care (CoC);
- Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP); and
- Emergency Solutions Grants Program

This memorandum also announces a simplified notification process for recipients of these programs to use this waiver flexibility to expedite the delivery of assistance. CPD Field Office Directors, Deputy Directors, and Program Managers are instructed to inform CPD recipients operating within their jurisdictions of the content of this memorandum.

NOTIFICATION PROCESS

Recipients may use the waivers described in this memorandum to assist affected CPD program beneficiaries and CPD program eligible households to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to mitigate against the economic impact caused by COVID-19 for eligible households. To use the waiver flexibility provided in this memorandum, the recipient must provide notification in writing, either through mail or e-mail, to the CPD Director of the HUD Field Office serving its jurisdiction no less than two days before the recipient anticipates using the waiver flexibility. Further directions on notifying HUD can be found in Attachment #1.

WAIVER AUTHORITY

In December 2019, a new coronavirus known as SARS-CoV-2 was first detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, People's Republic of China, causing outbreaks of the coronavirus disease COVID-19 that has now spread globally. The first case was reported in the United States in January 2020. In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic and President Trump declared the outbreak a national emergency. During this time, the majority of states have declared states of emergency with most shutting down large gathering places and limiting the movement of their residents. As a consequence, many CPD recipients are facing challenges in ensuring appropriate shelter options are available for program participants who need to be separated from others because they are exhibiting symptoms, training staff on how to safely work with program participants and prevent spreading the virus, obtaining supplies to prevent the spread of the virus, and maintaining necessary staffing levels during the outbreak. Further, many program participants are suffering economic consequences from the mass shutdown of businesses and lack of availability of traditional mainstream benefits. A number of recipients have inquired about the availability of waivers of various CPD program requirements to facilitate assistance to program participants and prevent the spread of the virus.

In accordance with 24 CFR 5.110, HUD may, upon a determination of good cause and subject to statutory limitations, waive regulatory provisions. Additional regulatory waiver authority is provided in 24 CFR 91.600. On March 31, 2020, CPD issued its first waivers of regulatory authority to help recipients prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. This memorandum includes additional waivers for the ESG, CoC, YHDP, and HOPWA Programs.

WAIVER AVAILABILITY

To provide additional flexibility to communities to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and better assist individuals and families, including those experiencing homelessness infected with the virus or economically impacted by the virus, I hereby find good cause to provide the regulatory waivers below. To use each waiver, each recipient must follow the notification process described above and update its program records to include written documentation of the specific conditions that justify the recipient's use of the waiver, consistent with the justifications and applicability provisions below. Provisions that are not specifically waived remain in full effect.

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT PROGRAM

To the extent that funding provided under the CARES Act for the ESG program is subject to the same requirements in 24 CFR part 576 that apply to ESG funding provided through annual appropriations, the waivers made available on March 31, 2020 for ESG are made available with respect to the CARES Act funding for the same justifications and subject to the same conditions.

Additionally, the following housing stability case management waiver is made available with respect to all ESG grants, whether funded under the CARES Act or annual ESG appropriations.

1. Housing Stability Case Management

- Requirement:** Program participants receiving homelessness prevention or rapid re-housing assistance must meet with a case manager not less than once per month, unless certain statutory prohibitions apply.
- Citation:** 24 CFR 576.401(e)
- Explanation:** Under 24 CFR 576.401(e), the recipients or subrecipients must require program participants to meet with a case manager not less than once per month to assist them in ensuring long-term housing stability, unless the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 or Family Violence Prevention and Services Act prohibits the recipient or subrecipient from making its shelter or housing conditional on the participant's acceptance of services. As provided by the CARES Act, people experiencing homelessness cannot be required to receive treatment or perform any other prerequisite activities as a condition for receiving shelter, housing, or other services funded with ESG grants provided under the CARES Act. Accordingly, 24 CFR 576.401(e) does not apply to the extent the assistance is provided with CARES Act funding to people who qualified as homeless at the start of that assistance.
- Justification:** HUD originally waived this requirement for 2-months on March 31, 2020. Recipients are continuing to report limited staff capacity as staff members are home for a variety of reasons related to COVID-19 (e.g., quarantining, children home from school, working elsewhere in the community to manage the COVID-19 response). In addition, not all program participants have capacity to meet via phone or internet. Waiving the monthly case management requirement as specified below will allow recipients to provide case management on an as needed basis and reduce the possible spread and harm of COVID-19.
- Applicability:** This waiver is in effect for an additional three months beginning on the date of this memorandum.

CONTINUUM OF CARE PROGRAM and YOUTH HOMELESSNESS DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

To the extent YHDP grants are subject to the same requirements in 24 CFR part 578 that apply to grants provided under the CoC Program, the same waivers made available on March 31, 2020 for grants provided under the CoC Program are made available to YHDP grants for the same justifications and subject to the same conditions. Additionally, the following waivers are available to CoC Program and YHDP recipients.

2. Permanent Housing Rapid Re-housing Limit to 24 Months of Rental Assistance

- Requirement:** CoC Program funds may be used to provide short-term (up to 3 months) and/or medium-term (for 3 to 24 months) tenant-based rental assistance.
- Citation:** 24 CFR 578.37(a)(1)(ii), 24 CFR 578.37(a)(1)(ii)(C), and 24 CFR 578.51(a)(1)(i)
- Explanation:** The CoC Program regulation at 24 CFR 578.37(a)(1)(ii) and 24 CFR 578.51(a)(1)(i) defines medium-term rental assistance as 3 to 24 months and 578.37(a)(1)(ii) and 24 CFR 578.37(a)(1)(ii)(C) limits rental assistance in rapid re-housing projects to medium-term rental assistance, or no more than 24 months.
- Justification:** Waiving the limit on using rental assistance in rapid re-housing projects to pay more than 24 months will ensure that individuals and families currently receiving rapid re-housing assistance do not lose their assistance, and consequently their housing, during the COVID-19 public health crisis and the subsequent economic downturn. This will reduce the spread and harm of COVID-19 by enabling affected program participants to continue to socially isolate in their housing.
- Applicability:** The 24-month rental assistance restriction is waived for program participants in a permanent housing rapid re-housing project who will have reached 24 months of rental assistance beginning on the date of this memorandum until a state or local public health official has determined special measures are no longer necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Program participants who have reached 24 months of rental assistance during this time and who will not be able to afford their rent without additional rental assistance will be eligible to receive rental assistance until 3 months after a state or local public health official has determined that special measures are no longer necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

3. Limit to be Eligible for DedicatedPLUS Project When Coming from Transitional Housing Being Eliminated

- Requirement:** To be eligible for a DedicatedPLUS project an individual or family must meet the criteria of DedicatedPLUS in the Notice of Funding Availability under which the grant was awarded. One of the possible criteria is residing in transitional housing *that will be eliminated* and meeting the definition of chronically homeless in effect at the time in which the individual or family entered the transitional housing project.
- Citation:** Section III.C.3.f.(2) of the FY 2018 CoC Program Competition NOFA and Section III.C.2.g.(2) of the FY 2019 CoC Program Competition NOFA.
- Explanation:** Section III.C.3.f.(2) of the FY 2018 CoC Program Competition NOFA and Section III.C.2.g.(2) of the FY 2019 CoC Program Competition NOFA

define a DedicatedPLUS project as a PSH project where 100 percent of the beds are dedicated to serve individuals and families residing in one of six places at intake, including residing in a transitional housing project that will be eliminated.

Justification: Waiving the requirement within the definition of DedicatedPLUS project that the transitional housing project is being eliminated will expand permanent housing options available for people moving out of transitional housing and will make more transitional housing beds available to others who need it. Expanding permanent housing options for persons in transitional housing will assist in preventing the spread of COVID-19 by allowing more people to move off the streets and into transitional housing.

Applicability: The definition of DedicatedPLUS project is waived for DedicatedPLUS projects funded in the FY 2018 and FY 2019 CoC Program Competitions to allow these projects to serve individuals and families residing in transitional housing, whether it is being eliminated or not, as long as the individual or family met the definition of chronically homeless upon entry to the TH.

4. Assistance Available at Time of Renewal

Requirement: With respect to renewing CoC Program awards, 24 CFR 578.33(c) requires that assistance for a renewal period will be up to 100 percent of the amount available for supportive services and HMIS costs in the final year of the prior funding period, up to 100 percent of the amount for leasing and operating in the final year of the prior funding period adjusted in proportion to changes in FMR for the geographic area, and for rental assistance up to 100 percent of the result of multiplying the number and unit size(s) in the grant agreement by the number of months in the grant agreement and the applicable FMR.

Citation: 24 CFR 578.33(c)

Explanation: 24 CFR 578.33(c) requires that budget line item amounts a recipient is awarded for renewal in the CoC Program Competition will be based on the amounts in the final year of the prior funding period for the project.

Justification: Waiving the requirement that the renewal grant amount is based on the budget line items in the final year of the grant being renewed will allow recipients to amend their budgets temporarily to address the needs of its program participants in responding to COVID-19 (e.g., providing different supportive services necessitated by the pandemic or serving fewer people because of the layout of the housing does not meet local social distancing recommendations) without changing the original design of the project when it is not operating in a public health crisis and can resume normal operations.

Applicability: The requirement that the renewal grant amount be based on the budget line items in the final year of the grant being renewed is waived for all projects that amend their grant agreement between March 31, 2020 and October 1, 2020 to move funds between budget line items in a project in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Recipients may then apply in the next FY CoC Program Competition based on the budget line items in the grants before they were amended.

Notification: Recipients utilizing this waiver flexibility do not need to follow the notification process outlined in Attachment #1. Instead, HUD will consider any grant agreement amendment executed between March 31, 2020 and October 1, 2020 to move funds between budget line items in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as notification to HUD.

5. Permanent Housing-Rapid Re-housing Monthly Case Management

Requirement: Recipients must require program participants of permanent housing – rapid re-housing projects to meet with a case manager at least monthly.

Citation: 24 CFR 578.37(a)(1)(ii)(F)

Explanation: The CoC Program interim rule at 24 CFR 578.37(a)(1)(ii)(F) requires program participants to meet with a case manager not less than once per month to assist them in ensuring long-term housing stability. The project is exempt from this requirement already if the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13925 *et seq.*) or the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (42 U.S.C. 10401 *et seq.*) prohibits the recipient carrying out the project from making its housing conditional on the participant's acceptance of services.

Justification: HUD originally waived this requirement for 2-months beginning March 31, 2020. Recipients are continuing to report limited staff capacity as staff members are home for a variety of reasons related to COVID-19 (e.g., quarantining, children home from school, working elsewhere in the community to manage the COVID-19 response). In addition, not all program participants have capacity to meet via phone or internet. Waiving the monthly case management requirement as specified below will allow recipients to provide case management on an as-needed basis and reduce the possible spread and harm of COVID-19.

Applicability: This requirement in 24 CFR 578.37(a)(1)(ii)(F) that projects require program participants to meet with case managers not less than once per month is waived for all permanent housing- rapid re-housing projects for an additional three months beginning on the date of this memorandum.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH AIDS (HOPWA)

6. HOPWA – Time Limits for Short-Term Housing Facilities and Short-Term Rent,

Mortgage, and Utility Payments

- Requirement:** Time Limits for Short-Term Supported Housing
- Citation:** 24 CFR 574.330(a)(1), Time Limits
- Explanation:** A short-term supported housing facility may not provide residence to any individual for more than 60 days during any six-month period. Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, and Utility (STRMU) payments to prevent the homelessness of the tenant or mortgagor of a dwelling may not be provided for costs accruing over a period of more than 21 weeks in any 52-week period.
- Justification:** This waiver is required to prevent homelessness or discharge to unstable housing situations for households residing in short-term housing facilities or units assisted with STRMU if permanent housing cannot be achieved within the time limits specified in the regulation.
- Applicability:** On an individual household basis, grantees or project sponsors may assist eligible households for a period that exceeds the time limits specified in the regulations. A short-term supported housing facility may provide residence to any individual for a period of up to 120 days in a six-month period. STRMU payments to prevent the homelessness of the tenant or mortgagor of a dwelling may be provided for costs accruing up to 52 weeks in a 52-week period.

This waiver is in effect for one year beginning on the date of this memorandum for grantees and project sponsors that are able to meet the following criteria:

- a. The grantee or project sponsor documents that a good faith effort has been made on an individual household basis to assist the household to achieve permanent housing within the time limits specified in the regulations but that financial needs and/or health and safety concerns have prevented the household from doing so; and
- b. The grantee or project sponsor has written policies and procedures outlining efforts to regularly reassess the needs of assisted households as well as processes for granting extensions based on documented financial needs and/or health and safety concerns.

7. HOPWA – Property Standards

- Requirement:** Property Standards for HOPWA
- Citation:** 24 CFR 574.310(b), Housing Quality Standards
- Explanation:** This section of the HOPWA regulations provides that all housing assisted

with acquisition, rehabilitation, conversion, lease, or repair; new construction of single room occupancy dwellings and community residences; project or tenant-based rental assistance; or operating costs must meet the applicable housing quality standards outlined in the regulations.

- Justification:** This waiver is required to enable grantees and project sponsors to expeditiously meet the critical housing needs of the many eligible families that have been affected by COVID-19 while also minimizing the spread of coronavirus.
- Applicability:** This waiver is in effect for one year beginning on the date of this memorandum for grantees and project sponsors that are able to meet the following criteria:
- a. The grantee or project sponsor is able to visually inspect the unit using technology, such as video streaming, to ensure the unit meets HQS before any assistance is provided; and
 - b. The grantee or project sponsor has written policies to physically reinspect the unit after the health officials determine special measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are no longer necessary.

8. HOPWA – FMR Rent Standard

- Requirement:** Rent Standard for HOPWA Rental Assistance
- Citation:** 24 CFR 574.320(a)(2), Rent Standard
- Explanation:** Grantees must establish rent standards for their rental assistance programs based on FMR (Fair Market Rent) or the HUD-approved community-wide exception rent for unit size. Generally, the rental assistance payment may not exceed the difference between the rent standard and 30 percent of the family's adjusted income.
- Justification:** This waiver of the FMR rent standard limit permits HOPWA grantees to establish rent standards, by unit size, that are reasonable, and based upon rents being charged for comparable unassisted units in the area, taking into account the location, size, type, quality, amenities, facilities, management and maintenance of each unit. Grantees, however, are required to ensure the reasonableness of rent charged for a unit in accordance with §574.320(a)(3).

This waiver is required to expedite efforts to identify suitable housing units for rent to HOPWA beneficiaries and HOPWA-eligible families that have been affected by COVID-19, and to provide assistance to families that must rent units at rates that exceed the HOPWA grantee's normal rent standard as calculated in accordance with §574.320(a)(2).

Applicability: Such rent standards may be used for up to one year beginning on the date of this memorandum.

Attachment #1 to Memorandum:**Procedure for Using Available Waivers of Program and Consolidated Plan Requirements to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 and Mitigate Economic Impacts Caused by COVID-19**

This attachment provides further information on the process that grantees must follow to use the waiver flexibility provided in the memorandum.

Grantees must email notification to the Community Planning and Development Director of the HUD Field Office serving the grantee.

The email notification must be sent two days before the grantee anticipates using waiver flexibility, and include the following details:

- Requestor's name, title, and contact information;
- Date on which the grantee anticipates first use of the waiver flexibility; and
- A list of the waiver flexibilities the grantee will use:
 1. ESG Program – Housing Stability Case Management
 2. CoC Program and YHDP - Permanent Housing Rapid Re-housing Limit to 24 Months of Rental Assistance
 3. CoC Program NOFA Requirement– Limit to be Eligible for DedicatedPLUS Project When Coming from Transitional Housing (TH) that TH Must be Being Eliminated
 5. CoC – Permanent Housing – Rapid Re-housing Monthly Case Management
 6. HOPWA – Time Limits for Short-Term Housing Facilities and Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, and Utility Payments
 7. HOPWA – Property Standards
 8. HOPWA – FMR Rent Standard

PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUM AND COPAY ASSISTANCE

Received by the Office of Support on 04-20-20

Tori,

I wanted to let you know that I have received several questions concerning Insurance premium and copay assistance. Maybe we can add this to the public comment. The individuals did not want to be identified.

Apparently we only have one provider/agency participating in this category.

I have received a lot of questions concerning this category in the past, but today I received a question/concern about copayments.

Their concern was about the lack of acknowledgement that their request was received, when it was paid, if it would be paid, etc.

So my understanding was that there was no feedback once their request was sent in. This person said it would be helpful because they were getting past due notices and did not know what to say to the providers when they called.

I mentioned that they should tell them know that a third party was making the payment. That if they paid, they would not be reimbursed.

That they needed to wait a little longer for payment

I think in this scenario, it would be helpful for the agency to let the customer/client know that the copayment would be accepted or paid and give them some kind of timeline, or in best practice, send them an email back when a payment was made.

Thanks and have a great day,

Take care,

Bobby

Houston Area HIV Services Ryan White Planning Council

2223 West Loop South, Suite 240, Houston, Texas 77027

832 927-7926 telephone; 713 572-3740 fax

www.rwpchouston.org

FY 2021 How to Best Meet the Need Quality Improvement Committee

Service Category Recommendations Summary (as of 05/28/20)

Those services for which no change is recommended include:

Case Management (Non-Medical Service Linkage)
Early Intervention Services (targeting the Incarcerated)
Home and Community Based Health Services (Adult Day Treatment)
Hospice Services
Linguistic Services
Oral Health (Untargeted and Targeting the Northern Rural Area)
Referral for Health Care and Support Services
Transportation
Vision Care

Services with recommended changes include the following:

Ambulatory Outpatient Medical Care (includes Medical Case Management, Local Pharmacy Assistance, Emergency Financial Assistance - Pharmacy Assistance, Outreach Services - Primary Care Re-Engagement, and Service Linkage)

⌘ Add the allowability of telehealth and telemedicine to the service definition, update the justification chart, and keep the financial eligibility the same at PriCare=300%, MCM=none, LPAP=400%+500%, EFA=500%, Outreach=none SLW=none.

Case Management (Clinical)

⌘ Add the allowability of telehealth to the service definition, update the justification chart, and keep the financial eligibility the same at none.

Case Management (Non-Medical Targeting Substance Use Disorders)

⌘ Add the allowability of telehealth to the service definition, update the justification chart, and keep the financial eligibility the same at none.

Emergency Financial Assistance

⌘ Accept the service category definition for Emergency Financial Assistance-Other which will provide a rapid response to personal emergencies, and set the financial eligibility at 400%. The committee recommends that the subcategory begin immediately using CARES Act (COVID-19) funds. After March 1, 2021, use Ryan White or State Services funding. SEE NEXT PAGE.

Health Insurance Premium and Cost Sharing Assistance

⌘ Add text to the service definition that states clients should receive notification that payments have been made to and received by their insurance provider, update the justification chart, and

keep the financial eligibility the same at 0 - 400%, ACA plans must have a subsidy.

Housing

⌘ SEE BELOW. Refer the discussion on Housing to a workgroup for further research.

Medical Nutritional Therapy/Supplements

⌘ Accept the service definition as presented, update the justification chart, and increase the financial eligibility to 400%.

Mental Health Services

⌘ Add the allowability of telehealth to the service definition, update the justification chart, and keep the financial eligibility the same at 400%.

Substance Abuse Treatment

⌘ Add the allowability of telehealth to the service definition, update the justification chart, and keep the financial eligibility the same at 300%.

On 05/27/20 the Housing Workgroup met and made the following recommendation which may or may not be approved by the Quality Improvement Committee on 06/02/20.

Emergency Financial Assistance

⌘ Add housing to the FY 2021 Emergency Financial Assistance – Other service definition and limit it to people who are displaced from their home due to a temporary, acute housing need. Also, the Office of Support is to educate people living with HIV and appropriate staff to Houston EMA/HSDA housing resources. The financial eligibility is 400%, per the above motion.

Houston EMA/HSDA Ryan White Part A Service Definition
COVID-19 Emergency Financial Assistance – Other
(Revised April 2020)

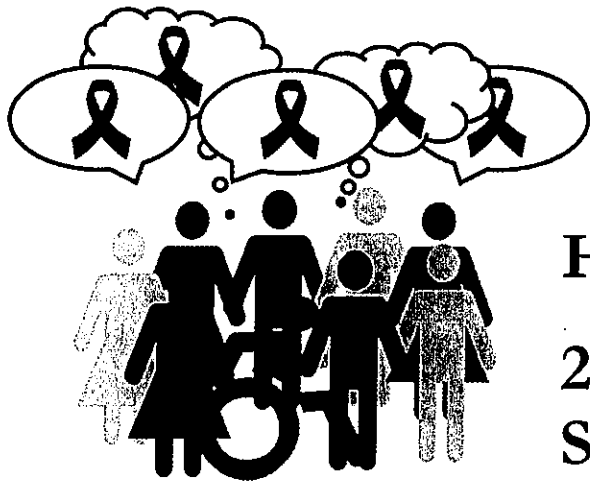
HRSA Service Category Title:	Emergency Financial Assistance
Local Service Category Title:	COVID-19 Emergency Financial Assistance - Other
Service Category Code (RWGA use only):	
Amount Available (RWGA use only):	
Budget Type (RWGA use only):	Hybrid
Budget Requirements or Restrictions:	<p>Direct cash payments to clients are not permitted. It is expected that all other sources of funding in the community for emergency financial assistance will be effectively used and that any allocation of RWHAP funds for these purposes will be as the payer of last resort, and for limited amounts, uses, and periods of time.</p> <p>Continuous provision of an allowable service to a client must not be funded through EFA.</p> <p>The agency must set priorities, delineate and monitor what part of the overall allocation for emergency assistance is obligated for each subcategory. Careful monitoring of expenditures within a subcategory of "emergency assistance" is necessary to assure that planned amounts for specific services are being implemented, and to determine when reallocations may be necessary.</p> <p>At least 75% of the total amount of the budget must be solely allocated to the actual cost of disbursements.</p> <p>Maximum allowable unit cost for provision of allowable COVID-19 EFA service to an eligible client = \$xx.00/unit</p>
HRSA Service Category Definition (do <u>not</u> change or alter):	<p>Emergency Financial Assistance - Provides limited one-time or short-term payments to assist the RWHAP client with an emergent need for paying for essential utilities, housing, food (including groceries, and food vouchers), transportation, and medication. Emergency financial assistance can occur as a direct payment to an agency or through a voucher program.</p>
Local Service Category Definition:	<p>COVID-19 Emergency Financial Assistance is provided with limited frequency and for a limited period of time, with specified frequency and duration of assistance. Emergent need must be documented each time funds are used. Emergency essential living needs include Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), cleaning supplies, COVID-19 self-isolation 14 day short term housing, food, telephone, and utilities (i.e. electricity, water, gas and all required fees) for eligible PLWH.</p>
Target Population (age,	PLWH living within the Houston Eligible Metropolitan Area

gender, geographic, race, ethnicity, etc.):	(EMA).
Services to be Provided:	<p>Emergency Financial Assistance provides funding through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term payments to agencies • Establishment of voucher programs • Disbursement of allowable COVID-19 related PPE and cleaning supplies <p>Service to be provided include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Vouchers • Utilities (gas, water, basic telephone service and electricity) • Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) • Cleaning supplies • COVID-19 self-isolation 14 day short term housing <p>The agency must adhere to the following guidelines in providing these services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance must be in the form of vouchers made payable to vendors, merchants, etc. No payments may be made directly to individual clients or family members. • Limitations on the provision of emergency assistance to eligible individuals/households should be delineated and consistently applied to all clients. • Allowable support services with an \$800/year/client cap.
Service Unit Definition(s): (RWGA use only)	A unit of service is defined as provision of allowable COVID-19 EFA service to an eligible client.
Financial Eligibility:	No more than 400% of Federal Poverty Level
Client Eligibility:	PLWHA residing in the Houston EMA (prior approval required for non-EMA clients).
Agency Requirements:	Agency must be dually awarded as HOWPA sub-recipient work closely with other service providers to minimize duplication of services and ensure that assistance is given only when no reasonable alternatives are available. It is expected that all other sources of funding in the community for emergency assistance will be effectively used and that any allocation of EFA funding for these purposes will be the payer of last resort, and for limited amounts, limited use, and limited periods of time. Additionally, agency must document ability to refer clients for food, transportation, and other needs from other service providers when client need is justified.
Staff Requirements:	None.
Special Requirements:	Agency must: Comply with the Houston EMA/HSDA Standards of Care and Emergency Financial Assistance service category program policies.

Houston EMA/HSDA Ryan White Part A Service Definition Emergency Financial Assistance – Other (Revised April 2020)	
HRSA Service Category Title:	Emergency Financial Assistance
Local Service Category Title:	Emergency Financial Assistance - Other
Service Category Code (RWGA use only):	
Amount Available (RWGA use only):	
Budget Type (RWGA use only):	Hybrid
Budget Requirements or Restrictions:	<p>Direct cash payments to clients are not permitted. It is expected that all other sources of funding in the community for emergency financial assistance will be effectively used and that any allocation of RWHAP funds for these purposes will be as the payer of last resort, and for limited amounts, uses, and periods of time. Continuous provision of an allowable service to a client must not be funded through EFA.</p> <p>The agency must set priorities, delineate and monitor what part of the overall allocation for emergency assistance is obligated for each subcategory. Careful monitoring of expenditures within a subcategory of "emergency assistance" is necessary to assure that planned amounts for specific services are being implemented, and to determine when reallocations may be necessary.</p> <p>At least 75% of the total amount of the budget must be solely allocated to the actual cost of disbursements.</p> <p>Maximum allowable unit cost for provision of food vouchers or and/or utility assistance to an eligible client = \$xx.00/unit</p>
HRSA Service Category Definition (do not change or alter):	<p>Emergency Financial Assistance - Provides limited one-time or short-term payments to assist the RWHAP client with an emergent need for paying for essential utilities, housing, food (including groceries, and food vouchers), transportation, and medication. Emergency financial assistance can occur as a direct payment to an agency or through a voucher program.</p>
Local Service Category Definition:	<p>Emergency Financial Assistance is provided with limited frequency and for a limited period of time, with specified frequency and duration of assistance. Emergent need must be documented each time funds are used. Emergency essential living needs include food, telephone, and utilities (i.e. electricity, water, gas and all required fees) for eligible PLWH.</p>
Target Population (age, gender, geographic, race, ethnicity, etc.):	PLWH living within the Houston Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA).

housing, limited to people who are displaced from their home due to acute housing needs.

<p>Services to be Provided:</p>	<p>Emergency Financial Assistance provides funding through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term payments to agencies • Establishment of voucher programs <p>Service to be provided include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Vouchers • Utilities (gas, water, basic telephone service and electricity) <p>The agency must adhere to the following guidelines in providing these services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance must be in the form of vouchers made payable to vendors, merchants, etc. No payments may be made directly to individual clients or family members. • Limitations on the provision of emergency assistance to eligible individuals/households should be delineated and consistently applied to all clients. • Allowable support services with an \$800/year/client cap.
<p>Service Unit Definition(s): (HIV Services use only)</p>	<p>A unit of service is defined as provision of food vouchers or and/or utility assistance to an eligible client.</p>
<p>Financial Eligibility:</p>	<p>Refer to the RWPC's approved <i>Financial Eligibility for Houston EMA Services</i>.</p>
<p>Client Eligibility:</p>	<p>PLWHA residing in the Houston EMA (prior approval required for non-EMA clients).</p>
<p>Agency Requirements:</p>	<p>Agency must be dually awarded as HOWPA sub-recipient work closely with other service providers to minimize duplication of services and ensure that assistance is given only when no reasonable alternatives are available. It is expected that all other sources of funding in the community for emergency assistance will be effectively used and that any allocation of EFA funding for these purposes will be the payer of last resort, and for limited amounts, limited use, and limited periods of time. Additionally, agency must document ability to refer clients for food, transportation, and other needs from other service providers when client need is justified.</p>
<p>Staff Requirements:</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>Special Requirements:</p>	<p>Agency must: Comply with the Houston EMA/HSDA Standards of Care and Emergency Financial Assistance service category program policies.</p>



Housing Profile

2020 Houston HIV Care Services Needs Assessment

Disclaimer:

This Housing Profile uses data from the 2020 Houston Area HIV Care Services Needs Assessment (approval pending). The 2020 Needs Assessment summarizes primary data collected from April 2019 to February 2020 from 589 self-selected, self-identified people living with HIV (PLWH) using either a self-administered written or electronic survey, or verbal interview. Most respondents resided in Houston/Harris County at the time of data collection. Data were statistically weighted for sex at birth, primary race/ethnicity, and age range based on a three-level stratification of HIV prevalence in the Houston EMA (2018). Though quality control measures were applied, limitations to the raw data and data analysis exist, and other data sources should be used to provide context for and to better understand the results. Data collected through this process represent the most current *primary* data source on PLWH in the Houston Area. Census, surveillance, and other data presented here reflect the most current data available at the time of publication.

Funding acknowledgment:

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Suggested citation:

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HOUSING SERVICE NEEDS AND BARRIERS

As payer of last resort, the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program provides a spectrum of HIV-related services to people living with HIV (PLWH) who may not have sufficient resources for managing HIV. The Houston Area HIV Services Ryan White Planning Council identifies, designs, and allocates funding to locally-provided HIV care services. Housing services for PLWH are provided through the federal Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) program through the City of Houston Housing and Community Development Department and for PLWH recently released from incarceration through the Houston Regional HIV/AIDS Resource Group (TRG). The primary function of HIV needs assessment activities is to gather information about the need for and barriers to services funded by the local Houston Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, as well as other HIV-related programs like HOPWA and the Houston Health Department's (HHD) prevention program. This Profile assesses the need, accessibility, and barriers to housing for PLWH in the Houston area.

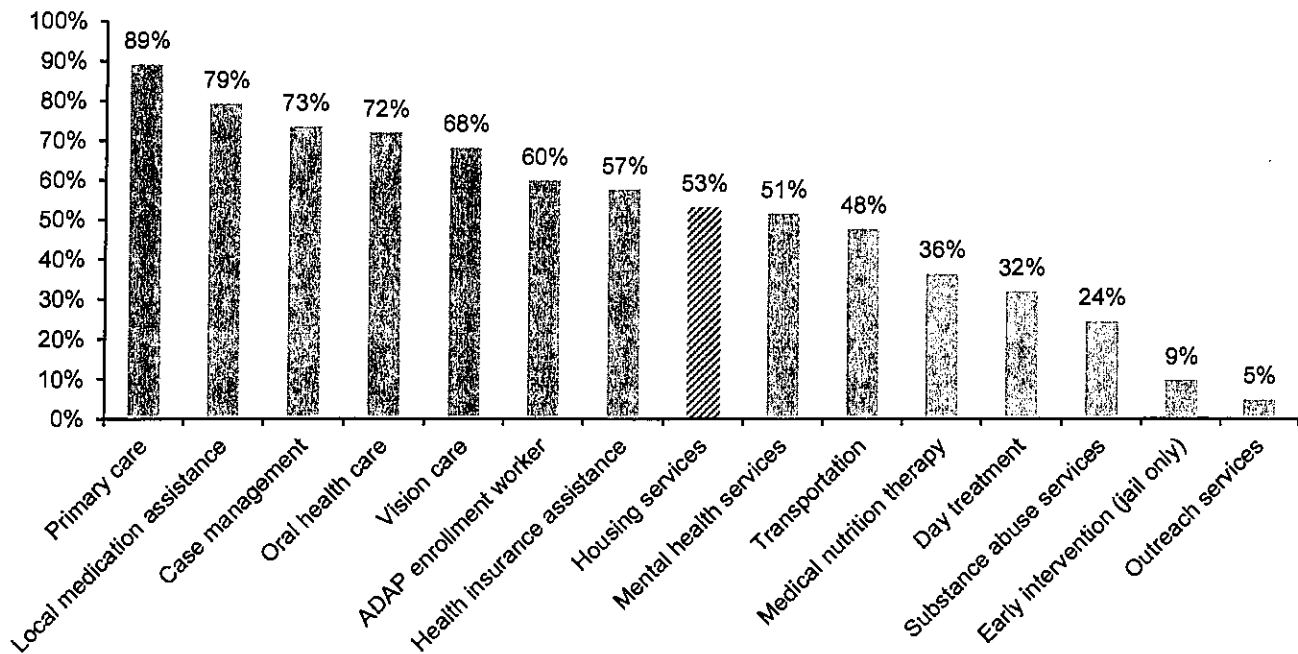
Overall Ranking of Housing and Funded Services, by Need

At the time of survey, 17 HIV core medical and support services were funded through the Houston Area Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program. For the first time, the 2020 Houston Area HIV Needs Assessment also collected data on the need for and accessibility to 10 additional services that are allowable under Ryan White, but not currently funded through Ryan White in the Houston area, such as housing services. Participants of the 2020 Houston HIV Care Services Needs Assessment were asked to indicate which of these funded and unfunded services they needed in the past 12 months.

(Graph 1) All funded and unfunded services except hospice and linguistics were analyzed and received a ranking of need. Housing services was identified as the most commonly needed unfunded service at 53% of survey participants indicating need. When ranked with currently funded services, housing was the 8th highest ranked for need. This places the need ranking for housing services before mental health services, transportation, medical nutrition therapy, adult day treatment, substance abuse services, early intervention services, and outreach services.

GRAPH 1-Ranking of Housing and Funded HIV Services in the Houston Area, By Need, 2020

*Definition: Percent of needs assessment participants stating they needed the service in the past 12 months, regardless of service accessibility.
Denominator: 569-573 participants, varying between service categories*



Overall Ranking of Housing and Funded Services, by Accessibility

Participants were asked to indicate whether each of the funded and unfunded services they needed in the past 12 months was easy or difficult for them to access.

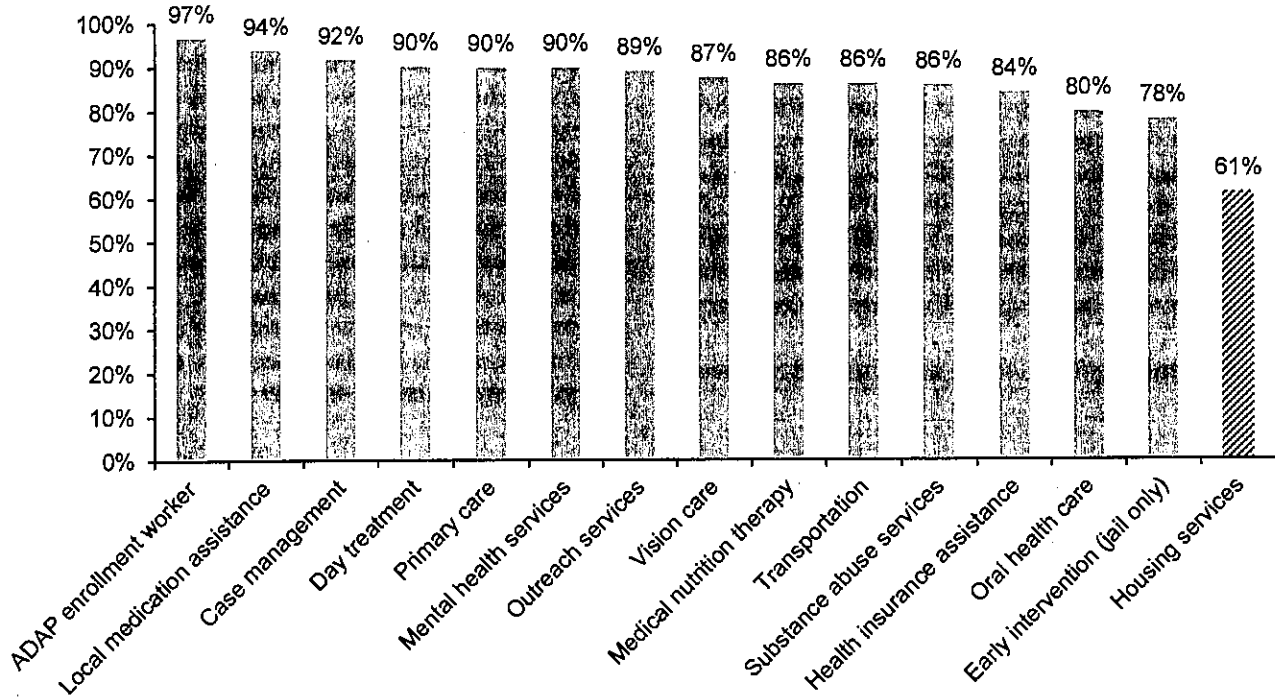
(Graph 2) All funded and unfunded services except hospice and linguistics were analyzed and received a

ranking of accessibility. Housing was identified as the least accessible unfunded service as only 61% of the participants who needed housing services found it easy to access. When ranked with currently funded services, housing the lowest ranked for accessibility. This places the accessibility ranking for housing services below every funded and unfunded service.

GRAPH 2-Ranking of Housing and Funded HIV Services in the Houston Area, By Accessibility, 2020

Definition: Of needs assessment participants stating they needed the service in the past 12 months, the percent stating it was easy to access the service.

Denominator: 569-573 participants, varying between service categories



Housing Services Need and Accessibility by Demographic Categories and Select Special Populations

(Table 1 and Table 2) Need and access to services can be analyzed for needs assessment participants according to demographic and other characteristics, revealing the presence of any potential disparities in access to services. For housing services, this analysis shows the following:

- More females than males found the service accessible.

- More Black/African American PLWH found the service accessible than other race/ethnicities.
- More PLWH age 25 to 49 found the service accessible than other age groups.

In addition, more transgender, homeless, and MSM PLWH found the housing difficult to access when compared to all participants.

Experience with the Service	Sex (at birth)		Race/ethnicity				Age		
	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	Other	18-24	25-49	50+
Did not need service	48%	42%	53%	40%	55%	29%	70%	41%	53%
Needed, easy to access	31%	38%	24%	41%	24%	38%	30%	35%	28%
Needed, difficult to access	22%	19%	24%	19%	20%	33%	0%	24%	19%

Experience with the Service	Homeless ^a	MSM ^b	Out of Care ^c	Recently Released ^d	Rural ^e	Transgender ^f
Did not need service	23%	52%	52%	22%	80%	28%
Needed, easy to access	35%	25%	32%	8%	3%	28%
Needed, difficult to access	42%	23%	16%	9%	17%	44%

^aPersons reporting current homelessness ^bMen who have sex with men ^cPersons with no evidence of HIV care for 12 mo.

^dPersons released from incarceration in the past 12 mo. ^eNon-Houston/Harris County residents ^fPersons with discordant sex assigned at birth and current gender

Barriers to Accessing Housing Services

Since the 2016 Houston Area HIV Needs Assessment, participants who reported *difficulty* accessing needed services have been asked to provide a brief description of the barrier or barriers encountered, rather than select from a list of pre-selected barriers. In 2016, staff used recursive abstraction to categorize participant descriptions into 39 distinct barriers, then grouped together into 12 nodes, or barrier types. This categorization schema was applied to reported barriers in the 2020 survey.

(Table 3) When barriers to housing services were reported, the most common barrier type was wait-related issues at 28% of reports, followed by education and awareness issues (24%), interactions with staff (13%), administrative issues (9%) and eligibility issues

(6%). Wait-related issues most commonly experienced were being placed on a housing waitlist (often in excess of 2 years) or being told a waitlist for housing was unavailable. Education and awareness issues were most often lack of knowledge about housing service availability or where to go to access housing services. Barriers regarding interactions with staff were most often poor or no communication from staff and staff who were not knowledgeable about area housing resources. Administrative issues were almost exclusively long, complex, or confusing processes required for accessing housing services. Barriers related to eligibility were most often having difficulty obtaining documentation needed for housing eligibility.

TABLE 3: Top Reported Barriers to Housing Services, 2020		
	No.	%
1. Wait-related (W)	31	28%
2. Education and Awareness (EA)	27	24%
3. Interactions with Staff (S)	14	13%
4. Administrative (AD)	10	9%
5. Eligibility (EL)	7	6%

ADDITIONAL HOUSING DATA

The 2020 Houston Area HIV Needs Assessment collected additional data relevant to housing needs, homelessness, housing instability, and housing quality. These additional data are presented below.

Housing Type, Homelessness, and Housing Instability

Participants of the 2020 Houston HIV Care Services Needs Assessment were asked to select on response for where they sleep most often from a list of 11 possible housing types. Participants were also encouraged to write in where they sleep most often if they did not see it listed among the housing type options. Another question asked they felt their current housing situation was stable.

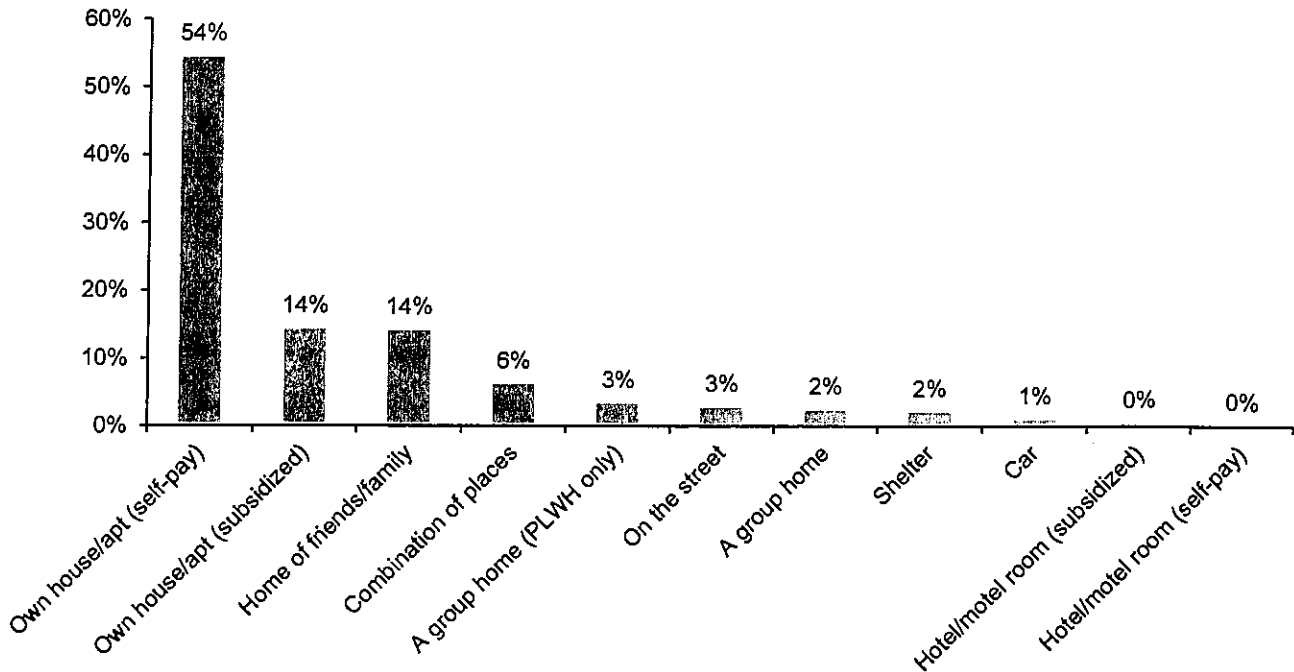
(Graph 3) A majority of participants slept most often in a house or apartment that they paid for (54%). This was followed by sleeping most often in a subsidized house or apartment (14%), staying with friends or family (14%), sleeping in a combination of places (6%) staying in a group home for PLWH (3%), or sleeping on the street (3%).

Participants who indicated they slept most often at a shelter, in a car, on the street, or in a combination of places that changes were identified as experiencing homelessness. By this metric, 11% of participants were experiencing homelessness as the time of survey. Regardless of housing type, 32% of participants indicated that they felt their current housing situation was unstable.

GRAPH 3 -Ranking of Housing Types for PLWH in the Houston Area, 2020

Definition: Percent of needs assessment participants stating they slept most often at each housing type.

Denominator: 563 participants



Current Housing Problems

Regardless of housing status and stability, other housing-related issues may present barriers to access and retention in care. Twelve-percent (12%) of participants indicated that their housing situation has interfered with them getting HIV medical care.

Participants were asked to indicate whether they were currently experiencing any of a list of housing quality, safety, or access issues. Participants were also encouraged to write-in any current housing problems, which at analysis were added to the list or condensed into existing options. Forty-percent (40%) of survey participants indicated they were currently experiencing housing quality, safety, or access issues.

(Graph 4) The most common housing problem participants were experiencing at the time of survey was poor housing quality at 26%. Examples given in the survey for poor housing quality were presence of mold or asbestos, exposed wires, broken windows, leaks, poor insulation, broken plumbing, or broken appliances. This was followed by having no privacy and feeling that possessions and medications were not safe (20%), being denied housing due to a past felony (14%), feeling unsafe or threatened at home (13%), and overcrowding (11%). Write-in responses with enough cases to justify inclusion in the list currently experiencing homelessness, struggling to pay rent/utilities, substance use in the home, pest infestation, stigma at home, and difficulties with landlords.

GRAPH 4-Current Housing Problems Experienced by PLWH, 2020

Definition: Of needs assessment participants stating they were currently experiencing problems with housing quality, safety, or access, the percent stating they were experiencing each problem.
Denominator: 328 participants

