

# FLEXIBLE HOUSING FUND GUIDELINES

## **Purpose**

It is the intent of the Flexible Housing Fund (FHF) to be used for a variety of circumstances that could present barriers to housing for people experiencing homelessness. This includes payment for back rent, current or back utility payments, moving costs, security deposits, and ongoing short-term rental assistance. It is the goal of the fund to provide just enough financial assistance to ensure successful outcomes for people exiting homelessness. Often financial assistance in our community is limited by the type of assistance it can provide, this fund seeks to supplement our existing resources and fill in where others cannot.

## **Eligible Agencies**

Agencies that participate in HMIS and offer housing services have been selected to participate the program and are eligible to access the funding. These agencies include:

- The Community Kitchen
- The City of Chattanooga's Office of Homelessness and Supportive Housing
- Family Promise
- Partnership
- Chattanooga Room in the Inn
- Helen Ross McNabb Centers
- Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System
- Connecting Vets to Resources
- La Paz

## **Target population**

Any individual or household that meets HUD's definition of literal homelessness:

- Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
  - Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation;
  - Is living in a publicly or privately-operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); or
  - Leaving an institution where they resided for 90 days or less and

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- who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution

## Referral Process

Any organization providing housing services in the form of case management or housing navigation to individuals or households that are literally homeless and also enter data in HMIS will be able to access the FHF by submitting a request to the point of contact at Chattanooga Regional Homeless Coalition (CRHC) by 12:00 Noon on Wednesdays. Plan accordingly as only one request may be submitted within a 12-month period per household, regardless of the amount. The only acceptance to this is for application fees and identification costs which can be accessed at any time. The determination of funding eligibility will be checked by contact person at CRHC, as well as, the applicant's homeless status and documentation in HMIS. CRHC will then coordinate with the partner agency representative that submitted the request. Approved requests will have checks available by Friday 12:00 Noon.

## The process goes as follows:

1. A local Housing Navigator or Case Manager locates appropriate and affordable housing for an individual or household
2. The Housing Navigator or Case Manager determines what is the least amount of funding needed
3. The Housing Navigator or Case Manager seeks out other funding sources such as ESG or ESG-CV funding to determine how much, if any, of the funding can be acquired by other means
4. The Housing Navigator or Case Manager's authorized agency representative then scans the request and all supporting documents (homeless verification, W9, etc) to the contact person at CRHC by 12:00 Noon on Wednesdays.
5. The contact person at CRHC then verifies documentation in HMIS and the Homeless Verification Form
6. The contact person at CRHC will then process the request by Friday
7. The Housing Navigator or Case Manager picks up the check from CRHC's office
8. The Housing Navigator or Case Manager makes payments where appropriate and scans receipts to the contact person at CRHC (**Receipts must be returned before additional checks can be issued to each Housing Navigator or Case Manager**)

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## **Funding determination process**

Assistance maximums are based off the size of a unit that the household requires. Individuals and couples without children will be measured at a one bedroom maximum unless there is medical cause to do otherwise.

The maximums are as follows:

- \$2,500 for a one-person unit
- \$2,700 for a two-bedroom unit
- \$3,100 for a three-bedroom unit.

FHF assistance may only be requested after all other funding sources have been exhausted. Requests will be processed on a first come, first serve basis of when CRHC receives the requests. The time stamp on the email will be the official order in which the requests were received.

## **Acceptable uses of the fund are as follows:**

- First Month's/Last Month's rent
- Security deposit (rent)
- Security deposit (utilities)
- Application fees (can be accessed as many times as needed)
- Rental arrears
- Utility arrears
- Pet deposit
- Identification fees (can be accessed prior to rental assistance and other expenses for the purpose of applying for housing)

## **Items that are not appropriate uses of the FHF include but are not limited to:**

- Transportation costs
- Any financial needs concerning employment
- Medical bills
- Tuition costs
- Etc.