

**Homeless Continuum of Care of Stark County (HCCSC)
Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) COVID19-
Policies Governing Eligibility and Prioritization to Receive CoC Assistance and Standards for Administering Assistance**

Purpose. The Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) on March 18, 2020, approved financial assistance for homeless prevention. The Homeless Continuum of Care of Stark County (HCCSC) has established access and prioritization policies for this one-time funding opportunity that expires on March 31, 2021.

Section - I. Eligibility and Prioritization for OHFA Emergency Housing Assistant Grant Program - Homelessness Prevention

A. Prevention Programs Receiving OHFA Funds.

1. Eligibility for Homeless Prevention. To be eligible for Homelessness Prevention services operated by Participating Agencies, individuals and families must:
 - a) Be residents of Stark County with funding targeted towards the residents outside of the City of Canton;
 - b) Be ineligible for system diversion;
 - c) Have a household related COVID19 hardship claim due to a decline in wages, unemployment, or health impact (i.e. confirmed or suspected COVID diagnosis that has led to drop in employment or income);
 - d) Meet Homeless Navigation Pre-Screen eligibility;
 - e) Have an annual income at or below 50% AMI, with priority given to households with incomes at or below 30% AMI;
 - f) Be at Imminent Risk or Imminent Eviction (At-Risk). Imminent Risk applicants will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that (i) Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of project referral; (ii) No subsequent residence has been identified; and (iii) The applicant lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing. Imminent Eviction (At-Risk) eligible individuals will include those who are unable to pay their rent and are at imminent risk of eviction; an eviction order need not be received. Priority will be given to households at imminent risk.

2. Eligible Uses for Homeless Prevention OHFA Costs¹
 - a. Rental assistance payments (no more than six months of rental assistance including the arrears)
 - b. Utility assistance including payments, deposits and arrears.
 - c. Move-in cost assistance including security deposits, etc.
 - d. Landlord verification services
 - e. Housing case management
 - f. Moving Cost Assistance
 - g. On a limited basis, funds may be used for hotel or motel stays for high risk individuals. Eligible individuals include seniors aged 60 and older, individuals with underlying pre-existing conditions and pregnant women. The length of assistance may not to exceed 30 days. Individuals receiving such assistance must be prioritized for more permanent housing options to limit length of stay.

¹ Recommended Uses for Homeless Prevention Response OHFA Costs for Homelessness Prevention Programs based on guidance from the Ohio Housing Finance Agency – Emergency Housing Assistance Program Guidelines

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3. Prioritization for Homeless Prevention. The following rules will be followed in prioritizing households for prevention services:
 - a. Prioritization for Households with Risk Factors for Contracting COVID-19. Households in which any member has two of the following risks factors (underlying medical condition(s), is 60 years of age or older and/or is a pregnant woman) will be prioritized before households with one risk factor. Household that have one risk factor (underlying medical condition(s), is 60 years of age or older or is a pregnant woman) will be prioritized before households with no risk factors.
 - b. Prioritization for Households with Extremely Low Income. Households that have an annual income at or below 30% AMI will be prioritized before households with income between 31% and 50% AMI.
 - c. Prioritization for Imminent Risk versus Imminent Eviction (At-Risk) Households. Households that are at imminent risk of homelessness within 14 days of project referral will be prioritized before households that are facing imminent eviction (At-Risk).

4. Requirement to Exhaust Other Resources. Before providing prevention services to any household, prevention staff must determine whether they have exhausted other options available to them.