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Emergency Shelter Grant Program

The Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) administers the federally-funded Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program to provide services, emergency shelter and rapid-rehousing to the homeless and to assist individuals and families at risk for homelessness through prevention assistance.

The State ESG funding is allocated to areas outside the CDBG entitlement communities that receive their own ESG funding directly from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These entitlement communities are Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville-Davidson County. THDA sets aside 7.5% of the ESG allocation for administrative and planning expenses. The $100,000 of the State allocation which does not require a match is awarded to the network of housing agencies established by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to provide services to clients being discharged from medical and mental health facilities. THDA then allocates 52% of the remaining ESG funds on a formula basis to the 12 CDBG entitlement communities that do not receive a direct ESG allocation, but are expected to address homelessness through the "Continuum of Care" described in their Consolidated Plan. These cities are Bristol, Chattanooga, Clarksville, Cleveland, Franklin, Hendersonville, Jackson, Johnson City, Kingsport, Morristown, Murfreesboro and Oak Ridge. The remaining 48% of the ESG funds are awarded on a competitive basis to non-profit organizations. An applicant for the competitive round must apply for at least $35,000 and may apply for a maximum of $75,000 in ESG funding. All ESG awards must be met with 100% match from the sub-recipients. THDA anticipates an ESG allocation for 2012 of approximately 2.7 million dollars.

The ESG program is governed by Title 24 Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 91 and 576. The objectives of the ESG program are:

1. To engage homeless individuals and families living on the street;
2. To improve the number and quality of emergency shelters for homeless individuals and families;
3. To help operate these shelters;
4. To provide essential services to shelter residents;
5. To rapidly re-house homeless individuals and families, and
6. To prevent families and individuals from becoming homeless.

ESG funds cannot be utilized for permanent housing projects. A person is considered homeless under the following criteria:

1. Literally homeless – an individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including those who may reside in a place not meant for human habitation, is living in an emergency shelter or temporary shelter, is living in a motel or hotel paid for by charitable organizations or local government program, *or* is exiting an institution where he/she has resided for 90 days or less and lived in one of the above circumstances prior to entering the institution.

2. Imminent Risk of Homelessness – an individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence within 14 days of the date of application for assistance, has no other resources identified *and* lacks the support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.

3. Homeless under other Federal Statutes – unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless but are defined as homeless by some other statute, has not had a lease or occupancy agreement in permanent housing in the preceding 60 days, has experienced persistent instability as measured by at least two moves in the preceding 60 days *and* can be expected to continue in such status due to special needs or barriers.

4. Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence – any individual or family, who is fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, has no other residence and lacks the resources *and* support to obtain other permanent housing.

ESG activities are focused on helping meet the needs of emergency homeless shelters and other agencies who provide services to the homeless or those at risk for homelessness. THDA is particularly interested in developing and expanding services in rural areas that lack ready access to other homeless assistance funds. THDA is also placing a priority on shelter programs serving families and on programs that provide prevention and rapid-rehousing services in order to maintain and secure permanent housing.

More information is found at www.thda.org. Click Community Programs, then Emergency Solutions Grant tab.

Questions and/or comments may be directed to:

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