

Yakima Valley Conference of Governments Notice of Funding Availability Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Project Proposals

GENERAL INFORMATION

Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG) as the lead Homeless Program Grants Administrator for Yakima County invites proposals from existing homeless rental assistance providers to provide up to 30 Rapid Re-housing vouchers and housing stability case management to serve those who are literally homeless and living in encampments or places not meant for human habitation within the City of Yakima.

Funds Available

This funding notice is for up to a total of **\$307,000** in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds will be made available through the Washington State Department of Commerce and Yakima County.

Funding Term

Funding is available for a 12-month project(s)

Program Overview and Purpose

1. The Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program is funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transitions to Housing Act of 2009 (HEARTH Act). Program regulations are established in the HUD ESG Interim Rule (ESG Program and Consolidated Plan Conforming Amendment of 24 CFR Parts 91 and 576, Docket No. FR-5474-I-01, RIN 2506-AC29). The Department of Commerce is a grantee of HUD and will administer this award for eligible counties and cities that are not direct grantees of HUD. All Commerce grantees and subgrantees must follow all applicable sections of the ESG Interim Rule as established in the Commerce ESG Guidelines (Addendum 2 attached). In these guidelines the term “grantee” refers to the lead ESG grantee of Commerce Yakima County and YVCOG and any subgrantees. While reading the HUD ESG Interim Rule it is important to note the “recipient” in this case is the Department of Commerce and the “subrecipient” is the lead ESG grantee (including any subgrantees) of Commerce. Furthermore, not every section in the HUD ESG Interim Rule applies to Commerce-administered ESG. The Commerce ESG Guidelines define eligible activities and populations to be served (including additional required documentation) which are subsets of what is listed in the ESG Interim Rule.

2. The purpose of the ESG program is to provide emergency shelter to persons who would otherwise become homeless, and to provide assistance to rapidly re-house persons who are experiencing homelessness. The funds will provide for a variety of services, including: Short-Term or Medium-Term Rental Assistance, Utility Assistance, Housing Search and Placement, and Housing Stability Case Management. All ESG-funded projects are required to participate in the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and Coordinated Entry and Assessment system.
3. YVCOG reserves the right to reject a proposal if insufficient information is provided in the application, ineligible activities are proposed, or if an applicant lacks demonstrated capacity to administer grant awards. Preparation of an application does not guarantee that applicants will receive funds.

Who can receive support?

Projects must prioritize **unsheltered homeless households** for housing and services. (data standards identify this population as literally homeless).

- ✓ People who are living in homeless encampments or a place not meant for human habitation.

Income Eligibility

- ✓ Individuals or families without children who are homeless and who have no household income or income at or below the Extremely Low (30%) Income Limits for their county are eligible.

For the purpose of ESG, the term “household/s” means individual or household unless otherwise specified.

Eligible Activities

Rapid Re-Housing – for Households who are Literally Homeless

1. Rapid Re-Housing assistance is available for persons who are literally homeless according to HUD's definition:

An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- a. An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground; OR

Stability Case Management

2. Case management. The cost of assessing, arranging, coordinating, and monitoring the delivery of individualized services to meet the needs of the program participant is eligible. Component services and activities consist of:
 - a. Using the centralized or coordinated assessment system
 - b. Conducting the initial evaluation including verifying and documenting eligibility;
 - c. Counseling;
 - d. Developing, securing, and coordinating services and obtaining Federal, State, and local benefits;
 - e. Monitoring and evaluating program participant progress;
 - f. Providing information and referrals to other providers;
 - g. Providing ongoing risk assessment and safety planning with victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and
 - h. Developing an individualized housing and service plan, including planning a path to permanent housing stability.

Compliance with HMIS Data Standards

1. The ESG Notice requires all grantees to collect data on clients receiving ESG assistance via the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) run by YVCOG. Data collection must be compliant with HUD's HMIS Data Standards.

2. The HMIS standards require that grantees enter income sources and amounts and non-cash benefits received in the past 30 days during three points in time - at entry into program, at exit from the program and at least once annually if the household is in the program over a year. The amount documented through this calculation should NOT be used to determine eligibility, but rather can be used to show that the household does lack resources to maintain housing.

Documentation Requirements for Rapid Re-Housing

In order to receive Rapid Re-Housing assistance, households must have the following clearly noted and documented in the household's case file:

- a. Initial Consultation & Eligibility Determination:
 - i. The household must receive an initial consultation and eligibility assessment to determine income and housing status eligibility and the appropriate type of assistance needed to regain stability in permanent housing.
- b. Assistance in obtaining mainstream and other resources:
 - i. The household must receive appropriate supportive services and referrals essential to achieving independent living through other federal, state, local, and private assistance.
- c. Housing stability plan to include:
 - i. Needs assessment to include specific housing and self-sufficiency goals; and
 - ii. Action steps to retain permanent housing after ESG assistance ends;

Rating & ranking of projects - To become eligible for consideration by the Rating & Ranking Committee, all projects must first successfully pass a review of threshold requirements, including meeting the application submission deadline. All projects meeting threshold requirements will be given to the Rating and Ranking Committee for review and rating. The individual project rating scores will determine the ranking of all applications.

Availability of Technical Assistance: A limited amount of technical assistance is available to assist potential applicants. All applicants may seek advice and clarification on the requirements of program and eligibility of their project. For assistance, contact Tim Sullivan, Housing & Homeless Programs Manager, Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (509) 574-1550 or by email at tim.sullivan@yvcog.org

1. APPLICATION PROCESS TIMELINE

<u>June 27</u>	ESG RFP issued
<u>July 11</u>	<u>Applications due:</u> Applications must be submitted by 12 p.m. to: Tim Sullivan Housing & Homeless Programs Manager Yakima Valley Conference of Governments 311 North 4 th Street, Suite 204 Yakima, WA 98901 Voice (509) 574-1550 tim.sullivan@yvcog.org
<u>July 11</u>	Application threshold reviews completed and Project Rating Panel meets to complete ranking process.
<u>July 12</u>	Project Rating Panel recommendations presented to Homeless Planning & Policy Council (HPPC) for consideration.
<u>July 18</u>	HPPC recommendations presented to YVCOG Executive Committee
<u>July 18</u>	Send award announcement to successful applicants
<u>July 19</u>	Draft contract sent to Yakima County for processing
<u>July 25</u>	Contracts sent out for signature
<u>July 28</u>	Contract due back by 12:00 noon to go on Commissioners agenda
<u>August 2</u>	Contract presented

2. REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMISSION OF CHRONIC HOMELESS APPLICATION

A. Application Documents

The project proposal consists of the following documents:

1. ___ Cover letter with the name, e-mail and phone number of the person who will be responsible for responding to the need for any revisions to the project application.
2. ___ Leverage Commitment Letters – hard copy
3. ___ “Applicant Response to Rating Form” – Narrative form of application.
4. ___ Project Budget

3. APPLICATION RATING INFORMATION

Threshold Criteria

The following criteria will be used to determine if an application is accepted for consideration:

Minimum Project Standards

Each project must meet the following minimum standards:

1. The project must meet ESG eligibility requirements.
2. The application must be complete.
3. The application must be submitted on time (received by the due dates indicated in the “Application Process Timelines”). Any corrective actions requested must also be completed and submitted by the due dates requested.
4. The project must be feasible and the costs reasonable.
5. The project must demonstrate that it has potential for moving the homeless toward permanent housing.
6. The application must demonstrate that the project will be able to proceed in a timely basis. Projects that demonstrate they are “shovel ready” will receive greater consideration.

4. 2016 PROJECT RATING CRITERIA

Criteria	Points
1. Project Description	10 points
2. Readiness/Capacity/Experience	20 points
3. Project Quality and Effectiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall project quality – up to 10 points • The extent to which the application describes activities, policies and services (up to 10 points) which: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) are likely to result in the participants remaining in housing for more than 12 months, and 2) will assist the participants in obtaining or retaining income or employment. 	20 points
4a. Leverage Scale (Based on qualified leverage letters as a percent of the total grant request)	5 points
0-25% of the grant request	1 point
26%-50%	2 points
51%-75%	3 points
76%-100%	4 points
101% or more	5 points
4b. Commitment (Based on qualified commitment letters from landlords) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of units committed to the project and rent costs are reasonable for the amount of proposed funding and intended numbers to be served 	5 points
Maximum Points Possible	60 points

5. DETAILS OF RATING CRITERIA

Applicants must:

- **Using no more than 4 typewritten pages (12 point font), provide a narrative that responds to all factors outlined in rating criteria numbers 1-3 below (see page 10 of this RFP for the narrative form);**
- **Submit leverage letters for #4.**

1. Project Description 10 POINTS

Describe the proposed project. Describe your proposed project in terms of why the project is needed, who will be served, what need is being addressed, what types of services will be provided and what are the intended outcomes.

Weaker Proposals	Stronger Proposals
The proposed project is not clearly described or important details are left out.	The proposed project in described in detail with no important left out.

2. Readiness/Capacity/Experience 20 POINTS

Describe:

- The extent to which the project is ready to proceed quickly.** Describe the readiness of the project to proceed. (For instance, what steps have already been taken and what are your plans to complete the remaining steps before the project can begin.) What progress have you made toward starting this project – i.e., site control, letters of support, other fund sources, etc.? What is currently in place? What needs to be accomplished before the project can proceed?
- The extent to which the staff to be involved in the delivery of services or housing in the proposed project have had experience in similar projects.** Describe the experience of staff to be involved in the project. Either qualifications of staff to be used in hiring staff or the staff already on board who will be involved in the project.
- The extent to which the applicant agency has had experience in similar services or housing projects.** Describe past and present experience with housing and services noting those areas where similar populations, similar type of housing and/or similar types of services have been provided by the agency.

Weaker Proposals	Stronger Proposals
<p>Few of the steps necessary to proceed are in place. If a site is included, it is not clear that is under the applicant’s control or will be by the time the application is approved.</p> <p>The applicant does not clearly describe what steps have been taken and which remain to be taken.</p> <p>Limited housing and services experience by the agency and/or the staff to be involved have been described.</p>	<p>The applicant clearly describes the status of the project, indicating what steps have been taken and has a clear plan to complete all remaining steps. If a site is involved, the applicant has firm control. If partnerships are included, formal agreements between parties are well described.</p> <p>There are no impediments to implementing the project.</p> <p>The agency and staff have both had extensive experience in projects serving the same populations with the similar services and housing.</p>

3. Project Quality & Effectiveness	20 POINTS
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Describe:

- a) The extent to which the project design is likely to be in moving persons toward permanent housing.** Describe the project’s linkages / collaborations with programs of other agencies. Describe how the services and/or housing to be provided are appropriate for the population you will serve and how the project will assist persons to move toward self-sufficiency or stability. Describe how the project will assist participants to access permanent housing. All projects will also be rated based on the extent to which the project provides services and coordination with other income and employment program providers, which is likely to result in increased income of participants by exit.
- b) The activities proposed involve a collaborative effort on the part of agencies in the community.** Describe any collaborative efforts the community is engaged in that either assist or will assist the clients of your project.
- c) The extent to which the project utilizes county and state supportive services to meet the needs of their clients.** Describe how your agency has coordinated with state and local agencies providing potential services to your future clients and how your agency will maximize the use of those resources in your proposed project before considering ESG funding.
- d) Extent of evidence that the agency will effectively use “mainstream” resources to serve clients** (TANF, SSI, SSDI, SCHIP, Medicaid, Food Stamps, Veterans Health Care, WIA and other state programs). Describe how your agency will use “mainstream resources” for your clients.

Weaker Proposals	Stronger Proposals
<p>Proposals fail to demonstrate that collaboration took place in the development of the planning of the project. The applicant has determined to not partner with other potential providers in the community without explaining the reasons.</p> <p>The application does not provide information that substantiates that clients served are likely to achieve self-sufficiency, housing stability and</p>	<p>The proposal demonstrates that the applicant has developed a close working relationship with other agencies involved in carrying out the project. The applicant has involved other agencies in the planning of the project.</p> <p>The application clearly shows that clients receive the range and intensity of services needed to move them to self-sufficiency, maintain housing stability and obtain or</p>

<p>obtain or retain employment.</p> <p>The application does not clearly describe effective housing and services components.</p> <p>The proposal will assist a significant number of persons for the amount of the grant request.</p> <p>There is not a clear linkage between the project and assurances the client will become ready for permanent housing.</p> <p>Described outcomes are not reasonable nor do they appear to be appropriate.</p> <p>The agency has not coordinated with county and state agencies delivering supportive services.</p>	<p>retain employment.</p> <p>The project and other services integrated into it demonstrate the likelihood of success in assisting persons toward self-sufficiency and stable housing.</p> <p>The proposal will assist a relatively small number of persons for the amount of the grant request.</p> <p>The described outcomes are appropriate to the population served and are realistic and/or have information has demonstrated that the outcomes are being achieve.</p> <p>The agency has developed a strong relationship with state and local agencies in identifying person eligibility for programs and assures that they are enrolled in those programs.</p>
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4.	Leverage of Other Funds and Rental Unit Commitments	10 POINTS
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No written response is necessary. The raters will use the information in the letters to determine the percentage of funds provided as leverage and the number of rental units committed.

Weaker Proposals	Stronger Proposals
<p>The percentage of funds and in-kind services provided from sources other than ESG funds that are used to support the project is Low.</p> <p>The number of units is not sufficient or rental costs are unreasonable.</p>	<p>The percentage of funds and in-kind services provided from sources other than ESG funds to support the project is High.</p> <p>The number of units and rental costs are sufficient for the project.</p>

APPLICANT RESPONSE TO RATING CRITERIA FORM

PROJECT: _____

APPLICANT: _____

CONTACT: _____

PHONE: _____

***Instructions:** Use this format for your response by filling in the information within each box according to the “Details of Rating Criteria” beginning on page 7 of this RFP. Be certain to keep your project summary and the response to the first 3 rating criteria within the 4 page limit. Responses to #4, and the other application documents described in this RFP are not included in the 4 page limit. Include your Agency’s Name and the Project Name at the top of each page. To save space, you may delete all instructions on this page that are italicized after you have completed the form.*

1. Project Description (limit to 250 words) 10 POINTS

Summarize the major components of your project, including scope of the project, the number and characteristics of the population to be served, the type of housing and services to be provided, what the ESG grant funds will be used for, and identify any other major providers involved.

Answer Here:

2. Readiness/Capacity/Experience 20 POINTS

Answer Here:

3. Project Quality & Effectiveness 20 POINTS

Answer Here:

4. Leverage/Commitments - Submit letters with application 10 POINTS

5. BUDGET INFORMATION

Project Budget

Proposed Activities	Description of Cost	ESG Dollars Requested
Rapid Re-housing Vouchers		
Case Management		
Admin <i>(No more the 7%)</i>		
ESG Total Request		

INFORMATION ON LEVERAGE/COMMITMENT LETTER

The application receives points based upon the amount of funds or services leveraged and the commitment of rental units from area landlords. Leverage can be cash or the value of labor or materials provided to the project (in-kind). It can include below-market lease payments by agencies, rental income for tenants put back into the program, volunteer labor or if professional labor (lawyers, Doctors, etc) is provided, it can be valued at the going cost of the service. It can also include services provided for free or at reduced rates by other agencies and staff time of your agency that is not reimbursed by the ESG grant. In short, leverage includes everything but the ESG grant as long as a firm letter of commitment is obtained meeting the requirements of the models below. Only letters and agreements meeting the below requirements that are submitted by the stated application deadline will be used for determining each project's leverage in the project scoring. Copies of letters and agreements need to be sent into YVCOG as part of the application.

A sample letter language has been included for reference:

Model Commitment or Letter for Leverage

Guide:

Bold Print = Suggested Text

Regular Print = (Explanation)

Typed on Donor Agency Letterhead

To: _____ (Sponsor of Project) _____ (Date)

Subject: Commitment to the _____ (Name of Homeless Project)

(A. For Services, Leasing or Operations Costs):

If the _____ (name of homeless project) is awarded ESG funds, _____ (name of agency, church, organization, government, person or business) commits to provide contribution worth \$ _____ over the next _____ month(s) (1,2 or 3) to _____ (name of sponsor organization). **Our contribution for _____ (operations or type of service: e.g. cash, childcare, case management, clothing, food, etc.) will be available beginning August 1, 2016 or as of the start date of the project, whichever comes later.**

1. (If professional services based on an hourly rate are involved add the following to the first two sentences): **The commitment is calculated based upon _____ hours of _____ (type of service) at our normal rate of \$_____/hour.**
2. (If non-professional/volunteer services are involved add the following to the first two sentences): **The commitment is based upon _____ hours of service at the rate of \$10.00/hour.**
3. (If the donation is a physical item, add the following to the first two sentences): **The amount of the contribution is based upon a donation of _____ (units) _____ (the contribution).**

(B. For Leased Housing)

If the _____ (name of homeless project) is awarded ESG funds,
_____ (name of property or owner) agrees to lease _____ (number of units) to
_____ (name of the agency renting) at the following rents _____ for # of months _____
beginning after August 1, 2016. (You will then need to attach standard - Fair Market Rents
documentation and comparable rents documentation)

Sincerely,

_____ (name of authorized representative)

_____ (title)