



## HPA CONSORTIUM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### HPRP FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ON BEHALF OF CLIENT HOUSEHOLDS Effective February 3, 2011 and beyond\*

**PURPOSE:** To provide the financial assistance with rent and essential utilities necessary to prevent an eviction from current housing and/or to end an unnecessary episode of homelessness by assisting with new move-in (NMI) costs, when the following conditions apply:

1. An Eviction Notice has been issued or, alternatively, the household is already homeless but could maintain housing if assisted to re-house; and
2. The prior-month total household (gross) income is at or below 50% of Area Median Income; and
3. The inability of the household to make the required payment(s) is the result of a change of circumstances, a crisis beyond their control, e.g., a sudden and unexpected reduction in income, unexpected but necessary increase in expenses (car repairs must be justified by job need), death of or other separation from an income-earner, etc. (must be documented); and
4. There is a reasonable prospect that the household will be able to resume payments – in full and on time – when assistance ends, **which is now expected to end at the end of the upcoming month (when justified and approved, some households may be assisted with up to 75% of an additional month's rent, with the rare opportunity for a final assistance at 50% of monthly rent, under certain circumstances)**; and
5. The household lacks the financial resources and support networks needed to remain in its existing housing; and
6. All other options such as payment plans, family/friend loans or other resources have been exhausted; and
  - a) If the household resides within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Las Vegas (consult the County Assessor's website), the client must first be screened for eligibility by the City of Las Vegas, Neighborhood Services Department – **229-4273** – for consideration of financial assistance from the City's funds. Should the household be denied assistance from City of Las Vegas, the LEAD AGENCY may consider eligibility under the HPA Consortium criteria.
7. **The housing unit or utility services are leased/opened in the name of an adult member of applying household, and monthly rent does not**



exceed **\$1,000 per month (unless justified and approved by CCSS in writing); and**

8. Any housing units constructed before January 1, 1978 will be assessed for Lead-Based Paint Hazards; and

9. The client household will enter into a Client Contract, agreeing to participate in case management and other activities designed to improve their ability to remain stably housed.

10. Financial assistance with essential utilities that are in arrears no more than six (6) months shall be available to households facing eviction, **during their first eligibility screening**, and such assistance shall bring the household up to a zero balance, whenever possible. **Requests for financial assistance to bring a utility arrearage to a zero balance must be accompanied by the payment history screen shot from the utility company. No further assistance with utilities will be available from HPRP.**

## **I. DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY – CLIENTS AND RENT AMOUNTS**

### **A. Eligible Households:**

1. Total household income (gross) for prior 30 days is at or below 50% of Area Median Income;
2. The inability of the household to make the required payment(s) is the result of an unexpected and unavoidable change of circumstance(s) – such as a sudden reduction in income, or unexpected but necessary increase in expenses;
3. The household lacks the financial resources and support networks needed to remain in its existing housing (page 3 of Supplemental Application);
4. All other options such as payment plans, family/friend loans or other resources have been exhausted;
  - a) If the household resides within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Las Vegas (consult the County Assessor’s website), the client must first be screened for eligibility by the City of Las Vegas, Neighborhood Services Department – **229-4273** – for consideration of financial assistance from the City’s funds. Should the household be denied assistance from City of Las Vegas, the LEAD AGENCY may consider eligibility under the HPA Consortium criteria.



5. There must be a reasonable prospect that the household will be able to resume payments – in full and on time – within a reasonable period of time (**within the next one or two months**);
6. All above-referenced criteria must be supported by documentation that has been copied and uploaded into the electronic file in HMIS and stored in the client’s paper file.

**B. Eligibility for Rental Assistance to Prevent Eviction:**

1. The household will actively engage in a Housing Stabilization Plan, the goal of which will be to either increase income and/or reduce expenses such that the rental cost is no more than 80% of the household’s net income.
2. The household **will be “re-certified” for eligibility monthly**, not later than the 20<sup>th</sup> day of each month. (**Late Fees for subsequent months will not be paid with HPRP funds**)
3. The household scores between 12 and 28 points on the Housing Needs Assessment Matrix (exceptions may be considered for households that score between 30 and 32 points, when circumstances justify);
4. The head of applying household has a signed rental agreement or lease **for a housing unit that does not exceed \$1,000 per month in rent costs**, unless utilities are included (for cases of New Move In assistance, see below); AND
5. The initial assistance must have been necessary to avoid eviction (**eviction notice required**), or to avoid or reduce an unnecessary episode of homelessness of the household (see “D” below).
6. **The first issuance of assistance cannot exceed two months of rental arrear payments**, payment of up to six months of utility arrears when it will bring utility obligation to a zero balance, plus up to 100% of the upcoming month rent.
  - a) Example: client applies for assistance on February 10<sup>th</sup>, and is behind January and February rent; HPRP may assist with January and February Rent & Late Fees, and whatever portion of March the client needs assistance with; additionally, any utility arrearage that can help stabilize household while it applies for EAP.
7. **A second issuance of rental assistance, not to exceed 75% of the monthly rent rate, can be considered when the household demonstrates compliance with and progress on the Housing Stability Plan. However, Late Fees for “recertifying” clients will not be assisted with HPRP funds.**
8. **It is expected that a third issuance of rental assistance will require extensive justification and pre-approval by CCSS HPRP Lead Staff,**

Eviction Notice required for first issuance



**and shall not exceed 50% of monthly rent rate. Because a third issuance will require extraordinary justification, should approval be provided, HPRP will also assist with up to 50% of the Late Fees.**

**C. Eligibility for assistance with Essential Utilities**

1. The utility is for a service at a housing unit leased or otherwise contracted to the assisted household, and the household is also to receive assistance with rent to avoid homelessness;

- a) The utilities are in arrears (there is a past-due amount);
- b) Households with Shut-Off Notice of utilities shall be assisted to bring the past-due amount to a Zero Balance, provided utilities are no more than six (6) months in arrears, and shall be considered for rental assistance in that or the following month.

⇒ If household has an Eviction Notice, they can be assisted with Rent Arrears, Late Fees, and Utilities Arrears

2. The household scores between 12 and 32 points on the Housing Needs Assessment Matrix;

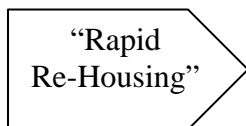
3. Client file must contain evidence that the household has applied for assistance from one or more of the Energy Assistance Programs, administered through the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services of the State of Nevada or through the United Way of Southern Nevada; AND

4. **Assistance with additional months of utilities will not be provided with HPRP funds.**



**D. Eligibility for New Move In (NMI) assistance:**

NOTE: If the household is staying in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program, has minor children and/or a member of the household has qualifying disabilities, the applicant household should first be referred to the SAFAH-Link Program at Women's Development Center. Should the household be deemed ineligible for assistance from Women's Development Center's program, the eligibility documentation should be forwarded to the FISCAL AGENCY for consideration.



Financial assistance can be provided through the Consortium to pay for first month's rent, security deposits, utility deposits and/or costs associated with moving an assisted household's essential belongings from one housing unit or storage unit into a new housing unit to be leased in the household's name, when the SAFAH-Link program cannot assist and when the following conditions apply:

- 1. The household had been domiciled in a private-sector housing unit located in the State of Nevada within the past 12 months (exceptions can be considered by the Lead Agency's Program Manager);



2. The household has secured new employment and has received the first paycheck, demonstrating prospective take-home income that is at least twice the proposed rent rate;
3. The housing unit proposed to be contracted by eligible household has been inspected for basic housing quality standards, including screened for Lead-Based Paint Hazards;
4. The household scores between 12 and 30 points on the Housing Needs Assessment Matrix (exceptions may be considered for households that score between 30 and 32 points, when circumstances justify); AND
5. The household is engaged in ongoing case management with the PARTNER AGENCY.
6. Households involved with the County Department of Family Services may be approved for exceptions to any of the stated criteria.
7. The household is otherwise eligible, as outlined in “A” above.

E. Eligibility with Emergency Lodging in a hotel/motel or other temporary situation for HPRP-eligible households for not more than 30 days:

1. The household has lost its housing and lacks the financial resources and support networks needed to obtain appropriate housing of its own; and
2. There are no emergency, transitional or other shelter beds available for the household unit, or a current health condition precludes staying in a public shelter; and
3. Appropriate housing has been identified, but is not immediately available for move-in (or, in the case of a program, enrollment), but the housing / program *will be available within the next 30 days*; and
4. The household scores between 12 and 28 points on the Housing Needs Assessment Matrix (exceptions may be made for households that score between 31 and 32 points, when circumstances justify).
5. NOTE: If household previously resided within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Las Vegas, client should first be referred to the City of Las Vegas, Neighborhood Services Department – 229-4273 – for consideration of assistance from their resources. Should the household be denied assistance from City of Las Vegas, the eligibility documentation should be forwarded to the LEAD AGENCY for consideration.

F. **Duration of Assistance:** As part of the HPRP “spend-down” plan:

1. **Newly-eligible households may receive financial assistance that shall not exceed 100% of two months of rent arrears and late fees, and when necessary, the upcoming month’s rent (may be up to 100%, but most likely will be between 75% - 90% of monthly rate), and may**



**include up to 100% of up to six months of essential utilities, bringing household to a zero balance.**

**2. Eligibility for continued HPRP assistance shall be determined on a monthly basis (period of eligibility “certification” shall take place at least every 30 days).**

**3. A second issuance of rental assistance may be considered when household is actively engaged in the Housing Stabilization Plan, and may not exceed 75% of the monthly rate. No Late Fees will be paid with HPRP funds after the first issuance.**

**4. Previously-assisted households (“re-certifications” and all third issuances) may receive additional financial assistance with up to 50% of an upcoming month’s rent, when the household has demonstrated compliance with and progress in its Housing Stabilization Plan.**

**a) If household is returning after a gap in assistance, up to 50% of the Late Fees may be paid.**

**5. Case Manager shall complete a projected monthly budget each month with client household, identifying sources of income, anticipated expenses, and determining the amount client household will contribute towards their rent and utilities.**

a) The budget exercise holds two purposes: (1) to identify how much the client can contribute towards the rent/utilities and other first-tier priority expenses; and (2) assist client in assessing and determining what is a first-tier priority expense;

b) Please Note: first-tier and second-tier priority expenses are related to fulfilling the household’s basic needs – those corresponding to the lowest-levels of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs pyramid. Hence, car payments and/or car repairs are not in the first two tiers, unless a car is necessary to maintain employment. Cable or Satellite TV, or cell phones are not considered necessities that compete with rent or utilities.

c) NOTE: It is always expected that client shall pay 100% of her/his rent obligations; HPRP is to be used to assist with any gap between household income and obligations.

G. All assisted households are expected to contribute to their rent and utilities throughout the period of assistance. They, and only they, are responsible for 100% of the monthly rental obligation; any assistance provided through the Homelessness Prevention Assistance Consortia is to be the minimal amount necessary to keep the household housed.



## **II. DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY OF HOUSING UNIT**

### **A. Housing Unit NOT in any stage of foreclosure:**

1. Partner Agency should consult the Clark County Assessor's website to confirm ownership of the property (particularly in cases where a rent check is to be paid to an individual, and not a property management company).
2. Partner Agency must then consult the Clark County Recorder's website to review if any documents have been recorded against that property owner that are titled "Default", "Deed in lieu of foreclosure" or other similar document types that might indicate the property is approaching foreclosure.
3. If there are questions about documents, contact the Recorder's office at 455-4336 to confirm.

### **B. No Lead-Based Paint Hazards:**

If the assisted housing unit was constructed before January 1, 1978, and if the assisted household has minor children aged 5 and below, the housing unit must be inspected for lead-based paint in accordance with 24 CFR Part 35, particularly subparts A, B, M, and R, which apply to housing occupied by families with minor children receiving assistance from federal funding sources;

1. When on the Clark County Assessor's website to confirm ownership, take note of the year the housing unit was constructed.
2. If the unit was constructed after January 1, 1978, simply note that in the case notes and on the Summary of Eligibility form.
3. If the unit was constructed before January 1, 1978, complete the first page of the HPRP Lead Screening Worksheet, listing name of client, address and unit number, and follow the instructions.
  - a) Note, if the household has no children under the age of six and no pregnant women, only page 1 need be completed.
  - b) If the household has children aged 5 and under and/or a pregnant woman who will reside in the housing unit, Part 2 and beyond must be completed, as applicable.

### **C. Rent Must be Reasonable:**

1. Is the housing unit the minimal size needed for the household size?
2. **Is the rent rate at or below \$1,000 per month? If over, is there a reason HPRP assistance will not be used to move household to a less expensive unit?**
3. Complete a Rent Reasonableness form for each assisted property.



**D. Housing Unit must be Habitable:**

1. When a household is moving into a new housing unit (not previously legally occupied by assisted household in prior 30 days), the housing unit must be inspected for basic habitability standards
  - a) Complete the New Move In Habitability Standards Inspection Checklist, or obtain a copy of a recently-completed HQS Inspection form completed as part of a move-into that unit for the assisted household.
2. If a household is currently residing in sub-standard housing, the household should be assisted to move into housing that is both affordable and habitable.

**III. DOCUMENTATION**

A. Every eligibility criteria listed above must be documented in the client file and scanned for storage with the client’s HMIS electronic file. The paper file shall be retained for a minimum of four years.

B. Third-Party Verification shall be the preferred method. This means something other than the client’s statement, such as pay stubs, letters signed and dated on letterhead from authorized persons or professionals, statements from government sources concerning benefit payments, and case worker telephone confirmation with a third-party, etc.

1. If third-party verification is not possible, and client household seems earnest and honest, a HUD-approved self-declaration form may be substituted. Be sure to inform client household that if it is discovered that anything is mis-represented, HUD and the US Attorney General will prosecute for fraud.

2. **Remember, Case Manager must explain the efforts made to obtain third-party verification and sign the Self-Declaration form, as well as the client’s signature and declaration.**

C. Whenever possible, please have friends/family/spiritual leaders or other third-party verifiers add the following language to their written verification:

Under 18 USC 1001, knowingly and willingly concealing a material fact by any trick, scheme or device OR knowingly making a false statement in connection with this HPRP assistance is a Federal Offense, punishable by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for not more than 5 years, or both.





#### **IV. CLIENT APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

A. Households seeking assistance with rent or utilities shall complete a Supplemental Application for Rent and/or Utility Assistance (in addition to the Partner Agency's regular Application for Assistance, which shall capture all the client-level data elements required by the HUD HMIS Data Standards) and also an Income and Assets Declaration Form.

B. Review with client the documentation they have brought to substantiate their eligibility, particularly with respect to:

1. household income and size
2. crisis – or change of circumstance that prevented them from paying their own rent/utilities
3. homelessness or imminent risk of homelessness (Shelter Letter or Eviction Notice)
4. Lease Agreement
5. plan or ability to resume payments when assistance ends.

C. DENIAL: if the household does not have adequate documentation to substantiate any of the eligibility requirements of income, risk of homelessness, crisis that was unexpected or unavoidable, or for some other reason the HPA Consortium Coordinator determines that the client household does not qualify for HPRP assistance, complete a Denial of Rental Assistance and Appeal Procedure form, copy for the client's HMIS file and give the original to the client.

D. ELIGIBLE households must complete:

1. Shared Care Agreement – Client Rights to Confidentiality form, Consent for Exchange of Information forms, etc.
2. Client Contract
3. Landlord – Tenant – Case Manager Communication Agreement
4. Budget for past 30 days, showing total household income and detailing expenses.

E. Partner Agency completes the following forms on Eligible Households:

1. Housing Crisis Needs Matrix
2. Direction to Liquidate Assets, if necessary
3. Staff Certification of Eligibility (HUD Form)
4. HPRP Lead Screening Worksheet (first page at least), if housing unit was constructed before January 1978
5. Rent Reasonableness Checklist and Certification form



## **V. PREPARING TO ISSUE PROMISSORY NOTE**

A. Enter all pertinent information concerning ALL client households (served and denied) into Miner-HMIS, following instructions in the “MINER HMIS HPRP MANUAL FOR HPA CONSORTIA MEMBERS”, available from Bitfocus, Inc. or on the Miner-HMIS website at [www.Nevada.HMIS.biz](http://www.Nevada.HMIS.biz).

B. Consortium Coordinator shall ensure Summary of Eligibility form is completed and on-hand, so that staff can write down the “reservation number” in the bottom right corner.

C. **Lead Agency’s Consortium Coordinator emails CCSS HPRP Staff to “reserve” the anticipated amount, and obtain a reservation code, by emailing: [HPRPReservations@ClarkCountyNV.gov](mailto:HPRPReservations@ClarkCountyNV.gov). The email should include the following:**

1. **In the Subject Line, place Client Code (e.g., Abc Def 1234)**
2. **In the body of the email, include**
  - a) **Client Full Name**
  - b) **If Client is NEW or RECERT**
  - c) **Jurisdictional Boundary of housing unit**
  - d) **Type(s) of Assistance: Rent, Utility, Moving Costs, Deposits**
  - e) **Total Amount Suggested**
  - f) **Notation for what that total covers (e.g., February @ 100%, March at 75%)**
  - g) **Cc: Mariah McCarty at [m1m@ClarkCountyNV.gov](mailto:m1m@ClarkCountyNV.gov) AND Hope Arrington at [h2a@ClarkCountyNV.gov](mailto:h2a@ClarkCountyNV.gov)**
3. **CCSS HPRP Staff will “reply to all” with the HPRP Reservation Code – hence, if the sender has a back-up staff person, they should include the back-up person as a cc: so they too will receive the responding email containing the HPRP Reservation Code.**
4. **Lead Agency should include a copy of the email response providing the HPRP Reservation Code to the total request packet when submitting to CCSS for check-cutting.**

D. **CCSS HPRP Staff shall consult the “Payments Authorized Tracking” Excel Spreadsheet and enter client’s name, and amount authorized into the appropriate worksheet, as per internal policies and procedures, and issue a “Reservation Code” that Lead Agency shall include in the future request for issuing a check.**



1. The “Reservation Code” will correspond with the worksheet and row number of the spreadsheet being used to monitor the spend-down of HPRP funds, and will look like this: “CountyNH-1261” or “State-894” or “NLV-991”

2. **Please Note:** CCSS HPRP staff anticipate that Lead Agencies will have an HPRP Reservation Code response within an hour from request, and will certainly provide the response within seven (7) hours.

E. Lead Agency staff shall note this “Reservation Code” on the bottom-right corner of the Promissory Note and of the Summary of Eligibility form.

F. Lead Agency issues Promissory Note to Landlord, secures a current IRS form W-9 from the landlord.

G. Lead Agency faxes all pertinent paperwork to CCSS at 366-9972, ensuring that the “Reservation Code” is legible on the bottom-right corner of both the Promissory Note and the Summary of Eligibility form.

1. Summary of Eligibility form, with “reservation code” noted in bottom right corner
2. Promissory Note, with “reservation code” noted in bottom right corner.
3. HPRP Eligibility Checklist for Rent or Utility Arrears
4. Eviction Notice (when it’s a first-issuance)
5. IRS Form W-9 for Landlord
6. Utility bill or screen-shot, when appropriate
7. Email from CCSS HPRP Staff noting the HPRP Reservation Code.

H. CCSS/HPRP staff shall strive to authorize for payment rent and utility check requests within one business day of receiving all documents by fax.

I. CCSS/Fiscal staff shall strive to process and forward to the County Comptroller’s office for payment any rent and utility check requests authorized by CCSS HPRP Staff within one business day of receiving payment packets.