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**Spokane County**  
WASHINGTON

# Homeless Housing Assistance Act (HHAA) Program 2022 Funding Policies

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Spokane County Community Services, Housing, & Community Development

## **Homeless Housing Assistance Act**

The Homeless Housing Assistance Act (HHAA) was passed by the Washington State Legislature in 2005 to allow collection of surcharges on documents recorded for the sale and/or transfer of real property to fund homeless programs. This Act (Chapter 43.185C RCW) requires state and local governments to develop and implement plans to reduce homelessness.

Funds must be used in accordance with the Continuum of Care (CoC) Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness and assist homeless individuals and/or households with children:

<https://static.spokanecity.org/documents/ending-homelessness/about/2020-2025-strategic-plan-to-prevent-and-end-homelessness.pdf>.

Assistance may be through outreach, diversion, prevention and direct client service (financial support), to help them gain access to adequate housing, address the root cause of homelessness. Organizations funded will track and report on homeless-related data and facilitate the movement of homeless individuals and families along the housing continuum toward more stable and independent housing.

### **Eligible Applicants for HHAA funds**

- Local government, including the City of Spokane and members of the Urban Consortium
- Spokane County Departments
- Private for-profit organizations
- Public and private nonprofit organizations – typically 501(c)(3)
- Faith based organizations

### **Eligible Project/Activity Types**

#### **DIVERSION**

##### **Description:**

Diversion strategies and practices assist people to resolve their immediate housing crisis by accessing alternatives to entering emergency shelter or the experience of unsheltered living. This typically occurs at the point people request emergency services, such as entry into emergency shelter or could take place in a day center or through outreach before a person spends a night unsheltered. As with Homeless Prevention, diversion assistance may be limited to services alone, such as conflict resolution or help connecting with family or friends. Alternatively, diversion may combine direct client services to provide buss pass to stay with a family member, assistance with past due rent, or other allowed expense.

##### **Performance Measures**

- The percentage of clients who successfully retain their housing and do not become homeless.
- The percentage of clients who require additional homeless prevention assistance after diversion assistance has been utilized.
- Data on whether the household is successful in permanent housing after two (2) years.

##### **Eligible Expenses:**

- Payments on behalf of the client to landlords for past due and current rent
- Payments to utility companies to keep power, natural gas, and water service
- Payments for internet, garbage or sewer bills
- Organization salary, staffing, and administration costs

**Ineligible Expenses:**

- Fundraising
- Political Activities
- Replacement or operating reserves
- Direct financial assistance to beneficiaries/clients

**HOMELESS PREVENTION****Description:**

Homeless prevention is a strategy that prevents homelessness by helping households experiencing a housing crisis to preserve their current housing. There are several contributing factors that may create a housing crisis that can be addressed with direct client service; short-term financial assistance, mediation with landlords, legal services, and other supports to help these households gain the ability to be stable in housing without further subsidies or entering the homeless response system. Financial assistance is provided directly to landlords or other qualified expenses to ease the burden on the household on a short term (average three months) basis. Homeless prevention projects will serve the Regional Continuum of Care system-wide, includes the City of Spokane and Spokane Valley, and members of the Urban Consortium to prevent homelessness in their community.

**Performance Measures:**

- The percentage of clients who successfully retain their housing and do not become homeless.
- The percentage of clients who require diversion assistance after financial assistance has been utilized.
- Data on whether the household is successful in permanent housing after two (2) years.

**Eligible Expenses:**

- Costs to promote the Prevention Program to the Community with website and other outreach activities.
- Payments on behalf of the client to landlords for past due and current rent
- Payments to utility companies to keep power, natural gas, and water service
- Payments for internet, garbage or sewer bills
- Organization salary, staffing, and administration costs, including case management staff

**Ineligible Expenses:**

- Fundraising
- Political Activities
- Replacement or operating reserves
- Direct financial assistance to beneficiaries/clients

**EMERGENCY SHELTER OPERATIONS AND STAFFING****Description:**

Emergency shelters play a critical role in a crisis response system. Low barrier, permanent housing focused shelters not only ensure individuals and families have a safe place to stay, but that their experience of homelessness is as brief as possible. Emergency shelters should ensure that they have no barriers to entry and have inclusive policies for all persons. In addition, emergency shelters should be

housing-focused with case management targeted at reducing clients' barriers to housing and connecting the household to housing options through Coordinated Assessment and other non-homeless housing programs.

Isolation capability provisions:

The service provider will identify and maintain 5% of beds for isolation capability as defined in guidance by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at their shelter location(s) associated with this RFP in the event of an individual(s) within the shelter being exposed to or contracting a communicable/infectious disease, as defined by the Spokane Regional Health District, and the individual does not require admittance for medical care at a healthcare facility. The following is a link to CDC website for guidance documentation specific to homeless shelters:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/unsheltered-homelessness.html>

Describe the applicant's safety, emergency, and disaster preparedness protocol, including adherence to the Spokane Regional Health District's protocols for infectious diseases (including, but not limited to, COVID-19, Influenza, Hepatitis A, Norovirus, and Sexually Transmitted Infections) as well as maintaining isolation space in the event of a disease outbreak among the population served or other emergencies, and how participants are made aware of emergency scenario plans].

Isolation space will be used for individuals who have been confirmed through confirmatory testing or clinical diagnosis (signs and symptoms compatible with the illness while awaiting confirmation testing) to have a communicable disease easily transmitted within a congregate setting.

The maximum number of individuals able to be served in this dedicated space reserved for isolation capabilities must be noted. Additional dedicated operational costs to maintain or operate this space must be included in the proposed budget as a separate line item, due to the requirement that individuals in isolation will require 24-hour supervision and restriction of movement in the other sections of the shelter as well as out in the community during their defined isolation period.

\*Please note the above isolation capability provisions are subject to change as determined by the Spokane Board of County Commissioners, the Spokane Regional Health District, and/or the CDC.

For any questions about the isolation protocols or requirements. Contact Lola Phillips at the SRHD at [lphillips@srhd.org](mailto:lphillips@srhd.org)

**Performance Measures:**

- Continuous Stay Shelters; the average night utilization of emergency shelter inventory.
- Night by Night Shelters; the average length of time from project enrollment to clients' date of engagement.
- The length of consecutive nights/days people stay the emergency shelter.
- The percentage of exits to permanent housing destinations.
- Number of households exiting to permanent housing destinations who return to homelessness within two (2) years.

**Eligible Expenses:**

- Organization salary, staffing and administrative costs, including case management staff
- Organization Operations and Maintenance Costs
- Rent and utility costs
- Legal and Professional costs

**Ineligible Expenses:**

- Fundraising
- Political Activities
- Replacement or operating reserves
- Direct financial assistance to beneficiaries/clients

**TRANSITIONAL HOUSING OPERATIONS AND STAFFING****Description:**

Transitional housing can be an effective tool for addressing certain needs such as housing for homeless youth who are unable to sign a lease, safety for persons fleeing domestic violence and assistance with recovery from addiction. As part of a crisis response system, traditional housing programs should serve populations proven to be successful with this intervention; have reduces barriers to entry; and policies that ensure client-driven housing stabilization.

**Performance Measures:**

- The average nightly utilization of transitional housing inventory
- The length of time individuals or families are in Transitional Housing.
- The number of adults with increased income at project exit.
- The number of exits to permanent housing destinations.
- The number of households exiting to permanent housing destinations who return to homelessness within two (2) years.

**Eligible Expenses:**

- Organization salary, staffing and administrative costs, including case management staff
- Organization Operations and Maintenance costs
- Organization rent and utility costs
- Organization legal and Professional costs
- Direct client service; temporary household's rent, utility, garbage, sewer, internet costs, employment support, childcare expenses, if applicable for working parents with children.

**Ineligible Expenses:**

- Fundraising
- Political Activities
- Replacement or operating reserves
- Direct financial assistance to beneficiaries/clients

## **SUPPORT SERVICES (supportive housing for chronic homeless projects/activities)**

### **Description:**

Support Services for permanent housing can include support for an existing permanent supportive housing project *or* services to support participants in obtaining and stabilizing in permanent housing, including activities of housing search and stabilization. These projects should have minimal barriers to entry, provide on-site services and prioritize the most vulnerable homeless households. Support services should be informed by harm reduction and employ flexible and creative person-centered services to ensure continued housing stabilization. Services should be available and encouraged but cannot be required as a condition of tenancy. Projects providing or supporting permanent housing will ensure that client assessments are completed in the timeline and method detailed in the contract. There should be ongoing communication between supportive service providers, property owners or managers and a housing stability plan in place for clients.

### **Performance Measures:**

- The monthly utilization of permanent supportive housing by formerly homeless.
- The number of adults with increased income at project exit.
- The number of adults with increased income at annual assessment.
- The number of individuals exiting to permanent housing destination who return to homelessness within two (2) years.

### **Eligible Expenses:**

- Organization salary, staffing and administrative costs, including case management staff
- Organization Operations and Maintenance costs
- Organization rent and utility costs
- Organization legal and Professional costs
- Direct client service

### **Ineligible Expenses:**

- Fundraising
- Political Activities
- Replacement or operating reserves
- Direct financial assistance to beneficiaries/clients

## **STREET OUTREACH**

### **Description:**

Outreach should be highly accessible to the unsheltered homeless population and focused on engaging homeless individuals who are not connecting with other services. The outreach team should employ strategies of assertive engagement and work to reframe the possibility of housing. The outreach team will target the unsheltered homeless population regardless of mental health diagnosis, engagement in treatment or engagement in any other mainstream resources. Preference will be given to outreach projects that can show how they will connect and participate in the local SOAR initiative.

**Performance Measures:**

- The number of successful exits from street outreach;
  - The number of exits to temporary destinations, such as emergency shelter or temporary housing.
  - The number of exits to permanent housing through rapid rehousing
- The number of households exiting to permanent housing destinations who return to homelessness within two (2) years.
- The number of chronic homeless persons contacted per month.
- The client's date of engagement in the homeless crisis response system.

**Eligible Expenses:**

- Organization salary, staffing and administrative costs, including case management staff
- Organization Operations and Maintenance costs
- Organization rent and utility costs
- Organization legal and Professional costs
- Direct client service; hotel/motel vouchers (for inclement weather, health stays, or lack of emergency shelter beds), employment support, transportation, gaining identification, etc.
- Outreach supplies; water, hand warmers, socks, first aid kits, etc.

**Ineligible Expenses:**

- Fundraising
- Political Activities
- Replacement or operating reserves
- Direct financial assistance to beneficiaries/clients

**COORDINATED ASSESSMENT PROJECTS****Description:**

Coordinated Assessment (CA) refers to the Continuum-wide effort to provide a real time response to households in a housing crisis. Successful CA projects will treat the process as an opportunity to explore a household's current housing crisis and be creative about housing options, including exploring every available resource a household might have to stay housed or move directly to other housing. Projects funded for Coordinated Assessment will work collaboratively with the Rapid Rehousing providers to ensure streamline processes that will result in the client's household homeless episode ending in twenty (20) days or less.

For households that have no alternative to entering the homeless system, the CA sites will assess vulnerability of the homeless households and connect them to the appropriate housing resource based upon level of need. The goal of CA is to provide each homeless household with the services and supports needed to rapidly return them to permanent housing. Key components of CA include housing first, client choice, collaboration between community partners, data quality, performance and data driven decision making and prioritization of chronically homeless households for permanent supportive housing.

The goals of coordinated assessment are as follows:

- Reduce “run around” for households experiencing homelessness;
- Reduce barriers for households experiencing homelessness to get into an appropriate housing placement;
- Prioritize the most vulnerable homeless households and connect them to the appropriate level of housing and support;
- Reduce the number of programs a household must participate in before getting their needs met;
- Reduce new entries into homelessness through coordinated diversion and targeted prevention efforts;
- Eliminate the need for providers to manage waitlists, allowing them to focus primarily on providing services;
- Foster increased collaboration between providers and minimize duplication of services.

#### **Performance Measures:**

- The number of referrals with a successful outcome.
- The length of time from assessment to acceptance of referral by provider.

#### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The purpose of the organizational risk assessment is to determine how prepared the applicant is to administer public funds. Four categories are assessed through this evaluation including management systems, audit reports and monitoring results, financial stability, and performance history. Special award conditions may be imposed as a result of the risk assessment determination. Failure to provide applicable supporting documentation will affect the risk determination. The risk assessment will influence CSHCD Department’s monitoring plan and conditional funding determinations will be provided to the HCDAC as part of a staff report for consideration during their recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). Desk monitoring will be conducted monthly throughout the period of performance.

Monthly desk monitoring will include a review of progress toward fulfilling contract deliverables. Technical assistance will be available to organizations who are not performing as proposed in the HHAA application. Furthermore, CSHCD intends to participate in case conferencing with the City of Spokane CHHS for organizations that receive funding from both to understand how projects are performing within the homeless crisis response system overall.

**DEFINITIONS** See Strategic Plan for definitions <https://static.spokanecity.org/documents/ending-homelessness/about/2020-2025-strategic-plan-to-prevent-and-end-homelessness.pdf>.