

e*SNAPs

your e-connection to HUD's Homeless Assistance Programs

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U.S. Department of Housing
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December 2006 e-SNAPs Update v1

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Office of
Special Needs Assistance
Programs

A Message to CoC Coordinators, SNAPs Grantees, and Other Interested Parties:

I am excited to share the news that Mark Johnston, who has served as the Director of the Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs (SNAPs), is the new Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Needs. Mark's 17 years of experience at HUD will be invaluable in his oversight and guidance of SNAPs and the Office of HIV/AIDS Housing.

Also, I am excited to introduce you to the new HUD Homeless Program's communication update: e-SNAPs. At the first CoC Forum convened this past September in Denver, we made a commitment to have more frequent communication with all of SNAPs stakeholders. We recognize both the value of and limitations to our existing methods of communications- web broadcasts, frequently asked questions, etc. - and are excited to offer you new and valuable resources.

The e-SNAPs update will offer you policy and programmatic highlights, key resource links, and community spotlights on a bi-monthly basis. It will highlight SNAPs programs including Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG), Supportive Housing Program (SHP), Shelter Plus Care (S+C), Single Room Occupancy (SRO), and Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), as well as provide timely access to critical program announcements.

Additionally, over the last 18 months we have been developing another new online resource- the Homeless Resource Exchange (HRE). The HRE will post important resource and publication information on SNAPs programs and will include CoC pages providing SuperNOFA application data - including grant amounts, pro-rata need values, and housing inventory information. Stay tuned for the launch of the HRE in early 2007.

As a final note, we know many of you are anxious to hear when SuperNOFA award decisions will be made. We are pleased to report that we received a record number of applications this past spring. We are busy reviewing the applications expediently so that we may share the award decisions with you. However, due to the volume of applications, we do not expect final award decisions until after December. I encourage you to sign up for the HUD [Homeless Assistance Programs listserv](#) and watch for our next issue of e-SNAPs so that you and your local Continuum agencies can be alerted quickly when we post the awards from the 2006 SuperNOFA.

We are excited about our newest additions to our communication resources! We are confident the Homeless Resource Exchange and e-SNAPs will be valuable tools for you, and look forward to your feedback and input.

Best,
Pamela Patenaude
Assistant Secretary, Community Planning and Development



Denver Forum Highlights

HUD held its first ever Continuum of Care Forum, *"Planning, Policy, and Performance"*, this past September in Denver, Colorado. The CoC Forum provided an opportunity for over 400 CoC representatives, national and local HUD staff, and others to share current information, effective practices, and general experiences. After opening remarks from HUD Secretary Alphonso

Jackson, HUD staff welcomed the opportunity to share valuable information on their programs, policies, and future direction including the definition of homelessness, CoC governance and reporting requirements, housing, and fiscal management including reallocation of funds. A key presentation was made by Jim Greene, Director of the Emergency Shelter Commission in Boston, on two different approaches to "hold harmless" reallocation. This presentation and all HUD plenary remarks are available at:

http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/library/coc_conference_091906/plenary_hudperspective.pdf.

The forum offered sessions on CoC Planning and CoC Management where HUD staff and communities of like-size shared information about HUD expectations, effective strategies, and provided an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning. Key characteristics of strong CoC planning and management structure were discussed and identified as strong leadership, broad collaboration and coordination, transparent decision making, a year-round process, and strong communication. Both sessions discussed the importance of having valid data to rely upon when evaluating program and system performance to inform CoC planning and management decisions.

Additional breakout sessions were offered on Accessing Mainstream Resources, Discharge Planning, HMIS as a Tool to Inform CoC Planning, Legislation, Planning Employment Services for the Chronically Homeless, Prevention Strategies, Re-designing the APR, and Transitional Housing. All conference materials are available at:

http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/library/coc_conference_091906/index.cfm

Participant evaluation responses indicated that the CoC Forum "improved their knowledge of CoC-related issues" (3.68 on a five point scale) and that the event "provided information that was relevant and useful" (3.84). Overall, participants were satisfied with the level of presenter expertise, appreciated the use of case studies and data illustrations during presentations, and were encouraged by solution-oriented discussions and success stories. Participants repeatedly emphasized the value of peer-to-peer discussion and would like to see further opportunities to interact and collaborate with HUD headquarters staff.



Program Basics

Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) is the process the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) uses to reorganize its base structure. The 2005 BRAC Commission's list of closing and realigning military installations became law on November 9, 2005. The list contained 25 major closures, 26 major realignments and smaller actions at almost 800 installations. Once the surplus determinations have been made, affected communities, through their Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA), develop reuse plans to transition the property from military to civilian use. HUD reviews the redevelopment plans and ensures an appropriate balance has been reached between the need for economic redevelopment, other development, and the needs of homeless persons in the affected communities for compliance with the Base Closure Community Redevelopment and Homeless Assistance (Redevelopment) Act.

Surplus property is available **at no cost** to State and local governments and private nonprofits for homeless assistance use. Each LRA must identify and consider the needs of the homeless in the communities surrounding the closing installation when developing the reuse plan. LRAs must place newspaper ads and contact homeless service providers to solicit Notices of Interest (NOI) in using the property for homeless assistance. Property may be used for housing, supportive services, or any other activity that assists homeless persons. The newspaper ad must outline the form and contents of the NOI. The LRA is available to conduct a workshop designed to explain the BRAC and NOI process, review known land use constraints, and allow tours of available buildings and land.

Homeless assistance transfers are not available for general relief of the poor or for those temporarily dislocated due to disaster. Only those organizations proposing to serve homeless persons meeting the HUD McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness are eligible to receive a no cost transfer.

HUD is currently tracking progress on 136 installations. To date, 121 LRAs are recognized by DoD. Of the surplus Reserve installations, the following communities have declined to form an LRA: Norristown, PA, Missoula, MT; Amarillo, TX; and Cheney and Spokane Valley in WA. The Governors of MT and TX have also declined to establish LRAs. The military is required to start closing the bases within two years and finish by September 15, 2011. HUD anticipates receiving the bulk of the smaller reuse plans early next year.

Surplus federal property can also be transferred at no cost to qualified State and local governmental agencies and private non-profits for public uses via a public benefit conveyance (PBC). Properties qualifying for a PBC can be used to provide educational, health care, and correctional facilities; improve transportation; retain historic monuments; and beautify communities through park and recreational improvements. The intent of a PBC is to support property uses that benefit the community as a whole.

HUD has updated and published a Guidebook for Military Base Reuse and Homeless Assistance. This guidebook, as well as a list of LRAs and contact information for authorized PBCs, is available on HUD's BRAC website at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/programs/brac>. The guidebook is also available on the DoD's BRAC website at www.oea.gov or a copy may be requested from the Community Connections Information Center by calling 1-800-998-9999.



IDIS Upgrade and ESG Desk Guide

The Integrated Disbursement & Information System (IDIS) is being re-engineered. IDIS improvements will be released in phases over the next several years with Phase 1 expected in fall 2007. The re-designed IDIS will be web-based. And while there will be minimal change to the data elements collected in IDIS, there are significant changes in how they will be collected. There will be two activities for reporting accomplishment data related to beneficiaries: **Homeless Assistance** and **Homeless Prevention**. The new Homeless Assistance activity will incorporate all of the current ESG homeless activities (Operations, Essential Services, and Renovation/major rehab/conversion).

For reporting ESG funds expended, the two activities will have additional reporting categories:

Homeless Prevention: Services (non-financial assistance) & Financial Assistance

Homeless Assistance: Operations, Essential Services, Renovation, Major Rehabilitation & Conversion

Unlike the current version of IDIS where grantees enter beneficiary data in only the first activity, the re-engineered IDIS will require that grantees enter beneficiary data for persons served in Homeless Assistance or Prevention. Therefore, grantees will enter beneficiary data in up to two (2) activities (no beneficiary data is ever entered in an Administration activity). Additionally, grantees will be required to provide the number of new beds when engaging in renovation, major rehabilitation and/or conversion.

As in the current version of IDIS, grantees are to establish the shelter/program as the project. In preparation for the Phase I release, ESG grantees with projects incorrectly set up and those with other data anomalies will be contacted by HUD's technical assistance contractors to assist them in correcting project set-up and data errors. After these errors are corrected, current project activities will be correctly mapped to the new IDIS categories.

For 2007, all ESG projects must reflect the name of the shelter/program. Until Phase I is implemented, the permissible activities are: Operations, Essential Services, Prevention, Renovation/Major Rehabilitation/Conversion, and Administration. All grantees will be required to set-up projects and activities in this manner. HUD will be providing additional guidance and training on activity set-up in 2007.

As ESG enters its 20th year, the program's mission remains the same: to be the first step in a continuum of assistance to enable homeless individuals and families to move toward independent living as well as to prevent homelessness. The flexibility of ESG funding to meet the needs of homeless individuals and families as well as those at risk of becoming homeless fills a critical need in Continuum of Care (CoC) homeless programs and planning. HUD expects the improved IDIS to provide more accurate data for planning at the national, state and local levels.

Updated ESG Desk Guide will be available in 2007! While there are no major changes in the ESG program, the new Desk Guide will provide additional program clarifications.

Community Spotlight: Homeless Prevention Program



It Takes a Home to Raise a Child

A CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT AND REDUCE FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

The State of Illinois had a dream. A simple dream where at-risk families could find the short-term help necessary to get them past the tragedies that so often would find them on the street or in shelters. A daunting dream – they needed resources and flexibility to implement a statewide homeless prevention program. The state could not ignore the fact that it required much more money to provide emergency shelter and services to homeless individuals than to house them right away or, better yet, to prevent them from becoming homeless in the first place. So they had a dream – but they needed a plan.

After extensive advocacy from a statewide coalition, legislation to fund the Illinois Homeless Prevention Program was passed in early 2000. The Homeless Prevention Program has three goals: stabilize individuals and families in their existing homes, shorten the time individuals and families stay in shelters, and help individuals and families secure affordable housing. Services are provided through each of the State's 20 Continuum of Care (CoC) and include rental assistance, utility assistance, security deposit assistance, and assistance in obtaining supportive services directly related to the prevention of homelessness or repeated episodes of homelessness. Working within the CoC framework ensures that proper planning and effective service delivery occurs for homeless clients.

That the Illinois Homeless Prevention Program is successful is without question. The program prevented 8,985 households from being, or staying homeless in 2006. The administrators from the Department of Human Services advocate that prevention is cost effective. The program serves an average of 428 households per CoC and spends an average of \$561 per household compared to \$3,400 for an average emergency shelter stay.

It is estimated that for every \$1 million in prevention funding, 1,800 households are served. The program has promoted permanent housing options- 85% of all households served in 2005 were still housed 6 months after the end of the fiscal year. On average, 69% of participating households are able to retain their current housing while 22% moved into other permanent housing. To the people the program has served, it has rescued them from financial hardship and prevented homelessness. A woman from a suburb of Chicago had a fall and became disabled - not allowing her to return to her life long job and incurring \$100,000 in hospital bills. Needing to file for bankruptcy, she paid the \$1,100 filing fee from her rent money - risking eviction. The Illinois Homeless Prevention Program kept her from becoming homeless. A single mother of seven received notice that her building was sold and that she had to move immediately. Working as a security guard at an airport, she could not amass the money necessary for a security deposit on a new place. In keeping with the mission of "It takes a home to raise a child", the Illinois Homeless Prevention Program provided the family with the resources that allowed them to remain together in a new home. For more information on the Illinois Homeless Prevention Program visit <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/ts/familysupportservices/hssh/hsshhpp.asp>.

COMING FEATURES:

- **Tips, Tricks & Tools:** Helpful tips, tricks, and tools for working with HUD programs.
- **From the Desk:** Updates on HUD's Homeless Assistance Programs.
- **Resources & Links:** Links to important resource documents and additional information.

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