

Oregon Housing and Community Services

Homeless State Funds Program Operations Manual

Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA)
State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP)
Low Income Rental Housing Fund (LIRHF)

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1. Program Summary

Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA) provides state funds to supplement effective existing local programs and/or establish new programs designed to prevent and reduce homelessness. EHA funds are available for eight program components: emergency shelter; transitional housing; homeless prevention; supportive in-home services; rapid re-housing; veterans' services; data collection; and community capacity building designed to enhance, expand or sustain homeless services.

The State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP) provides operational support for emergency shelters and related client supportive services for homeless individuals, families and households. SHAP funds are available for four program components: shelter facility; facility operations; shelter resident support services; and data collection.

The Low Income Rental Housing Fund (LIRHF) program provides short-term and medium term rental assistance to very low income tenants who are unstably housed and at risk of homelessness. Assistance includes rent payments, housing related deposits and rental arrears.

EHA program funding comes from legislatively approved state general funds and the Document Recording Fee (DRF). EHA general funds are allocated on a biennial basis and DRF funds are distributed quarterly. The legislatively approved portion of DRF funding for Veterans is allocated separately and requires tracking and reporting of Veteran clients and expenditures to be done separate from the other EHA funding. SHAP and LIRHF program funding comes from legislatively approved state general funds.

2. Client Eligibility

(A) Household Composition

Homeless and unstably housed households are eligible to receive EHA, SHAP, and LIRHF funded services. "Household" means an individual living alone, family with or without children, or a group of individuals who are living together as one economic unit. Legislatively targeted populations for EHA include veterans, seniors over 65 years of age, disabled persons, farmworkers, and Native Americans.

(B) Housing Status

Eligible applicants for program services must meet one of the following categorical definitions of homeless and at risk of homelessness:

Category 1: Literally Homeless—Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- Has in a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for human habitation (including, but not exclusive to, a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport or camping ground);
- Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional shelter, and hotels or

motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state or local government programs); **OR**

- Is exiting an institution where he or she has resided for 90 days or less **AND** who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homelessness—Individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence provided that:

- The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;
- No subsequent residence has been identified; **AND**
- The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks (e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks) needed to obtain other permanent housing.

Category 3: Homeless Under Other Federal Statutes—Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, (literally homeless, imminent risk of homelessness or fleeing/attempting to flee domestic violence) but who:

- Are defined as homeless under other listed federal statutes;
- Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the program assistance application;
- Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the preceding 60 days; **AND**
- Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers.

Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence—Individual or family who:

- Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence;
- Has no other safe residence; **AND**
- Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

Category 5: Unstably Housed—Individual or family who:

- Is at risk of losing their housing, and does not otherwise qualify as homeless under the above listed (1-4) categories, provided that:
- They have been notified to vacate current residence or otherwise demonstrate high risk of losing current housing; **AND**
- Lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

(C) Veteran Status

Eligible applicants for EHA DRF veterans funding must meet one of the following conditions as documented with original discharge papers or DD214 Identification:

- (1) Served on active duty with the Armed Forces of the United States for a specified period of time as further defined in ORS 408.225 and was discharged or released from active duty under honorable conditions;

- (2) Received a combat or campaign ribbon or an expeditionary medal for service in the Armed Forces of the United States and was discharged or released from active duty under honorable conditions; **OR**
- (3) Is receiving a non-service-connected pension from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

(D) *Income*

There is no income eligibility requirement for SHAP funded assistance. EHA provided services require applicants to be low income; i.e., gross household income at or below 80% of area median income. LIRHF funded rental assistance requires applicants to be very low income; i.e., gross household income at or below 50% of area median income.

Income includes the current gross income of all adult household members. Income earned by household members who are minors or full-time students **and** are not considered heads of household is excluded. While household assets should be identified to determine that a program applicant lacks the resources to obtain or retain permanent housing, they are generally not counted as income.

(E) *Citizenship and Residency*

There is no client citizenship or residency requirement to be eligible for EHA, SHAP and LIRHF funded assistance.

(F) *Eligibility Documentation*

- (1) Housing status and income verification and related documentation must be obtained and available in client files. In the case where client files are collected and maintained electronically, required documentation must be made available to OHCS in paper form when requested. Drop-in, group or congregate shelter facilities that provide bed nights and no case management must maintain sign-in attendance documentation that includes shelter resident self-certification of their homeless status. All other shelter, including issuance of hotel or motel vouchers requires client eligibility documentation that is maintained in a client file (electronic or paper).
- (2) OHCS requires program staff to comply with the following general documentation standards listed in order of preference:
 - **Third-party documentation**, where it is available, is the preferable form of documentation. Third party can include employer, landlord, public benefit worker, agency service provider, etc. Written verification directly to program staff or via the applicant is preferred.
 - **Intake Worker Observation** may include oral statements made by a social worker, case manager, or other appropriate official at an institution, shelter, or other facility and documented by the Intake Worker. Where the Intake Worker is not able to obtain a written or oral statement from a social worker, case manager, or other appropriate official at an institution, shelter, or other facility, the Intake Worker must document in the case file his or her due diligence in attempting to obtain a statement from the appropriate official.

- **Participant Self-Certification** requires a written and signed document by the individual or head of household seeking assistance attesting to the facts for which they are certifying. A third-party may be designated by a participant to sign documents on their behalf when they are unable to do so. It is the responsibility of the Subgrantee Agency to provide access to language interpretation services and assistive devices necessary for participants to understand the documents they are certifying.

3. Allowable Program Components and Expenditures

Specific funds are restricted for use in one or more of the following eight categories as further defined in each program component:

- (A) Emergency & Transitional Shelter (inclusive of motel/hotel vouchers)
- (B) Transitional Housing
- (C) Homelessness Prevention
- (D) Supportive In-Home Services
- (E) Rapid Re-housing
- (F) Veterans Services
- (G) Data Collection
- (H) Community Capacity Building

NOTE Regarding LIRHF Funding

The Low Income Rental Housing Fund can only be used to provide very low income (50% AMI) households with short-term and medium-term rent assistance within the homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing program components. Allowable LIRHF expenditures are further defined within these program components.

Use of State Funds Comparison Table

	Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA)	State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP)	Low Income Rental Housing Fund
Eligible Participants (homeless status)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ literally homeless ✓ imminent risk ✓ other federal statutes ✓ fleeing DV ✓ unstably housed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ literally homeless ✓ other federal statutes ✓ fleeing DV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ literally homeless ✓ imminent risk ✓ other federal statutes ✓ fleeing DV ✓ unstably housed
Eligible Participants (income requirement)	80% or below area median income	no income requirements	50% or below area median income
Allowable Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emergency and transitional shelter • transitional housing • homelessness prevention • in-home services • rapid re-housing • veterans services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emergency and transitional shelter • data collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homelessness prevention • rapid re-housing • data collection

	Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA)	State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP)	Low Income Rental Housing Fund
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data collection • capacity building (with prior OHCS approval) 		
Allowable Administrative Costs	10% of total allocation	10% of total allocation	7% of total allocation

(A) Emergency Shelter

(1) Shelter Facility Operations

EHA and SHAP funding may be used to pay for the costs of maintaining and operating a facility whose primary purpose is to provide shelter to homeless households. Eligible facility costs include, but are not exclusive to:

- (a) Facility conversion or rehabilitation costs;
- (b) Lease or rent payments;
- (c) Utilities;
- (d) Security equipment or service;
- (e) Janitorial supplies and service;
- (f) Facility management;
- (g) Repairs; **and/or**
- (h) Furnishings, etc.

Shelter facility acquisition and new construction are **NOT** eligible expenditures.

(2) Shelter Resident Support Services

EHA and SHAP funding may be used to meet the emergency needs of shelter residents to stabilize their housing situation and facilitate transition out of shelter into more stable housing. Eligible support service costs include, but are not exclusive to:

- (a) Intake and case management including pre-eligibility determination for housing and other needed services;
- (b) Housing relocation;
- (c) Food and clothing;
- (d) Crisis intervention/counseling;
- (e) Transportation; **and/or**
- (f) Information and linkage to longer term services, etc.

In circumstances where there is no appropriate emergency or transitional shelter available for homeless households, SHAP and EHA funding may be used to provide hotel or motel vouchers. Support services must be made available to households receiving vouchers to ensure quick and successful transition to more stable housing.

(B) *Transitional Housing*

EHA funding may be used to provide temporary housing and services intended to facilitate homeless household's transition to permanent housing within a reasonable amount of time (usually less than 24 months). Transitional housing, in contrast to shelter, requires occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements. Eligible services include, but are not exclusive to:

- (1) Transitional housing costs such as rent, maintenance, security, utilities;
- (2) Housing relocation assistance, including staff time locating permanent housing and related upfront housing costs, such as application fees, moving costs, deposits;
- (3) Case management; **and/or**
- (4) Education and training in such areas as financial management, job search and literacy.

(C) *Homelessness Prevention*

EHA and LIRHF funding may be used to provide prevention services to enable households who are at imminent risk of homeless or unstably housed to regain stability in their current housing or other permanent housing. Eligible services include, but are not exclusive to:

- (1) EHA housing costs such as rent payments and arrearages, utility payments and arrearages, moving costs, landlord required deposits and application fees;
- (2) LIRHF short-term rent assistance, defined as three months or less, and medium-term rent assistance, defined as more than three months, but not exceeding twenty-four months;
- (3) LIRHF landlord required deposits, utility deposits and utility and rent arrearages required for move into permanent housing;
- (4) EHA case management and housing relocation assistance; **and/or**
- (5) EHA self-sufficiency activities including education and training in such areas as financial management, job search, and literacy.

(D) *Supportive In-Home Services*

EHA funding may be used to provide supportive services designed to enable persons to continue living in their own homes when suitable in-home service programs do not exist in their geographic area. Eligible services include, but are not exclusive to:

- (1) Housing modifications to address mobility or safety barriers;
- (2) Life skills training and assistance;
- (3) Short-term personal care assistance;
- (4) Needs assessment and linkage with appropriate care regarding health, safety, nutrition; **and/or**
- (5) Linkage with family support and/or community social support networks.

(E) *Rapid Re-Housing*

EHA and LIRHF funding may be used to provide rapid re-housing services to enable households who are literally homeless to transition directly to permanent housing. Eligible services include, but are not exclusive to:

- (1) EHA housing costs such as rent payments and arrearages, utility payments and arrearages, moving costs, landlord required deposits and application fees;
- (2) LIRHF short-term rent assistance, defined as three months or less, and medium-term rent assistance, defined as more than three months, but not exceeding twenty-four months;
- (3) LIRHF landlord required deposits, utility deposits, utility and rent arrearages required for move into permanent housing;
- (4) EHA case management and housing relocation assistance; **and/or**
- (5) EHA self-sufficiency activities including education and training in such areas as financial management, job search, and literacy.

(F) *Veterans Services*

Services funded with EHA DRF Veterans funds includes all service components available through the general EHA program, but restricted to eligible clients that meet the EHA definition of veteran as documented by official discharge papers or DD214 Identification. Other services may include, but are not exclusive to, coordination and linkage with Veterans benefit and advocacy programs; cost of acquiring and/or expediting DD214 documentation; and financial assistance (deposits, credit reports, etc.) to increase access to housing including utilization of VASH vouchers.

(G) *Data Collection*

EHA, SHAP, LIRHF funding may be used to support staff and related costs necessary to collect and report shelter bed nights, client services, client demographic data, performance outcomes and other reporting requirements. Eligible data collection costs include, but are not exclusive to:

- (1) HMIS licenses;
- (2) Data entry;
- (3) Equipment upgrade; **and/or**
- (4) Staff training, etc.

(H) *Community Capacity Building*

EHA funding may be used to fund programs, activities and projects that expand homeless prevention and/or intervention program capacity, including emergency shelter, rapid re-housing, and transitional housing. **Use of EHA funding for capacity building must have OHCS approval prior to implementation.** Allowable activities include, but are not exclusive to:

- (1) Convening stakeholders and facilitating community planning to increase shelter beds;

- (2) Developing service agreements with partner organizations to increase homeless access to mental health/substance abuse services;
- (3) Developing peer support programs to expand/enhance staff-provided client services; **and/or**
- (4) Development of private landlord agreements to increase supply of permanent housing for homeless households.

4. General Program Requirements

(A) **Release of Information**

Client information (including identifying the person as a client) should not be released without written authorization from the client. Subgrantees are required to have a signed agency Release of Information form for all clients authorizing the release of information pertinent to determining program eligibility, providing assistance/service, HMIS reporting or other relevant need for sharing information. Release forms must be time-limited and specific as to with whom and what information will be shared. OHCS should be routinely listed as an entity with which client information will be shared as it pertains to data collection and monitoring (including third-party adults and reviews).

Client refusal to provide such authorization **cannot** be the basis for denying program services to otherwise eligible clients.

(B) **Confidentiality**

Subgrantees must have policies and procedures that ensure all client information and records are secure and confidentially maintained. Subgrantee officers, employees and agents must be aware of and comply with the Subgrantees' confidentiality policies and procedures.

Confidential records are all applications, records, files, and communications relating to applicants for, and clients of, EHA, SHAP and LIRHF funded services.

Electronic collection of client information requires procedures for ensuring confidentiality including:

- Computer terminal(s) must be located in a secure location, limiting access to only those persons who have a legitimate interest in and are responsible for client records;
- Computer monitor must be cleared (or a screen saver activated) immediately after accessing a client record;
- Computer terminal must be on a "locked" mode or turned off if the terminal is unattended; **and**
- Access to HMIS data shall be given to only authorized personnel as necessary for performing the work required for the EHA, SHAP and LIRHF programs.

Note to Domestic Violence Providers:

Subgrantees must have procedures that ensure the safety and security of program participants who are victims of domestic violence, including maintaining strict confidentiality of records. Additionally, the address and location of EHA and SHAP funded domestic violence shelter facilities must be protected from public disclosure except as authorized by the director of the organization responsible for operations of the shelter.

Domestic Violence Providers are required to collect client-level data consistent with HMIS data collection requirements, but they must NOT directly enter data into ServicePoint. To protect clients, victim services providers must enter required client-level data into a comparable database that complies with HMIS requirements, but does not share information with ServicePoint directly. However, victim services providers are still required to aggregate client data for program reporting purposes.

The confidential policy standards maintained by Subgrantees must comply with all applicable local, state and federal requirements. All records shall be open for review to federal, state, and Subgrantees' auditors and/or examiners in the course of their regular audits and monitoring functions of EHA, SHAP, and LIRHF funded programs.

(C) *Service Termination or Denial of Assistance*

Subgrantees must have written termination, denial, and grievance policies and procedures. The policies and procedures should be readily available to program participants either at intake or by posting the policy in a public place. It is important to effectively communicate these policies and procedures to applicants/clients and ensure that they are fully understood.

Subgrantees are required to provide written notice to applicants/clients when denied program assistance or assistance is terminated. The notice must include the specific reason(s) for the denial/termination and identify the steps to appeal the staff person's decision.

(D) *Grievance and Appeals Process*

Subgrantee is required to have an established process for addressing client grievances. At a minimum, the process must include the following components:

- Allow the participant a minimum of thirty days within which to request an administrative review;
- Inform the participant of their right to present written or oral objections;
- Inform OHCS of the request for administrative review within 10 days of receiving the request;
- Inform the participant and OHCS in writing of the review determination within ten days of the determination.

Any person or persons designated by Subgrantee can complete the administrative review, other than the person who made or approved the decision under review or a subordinate of this person.

OHCS retains the right to require modification of any review or appeal process that OHCS determines does not meet basic principles for notification, instruction, time allowance, impartiality or other necessary component.

Subgrantees must make accommodations for clients who have language or disability barriers that would prevent them from participating in the appeals process.

OHCS retains the right to require modification of any review or appeals process that in its determination does not meet basic principles for notification, instruction, time allowance, impartiality and access.

(E) Conflict of Interest

Subgrantees are required to have a conflict of interest policy that minimally requires staff and board members to disclose the conflict or potential conflict; prohibits those with a conflict from voting or making a decision on the matter in which there is a conflict; defines the process for managing and determining conflicts of interest; and documentation that verifies staff and board members are aware of and understand the policy.

(F) Coordinated Homeless Intake System

Subgrantees are required to participate in the Continuum of Care Centralized or Coordinated Homeless Assessment and Intake System for their service area once established. If one does not exist, OHCS expects Subgrantees to be active participants in the design and development of a coordinated homeless intake system for their service area.

Note: Required participation is contingent upon the capacity of the assessment/intake system to accommodate the homeless subpopulations being served by the Subgrantee. For example, if the system is only available for families with children, then homeless individual clients would not be able and thus required to be assessed through the CoC centralized/coordinated system.

Subgrantee Agencies are required to coordinate veterans' assistance with their local veteran's office to ensure access to all Veterans Affairs services appropriate to client needs.

5. Allowable Administrative Costs

Subgrantees are allowed to use up to ten percent (10%) of their total EHA and SHAP allocation for administrative costs, including those allowed for Subrecipient organizations with whom the Subgrantee contracts. Subgrantees are allowed to use up to seven percent (7%) of their LIRHF allocation for administrative costs. Administrative costs are agency-wide expenses related to general management; oversight; coordination; and evaluation. Allowable costs include, but are not exclusive to:

- Senior executive management personnel salaries and benefits (unless they are directly involved in program operations), administrative staff travel costs;
- General services such as accounting, budget development, personnel, contracting, marketing, agency audit; **and/or**

- Equipment rental/purchase, insurance, utilities, IT costs, facilities management, maintenance, and repair that are not program specific but relate to the administration of the agency as a whole.

6. Reporting Requirements

(A) **Data Entry**

Subgrantees are required to enter EHA, SHAP and LIRHF related client and service (including case management) data into the ServicePoint Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), except for victims of domestic violence clients and clients residing in short-term congregate shelter facilities as directed by OHCS. Timely and accurate data entry is critical to ensuring meaningful data analysis and reporting. Therefore, it is recommended that data be entered within three business days and data quality reports be run periodically (preferably quarterly) using the ServicePoint Data Completeness Report Card (EE) and Continuum of Care APR Detail Report from ART.

(B) **Reports**

Subgrantees are required to submit quarterly program reports by the 20th of the month following the end of each quarter in accordance with OHCS directives for content and format. At the discretion of OHCS other reports may be required, including a year-end report, when deemed necessary to provide adequate program utilization and performance information.

7. Records

(A) **Case Files**

Documentation of client eligibility and services received must be maintained in client case files (paper or electronically) and include an assessment related to housing barriers and the services/assistance provided to address such barriers. Development of a housing stability plan is required for those clients receiving more than one time only services. Existing assessments and active case plans with other providers may be used and included in the client file.

Clients residing in short-term (90 days or less) congregate shelter facilities must be tracked, but are not required to have case files with the same level of documentation as identified above. However, in order to better understand the utilization and effectiveness of congregate shelter, Subgrantees are encouraged to record as much client and service data as is feasible.

(B) **Records Access**

Subgrantees and their Subrecipient organizations are required to permit OHCS, the Oregon Secretary of State's Office, the federal government, and the duly authorized representatives of such entities access to, and the right to copy, all program client and fiscal records for such purposes as research, data collection, evaluations, monitoring, and auditing. At the sole discretion of OHCS, access to records shall include the removing of records from the Subgrantees' office.

(C) Records Retention

Subgrantees shall retain all program records pertinent to client services and expenditures incurred under EHA, SHAP and LIRHF in a manner consistent with the requirements of state and federal law. This includes, but is not limited to, those requirements listed in Administrative Rule, Operations Manual and Special Schedules. Find the OHCS Special Schedule at the Oregon State Archives:

<http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/recmgmt/sched/state.html>);

Find the State Agency General Records Retention Schedules at the Oregon State Archives:

http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/rules/oars_100/oar_166/166_300.html).

Subgrantees shall retain and keep accessible all such **fiscal records**, books, documents, papers, plans, and writings for a minimum of **(6) six years**, or such longer period as may be required by applicable law, whichever date is later. Applicable law includes the following final payment and termination of EHA, SHAP and/or LIRHF funding, or until the conclusion of any audit, controversy or litigation arising out of, or relating to, EHA, SHAP, and LIRHF.

Subgrantee shall retain and keep accessible all such **program records**, client records, books, documents, papers, plans, and writing for a minimum of **five (5) years** after final payment to client.

8. Monitoring

OHCS will conduct a program monitoring of Subgrantees once every three years or sooner if warranted. Fiscal monitoring will be conducted annually unless circumstances require sooner. Subgrantees will be notified thirty (30) days in advance of the monitoring visit and informed of what documents and records will be reviewed and any required staff or Board interviews. OHCS will provide Subgrantees with a written monitoring report inclusive of any findings, concerns or comments. Subgrantees are required to provide timely corrective action to findings and failure to do so may result in the withholding and/or return of EHA, SHAP and LIRHF funds to OHCS.

Subgrantees are required to minimally monitor their Subrecipient organizations once during a biennium or the term of the Master Grant Agreement, as determined by OHCS. Subrecipient organization monitoring procedures must be in place and adequately ensure compliance with EHA, SHAP, and LIRHF program requirements. Monitoring reports will be retained by the Subgrantee and available for review by OHCS or other authorized entity.

Subgrantees must notify and receive approval from OHCS when adding Subrecipients and/or renewing Subrecipients. Notification and approval normally occurs during the Master Grant Agreement funding application process. However, if changes are made outside of the funding application, Subgrantees should notify the OHCS Homeless Coordinator and obtain approval.

9. Applicable Rules and Regulations

All the following as may be amended from time to time:

1. ORS 456.515 through 456.725: [Housing and Community Services Department](#)
2. ORS 458.505 through 458.545: [Community Services Program](#)
3. ORS 458.600 through 458.650: [Oregon Housing Fund](#)
4. OAR 166-300: [State Agency Record Retention Schedule](#)
5. OAR 813-046: [Emergency Housing Assistance](#)
6. OAR 813-240: [State Homeless Assistance Program](#)
7. OAR 813-049: [Low Income Rental Housing Fund](#)
8. **This manual** as guidelines for EHA, SHAP and LIRHF are amended from time to time along with all other references made within this manual. All references made in this manual are understood to be as written, and as amended from time to time.
9. **ORS** cited are amended from time to time and can be found at: <http://landru.leg.state.or.us/ors/>
10. **OARs** cited are amended from time to time and can be found at: <http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/rules/access/numerically.html>