



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS FOR:

***Emergency Solutions Grant – CARES Act (ESG-CV) Funding
Version 2***

RFA PURPOSE:

To share with potential applicants the process for applying for ESG-CV funding and the requirements to which Applicants must adhere.

ISSUE DATE:

***Thursday, May 21, 2020
4:00 PM CST***

APPLICATIONS OPEN:

Monday, May 25, 2020
12:00:00 AM CST

APPLICATIONS DUE:

Friday, June 5, 2020
11:59:59 PM CST

SUBMIT TO:

Applications must be submitted via the application portal, Apply.
<https://thncompetition.smapply.org/prog/ESGCV19Application/>

RFA POINT OF CONTACT:

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Proposers must contact the Point of Contact regarding this Request for Applications (RFA). Other employees do not have the authority to respond.

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| Version | About | Release Date |
|-----------|--|---------------------------|
| Version 1 | | Monday, May 18, 2020 |
| Version 2 | <p>All Version 2 changes are <i>bolded and italicized</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Added Details about ESG CARES Act Changes (Pg 4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Added under the Details of ESG CARES Act Changes: Pre-Contracting Cost Details (Pg 5) ○ Added under the Details of ESG CARES Act Changes: Administrative Costs (Pg 5) ● Added updates to Eligibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Applicants must have an active SAM Registration (Pg 6) ● Updated under Application Requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Naming Conventions for all Application Documents (Pg 9) ○ Changes to Local Government Approval Form Section (Pg 10) ○ Changes to Board Resolution Section (Pg 11) | Thursday, May 21, 2020 |

I. INTRODUCTION – INVITATION & BACKGROUND

On March 27, 2020, the CARES Act was signed into law. The CARES Act provides for \$4 billion to be distributed through the ESG Program nationally and includes waivers of certain provisions of the ESG regulations. **The funding made available through the CARES Act is for COVID-19 prevention, preparedness and response.**

THN, as Lead Agency for the Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care, is coordinating the (local) competition for ESG-CV funds allocated by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) to the TX BoS CoC, which amounts to approximately \$6,928,889. The competition will assist THN in making funding recommendations to TDHCA who will then contract directly with Project Applicant, if awarded.

The intention of ESG-CV funds is to serve people experiencing homeless and/or at risk of homelessness impacted by COVID-19 through street outreach (SO), emergency shelter (ES), rapid re-housing (RRH), homelessness prevention (HP). Applicants may also apply for funding for Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which is a requirement to use if you receive the funding, and 5% administration of Project Participant Services for administering the grant.

The guidance about the ESG-CV funding is changing every day. It is important that Agencies applying for this funding manage expectations and be prepared for updates to items such as eligible costs and activities.

EXPECTATIONS

The goal of this funding is that we are addressing COVID-19, including a potential resurgence, while also strengthening systems that prevent and end homelessness for everyone to be better prepared for future crises. THN is looking for projects that are:

1. Reducing new entries into homelessness through prevention and diversion strategies
2. Equitably protecting ALL people experiencing homelessness from COVID-19 infection and illness, helping flatten the curve of community infections and reducing demand on health care resources.
 - a. Promoting the health and safety of people who are unsheltered through Street Outreach, while quickly transitioning them to temporary or permanent housing.
 - b. Expanding and improving shelter options, including Non-Congregate Shelter options, to come into compliance with CDC guidance for separation, isolation, and quarantine.
3. Rapidly exiting people from the homelessness system and stabilizing them in housing through Rapid Re-Housing.
4. Administering their project with a low barrier and housing first orientation.

II. ABOUT THN

Texas Homeless Network (THN) serves as the Collaborative Applicant and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead Agency for the Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care, which covers 215 counties of Texas’ 254. The Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) was formed to carry out the responsibilities required under the CoC Program Interim Rule (24 CFR 578). The CoC is a broad group of stakeholders dedicated to ending and preventing homelessness across Texas. The overarching CoC responsibility is to ensure community-wide implementation of efforts to end homelessness, including ensuring programmatic and systemic effectiveness of the local continuum of care program.

III. CHANGES

The ESG Program Interim Rule outlines the requirements for ESG Program funding. Since this is ESG Program funding provided through the CARES Act, there are a few areas in which the guidance will be different. The following table outlines changes to the ESG Annual Allocation rules for the purposes of ESG CARES Act Funding.

| ESG CARES Act | ESG Annual Allocation |
|---|---|
| Income limit of 50% Area Median Income to receive or continue to receive homelessness prevention, or to continue receiving rapid re-housing assistance. | Income limit of 30% Area Median Income to receive or continue to receive homelessness prevention, or to continue receiving rapid re-housing assistance. |
| No cap on the use of ESG CARES funds for emergency shelter and street outreach. | Cap of 60% for emergency shelter and street outreach with ESG funding. |
| No match requirement. | 100% match requirement. |
| Pre-contracting costs will be allowed from the first COVID-19 response, which in Texas is March 13, 2020, with the state-declared disaster, though certain costs earlier than March 13 th may be eligible if staff approved. | Pre-contracting costs are only allowed to the date for which HUD signed the ESG grant agreement with the Department. |
| Environmental and habitability reviews for temporary shelters are not required. | Environmental clearance and habitability reviews need to be conducted before any funds are expended on temporary shelters |
| Administrative percentage is 10%, distributed between the recipient (the Department) and ESG Subrecipients. | Administrative percentage is 7.5%, distributed between the recipient (the Department) and ESG Subrecipients |

Details about ESG CARES Act Changes:

A. Precontracting Costs

Pre Contracting Costs are eligible, generally all costs are eligible except in three cases:

- a. *Emergency shelter activities before the local government approval of shelter activities are received. In this case, the other program components in the Contract could be charged and emergency shelter would be eligible once the approval is received.*
- b. *Emergency shelter renovation, rehabilitation or conversion, which requires additional environmental clearance. In this case, no other program components in the Contract could be charged until the environmental clearance is received.*
- c. *Project-based rental assistance, which requires additional environmental clearance. In this case, no other program components in the Contract could be charged until the environmental clearance is received.*

Pre Contracting Costs must be included in your budget.

B. Administrative Percentage

- a. *Administrative Costs are distributed between TDHCA and the ESG Subrecipient, the ESG Subrecipient can only apply for 5% Administrative Costs.*

IV. ELIGIBILITY

C. ELIGIBLE

- a. Non-profit Organizations that have been incorporated for at least two (2) years and has at least one full time paid staff member
- b. Local Government
- c. Entities must have an active DUNS Number also known as a Unique Entity Identifier Number (UEIN)
- d. ***Applicants must have an active SAM Registration***

D. INELIGIBLE

- a. Public Housing Authorities
- b. Local Mental Health Authorities

V. PROJECT SCOPE OF WORK

A. OPERATE PROJECT COMPONENT TYPE(S) ACCORDING TO BEST PRACTICES AND TO PREVENT, PREPARE, OR RESPOND TO COVID-19

a. Homelessness Prevention

Homelessness Prevention refers to the short-term approach to prevention: intervening with people experiencing crises before they show up at the shelter door. The purpose of Homelessness Prevention is to keep people in their housing. Effective Homelessness Prevention projects will reduce the inflow of homelessness into a community's homeless crisis response system.

b. Street Outreach

Street outreach involves moving outside the walls of the agency to engage with people experiencing homelessness who may be disconnected and alienated not only from

mainstream services and supports, but from the services targeting homeless persons as well. This is incredibly important work designed to help establish supportive relationships, give people advice and support, and hopefully enhance the possibility that they will access necessary services and support that will help them move off the streets.

c. Emergency Shelter

Emergency shelters play a critical role in ending homelessness. Effective shelters should embrace a Housing First approach, offer immediate and low-barrier access to anyone facing a housing crisis, and measure shelter performance in order to improve results. For the purposes of COVID-19 preparedness, prevention, and response, Emergency Shelter can refer to an existing structure that is requesting funding to adhere to Centers for Disease Control guidance, hotel/motels for the use of non-congregate shelter, and/or temporary structures.

d. Rapid Re-Housing

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) can end homelessness by quickly connecting people to a home and services. RRH provides short-term rental assistance and services. The goals are to help people obtain housing quickly, increase self-sufficiency, and stay housed. It is offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety) and the resources and services provided are typically tailored to the needs of the person, i.e., progressive engagement.

B. EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE ESG ACTIVITIES TO PREVENT, PREPARE, OR RESPOND TO COVID-19

These are examples of eligible costs that must meet the discretion of HUD and TDHCA. If you have questions about eligible costs, consult with THN to ensure it is an eligible cost per HUD and TDHCA.

a. Prepare for a Coronavirus Outbreak

- Creation or update of infectious disease outbreak plan;
- Sourcing and purchasing personal protective equipment for staff;
- Coordination with local health service providers for activities, including: the development or provision of guidance to staff or residents, travel for testing, or other reasons related to coronavirus;
- Childcare costs for clients so that they can continue to work
- Other reasonable expenses related to preparing for the coronavirus.

b. Prevent a Coronavirus Outbreak

- Costs related to maintaining adequate social distancing, including modifying or limiting access to communal spaces, increasing service hours to prevent crowding in waiting areas, or any other costs incurred to ensure adequate distance among staff and residents;
- Direct costs related to limiting the spread of the coronavirus, including travel costs for testing, or other preventive health measures related to coronavirus;
- Expenses of isolating people suspected of being exposed or those at high-risk of serious complications if infected (e.g., elderly residents, and residents with underlying health conditions)

- Costs of protecting residents (particularly high-risk residents) from exposure from interaction with staff and vice versa
- c. Respond to a Coronavirus Outbreak
 - Hazard pay for staff
 - Physical, personnel, or security costs incurred to limit movement;
 - Costs to safely transport clients that tested positive to a quarantine facility; and
 - Costs of supporting residents in quarantine such as health-related supplies (e.g., masks and cleaning supplies).
 - Other reasonable expenses incurred while responding to the coronavirus.

VI. HUD REGULATIONS

Unless HUD releases a waiver, Applicants understand they must adhere to the following regulations outlined in the ESG Program Interim Rule in addition to the items in Section III:

- A. Participate in Coordinated Entry
- B. Enter data into [HMIS](#) or an HMIS-comparable database
- C. Must meet the [eligible homeless definitions for each Project Component Type](#)
- D. Must adhere to [recordkeeping requirements](#)

VII. TDHCA REGULATIONS

If awarded, Applicants must also adhere to regulations established by TDHCA including, but not limited to, submitting the Monthly Performance Report (MPR) and Monthly Expenditure Report (MER) to TDHCA.

VIII. TIMELINE

A. SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

THN will make every effort to adhere to the following anticipated schedule. THN will communicate changes to the timeline to Applicants and via the TX BoS CoC News Newsletter.

| No. | Event | Date |
|-----|---|--|
| 1 | THN issues the RFA Version 1. <i>Version 2 was released on Thursday, May 21, 2020.</i> | Monday, May 18, 2020 at 9:00 AM |
| 2 | OPTIONAL THN hosts a webinar about the local ESG-CV Competition. | Tuesday, May 19, 2020 from 10:00-11:30 AM |
| 3 | The application portal, Apply, opens for submission of applications for ESG-CV. | Monday, May 25, 2020 at 12:00:00 AM (midnight) |
| 4 | The application portal, Apply, closes. Any applications submitted after this time will not be considered. | Friday, June 5, 2020 at 11:59:59 PM |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 5 | THN scores and ranks applications. The ranking will serve as the recommendation for ESG-CV funding to TDHCA. | Monday, June 8, 2020 through Friday, June 12, 2020 |
| 6 | THN notifies Applicants of their score and rank. THN will share the recommendation with all Applicants. THN will de-identify the organizations on the list, except for the Applicant. | Monday, June 15, 2020 at 9:00:00 AM |
| 7 | The TX BoS CoC Board votes on the recommendation. THN will notify Applicants after the meeting. | Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 2:00:00 PM |
| 8 | Grievances due to THN for submission to the TX BoS CoC Board. | Friday, June 26, 2020 at 12:00:00 PM (lunchtime) |
| 9 | Special called CoC Board Meeting to discuss grievances. Applicants will be notified after the meeting. | Wednesday, July 1 at TBD |

IX. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Submit all application materials to THN for consideration by 11:59:59 PM on Friday, June 5, 2020. THN will only accept applications submitted via Apply. THN will not consider late applications.

X. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The following outlines all of the items that are required for consideration for ESG-CV funding: The Naming Convention for each uploaded document, items B-M, must include an Acronym of the Agency Name and a shortened version of the document name. For example, THNCARESApplicationWorksheet or THNCARESCertification.

A. THN Application

The THN Application contains a series of questions that must be completed by Project Applicants. This will be available when Apply opens on Monday, May 25, 2020.

B. ESG CARES Application Worksheet

This attachment is an excel worksheet that must be completed by the Applicant to show threshold information, a proposed budget, and a proposed service area. The contract start date will vary and will end July 31, 2021. Pre-contracting costs may be eligible as of the first COVID-19 response (no earlier than March 13, 2020, unless TDHCA approves the request). Download the document for completion [here](#).

There is no minimum or maximum for the total proposed budget however, Applicants

are statutorily prohibited from applying for more than 100% of their operating budget (see Application Requirement K).

C. ESG CARES Certification

Certification used to review the Written Standards, termination policy, and general ESG certifications. The written standards must comply with requirements of 24 CFR §576.400. The termination policy must comply with the requirements of 24 CFR §576.402. The ESG Certifications must be executed by the Applicant. Download the document for completion [here](#).

D. PREVIOUS PARTICIPATION FORM

TDHCA does a previous participation review of all applicants to ensure they are in good standing. Download the document for completion [here](#). Find instructions for completing the document here: <https://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/pmcomp/forms.htm>

E. LOCAL GOVERNMENT APPROVAL OF SHELTER ACTIVITIES

This document is required for Applications proposing to operate Emergency Shelter; Applicants not proposing to operate Emergency Shelter do not need to submit this document. ***This form can be from within the past 12 months.*** Download the document for completion [here](#).

F. AUDIT CERTIFICATION FORM

This document is required only for New Applicants. Download the document for completion [here](#). Find instructions for completing the document here: <https://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/pmcomp/forms.htm>.

G. WRITTEN STANDARDS FOR SERVICE PROVISION

The Applicant must submit written standards that comply with the requirements of [24 CFR §576.400](#). Any occupancy standard set by the Subrecipient must not conflict with local regulations or [Texas Property Code §92.010](#). The Written Standards governing the project must be in alignment with the [Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care Written Standards for Service Provision](#).

H. TERMINATION POLICY

The Applicant must submit its policy for termination of assistance which complies with the requirements of [24 CFR §576.402](#). The Termination Policy governing the project must be in alignment with the [Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care Written Standards for Service Provision](#) for each Project Component.

I. AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT

The Applicant must submit a governing body action or a letter on Agency letterhead from the Board Chair or Executive Director that is signed and dated within 12 months of this Application

and includes Authorization of the submission of the Application and the Title of the person authorized to represent the Applicant and designated with signature authority to execute a Contract. ***This form can be from within the past 12 months and does not need to specifically include this grant application name.***

J. 501(c)3 DOCUMENTATION

The Applicant must submit their 501(c)3 documentation.

K. PROOF OF OPERATIONAL BUDGET

The Applicant must submit documentation proving their operational budget to ensure the Applicant is not applying for over 100% of their operational budget. An example is a Board approved annual budget for FY 2019-2020 or FY 2020-2021.

L. EVIDENCE OF PARTNERSHIP WITH AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVIDER, IF APPLICABLE

To receive Bonus Points (Section XII, B) for targeting homelessness prevention to households in Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, or affordable housing projects, the Applicant must submit evidence of a partnership with an affordable housing provider.

If Applicants are partnering with another provider, they must provide an executed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated between Monday, May 18, 2020 and Friday, June 5, 2020. The MOU must also outline the relationship between the two agencies.

If Applicants are applying for homelessness prevention dollars to support clients in their Rapid Re-Housing and/or Permanent Supportive Housing projects, they must submit a letter on Agency letterhead dated between Monday, May 18, 2020 and Friday, June 5, 2020 signed by a Member of the Agency's Board.

M. MOU WITH PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT, IF APPLICABLE

To receive Bonus Points (Section XII, B) for partnering with the local Public Health Department, the Applicant must provide an executed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated between Monday, May 18, 2020 and Friday, June 5, 2020. The MOU must outline the relationship between the two agencies.

XI. THRESHOLD REQUIREMENTS

All Applications will go through a threshold review to determine if they meet the basic requirements to continue forward in the process to be scored.

A. APPLICATION RECEIVED BY THE DEADLINE

- a. Only applications received by the deadline will be considered.

B. ELIGIBILITY

- a. Only applications from eligible entities will be considered.

XII. SCORING

A. FACTOR

THN will score questions indicated as “scored” on the THN Application, described in Section X.A, in Apply. THN will also add bonus points to Applications that are in alignment with the projects described in the next section titled “Bonus Points”. In order to receive bonus points, Project Applicants must make their project design very clear in the THN Application. Projects that fall under the “Bonus Points” criteria will receive 2 additional points. Projects that do not adhere to the criteria will receive 0 points.

Each question will receive either 1 or 2 points. For narrative questions, projects will receive 2 points if the response is very clear how their project will focus on preventing, preparing, or responding to COVID-19 and for Emergency Shelters and Street Outreach Projects how their project follows Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance in their proposed coverage area. For the closed-ended questions, e.g., yes/no responses, THN will score 2 points for “yes” responses and 1 point for “no” responses.

B. BONUS POINTS

To receive bonus points, Applicants have to indicate this clearly in the application. We recommend using this language in their project description.

- b. Agencies requesting homelessness prevention dollars to implement diversion or enhance an existing diversion project
- c. Agencies requesting homelessness prevention dollars targeted to people who are living in permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing programs, Section 811, HUD Multi-Family Housing, Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), or USDA Multi-Family Housing
 - i. Section 8 is not included since HUD recently released funding to support Public Housing Authorities with their COVID-19 response, including
- d. Agencies requesting Emergency Shelter funding for the purposes of non-congregate shelter
- e. Agencies requesting Rapid Re-Housing funding to move people quickly out of shelter, permanent, temporary, and/or non-congregate, or unsheltered locations into permanent housing
- f. Applications where there is a documented relationship with the local Public Health Department

C. TIEBREAKER

In event Applications have the same score, THN Staff will utilize the following tiebreakers:

Criteria 1: Whether the Agency currently receives ESG Program Funding

Agencies that do not currently receive ESG Program funding will be ranked higher than those that do currently receive ESG Program funding (yes or no)

Criteria 2: Whether the Application is a collaborative application (yes or no)

Criteria 3: How long the Agency had administered ESG Program Funding (length of time)

XIII. RANKING

THN will rank Applications based on their total score until there is no funding available to recommend. THN will share the ranking with Applicants and will de-identify other applicants. Rank will matter if there are more funds requested than available. For example, if we receive requests that total \$7,203,234, this is \$274,345 more than the total allocation for the TX BoS CoC, which is \$6,928,889. Therefore, Agencies will not be included in the ranking.

XIV. GRIEVANCES

Grievances must be on Agency letterhead, addressed to the TX BoS CoC Board, and received by THN at esg@thn.org by 12:00:00 PM CST on Friday, June 26th. The CoC Board will make the final decision about the Grievance.

XV. THN SUBMITTING THE RECOMMENDATION TO TDHCA

THN has no control over the timeline once the recommendation is submitted to TDHCA.