

STATE OF ALABAMA **PY2017 ESG ACTION PLAN**

History

The Emergency Shelter Grant Program (ESG) was first enacted under Title V of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's appropriation act for the fiscal year 1987, and was fully established by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act in 1988. The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009 amended the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The HEARTH Act included major revisions to the Emergency Shelter Grant Program, essentially changing it to the Emergency Solutions Grants Program. This is a program that may provide assistance to all areas of the state. ESG funds are used to upgrade existing homeless facilities and domestic abuse shelters, to help meet the operating costs of such facilities, to provide essential services to both sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons, to help prevent homelessness, to re-house homeless persons, and to assist in the costs of administering HMIS activities.

Distribution of Funds

The ESG Program is administered by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) and will be utilized to provide assistance to homeless persons and victims of domestic abuse as defined under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, as amended. The State will receive \$2,754,579 in PY2017 ESG funds. The State will allocate funds based on the quality of applications received from local units of government and private nonprofit organizations. No portion of these funds will be set aside for specific purposes. ESG dollars must be matched on a dollar for dollar basis by subrecipients. However, the State is incorporating into this Plan the option allowed by law and regulations to forgive up to \$100,000 in required match when circumstances of extreme need indicate this is appropriate. The State will consider the urgency, need, and distress of the applicant when making such decisions.

The stated allocation amount is the amount that ADECA anticipates receiving from HUD under the respective fiscal year's federal budget; however, this amount can change due to the award of supplemental allocation(s) as and when determined by HUD. Upon receipt of the final annual allocation amount, ADECA will adjust the distribution of funds up or down by approximately the same percentage; the exception being the distribution of "State Administration" funds which will conform to HUD's rule. ADECA will also update the Annual Plan to reflect ADECA's actual fiscal year allocation.

Pre-Award Costs

The State requests permission to receive reimbursement for administration costs incurred prior to the award date of the agreement between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and ADECA. The costs would include eligible

functions performed by ADECA's staff members during the State's administration of the ESG program.

Thresholds

An applicant may only be included in one application. A second-tier subrecipient may be included in more than one application. No applications will be accepted under the following circumstances:

- The applicant owes the state or federal government money and no repayment arrangement is in place.
- Disallowed costs have resulted from an ADECA review or audit and no resolution is finalized.
- The applicant has an open ESG grant from FY2015 or an earlier year.
- The private nonprofit organization (acting as the applicant or second-tier subrecipient) lacks 501(c) (3) status.

Where eligibility for the grant is subject to close-out of earlier grants, acceptable closeout documents which require no changes must have been received by ADECA before the date of the FY2017 ESG Application Workshop, for the grant to be considered closed out.

Grant Ceilings

In order to address needs throughout the State, the Program will use a grant ceiling of \$200,000 for applicants that will serve a single jurisdiction. An applicant that will serve multiple localities within a single county is defined as a single jurisdiction. An applicant that will serve multiple counties will have a grant ceiling of \$400,000. An applicant may not be listed as a second-tier subrecipient in another application. However, a second-tier subrecipient may be listed as a second-tier subrecipient in more than one application. In the event that all funds are not awarded through the one-time competitive application process, the State may negotiate with applicants to utilize all current year funds. Initiation of negotiations will be done by the State based on (1) demonstrated need; (2) prior performance; and (3) other available resources. Such negotiations may cause the original grant to exceed formerly applicable grant ceilings.

Recaptured Funds

Recaptured funds consist of any funds returned to the State during the program year, except Program Income as defined by applicable regulations. The Director, at his or her discretion, will use an appropriate amount of recaptured funds or unutilized prior year funds to assist eligible and fundable projects from the program year in which the funds are returned. The State may negotiate with subrecipients to reallocate all recaptured funds and unutilized prior year funds.

In the event of the availability of recaptured or unutilized prior year funds, subrecipients that have not exceeded the grant ceilings will be notified first. Subrecipients will submit a written response of their interest in receiving the recaptured or unutilized prior year funds. If all funds are not awarded after the first notification, the remaining subrecipients will be allowed to submit a written response expressing their interest in receiving the recaptured or unutilized prior year funds. Grant ceilings may be waived in efforts to award all recaptured or unutilized prior year funds.

Factors to be considered when reallocating funds include: (1) estimated number of program participants to be served; (2) impact on the community if the persons are not served; (3) other extenuating or unusual circumstances which may have necessitated the additional funding, (4) prior performance of the subrecipients' grant administration, (5) the subrecipients' demonstrated ability to expend funds in a timely manner, and (6) the subrecipients' ability to supply the required matching funds.

Eligible Activities

ESG funds may be used for the following activities allowed under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended:

Street Outreach: Assistance provided must serve unsheltered homeless persons who are neither willing nor able to access housing, emergency shelter, or an appropriate health facility. The total amount that may be used for street outreach and emergency shelter expenditures combined cannot exceed the greater of:

- 60 percent of that fiscal year's total ESG grant award; **or**
- The amount of the State's FY2010 grant funds committed to street outreach and emergency shelter activities.

Eligible costs include:

1. Engagement – Activities to locate, identify, and build relationships with unsheltered homeless persons in an effort to provide intervention, immediate support, and connections with mainstream social services, homeless assistance programs, and/or housing programs.
2. Case Management – Services include the cost of assessing service and housing needs. Case managers will arrange, coordinate, and monitor the delivery of individualized services in order to meet the needs of the program participants.
3. Emergency Health Services – Eligible costs include the direct outpatient treatment of medical conditions. Services are provided by licensed medical professionals operating in community-based settings and other places where unsheltered homeless persons reside. ESG funds may be

used only if other appropriate health services are unavailable or inaccessible in the area.

4. Emergency Mental Health Services – Eligible costs include the direct outpatient treatment of mental health conditions by licensed medical professionals operating in community-based settings and other places where unsheltered homeless persons reside.
5. Transportation – Eligible costs include travel by social workers, medical professionals, outreach workers, or other service providers when the travel takes place during the provision of eligible street outreach services.
6. Services to Special Populations – Eligible costs include eligible essential services that have been tailored to address the special needs of people living with HIV/AIDS, homeless youth, and/or victims of domestic violence and related crimes/threats.

Emergency Shelter: The types of assistance include providing essential services to homeless individuals or families in emergency shelters, operating costs for emergency shelters, costs associated with renovating buildings to be used as emergency shelter for homeless individuals and families, and assistance required under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (URA). Staff costs related to carrying out emergency shelter activities are eligible. The total amount that may be used for street outreach and emergency shelter expenditures combined cannot exceed the greater of:

- 60 percent of that fiscal year's total ESG grant award; **or**
- The amount of the State's FY2010 grant funds committed to street outreach and emergency shelter activities.

Eligible costs include:

1. Essential Services – case management, child care, life skills services, employment assistance and job training, education services, legal services, transportation, substance abuse treatment services, outpatient health services, mental health services, and services for special populations.
2. Shelter Operations – Rent, facility maintenance, utilities, food, insurance, furnishings, security, equipment, fuel, and supplies necessary for the operation of the emergency shelter. Hotel or motel vouchers are eligible only when no appropriate emergency shelter is available.
3. Renovation – Costs associated with renovating buildings to be used as emergency shelter for homeless individuals and families, including labor, materials, tools, and other costs including soft costs. The emergency shelter must be owned by a private nonprofit organization or a governmental entity. Types of renovation include:

- Conversion - A change in the use of a building to an emergency shelter for the homeless, where the cost of conversion and any rehabilitation costs exceed 75 percent of the value of the building after rehabilitation. (If ESG funds are used for conversion, the facility must be used as a shelter for the homeless for at least a ten-year period.)
- Major Rehabilitation – Rehabilitation that costs in excess of 75 percent of the value of the building before rehabilitation. (Where ESG funds are used for this purpose, the building must be used as a homeless shelter for at least a ten-year period.)
- Other Renovation – Rehabilitation that involves costs of 75 percent or less of the value of the building before rehabilitation. (Where ESG funds are used for this purpose, the building must be used as a shelter for at least a three-year period.)

Value of the building means the monetary value assigned to a building by an independent real estate appraiser, or as otherwise reasonably established by the subrecipient or the second-tier subrecipient.

4. Assistance Required under URA – Costs of providing URA assistance, including relocation payments and other assistance to persons displaced by a project assisted with ESG funds.

Homelessness Prevention: Assistance may be provided to individuals and families who meet HUD’s definition of at risk or at imminent risk of homelessness. Individuals and families must have an income below 30% of Area Median Income. Staff salaries related to service provision are eligible.

Eligible costs include:

1. Rental Assistance – Assistance may be short- or medium-term. Short term assistance may be provided for up to 3 months. Medium-term assistance may be provided for 4 to 24 months. Assistance may be provided during any 3-year period, including a one-time payment for up to 6 months of the tenant’s portion of rental arrears.
2. Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services – Consists of two types of assistance: financial assistance and services.
 - A. Financial Assistance – ESG funds may be used to pay utility companies, housing owners, and other third parties for the following types of costs: rental application fees, security deposits, last month’s rent, utility deposits, utility payments, and moving costs.

- B. Services – ESG funds may be used to pay the costs of providing the following services:
1. Housing Search and Placement – Activities or services necessary to assist program participants in locating, obtaining, and retaining suitable permanent housing.
 2. Housing Stability Case Management – Services necessary to assess, arrange, coordinate, and monitor the delivery of individualized services to facilitate housing stability.
 3. Mediation – Mediation between the program participant and the owner or person(s) with whom the program participant currently resides to prevent the program participant from losing permanent housing in which they currently reside.
 4. Legal Services – Services necessary to resolve a legal problem that prohibits the program participant from obtaining or maintaining permanent housing.
 5. Credit Repair – Services necessary to assist program participants with critical skills related to household budgeting, money management, accessing a free personal credit report, and resolving personal credit problems.

Rapid Re-Housing: Assistance may be provided to individuals and families who meet HUD’s definition of being literally homeless. Staff salaries related to service provision are eligible.

Eligible costs are the same as those for Homelessness Prevention.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS): HMIS is a statutory requirement of the HEARTH Act. Victim service providers cannot participate in HMIS. Legal services organizations may choose not to participate in HMIS. Providers that do not participate in HMIS must use a comparable database that produces unduplicated reports.

Eligible costs include purchasing or leasing equipment or computer hardware; purchasing software licenses; obtaining technical support; leasing office space; overhead charges such as electricity, phone, water, gas, and high-speed data transmission necessary to operate the HMIS; salaries necessary to operate the HMIS; travel to attend HUD-sponsored and HUD-approved training on HMIS and programs authorized by Title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act; travel costs to conduct intake; and paying participation fees charged by the

HMIS Lead Agency designated by the Continuum of Care to operate the area's HMIS.

Administration: Administration includes the activities necessary to administer the grant in compliance with program objectives and regulations.

Eligible administrative costs include staff to operate the program, preparation of progress reports, audits, and monitoring of recipients. This does not include staff and overhead costs directly related to carrying out other ESG eligible activities. No more than 7.5 percent of the State's grant may be spent for administrative costs.

Obstacles to Addressing Underserved Needs

Various obstacles to addressing underserved community needs exist across the State. In the rural counties, transportation is a major issue. Nonexistent public transportation limits access to mainstream resources. Dwindling funding for mainstream resources at various levels of government further negatively impact the needs of persons experiencing homelessness. The shortage of affordable permanent housing presents another obstacle. Job loss, unemployment, and the lack of affordable healthcare are also obstacles.

Proposed Activities

The point-in-time surveys completed in 2016 for the State of Alabama documented 4,111 homeless persons. Of those, 1,218 were unsheltered and 2,893 were sheltered in emergency shelters, transitional shelters or safe havens. Because these numbers indicate needs for both sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons, the State has identified additional housing resources and case management services as priority needs in its Consolidated Plan. In an effort to address these needs, the State has chosen to allow applicants to request funding for all eligible activities.

For homeless assistance activities (emergency shelter and street outreach), the objective is to create a suitable living environment. The outcome is availability/accessibility.

For homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing activities, the objective is to provide decent affordable housing. The outcome is affordability.

Application Process

The application submission date for ESG funds will be announced during the ESG Application Workshop or through another widely distributed notification process. Applicants are limited to local units of government and private nonprofit organizations. Funds will be awarded competitively based on the factors reviewed below. The State may exercise discretion to fund requests fully or partially, if so warranted, to maximize

impact on the State's homeless and other ESG-eligible clientele. The State may conduct site visits to potential subrecipients. The site visits may influence funding decisions.

A. Identification of Homeless Assistance Needs: 20 Points

Applicants will identify the homeless assistance needs they propose to address for their service area including the needs of other eligible clientele such as victims of domestic violence. Applicants should specifically address the needs of the unsheltered homeless persons in their service area. They should use quantifiable data, specific to their service area, to the maximum extent possible. Data should include the number of individuals and families actually served during the last calendar year.

B. Applicant's Strategy to Address Homeless Problems: 25 Points

Applicants will describe their strategy for addressing homeless problems. They will provide specific data quantifying the types of assistance or services provided to homeless individuals and families or those persons at risk of homelessness during the last calendar year. Applicants will estimate the number of participants they propose to assist in relation to the types of assistance to be provided. They should explain their strategy for targeting funds to the neediest persons, or to the geographic or functional areas where funds may have the greatest impact.

C. Capacity and Coordination: 20 Points

Applicants will describe their management capacity, especially that of all second-tier subrecipients, if any. Provide specific details relating to direct or related experience with service provision to homeless individuals and families or those at-risk of homelessness. Applicants will provide their plan to coordinate and integrate ESG-funded activities with other programs targeted to serving homeless persons and with mainstream resources for which program participants may be eligible.

D. Participation in a Continuum of Care: 15 Points

The applicant will demonstrate a thorough understanding of the "continuum of care" concept and explain how the services provided by it or its second-tier subrecipients are in line with this concept. This will include information concerning membership in an existing Continuum of Care Homeless Coalition. Explain the levels of participation for the applicant and that of the second-tier subrecipients regarding continuum initiatives, activities, and programs. Provide details regarding the strategies of the particular continuum for serving the homeless.

E. Match: 10 Points

Points will be given based on the clarity of proposed match. Match (in-kind or cash) must be explained as to how its use relates to the activities allowed under the McKinney

Homeless Assistance Act, as amended. Match must be verified to include resolutions and letters detailing sources of funds. If match comes from the city or the county, then the source of funds (general fund) must be identified. Letters from banks, organizations, or donors specifying donated items will be needed. Volunteer hours and fundraising efforts will need to be discussed in enough detail to establish validity. The service area or activities for which volunteer hours will be used must be clearly indicated.

F. Budget: 10 Points

The budget narrative must consist of a thorough explanation of activities involved with the request. Each budget category (Administration, Street Outreach, Emergency Shelter, Homelessness Prevention, Rapid Re-Housing, and HMIS) must give a detailed description of costs. The applicant's budget must be the aggregate of the second-tier subrecipients' budgets. In addition to the budget forms, each agency for which funds are requested should submit its annual budget that shows the source and amount of other funds received.

TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE: 100 Points

Process for Making Sub-awards

Applications should provide the applicants' strategies to provide emergency shelter, street outreach, homelessness prevention, and rapid re-housing assistance. Project reviews will include the following criteria:

- demonstrated need for assistance in the service area
- plan to provide services to the target population
- capacity to carry out program requirements
- activities to be performed
- coordination with local agencies serving similar target populations

If necessary, the State may request additional information to assist with reviews. State subrecipients will be required to ensure that program information is available in the appropriate languages for the geographic areas to be served with ESG funds.

Tie Breaker

In the event of tied scores where funding is not available to all applicants, the Director will exercise discretion in funding requests with the most impact. The Director may also exercise discretion in adjusting funding awards to serve needs in a greater number of communities without significantly reducing the effectiveness of proposed programs.

Monitoring Plan

ADECA staff will monitor each ESG grant on-site at least once prior to project close-out. Areas reviewed for compliance include adherence to the program's national objective and eligibility requirements, progress and timeliness, citizen participation, environmental, shelter standards, housing habitability standards, rent reasonableness, affirmative outreach, fair housing, equal employment opportunity, procurement, and financial management.

After each monitoring visit, written correspondence is sent to the subrecipient describing the results of the review in sufficient detail to clearly describe the areas that were covered and the basis for the conclusions. Monitoring determinations range from "acceptable" to "finding" with appropriate corrective measures imposed. Corrective measures may include certifications that inadequacies will be resolved, documentary evidence that corrective actions have been instituted, or reimbursement of disallowed costs.

If the subrecipient has not responded within 30 days after the date of ADECA's letter, ADECA staff will work with the subrecipient through phone calls, e-mails, or written correspondence to obtain the requested information. No grant can be closed until all monitoring findings have been satisfactorily resolved.

ADECA maintains an "HESG Projects Schedule" spreadsheet which is used as a tracking system to ensure each ESG grant is monitored at least once prior to close-out. Monitoring visits will be scheduled at the time when at least 40 percent of the funds have been drawn. This spreadsheet is also used to track monitoring findings, receipt of the requested responses, and the date of project closeout.

ADECA retains the ability to schedule additional monitoring visits as may be necessitated by problems identified in the monitoring visit or when grant conditions demonstrate a need for additional ADECA review. Further, ADECA may also incorporate additional monitoring and review techniques not listed here in order to ensure program compliance.

Consultation with Continuums of Care

The State and the continuums of care (CoC) in its jurisdiction mutually agreed to maintain the following outcomes developed in 2012 for the ESG program.

1. Determining how to allocate ESG funds for eligible activities:
 - a. Membership in CoC – Agencies interested in applying for ESG funding must be active, participating members of the local continuum of care.
 - b. Service Provision – Services provided by the interested agencies must meet an established goal of the local CoC.
 - c. Capacity – Interested agencies must have demonstrated their capacity

to carryout ESG or similar program activities.

d. Collaboration - Interested agencies must collaborate with local agencies that serve similar target populations.

e. Coordination - Interested agencies must coordinate with other agencies that provide mainstream resources to similar target populations.

2. Developing the Performance Standards for activities funded under ESG:

a. Agencies funded with ESG funds must utilize written intake forms that clearly document eligibility for ESG assistance, and homeless status at program entry and program exit.

b. Funded agencies must report client data in HMIS, unless the agency is a victim service provider or legal service provider. In such cases, the funded agencies must report client data in a comparable database.

c. Funded agencies must set measurable targets to be accomplished throughout the life of the program.

d. Funded agencies and their respective CoC will periodically monitor program progress of all ESG-funded activities to document:

1. Impact of ESG-funded projects;
2. Number of persons served by ESG-funded projects;
3. Number of program participants obtaining mainstream benefits such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs, VA Health and Pension Benefits, Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance, and Medicaid.

3. Developing funding, policies, and procedures for the operation and administration of the HMIS *PromisSE*, a web-based data management system, serves as a multi-implementation of HMIS. Every continuum in the state, with the exception of the Homeless Care Council of Northwest Alabama, utilizes *PromisSE*. *PromisSE* is operated under a Steering Committee which consists of members of each continuum across the states of Alabama and Florida. *PromisSE* has established policies and procedures. Funding for HMIS and related activities and costs will be limited to up to five percent of the grant award to individual subrecipients.

Written Standards for Provision of ESG Assistance

Because the needs of program participants and their access to available assistance vary across the State, the State will require its subrecipients to establish and implement their own written program standards. Program standards must not be designed to discriminate against any program participant. Program standards must be applied consistently to every program participant. At a minimum, program standards must include the following:

1. Policies and procedures for evaluating individuals' and families' eligibility for ESG assistance.

2. Policies and procedures for coordination among homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing assistance providers, emergency shelter providers, essential service providers, other homeless assistance providers, and mainstream service and housing providers.

3. Policies and procedures for determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive homelessness prevention assistance and which eligible individuals and families will receive rapid re-housing assistance.

4. Standards for determining the length of time a particular program participant will be provided with rental assistance and if and how the amount of that assistance will be adjusted over time.

5. Standards for determining the share of rent and utilities' costs that each program participant must pay, if any, while receiving homelessness prevention or rapid re-housing assistance.

6. Standards for determining the type, amount, and duration of housing stabilization and/or relocation services to provide a program participant. Include the limits, if any, on the homelessness prevention or rapid re-housing assistance that each program participant may receive (maximum amount of assistance, maximum number of months, or maximum number of times the program participants may receive assistance).

7. Standards for targeting and providing essential services related to street outreach activities. Include the limits, if any, on the street outreach assistance that each program participant may receive (maximum amount of assistance, maximum number of months, or maximum number of times the program participants may receive assistance).

8. Policies and procedures for admission, diversion, referral and discharge by emergency shelters assisted under ESG, including standards regarding length of stay, if any, and safeguards to meet the safety and shelter needs of special populations, e.g., victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and individuals and families who have the highest barriers to housing and are likely to be homeless the longest.

9. Policies and procedures for assessing, prioritizing, and reassessing individuals' and families' needs for essential services related to emergency shelter.

10. Procedures to guarantee that reasonable steps are taken to ensure meaningful access to program activities for persons of limited English proficiency.

11. Standards for terminating assistance. Include requirements of a formal process to terminate assistance. At a minimum, the process should contain:

- A written notice to the participant stating the reason for termination of assistance.
- A review of the decision, where the participant is given the opportunity to present written or oral objections.
- Prompt written notice of the final decision to the participant.

Performance Standards

Funded agencies and their respective CoC will periodically monitor program progress of all ESG-funded activities to document:

- Impact of ESG-funded projects
- Number of persons served by ESG-funded projects
- Number of program participants obtaining mainstream benefits such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs, VA Health and Pension Benefits, Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance, and Medicaid.

Outcome Measures

Outcome measures will be determined by performance indicators. Because the State's ESG program will be implemented in different geographic areas with various needs, various social services programs and various degrees of access to service, the State chose not to develop performance indicators. The subrecipients will develop performance indicators that best depict program accomplishments for their local areas. Performance indicators specific to geographic areas will be evaluated to determine program outcomes.

Centralized or Coordinated Assessment

Each continuum of care has an established centralized or coordinated assessment system for its service area. Implementation of the systems varies by continuum. ESG-funded projects in service areas covered by One Roof and the West Alabama Coalition for the Homeless have not begun to utilize their respective systems. Utilization of the systems in these two service areas should commence within the next few months.

Requirements for recipients who plan to use the risk factor under paragraph (1) (iii) (G) of the “at risk of homelessness” definition

If the recipient plans to serve persons “at risk of homelessness”, based on the risk factor “otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and increased risk of homelessness” describe specific characteristics associated with instability and increased risk of homelessness.

The State accepts the following conditions to be indicative of housing instability and increased risk of homelessness:

1. Documented mental health conditions that limit or prohibit a person’s ability to work;
2. Documented physical health conditions that limit or prohibit a person’s ability to work;
3. Documented substance abuse that limits or prohibits a person’s ability to work;
4. Person has a criminal background; or
5. Occurrences of domestic violence or abuse.

One-year goals and specific action steps for reducing and ending homelessness through:

Reaching out to homeless persons (especially unsheltered persons) and assessing their individual needs

The point-in-time counts for 2016 showed that there were 1,218 unsheltered homeless persons in Alabama. The State’s goals are to decrease the number of unsheltered homeless persons and to increase the provision of services to them. In an effort to reach out to the unsheltered homeless persons and address their needs, the following action steps will be undertaken.

1. The ESG subrecipients and second-tier subrecipients will work more closely with the continuum of care groups throughout the state to identify the unsheltered homeless persons in their service areas and determine their needs.
2. In addition to their established programs, the ESG subrecipients and second-tier subrecipients will target unsheltered homeless persons in an effort to provide shelter and services to them.
3. The ESG subrecipients and second-tier subrecipients will ensure that their case managers inform the unsheltered homeless of services available

to them and coordinate with those service providers in an effort to facilitate the provision of those services.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

The point-in-time counts for 2016 showed that there were 2,893 homeless persons in emergency shelter and transitional housing in Alabama. The State's goals are to decrease the number of sheltered homeless persons and to increase the provision of services to them. In a continued effort to provide services to the sheltered homeless persons and address their needs, the following action steps will be undertaken.

1. The ESG subrecipients and second-tier subrecipients will work more closely with mainstream service providers throughout the state to link the sheltered homeless persons in their service areas to the appropriate services.

2. The ESG subrecipients and second-tier subrecipients will work more closely with housing agencies to determine availability for those sheltered homeless persons exiting the system.

Helping homeless persons (especially chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth) make the transition to permanent housing and independent living, including shortening the period of time that individuals and families experience homelessness, facilitating access for homeless individuals and families to affordable housing units, and preventing individuals and families who were recently homeless from becoming homeless again.

The State's goals are to shorten the length of time any homeless person remains homeless, facilitate access to affordable housing units, and prevent reoccurrences of homelessness. However, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, there is a shortage of more than 95,000 safe, available and affordable housing units in the State. This shortage creates a huge obstacle to obtaining these goals. However, case managers working with ESG funds will continue to seek supplemental assistance for their clients by coordinating with mainstream service providers.

Helping low-income individuals and families avoid becoming homeless, especially extremely low-income individuals and families who are: Being discharged from publicly funded institutions and systems of care, such as healthcare facilities, mental health facilities, foster care and other youth facilities, and corrections programs and institutions.

The State's goal is to increase awareness of permanent housing, emergency shelter, and transitional housing availability. In order to accomplish this goal, the ESG subrecipients and second-tier subrecipients will inform those publicly funded institutions of the available housing options in their service area. This information would then be made available to those persons being discharged. The ESG subrecipients and second-tier subrecipients will also work more closely with mainstream

agencies serving individuals and families that are at risk for homelessness in an effort to inform them of available permanent housing, emergency shelter, and transitional housing availability.

Receiving assistance from public and private agencies that address housing, health, social services, employment, education, or youth needs.

The State's goal is that ESG subrecipients' and second-tier subrecipients' case managers will become more knowledgeable about the types of public and private assistance that address housing, health, social services, employment, education and youth needs. To accomplish this goal, case managers will work more closely with mainstream service providers and private agencies which address these needs. The case managers will provide this information to their clients and assist them in obtaining other eligible assistance.

The jurisdiction must specify the activities that it plans to undertake during the next year to **address the housing and supportive service needs** identified in accordance with §91.215(e) with respect to **persons who are not homeless but have other special needs.**

The Alabama Housing Finance Authority (AHFA), as the administrator of the HOME Program, provides opportunities for developer applicants to construct housing for some persons who are not homeless but may have other special needs. While AHFA does not specify what may be needed or desired in certain markets, they generally approve high quantities of housing for the elderly. Units for other persons with special needs are encouraged but not mandatory. HOME funds are not used for tenant-based rental assistance.

Information specific to the needs of non-homeless persons who may require supportive services or housing assistance is currently not reported to the State. However, to address these needs, the following steps will be taken. Where applicable, the continuum of care groups in the State will work towards expanding their membership to include agencies that provide services to the following persons who are non-homeless: elderly, persons with HIV/AIDS, persons with disabilities, persons with alcohol or other drug addictions, and public housing residents.

At a minimum, each continuum will coordinate with these agencies in its service area regarding the supportive services and housing needs of these persons. The continuums will summarize and prioritize these needs. Once this information is available, the continuums, service providers, and other interested agencies can begin to plan activities and coordinate efforts to address these needs.