

DRAFT

CITY OF OXNARD CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN – Addendum FOR THE 2020 CARES ACT FUNDS, FLEXIBILITIES AND WAIVERS

A. POLICY STATEMENT

1. This Citizen Participation Plan Addendum specifically addresses the special policies and guidelines in support of addressing the impacts of COVID-19 through the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and HOME Investment Partnerships Act (HOME) programs, and the 2020 CARES Act Funds, termed CDBG-CV and ESG-CV.
2. All policies and processes described in the City of Oxnard (hereinafter referred to as “City”) Citizen Participation Plan, amended on July 10, 2018, is applicable to all CDBG, ESG and HOME funding sources unless specified in this Addendum.
3. All policies and processes specified in this Addendum are applicable through the adoption date of this Addendum and will expire upon the date specified for the CARES Act of 2020 funding and waivers, by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) department.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. CARES Act Flexibilities and Waivers – HUD Secretary issued statutory and regulatory waivers/alternative requirements for CDBG-CV, ESG-CV and some CDBG, HOME and ESG funds when necessary to expedite or facilitate the use of grant funds to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus. Prohibits waivers/alternative requirements related to fair housing, nondiscrimination, labor standards, and the environment. (see Appendix A)
2. CDBG-CV – Community Development Block Grant funding specifically allocated for the impacts related to COVID-19
3. ESG-CV – Emergency Solutions Grant funding specifically allocated for the impacts related to COVID-19

C. PLANNING PROCESS FOR CONSOLIDATED PLAN DOCUMENTS

1. Public Review and Comment – Documents (Plans) created for the CARES Act of 2020 funds and waivers will be made available to the public for no less than 5 calendar days. Written comments will be accepted during the public comment period. Summaries of comments will be attached to documents requiring public reviews and input.

D. MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

1. During locally, state, or federally declared Stay-At-Home orders, public meetings may occur virtually and will publicly post meeting dates, times, and instructions in advance of the meetings.

Appendix A
CDBG and ESG Waivers




U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-7000

9 April 2020

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM FOR: All Fiscal Year 2020 and 2019 CDBG and CDBG-CV Grantees and All CPD Field Office Directors

FROM:  John Gibbs, Acting Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development

SUBJECT: CARES Act Flexibilities for CDBG Funds Used to Support Coronavirus Response and plan amendment waiver

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) (Public Law 116-136) makes available \$5 billion in supplemental Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for grants to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus (CDBG-CV grants). Additionally, the CARES Act provides CDBG grantees with flexibilities that make it easier to use CDBG-CV grants and fiscal years 2019 and 2020 CDBG Grants for coronavirus response and authorizes HUD to grant waivers and alternative requirements.

The Department has announced the allocations of the first \$2 billion in CARES Act funding for CDBG grantees, as well as \$1 billion for Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) and \$53.7 million for Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA). You can find the allocations at www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/budget/fy20/.

This memorandum transmits the attached *CARES Act Flexibilities for CDBG Funds Used to Support Coronavirus Response Guide (Guide)*. The Guide describes the immediate availability of a 5-day public comment period for amendments and new plan submissions, uncaps the percentage of CDBG funding for public services to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus, as well as other flexibilities. Please note that these new provisions are not only applicable to the \$5 billion in CDBG funding from the CARES Act but many of the new provisions are also applicable to FY2019 and FY2020 CDBG funding. This broad applicability provides grantees with flexibility to help address the challenges facing our nation.

Grantees are advised to amend or prepare their plans as soon as possible and not to wait for the pending Federal Register notice, which may provide additional waivers and alternative requirements. Similarly, grantees should not wait for HUD to allocate the remaining nearly \$3 billion of the \$5 billion provided by the CARES Act for the CDBG program. Upon publication of the Federal Register notice and subsequent allocations, grantees receiving allocations will then amend plans accordingly.

Grantees should proceed with all amendments and plans under these new provisions by adding the CDBG-CV allocation in their plans as an available resource for the year. The CARES Act permits HUD to waive, or specify alternative requirements for, any provision of any statute or regulation that the Secretary administers in connection with the CDBG-CV funds, FY2019 and FY2020 CDBG funds (except for requirements related to fair housing, nondiscrimination, labor standards, and the environment), upon a finding by the Secretary that any such waivers or

alternative requirements are necessary to expedite or facilitate the use of such amounts to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

To expedite grantees' use of CDBG-CV funds, HUD is waiving the requirements at 42 U.S.C. 12705(a)(2) to the extent it requires updates to the housing and homeless needs assessment, housing market analysis, and strategic plan and 24 CFR 91.220 and 91.320 to the extent the action plan is limited to a specific program year to permit grantees to prepare substantial amendments to their most recent annual action plan, including their 2019 annual action plan. Grantees must identify the proposed use of all funds and how the funds will be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

The Department is also waiving 24 CFR 91.505 to facilitate the use of the CDBG-CV funds to the extent necessary to require submission of the substantial amendment to HUD for review in accordance with 24 CFR 91.500. To receive a CDBG-CV grant, a grantee must also submit a SF-424, SF-424D and the certifications at 24 CFR 91.225(a) and (b) or 24 CFR 91.325(a) and (b).

The Guide addresses many of the Field's initial questions. Email inquiries to CPDQuestionsAnswered@hud.gov will continue to receive individual replies and guidance. HUD will also be batching questions and responses and periodically making them available as FAQs. Additional resources will continue to be posted to www.hudexchange.info/programs/cdbg/disease/.

Thank you for the work you and your staff do with our communities in the fight against the coronavirus.

CARES Act Flexibilities for CDBG Funds Used to Support Coronavirus Response

April 9, 2020

President Trump has signed *The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act* (CARES Act). The CARES Act:

- Makes available \$5 billion in supplemental Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for grants to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus (CDBG-CV grants);
- Provides flexibilities for CDBG grantees to make it easier to use CDBG-CV grants and fiscal years 2019 and 2020 CDBG grants for coronavirus response and authorizes HUD to grant waivers and alternative requirements;
- Requires CDBG-CV grantees to prevent the duplication of benefits, which means grant funds may not be used to pay costs if another source of financial assistance is available to pay that cost.

HUD will publish a Federal Register notice describing the requirements for CDBG-CV grants. The notice will also include waivers and alternative requirements for CDBG-CV and fiscal year 2019 and 2020 CDBG grants. A grantee may submit a CDBG-CV action plan substantial amendment to its most recent accepted CDBG action plan for the first CDBG-CV allocation before the notice is published. To apply for CDBG-CV grants, grantees may follow existing regulatory requirements for a substantial amendment to the grantee's action plan that describes the amount of CDBG-CV funds available in the first allocation and planned use of funds, in accordance with existing requirements and the flexibilities in the CARES Act, summarized below. HUD will publish a Q&A document with further information on this process.

Grantees may use CDBG-CV and CDBG funds for a range of activities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus. For examples, see the [Quick Guide to CDBG Activities for Infectious Disease Response](#).

Summary of CARES Act Provisions for Coronavirus Response With CDBG-CV and CDBG Grants

<i>For more information, refer to applicable sections of the CARES Act, Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (for State CDBG Grantees) and CDBG regulations (for Entitlement CDBG grantees).</i>			
<i>Description of Program Flexibility</i>	<i>Applicability to CDBG-CV and CDBG Grants</i>		
Public Service Activities			
Eliminates the 15 percent cap ¹ on the amount of grant funds that can be used for public services activities. <i>Following enactment, the cap in section 105(a)(8) of the HCD Act and 24 CFR 570.201(e) has no effect on CDBG-CV grants and no effect on FY 2019 and 2020 CDBG grant funds used for coronavirus efforts.</i>	CDBG-CV	Immediately Available	✓
	CDBG FY 19 and FY 20 Grants	Immediately Available	✓
	CDBG Grants before FY 19		Not Available ✗
Reimbursement of Costs			
Provides that grantees may use CDBG-CV grant funds to cover or reimburse costs to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus incurred by a State or locality, regardless of the date on which such costs were incurred, when those costs comply with CDBG requirements. <i>For other grants, pre-agreement and pre-award cost authority is available under 24 CFR 570.489(b) (states) and 570.200(h) (entitlements).</i>	CDBG-CV	Immediately Available	✓
	CDBG FY 19 and FY 20 Grants		See current regulations. ✗
	CDBG Grants before FY 19		See current regulations. ✗

¹ Section 105(a)(8) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, provides a different percentage cap for some grantees.

<i>Description of Program Flexibility</i>	<i>Applicability to CDBG-CV and CDBG Grants</i>		
Citizen Participation and Public Hearings for Consolidated Plans (including Action Plans)			
<p>Provides that grantees may amend citizen participation plans to establish expedited procedures to draft, propose, or amend consolidated plans. Expedited procedures must include notice and reasonable opportunity to comment of no less than 5 days. The 5-day period can run concurrently for comments on the action plan amendment and amended citizen participation plans.</p> <p>In-person public hearings are not required. Grantees may meet public hearing requirements with virtual public hearings if: 1) national/local health authorities recommend social distancing and limiting public gatherings for public health reasons; and 2) virtual hearings provide reasonable notification and access for citizens in accordance with the grantee's certifications, timely responses from local officials to all citizen questions and issues, and public access to all questions and responses.</p>	CDBG-CV	Immediately Available ✓	
	CDBG FY 19 and FY 20 Grants	Immediately Available ✓	
	CDBG Grants before FY 19		Not Available ✗
Deadline to Submit Consolidated Plans (including Annual Action Plans)			
<p>Extends the deadline for grantees to submit action plans and other updates to their consolidated plans submissions for fiscal years 2019* and 2020 to August 16, 2021.</p> <p><i>Without extension, the deadline for fiscal year 2020 grants would be August 16, 2020, in accordance with section 116(b) of the HCD Act and 24 CFR 91.15.</i></p> <p><i>*The deadline for fiscal year 2019 passed on August 16, 2019 (plans due then have been submitted).</i></p>	CDBG-CV	Immediately Available ✓	
	CDBG FY 19* and FY 20 Grants	Immediately Available. ✓	
	CDBG Grants before FY 19		Not applicable. ✗
Waiver and Alternative Requirement Authority			
<p>Authorizes the Secretary to issue statutory and regulatory waivers/alternative requirements for CDBG-CV and some CDBG funds when necessary to expedite or facilitate the use of grant funds to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.</p> <p>Prohibits waivers/alternative requirements related to fair housing, nondiscrimination, labor standards, and the environment.</p> <p><i>HUD has additional regulatory waiver and statutory suspension authorities that it may use for CDBG Grants before fiscal year 2019 if necessary.</i></p>	CDBG-CV	Immediately Available ✓	
	CDBG FY 19 and FY 20 Grants	Immediately Available. ✓	
	CDBG Grants before FY 19		Not applicable. ✗


Submit your questions to: CPDQuestionsAnswered@hud.gov



OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-7000

MEMORADUM FOR: All Community Planning and Development Field Office Directors,
Deputy Directors and Program Managers

FROM:  Digitally signed
by JOHN GIBBS
Date: 2020.03.31
17:43:00 -04'00' John Gibbs, Assistant Secretary, Acting, D

SUBJECT: Availability of Waivers of Community Planning and Development
(CPD) Grant Program and Consolidated Plan Requirements to
Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 and Mitigate Economic Impacts
Caused by COVID-19

PURPOSE

This memorandum explains the availability of waivers of certain regulatory requirements associated with several CPD grant programs to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to facilitate assistance to eligible communities and households economically impacted by COVID-19. This memorandum covers waivers of consolidated plan requirements for all CPD formula programs and program-specific waivers for the following CPD programs:

- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA);
- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG); and
- Continuum of Care (CoC).

This memorandum also announces a simplified notification process for recipients of these programs to use this waiver flexibility to expedite the delivery of assistance. CPD Field Office Directors, Deputy Directors, and Program Managers are instructed to inform CPD recipients operating within their jurisdictions of the content of this memorandum.

NOTIFICATION PROCESS

Recipients may use the waivers described in this memorandum to assist affected CPD program beneficiaries and CPD program eligible households to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to mitigate against the economic impact caused by COVID-19 for eligible households. To use the waiver flexibility provided in this memorandum, the recipient must provide notification in writing, either through mail or e-mail, to the CPD Director of the HUD Field Office serving its jurisdiction no less than two days before the recipient anticipates using the waiver flexibility. Further directions on notifying HUD can be found in Attachment #1.

WAIVER AUTHORITY

In December 2019, a new coronavirus known as SARS-CoV-2 was first detected in Wuhan, Hubie Province, People's Republic of China, causing outbreaks of the coronavirus disease COVID-

19 that has now spread globally. The first case was reported in the United States in January 2020. In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic and President Trump declared the outbreak a national emergency. During this time, the majority of states have declared states of emergency with most shutting down large gathering places and limiting the movement of their residents. As a consequence, many CPD recipients are facing challenges in ensuring appropriate shelter options are available for program participants who need to be separated from others because they are exhibiting symptoms, training staff on how to safely work with program participants and prevent spreading the virus, obtaining supplies to prevent the spread of the virus, and maintaining necessary staffing levels during the outbreak. Further, many program participants are suffering economic consequences from the mass shutdown of businesses and lack of availability of traditional mainstream benefits. A number of recipients have inquired about the availability of waivers of various CPD program requirements to facilitate assistance to program participants and prevent the spread of the virus.

In accordance with 24 CFR 5.110, HUD may, upon a determination of good cause and subject to statutory limitations, waive regulatory provisions. Additional regulatory waiver authority is provided in 24 CFR 91.600. These regulatory provisions provide HUD the authority to make waiver determinations for the ESG, CoC, and HOPWA Programs and consolidated planning requirements for all CPD formula programs.

WAIVER AVAILABILITY

To provide additional flexibility to communities to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and better assist individuals and families, including those experiencing homelessness infected with the virus or economically impacted by the virus, I hereby find good cause to provide the regulatory waivers below. To use each waiver, each recipient must follow the notification process described above and update its program records to include written documentation of the specific conditions that justify the recipient's use of the waiver, consistent with the justifications and applicability provisions below. Provisions that are not specifically waived remain in full effect.

CONTINUUM OF CARE PROGRAM

1. Fair Market Rent for Individual Units and Leasing Costs

Requirement:	Rent payments for individual units with leasing dollars may not exceed Fair Market Rent (FMR).
Citation:	24 CFR 578.49(b)(2)
Explanation:	The CoC Program regulation at 24 CFR 578.49(b)(2) prohibits a recipient from using grant funds for leasing to pay above FMR when leasing individual units, even if the rent is reasonable when compared to other similar, unassisted units.
Justification:	Waiving the limit on using grant leasing funds to pay above FMR for individual units above FMR, but not greater than the reasonable rent will

assist recipients in locating additional units to house individuals and families experiencing homelessness and reduce the spread and harm of COVID-19.

Applicability: The FMR restriction is waived for any lease executed by a recipient or subrecipient to provide transitional or permanent supportive housing during the 6-month period beginning on the date of this memorandum. The affected recipient or subrecipient must still ensure that rent paid for individual units that are leased with CoC Program leasing dollars meet the rent reasonableness standard in 24 CFR 578.49(b)(2).

2. Disability Documentation for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

Requirement: A recipient providing PSH must serve individual and families where one member of the household has a qualifying disability (for dedicated projects and DedicatedPlus projects that individual must be the head of household). Further, the recipient must document a qualifying disability of one of the household members. When documentation of disability is the intake worker's observation, the regulation requires the recipient to obtain additional confirming evidence within 45 days.

Citation: 24 CFR 578.103(a) and 24 CFR 578.103(a)(4)(i)(B)

Explanation: 24 CFR 578.103(a) requires recipients to maintain records providing evidence they met program requirements and 24 CFR 578.103(a)(4)(i)(B) establishes the requirements for documenting disability for individuals and families that meet the "chronically homeless" definition in 24 CFR 578.3. Acceptable evidence of disability includes intake-staff recorded observations of disability that, no later than 45 days from the application for assistance, is confirmed and accompanied by evidence in paragraphs 24 CFR 578.103(a)(4)(i)(B)(1), (2), (3), or (5). HUD is waiving the requirement to obtain additional evidence.

Justification: Waiving 24 CFR 578.103(a)(4)(i)(B)(4) as specified below will allow recipients to house people by relying on intake staff-recorded observation of disability while providing recipients' intake staff with additional time to confirm the disability. This will help households with observed disabilities to be housed quickly and obtain the necessary documentation once healthcare workers are no longer inundated by COVID-19 responses.

Applicability: The requirement that intake staff-recorded observation of disability be confirmed and accompanied by other evidence no later than 45 days from the application for assistance documentation requirement is waived for any program participants admitted into PSH funded by the CoC Program for the 6-month period beginning on the date of this memorandum.

Note: For the purposes of individuals and families housed in PSH from the date of

this memorandum until public health officials determine no additional special measures are necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19, a written certification by the individual seeking assistance that they have a qualifying disability is considered acceptable documentation approved by HUD under 24 CFR 578.103(a)(4)(i)(B)(5).

3. Limit on Eligible Housing Search and Counseling Services

Requirement: With respect to program participant's debts, 24 CFR 578.53(ed)(8)(ii)(B) only allows the costs of credit counseling, accessing a free personal credit report, and resolving personal credit issues. 24 CFR 578.53(d) limits the use of CoC Program funds for providing services to only those costs listed in the interim rule.

Citation: 24 CFR 578.53(e)(8)(ii)(B) and 578.53(d)

Explanation: 24 CFR 578.53(e)(8) allows recipients and subrecipients to use CoC funds to pay for housing search and counseling services to help eligible program participants locate, obtain, and retain suitable housing. For program participants whose debt problems make it difficult to obtain housing, 24 CFR 578.53(e)(8)(ii)(B) makes eligible the costs of credit counseling, accessing a free personal credit report, and resolving personal credit issues. However, payment of rental or utility arrears is not included as an eligible cost. 24 CFR 578.53(d) limits eligible supportive service costs to those explicitly listed in 24 CFR 578.53(e), which is a more limited list than is eligible under the McKinney-Vento Act.

Justification: Waiving the limitation of housing search and counseling eligible activities to allow recipients and subrecipients to pay for up to 6 months of rental arrears and 6 months of utility arrears will help recipients and subrecipients remove barriers to obtaining housing quickly and help reduce the spread and harm of COVID-19.

Applicability: The limitation on eligible housing search and counseling activities is waived so that CoC Program funds may be used for up to 6 months of a program participant's utility arrears and up to 6 months of program participant's rent arrears, when those arrears make it difficult to obtain housing. This waiver is in effect one-year beginning on the date of this memorandum.

4. Permanent Housing-Rapid Re-housing Monthly Case Management

Requirement: Recipients must require program participants of permanent housing – rapid re-housing projects to meet with a case manager at least monthly.

Citation: 24 CFR 578.37(a)(1)(ii)(F)

- Explanation:** The CoC Program interim rule at 24 CFR 578.37(a)(1)(ii)(F) requires program participants to meet with a case manager not less than once per month to assist them in ensuring long-term housing stability. The project is exempt from this requirement already if the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13925 *et seq.*) or the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (42 U.S.C. 10401 *et seq.*) prohibits the recipient carrying out the project from making its housing conditional on the participant's acceptance of services.
- Justification:** Recipients are reporting limited staff capacity as staff members are home for a variety of reasons related to COVID-19 (e.g., quarantining, children home from school, working elsewhere in the community to manage the COVID-19 response). In addition, not all program participants have capacity to meet via phone or internet. Waiving the monthly case management requirement as specified below will allow recipients to provide case management on an as-needed basis and reduce the possible spread and harm of COVID-19.
- Applicability:** This requirement in 24 CFR 578.37(a)(1)(ii)(F) that projects require program participants to meet with case managers not less than once per month is waived for all permanent housing- rapid re-housing projects for two months beginning on the date of this memorandum.

5. Housing Quality Standards (HQS) – Initial Physical Inspection of Unit

- Requirement:** Recipients are required to physically inspect any unit supported with leasing or rental assistance funds to assure that the unit meets housing quality standards (HQS) before any assistance will be provided on behalf of a program participant.
- Citation:** 24 CFR 578.75(b)(1)
- Explanation:** 24 CFR 578.75(b)(1) requires that recipients or subrecipients physically inspect each unit to assure that it meets HQS before any assistance will be provided for that unit on behalf of a program participant.
- Justification:** Waiving the physical initial inspection requirement 24 CFR 578.75(b)(1) as specified below will allow recipients to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Applicability:** This waiver of the requirement in 24 CFR 578.75(b)(1) that the recipient or subrecipient physically inspect each unit to assure that the unit meets HQS before providing assistance on behalf of a program participant is in effect for 6-months beginning on the date of this memorandum for recipients and subrecipients that are able to meet the following criteria:

- a. The recipient is able to visually inspect the unit using technology, such as video streaming, to ensure the unit meets HQS before any assistance is provided; and
- b. The recipient or subrecipient has written policies to physically re-inspect the unit within 3 months after the health officials determine special measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are no longer necessary.

6. HQS – Re-Inspection of Units

Requirement: Recipients or subrecipients must inspect all units for which leasing or rental assistance funds are used, at least annually to ensure they continue to meet HQS.

Citation: 24 CFR 578.75(b)(2)

Explanation: 24 CFR 578.75(b)(2) requires that recipients or subrecipients are required to inspect all units supported by leasing or rental assistance funding under the CoC Program at least annually during the grant period to ensure the units continue to meet HQS.

Justification: Waiving the annual re-inspection 24 CFR 578.75(b)(2) requirement during this public health crisis as specified below will help allow recipients to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Applicability: This requirement in 24 CFR 578(b)(2) is waived for 1-year beginning on the date of this memorandum.

7. One-Year Lease Requirement

Requirement: Program participants residing in PSH must be the tenant on a lease for a term of at least one year that is renewable and terminable for cause.

Citation: 24 CFR 578.3, definition of permanent housing, 24 CFR 578.51(l)(1)

Explanation: The CoC Program regulation at 24 CFR 578.3, definition of permanent housing, and 24 CFR 578.51(l)(1) requires program participants residing in permanent housing to be the tenant on a lease for a term of one year that is renewable and terminable for cause.

Justification: Waiving the one-year lease requirement as specified below will allow recipients to more quickly identify permanent housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, which is helpful in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Applicability: The one-year lease requirement is waived for six-months beginning on the

date of this memorandum, so long as the initial lease term of all leases is for more than one month.

CONSOLIDATED PLAN REQUIREMENTS

8. Citizen Participation Public Comment Period for Consolidated Plan Amendment

- Requirement:** 30-day Public Comment Period.
- Citations:** 24 CFR 91.105(c)(2) and (k), 24 CFR 91.115(c)(2) and (i) and 24 CFR 91.401
- Explanation:** A CPD grantee may amend an approved consolidated plan in accordance with 24 CFR 91.505. Substantial amendments to the consolidated plan are subject to the citizen participation process in the grantee's citizen participation plan. The citizen participation plan must provide citizens with 30 days to comment on substantial amendments.
- Justification:** Given the need to expedite actions to respond to COVID-19, HUD waives 24 CFR 91.105(c)(2) and (k), 91.115(c)(2) and (i) as specified below, in order to balance the need to respond quickly to the growing spread and effects of COVID-19 with the statutory requirement to provide reasonable notice and opportunity for citizens to comment on substantial amendments concerning the proposed uses of CDBG, HOME, HTF, HOPWA or ESG funds.
- Applicability:** This 30-day minimum for the required public comment period is waived for substantial amendments, provided that no less than 5 days are provided for public comments on each substantial amendment. The waiver is available through the end of the recipient's 2020 program year. Any recipient wishing to undertake further amendments to prior year plans following the 2020 program year can do so during the development of its FY 2021 Annual Action Plan.

9. Citizen Participation Reasonable Notice and Opportunity to Comment

- Requirement:** Reasonable Notice and Opportunity to Comment.
- Citations:** 24 CFR 91.105(c)(2) and (k), 24 CFR 91.115(c)(2) and (i) and 24 CFR 91.401
- Explanation:** As noted above, the regulations at 24 CFR 91.105 (for local governments) and 91.115 (for States) set forth the citizen participation plan requirements for recipients. For substantial amendments to the consolidated plan, the regulations require the recipient to follow its citizen participation plan to

provide citizens with reasonable notice and opportunity to comment. The citizen participation plan must state how reasonable notice and opportunity to comment will be given.

Justification: HUD recognizes the efforts to contain COVID-19 require limiting public gatherings, such as those often used to obtain citizen participation, and that there is a need to respond quickly to the growing spread and effects of COVID-19. Therefore, HUD waives 24 CFR 91.105(c)(2) and (k), 24 CFR 91.115(c)(2) and (i) and 24 CFR 91.401 as specified below to allow these grantees to determine what constitutes reasonable notice and opportunity to comment given their circumstances.

Applicability: This authority is in effect through the end of the 2020 program year.

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANTS PROGRAM

10. HMIS Lead Activities

Requirement: ESG funds may be used to pay the costs of managing and operating the HMIS, provided that the ESG recipient is the HMIS Lead.

Citation: 24 CFR 576.107(a)(2)

Explanation: To enable ESG-funded projects to participate in HMIS as required by section 416(f) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 24 CFR 576.107(a)(2) authorizes the use of ESG funds for managing and operating the HMIS (e.g., hosting and maintaining HMIS software or data, upgrading, customizing, and enhancing the HMIS), only where the ESG recipient is the HMIS Lead, as designated by the CoC.

Justification: Waiving the rule as specified below would allow more recipients to use ESG funding to upgrade or enhance the HMIS as needed to incorporate ESG program data related to COVID-19.

Applicability: The condition that the recipient must be the HMIS Lead to pay costs under 24 CFR 576.102(a)(2) is waived to the extent necessary to allow any recipient to use ESG funds to pay costs of upgrading or enhancing its local HMIS to incorporate data on ESG Program participants and ESG activities related to COVID-19. This waiver is in effect for 6-months beginning on the date of this memorandum.

11. Re-evaluations for Homelessness Prevention Assistance

Requirement: Homelessness prevention assistance is subject to re-evaluation of each program participant's eligibility need for assistance not less than once every 3 months.

- Citation:** 24 CFR 576.401(b)
- Explanation:** The ESG regulations at 24 CFR 576.401(b) requires recipients or subrecipients providing homelessness prevention assistance to re-evaluate the program participant's eligibility, and the types and amounts of assistance the program participant needs not less than once every 3 months.
- Justification:** Waiving re-evaluation requirement for homelessness prevention assistance as specified below is necessary to help program participants remain stable in housing during the economic uncertainty caused by COVID-19.
- Applicability:** The required frequency of re-evaluations for homelessness prevention assistance under section 576.401(b) is waived for up to 2-years beginning on the date of this memorandum, so long as the recipient or subrecipient conducts the required re-evaluations not less than once every 6 months.

12. Housing Stability Case Management

- Requirement:** Program participants receiving homelessness prevention or rapid re-housing assistance must meet with a case manager not less than once per month, unless certain statutory prohibitions apply.
- Citation:** 24 CFR 576.401(e)
- Explanation:** Under 24 CFR 576.401(e), the recipients or subrecipients must require program participants to meet with a case manager not less than once per month to assist them in ensuring long-term housing stability, unless the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 or Family Violence Prevention and Services Act prohibits the recipient or subrecipient from making its shelter or housing conditional on the participant's acceptance of services.
- Justification:** Recipients are reporting limited staff capacity as staff members are home for a variety of reasons related to COVID-19 (e.g., quarantining, children home from school, working elsewhere in the community to manage the COVID-19 response). In addition, not all program participants have capacity to meet via phone or internet. Waiving the monthly case management requirement as specified below will allow recipients to provide case management on an as needed basis and reduce the possible spread and harm of COVID-19.
- Applicability:** This waiver is in effect for two months beginning on the date of this memorandum.

13. Restriction of Rental Assistance to Units with Rent at or Below FMR

- Requirement:** Restriction of rental assistance to units with rent at or below FMR.

- Citation:** 24 CFR 576.106(d)(1)
- Explanation:** Under 24 CFR 576.106(d)(1), rental assistance cannot be provided unless the total rent is equal to or less than the FMR established by HUD, as provided under 24 CFR Part 888, and complies with HUD's standard of rent reasonableness, as established under 24 CFR 982.507.
- Justification:** Quickly moving people into permanent housing is especially critical in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Waiving the limit on rental assistance to rents that are equal to or less than the FMR, established by HUD, will assist recipients and subrecipients in more quickly locating additional units to house individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
- Applicability:** The FMR restriction is waived for any individual or family receiving Rapid Re-housing or Homelessness Prevention assistance who executes a lease for a unit during the 6-month period beginning on the date of this memorandum. The ESG recipient or subrecipient must still ensure that the units in which ESG assistance is provided to these individuals and families meet the rent reasonableness standard.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH AIDS (HOPWA)

14. HOPWA – Self-Certification of Income and Credible Information on HIV Status

- Requirement:** Source Documentation for Income and HIV Status Determinations.
- Citation:** 24 CFR 574.530, Recordkeeping
- Explanation:** Each grantee must maintain records to document compliance with HOPWA requirements, which includes determining the eligibility of a family to receive HOPWA assistance.
- Justification:** This waiver will permit HOPWA grantees and project sponsors to rely upon a family member's self-certification of income and credible information on their HIV status (such as knowledge of their HIV-related medical care) in lieu of source documentation to determine eligibility for HOPWA assistance of families and grantees affected by COVID-19.
- Applicability:** Eligibility is restricted to a low-income person who is living with HIV/AIDS and the family of such person. This waiver is in effect for recipients who require written certification of the household seeking assistance of their HIV status and income, and agree to obtain source documentation of HIV status and income eligibility within 3 months of public health officials determining no additional special measures are necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

15. HOPWA – FMR Rent Standard

- Requirement:** Rent Standard for Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA).
- Citation:** 24 CFR 574.320(a)(2), Rent Standard
- Explanation:** Grantees must establish rent standards for their tenant-based rental assistance programs based on FMR (Fair Market Rent) or the HUD-approved community-wide exception rent for unit size. Generally, the TBRA payment may not exceed the difference between the rent standard and 30 percent of the family's adjusted income.
- Justification:** This waiver of the FMR rent standard limit permits HOPWA grantees to establish rent standards, by unit size, that are reasonable, and based upon rents being charged for comparable unassisted units in the area, taking into account the location, size, type, quality, amenities, facilities, management and maintenance of each unit. Grantees, however, are required to ensure the reasonableness of rent charged for a unit in accordance with §574.320(a)(3).
- This waiver is required to expedite efforts to identify suitable housing units for rent to HOPWA beneficiaries and HOPWA-eligible families that have been affected by COVID-19, and to provide assistance to families that must rent units at rates that exceed the HOPWA grantee's normal rent standard as calculated in accordance with §574.320(a)(2).
- Applicability:** Such rent standards may be used for up to one year beginning on the date of this memorandum.

16. HOPWA – Property Standards for TBRA

- Requirement:** Property Standards for Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)
- Citation:** 24 CFR 574.310(b), Housing Quality Standards
- Explanation:** This section of the HOPWA regulations provides that units occupied by recipients of HOPWA TBRA meet the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) established in this section.
- Justification:** This waiver is required to enable grantees and project sponsors to expeditiously meet the critical housing needs of the many eligible families that have been affected by COVID-19 while also minimizing the spread of the coronavirus.
- Applicability:** This waiver is in effect for one year beginning on the date of this memorandum for recipients and project sponsors that are able to meet the

following criteria:

- a. The recipient or project sponsor is able to visually inspect the unit using technology, such as video streaming, to ensure the unit meets HQS before any assistance is provided; and
- b. The recipient or subrecipient has written policies to physically re-inspect the unit after the health officials determine special measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are no longer necessary.

17. HOPWA Space and Security

Requirement: Adequate Space and Security.

Citation: 24 CFR 574.310(b)(2)(iii), Space and security

Explanation: This section of the HOPWA regulations provide that each resident must be afforded adequate space and security for themselves and their belongings.

Justification: This waiver is required to enable grantees and project sponsors operating housing facilities and shared housing arrangements the flexibility to use optional appropriate spaces for quarantine services of eligible households affected by COVID-19. Optional spaces may include the placement of families in a hotel/motel room where family members may be required to utilize the same space not allowing for adequate space and security for themselves and their belongings.

Applicability: This space and security requirement is waived for grantees addressing appropriate quarantine space for affected eligible households during the allotted quarantined time frame recommended by local health care professionals.

Attachment #1 to Memorandum:

Procedure for Using Available Waivers of Program and Consolidated Plan Requirements to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 and Mitigate Economic Impacts Caused by COVID-19

This attachment provides further information on the process that grantees must follow to use the waiver flexibility provided in the memorandum.

Grantees must mail or email notification to the Community Planning and Development Director of the HUD Field Office serving the grantee.

The mail or email notification must be sent two days before the grantee anticipates using waiver flexibility, and include the following details:

- Requestor's name, title, and contact information;
- Declared-disaster area(s) where the waivers will be used;
- Date on which the grantee anticipates first use of the waiver flexibility; and
- A list of the waiver flexibilities the grantee will use:
 1. CoC Program - Fair Market Rent for Individual Units and Leasing Costs
 2. CoC Program - Disability Documentation for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)
 3. CoC Program – Limit on Eligible Housing Search and Counseling Services
 4. CoC Program - Permanent Housing-Rapid Re-housing Monthly Case Management
 5. CoC Program - Housing Quality Standards (HQS) – Initial Physical Inspection of Unit
 6. CoC Program - HQS – Re-Inspection of Units
 7. CoC Program – One-Year Lease Requirement
 8. Consolidated Planning Requirements – HOME, CDBG, HTF, ESG, and HOPWA Programs – Citizen Participation Public Comment Period for Consolidated Plan Amendment
 9. Consolidated Planning Requirements – HOME, CDBG, HTF, ESG, and HOPWA Programs – Citizen Participation Reasonable Notice and Opportunity to Comment
 10. ESG Program - HMIS Lead Activities
 11. ESG Program - Re-evaluations for Homelessness Prevention Assistance
 12. ESG Program - Housing Stability Case Management
 13. ESG Program - Restriction of Rental Assistance to Units with Rent at or Below FMR
 14. HOPWA Program – Self-Certification of Income and Credible Information on HIV Status
 15. HOPWA Program – FMR Rent Standard
 16. HOPWA Program – Property Standards for TBRA
 17. HOPWA Program - Space and Security