



**To:** HSP Leads  
**From:** Sheila Parkins, OHCS HSP Program Analyst  
**Date:** 3/18/2020

**Please distribute to:**  Executive Directors  Fiscal Staff  Homeless Services Program Staff  
 Rental Assistance Program Staff

**Category:** Program Informational

**Update For:** HSP COVID-19 Program Information

**Message:**

- 1) We understand that many agencies are implementing some measures to limit in-person contacts. If you are using an alternative method for service delivery and since referrals remain the best way to use HSP dollars, we are recommending that referrals take place through phone conferencing. We recommend that the CAAs and Districts set up a regular time each day to connect with one another on verbal referrals. If you amend your collaboration plan to include this alternative method, you do not need to receive approval from OHCS to do so, you may go ahead and implement that process. If you have a unique situation that you would like to discuss, please let me know.

APPROVED REFERRAL PROCESS FOR AMENDMENT OF COLLABORATION PLANS:

To complete the documentation requirement for a verbal referral, the CAA will need to ensure that every field of the referral form is completed and that instead of the DHS contact's signature, the CAA can write "verified by phone by [name of DHS contact] on [date] and [time]". CAAs will still need to communicate their portion of the form via telephone as well, such as confirming what payments have been made and for what purpose.

If CAAs are at the point where they have no priority TANF recipients to serve through referrals and are serving TANF-eligible recipients, documentation of eligibility requirements will still need to be in the file; however, those may come via electronic means such as email or fax or we would even accept a phone photo of the documentation by the client and have it texted to the CAA either via email or through text. The CAA could then print the picture for the file. Printing of documentation to include in the file could also happen at a later date as long as it is included in the file after the COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted.

- 2) Spending of funds: A couple of agencies have met their spend-down projections, most have not. Many are under 50% expended. We understand that while the limitation of office hours or in-person contacts could further slow the expenditure of funds, most likely agencies will actually see an influx of people in need for the very same reasons. Please be as flexible as possible during this period of time and ensure that clients are getting the maximum amount of funds they need to stabilize their housing situation. Please also be sure to submit request for funds as quickly as possible as the length of time of time for disbursement of funds may see a bit of a delay because of limited staff and we want to ensure that agency have enough funds to meet their obligations.



If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. For more information about OHCS' response to COVID-19, along with a central location for pertinent information, please go to our website at:

<https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/Pages/agency-covid19-resources.aspx>

Thank you all for your continued commitment to helping those in need.

**For More Information Contact:**

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