

Housing Stabilization Program (HSP)

July 1, 2023



Housing Stabilization Program Operations Manual

Contacts

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1. Program Summary

The strategic delivery of the Housing Stabilization Program (HSP) can:

- Quickly identify and engage people at risk of and experiencing homelessness while including data sharing strategies that are aimed to improve service delivery and coordination at the ground level;
- Prevent people from losing their housing and divert people from entering the homelessness service system;
- Provide people with immediate access to services while prioritizing interventions that are aligned with a Housing First model to connect people with permanent and individualized housing solutions that include robust wrap-around services; and
- Quickly connect people experiencing homelessness to housing assistance and services tailored to their unique needs and strengths to help them achieve and maintain stable housing.

HSP provides temporary financial assistance and support services to stabilize the housing of low income eligible families who are homeless or unstably housed.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) federal funds are provided for one of the following four purposes:

- a) assisting needy families, so that children can be cared for in their own homes;
- b) reducing the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage;
- c) preventing out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and
- d) encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Pursuant to 45 CFR 260.31 and through an Interagency Agreement with Oregon Department of Human Services (OODHS), the Housing Stabilization Program assists the TANF program meet its specific purpose of assisting eligible needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes, with non-recurrent, short-term benefits that:

- Deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need; AND
- Are not intended to meet recurrent or ongoing needs; AND
- Will not extend beyond 120 days from the date of the first HSP assistance payment.

HSP requires subgrantees to identify and match grant funds with TANF Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds in an amount identified in the funding application. TANF MOE funds must not originate with the federal government and are not expended as a condition of receiving federal funds under another program. See more information regarding MOE in this manual.

Appendices are included in this manual for common definitions and acronyms, as well as rules and regulations associated with the program.

2. General Program Requirements

(A) ***System Wide Performance Requirements***

The Oregon Legislative Fiscal office adopted a set of criteria that agencies must meet when developing key performance measures. In alignment with the federal and state strategic plans to end homelessness, OHCS has established the following key performance measure:

- Percentage of homeless households who exited into permanent housing and retained that housing for six months or longer. (Statewide target 80%).

This key performance measure uses HMIS as the primary data source.

(B) ***Duplication of Benefits***

Per the subgrantee's grant agreement/contract Standard Terms and Condition, OHCS funds shall not be issued if it duplicates a benefit already paid through other sources. If a duplicate payment is made, subgrantee has thirty (30) days in which to return the duplicative payment. Subgrantees and subrecipients must check to ensure that benefits issued do not duplicate other benefits for the same payment/service using HMIS and any other data system for which the subgrantee or subrecipient have access.

Subgrantees must have a stand-alone policy that identifies:

- 1) How they will ensure benefits are not duplicated; and
- 2) What system(s) they use to check for duplicated benefits.

Subgrantees must ensure that subrecipients have policies that align with OHCS requirements and are consistent with the intent of such a policy as outlined by OHCS. OHCS retains the right to require modification of any policy that in its determination does not meet basic principles or requirements of such a policy.

(B) ***Limited English Proficiency***

The Federal government has issued a series of policy documents, guides and regulations describing how subgrantees and subrecipients address the needs of persons who have limited English proficiency (LEP). The abbreviated definition of persons with limited English proficiency is those who: have difficulty reading, writing, speaking, or understanding English, and do not use English as their primary language.

Subgrantees must have a LEP stand-alone policy that describes the following:

- The actions subgrantees took to identify LEP populations in their service area and cites any source(s) used for evaluation;
- Defines actions subgrantee will take to provide language assistance and address language barriers;
- States how and how often staff will receive training about assisting LEP persons; and

- Identifies that, minimally, LEP populations are evaluated biennially and that updates to the LEP Policy incorporates any needed changes to address new or emerging LEP populations.

Subgrantees must ensure that subrecipients have policies that align with OHCS requirements and are consistent with the intent of such a policy as outlined by OHCS. OHCS retains the right to require modification of any policy that in its determination does not meet basic principles or requirements of such a policy.

Subgrantees and subrecipients can create a written Language Access Plan (LAP) to provide a framework to document how the agency's programs will be accessible to all populations in their service area. Subgrantees and subrecipients who serve few persons needing LEP assistance can choose not to establish a LAP; however, the absence of a written LAP does not release subgrantee's and subrecipient's obligation to ensure LEP persons have access to programs or activities.

Links to more information about Limited English Proficiency requirements are provided in the appendices "Applicable Rules and Regulations".

(C) *Release of Information*

Personally identifiable information is protected by federal laws (Privacy Act of 1974, as amended) and will be collected for the purpose of determining program eligibility, providing assistance/service, data collection, reporting and monitoring. Personally identifiable information will be shared with Oregon Housing and Community Services as is necessary to carry out the intent of an assistance or service program for the benefit of the person applying for such assistance or service and will be disclosed to Oregon Housing and Community Services without written authorization.

As personally identifiable information will also be shared with Oregon Department of Human Services, Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs and Oregon Health Authority as part of the information sharing agreement with OHCS for administering programs with the same or similar clients or populations, participants must sign a Release of Information; however, refusal to sign such authorization cannot be the basis for denying program services to otherwise eligible participants. Participant refusal to sign a Release of Information does not negate the inclusion of personally identifiable in secure reporting to Oregon Housing and Community Services. Oregon Housing and Community Services will de-identify participant demographic data for the purposes of reporting.

Subgrantees and their subrecipients are required to have a signed agency Release of Information form for each adult member of the identified household authorizing the release of information pertinent to determining program eligibility, providing assistance/service and other relevant need for sharing information. Each adult member must complete and sign their own ROI privately and ROIs cannot be shared with other household members. Unaccompanied youth who are the head of household must also have a signed Release of Information form on file. Release forms must be time-limited and specific as to with whom and what information will be shared.

The Oregon Housing and Community Services and Oregon Department of Human Services, are required to be listed as entities with which participant information will be shared as it pertains to data collection and monitoring (including third-party audits and reviews), although this requirement does mean they must be listed on the same form and subgrantee/subrecipient can use separate forms for this purpose.

In addition, any Release of Information form for the purpose of releasing information to OHCS and ODHS must include the option of alternative formats including native languages, Braille, large print, computer disk and oral presentation. The MSC3010 form from ODHS meets this obligation. The form can be found on the ODHS website.

Participant refusal to sign a Release of Information must be documented, dated, and kept in the participant file. Participant refusal to sign such authorization **cannot** be the basis for denying program services to otherwise eligible participants.

(D) Confidentiality

ODHS has determined that the HSP directly relates to the administration of the TANF public assistance programs. TANF confidentiality rules apply to participants who receive HSP services and TANF benefits (see Applicable Rules and Requirements appendix of this manual).

Confidential records include all applications, records, files, and communications relating to applicants and participants of, OHCS funded services regardless of hard-copy or electronic format.

Subgrantees must have a stand-alone policy for the confidentiality of applicant/participant records. Such policy must include:

- 1) Identifies how all applicant/participants records are secure and confidentially maintained;
- 2) A statement that all applicant/participant records must be maintained within state guidelines for the proper retention and destruction of records;
- 3) A requirement that all subgrantee officers, employees and agents are aware of and comply with the subgrantees' confidentiality policy and must include an acknowledgement of such policy, in writing;
- 4) A provision for the electronic collection of applicant/participant information which states that:
 - Computer terminals must be located in a secure location, limiting access to only those persons who have a legitimate interest in and are responsible for applicant/participant records;
 - Computer monitors must be cleared (or a screen saver activated) immediately after accessing a(n) applicant/participant record;
 - Computer terminals must be on a "locked" mode or turned off if the terminal is unattended; and

- Access to personally identifiable HMIS data shall be given to only authorized personnel as necessary for performing the work required for OHCS-funded programs; and
- 5) A statement that all records shall be open for review to federal and state authorized representatives, and auditors and/or examiners during their regular audits and monitoring functions of OHCS funded programs.

Subgrantees must ensure that subrecipients have policies that align with OHCS requirements and are consistent with the intent of such a policy as outlined by OHCS. OHCS retains the right to require modification of any policy that in its determination does not meet basic principles or requirements of such a policy.

(E) Conflict of Interest

In the performance of work under HSP, subgrantees and subrecipients will create no potential or actual conflict of interest, as defined by ORS Chapter 244, for a director, officer, agent, or employee of subgrantee or subrecipient. A conflict of interest exists if, among other things, a decision or recommendation could affect the finances of the subgrantee or subrecipient's officers, agents or employees or the finances of their officer's, agent's, or employees' relative. If a conflict of interest exists, the subgrantee or subrecipient's officer, agent or employee must always give written notice of the conflict, and in some situations the officer, agent or employee is restricted in their ability to participate in the matter that presents the conflict of interest. No subgrantee or subrecipient officer, agency or employee may carry out the initial evaluation required to obtain services for any person in which an actual or perceived conflict of interest does or would exist, unless in rare circumstances it is in the interest of the participant for the expediency of housing placement services or to create a seamless service delivery while keeping the participant engaged in services and such situation is documented in the participant file.

Subgrantee must have a conflict of interest policy that outlines the process for disclosing, in writing, any potential or actual conflict of interest. This includes procedures for staff when employees, board members, friends or family members apply for program services. Subgrantees and subrecipients must comply with conflict of interest standards for both individuals and organizations as identified in 24 CFR 576.404(a), 24 CFR 85.36, and 24 CFR 84.42. Subgrantee and subrecipient must keep records to show compliance with program conflict of interest requirements.

(1) Organizational

The provision of any type or amount of assistance must not be conditioned on an individual's or household's acceptance or occupancy of emergency shelter or housing owned by subgrantee, subrecipient or an affiliated organization. Conflict of interest waivers regarding rent assistance and rental agreement requirements can only be approved by OHCS. If a subgrantee or subrecipient wishes to apply for a waiver, they must contact the OHCS homeless program analyst or manager for guidance in submission of a waiver request, which must be approved by OHCS.

A subgrantee and subrecipient can conduct a participant's intake assessment to determine program eligibility if the participant resides in housing where the subgrantee or subrecipient has ownership interest for the expediency of housing placement services and to create seamless service delivery while keeping the participant engaged in services. A waiver of the conflict of interest policy for this purpose is not required.

Subgrantees and subrecipients cannot steer potential renters to units owned or operated by the subgrantee or subrecipient, if the renters will be using a rent subsidy paid with any OHCS funds. Rent-subsidized tenants are free to execute a rental contract with another landlord within the subgrantee or subrecipient's jurisdiction or they can choose to rent a unit owned or operated by the subgrantee or subrecipient. A waiver request is not required for this situation; however, subgrantees and subrecipients must comply with this provision of the conflict of interest policy.

(2) Individual

For the procurement of goods and services, subgrantee and subrecipient must comply with the codes of conduct and conflict of interest requirements under 24 CFR 85.36 (for governments) or 24 CFR 84.42 (for private nonprofit organizations).

Persons for whom the conflict of interest requirements apply include any person who is an employee, agent, consultant, officer or elected or appointed official of the subgrantee or subrecipient agency. No person who exercises or has exercised any functions or responsibilities with respect to activities assisted under the programs, or who is in a position to participate in decision-making processes or gain inside information with regard to activities assisted under the programs, can obtain a financial interest or benefit from an assisted activity; have a financial interest in any contract, subcontract or agreement with respect to an assisted activity; or have a financial interest in the proceeds derived from an assisted activity, either for him or herself or for those with whom he or she has a family or business tie, during his or her tenure or during the one-year period following his or her tenure.

Subgrantee must have a Conflict of Interest stand-alone policy that complies with the following:

- 1) States that subgrantees officers, agents or employees will create no perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest;
- 2) Identifies how officers, agents and employees are notified of policy;
- 3) Outlines the process for disclosing, in writing, any potential or actual conflict of interest;
- 4) Identifies the process the subgrantee will follow when notice of a perceived, potential, or actual conflict of interest is received and must include procedures for staff when employees, board members, friends or family members apply for program services; and

- 5) Identifies how records are kept of perceived, potential, or actual conflicts of interest.

Subgrantees must ensure that subrecipients have policies that align with OHCS requirements and are consistent with the intent of such a policy as outlined by OHCS. OHCS retains the right to require modification of any policy that in its determination does not meet basic principles or requirements of such a policy.

(F) *Grievances and Appeals*

Subgrantees are required to have an established, written stand-alone policy for addressing applicant/participant grievances/appeal requests. Subgrantees must ensure that subrecipients have policies that align with OHCS requirements and are consistent with the intent of such a policy as outlined by OHCS. Applicants/Participants must have the right and opportunity to grieve/appeal any decision that terminates, denies, limits, reduces or modifies benefits for any reason. Applicants/Participants must be notified of their right for a grievance or appeal of such decision and subgrantee/subrecipient policy must clarify how and when applicants/participants are notified of their right to grieve/appeal decisions. Such grievance/appeal policy can be posted in a public place; however, applicants/participants **must** receive a written notification for any decision that terminates, denies, limits, reduces or modifies any benefit. Applicants/Participants must still receive a denial notice in writing even if the reason for denial is a subgrantee's/subrecipient's lack of funding. At a minimum, the policy must include the following components:

- Informs the participant/applicant that they can contest any subgrantee's or subrecipient's decision that terminates, denies, limits, reduces or modifies any benefits and identifies the steps to follow to contest the decision;
- Informs the participant/applicant of the reason for termination, denial, limitation, reduction or modification of benefit;
- Allows any aggrieved person a minimum of thirty (30) days within which to request an administrative review/appeal of such decision;
- Informs the applicant/participant of their right to present written or oral objections before a person other than the person (or a subordinate of that person) who made or approved the decision;
- Informs the applicant/participant and OHCS in writing of the final determination and basis for the decision within ten (10) days of the final determination; and
- Identifies what reasonable accommodations are available for participants/applicants who have language, mobility or disability barriers that would prevent them from participating in the review/appeal process and how to request such accommodations.

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

OHCS retains the right to require modification of any policy that in its determination does not meet basic principles or requirement for such a policy.

(G) Nondiscrimination

Subgrantees are required to comply with all state and federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination and must have a stand-alone policy that complies with the following.

- 1) A statement that subgrantee will comply with all state, federal or local statutes, rules and guidelines for all protected classes and will not take any of the following actions based on race, color, national origin, age, religion, gender, familial status, or disability (federal) or victims of domestic violence, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or source of income (state):
 - Refuse to accept an application for housing assistance or services
 - Deny an application for housing assistance or services
 - Set different terms, conditions or privileges for housing assistance or services
 - Provide different or specific housing, facilities or services
 - Falsely deny that housing is available for inspection or rental or that services are available
 - Deny anyone access to a facility or service; and
- 2) Identifies how applicants or participants can request reasonable accommodation to access assistance or services, how that process is communicated to applicants and participants and how those requests are processed.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination based on protected classes in the housing activities of advertising, screening, and unit rentals. Using a target population in screening is allowed; however, refusal to accept applications or provide information on services or available housing to any protected class, even if these groups do not fit into your targeting strategy is prohibited. TANF recipients are a target population for HSP and **must** receive priority for the delivery of financial assistance and/or services.

Screening criteria cannot be discriminatory and must be consistently applied. For example, a provider might decide to give priority to applicants/participants who graduate from a tenant readiness education program that is inclusive of all protected classes. If two requests come in at the same time and both meet the screening criteria, the applicant/participant who also has the tenant readiness education experience could receive priority over the applicant who does not; however, providers must always accept the first request meeting their criteria or prioritization policy.

Subgrantees must ensure that subrecipients have policies that align with OHCS requirements and are consistent with the intent of such a policy as outlined by OHCS. OHCS retains the right to require modification of any policy that in its determination does not meet basic principles or requirements of such a policy.

For more information, see the Fair Housing Council of Oregon's website at: www.fhco.org.

(H) *Monitoring*

OHCS will conduct a program monitoring of subgrantees once every two fiscal years or more frequently at OHCS' discretion. OHCS program monitoring may include desk audit, site visit and/or site visit with subrecipients. Fiscal monitoring will be conducted once every two fiscal years unless circumstances and/or risk assessment require less or more frequent monitoring at OHCS' discretion. Subgrantees will be notified thirty (30) days in advance of the monitoring visit and informed of what documents and records will be reviewed and any required staff or Board interviews. OHCS will provide subgrantees with a written monitoring report inclusive of any findings, concerns, or comments. Subgrantees are required to submit timely corrective action to findings and failure to do so can result in the withholding of funds or a requirement to return HSP funds to OHCS or other remedies as described in the subgrantee's grant agreement/contract.

Subgrantees must notify and receive approval from OHCS when adding subrecipients and/or renewing subrecipients. Notification and approval normally occur during the subgrantee's grant agreement/contract funding application process. However, if changes are made outside of the funding application, subgrantees must submit an Implementation Report Amendment Request form for approval of subrecipient additions, deletions, or modifications within 30 days of such change.

(I) *Subrecipient Monitoring*

For the purposes of this operations manual the term "subrecipient" shall mean any subgrantee's subcontractors, contractors, vendor, subrecipients and any subcontractors, contractors, vendors or subrecipients of a subcontractor, contractor, vendor or subrecipient. Subrecipients must follow program intent, rules, and guidelines for the expenditure of funds.

All subrecipients must comply with all applicable program rules and regulations as noted in this manual, the subgrantee's grant agreement/contract and Program Element: Scope of Work. Records of subrecipient monitoring performed by the subgrantee or subrecipient will be reviewed during OHCS monitoring. Subrecipient monitoring reports must be retained by the subgrantee and available for review by OHCS or other authorized entity, in compliance with program rules.

At least once during each biennium, Subgrantee must monitor the activities and expenditures of its subrecipients to ensure:

- 1) compliance with subgrantee's grant agreement/contract and program rules and requirements; and
- 2) achievement of performance goals.

Subgrantee's monitoring of its subrecipients must include:

- 1) an evaluation of each subrecipient's risk of non-compliance with rules, regulations, and terms and conditions of any applicable subaward for purposes of determining the appropriate level and type of subrecipient monitoring;
- 2) a review of financial and performance reports;
- 3) a review of subrecipient policies and procedures, forms, documentation, client records including eligibility, notifications and documentation;
- 4) a review of participant records to ensure compliance with security, maintenance, retention and destruction of records; and
- 5) follow-up on all deficiencies pertaining to any OHCS funding in accordance with all program rules and regulations.

Subgrantees must have a stand-alone policy that identifies the following:

- (1) Frequency of subrecipient monitoring, which must be minimally once during a biennium or the term of the subgrantee's grant agreement/contract;
- (2) The number of relevant samplings of fiscal transactions per program;
- (3) The number of relevant samplings of participant files and that such review includes eligibility, notification and documentation;
- (4) The number of relevant samplings of HMIS entries to ensure appropriate entry and tracking of participant information and service transactions;
- (5) A review of participant records to ensure compliance with security, maintenance, retention, and destruction of records; and
- (6) A review of subrecipient's policies and procedures, forms, documents and notifications to ensure compliance with all program, state and federal rules, regulations and requirements.

OHCS retains the right to require modification of any policy that in its determination does not meet basic principles or requirements of such a policy.

3. Additional HSP Requirements

(A) *TANF Collaboration*

Communication between ODHS staff and subgrantees/subrecipients administering HSP is fundamental to maximizing housing-related assistance for families in a more holistic approach while avoiding duplication of benefits or services.

Collaboration with ODHS case managers is required for the period of time in which HSP funds are available for expenditure. Subgrantees/subrecipients must track all participants served with HSP funds, including all ODHS referrals related to HSP funding and coordinate with their local ODHS offices to write and sign a collaboration plan that is submitted through the subgrantee's grant agreement/contract Funding Application.

Subgrantees must securely send to their local district office or share in co-case planning meetings with their local district office, the HSP Referral Tracking and Quarterly Provider Report (tracking sheet) at a frequency identified in the Collaboration Plan and must use the template, in form and format, provided by OHCS. If any modifications to

the template tracking sheet are desired, they must be prior approved by OHCS **before use**.

OHCS makes available a Collaboration Plan template to subgrantees that **must be used** as part of the subgrantee's grant agreement/contract Funding Application.

Collaboration Plans:

- Must be submitted and approved by OHCS through the subgrantee's grant agreement/contract Funding Application;
- Must be developed in cooperation with Subgrantee and local ODHS District staff and must be signed and approved by both entities and must include the identification of any subrecipients, if subgrantee further contracts the delivery of HSP funds to subrecipients;
- Must include names, email addresses, and phone numbers of Subgrantee (and subrecipients, if applicable) and ODHS personnel responsible for the development and delivery of the collaboration plan. This can be multiple people; however, the main point of contact for communication with OHCS must be identified for all entities;
- Must describe how the subgrantee/subrecipient will work with their local ODHS branch(es) to co-case manage clients;
- Must describe how the subgrantee/subrecipient will communicate their TANF participant list and/or referral tracking sheet to their local ODHS branch(es);
- Must describe the frequency of communication, which must occur at a monthly minimum while subgrantees/subrecipients have HSP funding available; and
- Must describe the method of communication between the subgrantee/subrecipient and their local ODHS branch(es) (include details for specificity, such as dates/times of meetings, how they occur either phone/zoom or in-person, who is responsible for scheduling, and what information will be shared).

Collaboration Plans must include information on Referrals as identified below:

REFERRALS:

- Must describe the referral process (include details for specificity, such as how are referrals sent, how is contact made with client and are there expectations of the participant for response);
- Must describe the timelines for how quickly the subgrantee/subrecipient and local branch(es) will respond to referrals;
- Must describe how actions taken on referrals will be communicated between the subgrantee/subrecipient and the local ODHS branch(es);
- Must describe how the subgrantee/subrecipient will address a crisis need if the frequency of working with their local branch(es) is later than the time needed to address the client's situation; and
- Must include a plan when/if the number of referrals exceed the subgrantee's/subrecipient's capacity to take action on the referrals.

Collaboration Plans must include information on Transportation as identified below:

TRANSPORTATION:

- Must describe how the subgrantee/subrecipient will address serving clients with transportation issues, if clients are unable to access the subgrantee's/subrecipient's physical location; and
- Must describe how such transportation options are communicated to clients.

(B) Case Files

Documentation of participant eligibility and services received must be maintained in printed form or electronically saved and with participant case files. Files for applicants found to be ineligible for assistance or for participants who are no longer eligible to receive assistance documentation must include why they are ineligible and how that was determined and how the applicant/participant was notified of their ineligibility. File documentation will be the basis of OHCS monitoring to ensure subgrantee and subrecipient comply with program requirements and regulations.

(C) Client Service or Housing Stability Plan

Case management is one of the primary services offered to individuals and families who face multiple challenges, including severe mental illness, addiction, and homelessness. Effective case management includes **assessment, planning, implementation, coordination, and evaluation**. Best practices in case management skills are available on the OHCS Homeless Services Section dashboard.

For those clients receiving case management and/or more than one-time only services the development of a client service or housing stability plan (action plan) is required. Additionally, in cases in which, based on the assistance or services provided, where it is a requirement of the program, a client service or housing stability plan (action plan) can also be required. Plans are required to be client driven, using input and goal setting by the client.

Client Service or Housing Stability plans can include a specific, simplified assessment related to housing barriers. A *Barriers to Housing Stability Assessment/Plan* is available in the sample forms located on the OHCS website.

Use of existing assessments and active case plans with ODHS and other providers is encouraged and can be used and included in the participant file to help meet this requirement. Subgrantees and subrecipients can request copies of assessments and case plans from ODHS for those participants receiving TANF.

(D) Criminal Records Check

Subgrantee, subrecipient agencies and subrecipient organization's subrecipients must verify that any employee working with HSP households do not have a conviction of child abuse, offenses against persons, sexual offenses, child neglect, or other offense

bearing a substantial relation to the qualifications, functions or duties of an employee scheduled to work with HSP households.

“Criminal records check” means obtaining and reviewing criminal records and includes any or all of the following for at least the state of Oregon:

- (1) Obtain an Oregon criminal records check from Oregon State Police (OSP) using the Law Enforcement Data System (LEDS). The Oregon criminal records check may also include a review of other criminal information [<https://www.oregon.gov/osp/programs/cjis/pages/cch.aspx>];
- (2) Request a national criminal records check where criminal records are obtained from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) through the use of fingerprint cards and other identifying information sent to OSP; or
- (3) Obtain a state-specific criminal record check from law enforcement agencies, courts, or other criminal records information resources located in, or regarding, a state or jurisdiction inside and/or outside Oregon.

4. Applicant Eligibility

(A) **Prioritization**

A **Priority Population** means persons that the subgrantee/subrecipient, the funding source or OHCS has determined as having the greatest need and will receive services first. Directives by the funding source or OHCS shall take precedence for who will receive HSP services/assistance.

For the delivery of HSP, OHCS has determined that TANF recipients have the greatest need and must be prioritized. There is no requirement for HSP funds to be delivered through a coordinated entry system, coordinated assessment or process. TANF recipients **MUST** receive services first. Subgrantee/subrecipients are allowed to use only the ODHS/Subgrantee referral process to prioritize the delivery of HSP funds to ensure rapid response to referrals and the timely expenditure of HSP funds.

Subgrantees and subrecipients shall ensure **priority** of HSP services is given:

- (1) First to households applying for or receiving TANF; and
- (2) Second to households who are not applying or receiving TANF, but who meet TANF/HSP eligibility requirements.

(B) **Household Composition**

- (1) The Eligibility Group **must** include at least the following people:
 - An Eligible Dependent Child, **AND**
- (2) Parent or Caretaker Relative living with Dependent Child, and, if applicable, their spouse and children. Self-certification of caretaker relative status, either by a document signed by the caretaker relative or by appropriate case notes that self-certification occurred, is sufficient, unless caretaker relative status is questionable and then third-party documentation is required.

Dependent Child: To receive HSP, at least one dependent child from the eligibility group must meet citizenship (or qualified non-citizenship status) and have a social security number or have applied for one.

If the dependent child is an unborn child and the mother is ineligible due to not meeting citizenship requirements, the household is not eligible until the child is born (see #5 below for more information).

If the only eligible dependent child is in foster care and in the process of reunification, subgrantee and subrecipient shall confirm with ODHS the plan, timeline, and requirements for reunification. The eligible child must rejoin the household, within the 120-day period of assistance payments or is subject to repayment of the assistance. Subgrantee and subrecipient must retain appropriate documentation in the client file of their contact/s with ODHS personnel (see #3 & #4 below for more information).

In cases where there is ODHS documentation of TANF or a written ODHS referral for HSP assistance of a TANF client, no additional dependent child documentation in the file is required.

Categorical Eligibility: In cases where there is OODHS documentation that the eligibility group is receiving TANF (EBT cash benefits), then the eligibility group is categorically eligible to receive HSP, without meeting any other financial or non-financial eligibility criteria. Households must still meet the housing status requirements; however, in cases where there is a written referral from ODHS indicating housing status, no further documentation is required.

Households are made up of a lot of different individuals, including grandparents, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, roommates, etc. All members of the household are considered part of the Eligibility Group. There are some Eligibility Group exceptions:

- (1) In some cases, members of the Eligibility Group do not wish to provide their citizenship or immigration status or SSN. Subgrantee must minimally have documentation of citizenship and SSN on the eligible dependent child. If a household member does not wish to provide citizenship status or SSN, **they can elect to be a non-applicant**; however, the income of all members of the household must be included, including that of the non-applicant. **Auxiliary services must not be provided for any member of a household for which documentation of that household member's citizenship and SSN is not obtained.**

For example, a household may include an uncle without citizenship documentation who works an agricultural job and does not want to share his personal information for fear of immigration services. This household member can be excluded as a non-applicant from the Eligibility Group, and he would not be required to disclose information about his citizenship or SSN as a

condition of the household's HSP eligibility. The non-applicant's failure to disclose this information will not affect the potential eligibility of other family members; **however**, any income or resources provided by the non-applicant must be included in the financial eligibility calculation, as such income is available for the purpose of household needs. In this example, you have a household with 5 members, but 1 is considered ineligible (a non-applicant) – the income of all adult members of the household is counted and the family size for purposes of eligibility (FPL guidelines) is still 5 persons even though 1 member is ineligible to directly receive HSP services. The household would receive assistance, but this ineligible member would not be able to receive any auxiliary services, such as a bus pass or education-related services specifically for his needs.

- (2) When a household is sharing housing and some of the people living in the household are not a part of group applying for HSP, such as a roommate, and may not be connected with applying for assistance and may not want to share their personally identifiable information or their income. This situation will apply **ONLY** if they pay their own portion of the rent or utilities. A person cannot be considered a roommate as a means of avoiding inclusion of their income. A roommate is not just another resident of the household, but a legitimate separation of households under the same roof with documented evidence and proof of their rental obligation. The amount of HSP funds that can be provided must be based on the household's "need". To be considered a roommate, such person **MUST** be paying a portion of the household's need. See the Income section of this manual to determine how to calculate HSP assistance based on need.
- (3) A parent can be working with ODHS Child Welfare to bring a child or children back into the home, but the adult needs to be in stabilized housing to do it. This could meet the definition of dependent child status; however, there must be documentation in the file from ODHS that housing is needed to return the child and that once housing is obtained, efforts will be made to return child to the home. OHCS requires coordination with ODHS when using HSP funds and this coordination avoids putting a client in a catch-22 situation, where they need to get a home to get the children, but then they need to have the children already to get the home. A documented statement from ODHS saying the home is needed to return the child or children and that re-unification will commence once a home is obtained is sufficient documentation for the client file for this unique household composition.
- (4) A household can also include a foster child or children. An eligibility group includes all members of the household, whether the children are foster children or not; however, if the **only** child is a foster child, then proof that the child is remanded into the adult's care would be needed for documentation to prove the dependent relationship. Such documentation can be provided by ODHS. If the foster child has a familial connection to the adults, then the adult

can be considered a caretaker relative which includes any blood relative, such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, and even stepparents. More information on the definition of caretaker relative is in (2) listed above.

In addition, foster care payments **DO** count as unearned income, so they need to be included in the income calculation. Do not exclude foster children and their supportive foster care payments to help a household meet the eligibility requirements.

- (5) An eligible dependent child can also be an unborn child. This child would qualify when the mother's pregnancy has reached the calendar month before the month in which the due date falls. For example, if the due date is June 20, the mother of an unborn child would be eligible for HSP as early as May 1. The clients' written statement that a medical practitioner, health department, clinic crisis pregnancy center or like facility verified the pregnancy is sufficient for documentation, nothing more would be required.

(C) Housing Status

The eligibility group **must** meet one of the following categorical definitions of homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. In cases where there is a written referral from ODHS indicating housing status, no further documentation is required.

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

- Living in a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport or camping ground; **OR**
- Living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, or hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state or local government programs); **OR**
- Exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

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

- The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 21 days of the date of application for homeless assistance; **AND**
- No subsequent residence has been identified; **AND**
- Household lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, needed to obtain other permanent housing.

Category 3: Homeless Under Other Federal Statutes—unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or family who do not otherwise qualify as literally homeless or imminent risk of homelessness, but who:

- Are defined as homeless under other listed federal statutes; **AND**
 - Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the program assistance application; **AND**
 - Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the preceding 60 days; and can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers.
1. Other Federal Statutes include:
- Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5701 et seq.),
 - Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.),
 - Subtitle N of the Violence against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e et seq.) (VAWA),
 - Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b),
 - Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.),
 - Section 17 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786), and
 - Subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.)

Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence—household who:

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

Category 5: Unstably Housed—household who:

- Is rent-burdened, defined as paying more than 30% of their gross income in rent (documented income/rent amount); **OR**
- Is currently paying more than the Fair Market Rent, defined by HOME FMRs (<https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/compliance-monitoring/Pages/rent-income-limits.aspx>) (documented rent amount); **OR**
- Is at risk of losing their housing, and does not otherwise qualify as homeless or imminent risk under the above listed (1-4) categories, provided that:
- They have been notified to vacate current residence or otherwise demonstrate high risk of losing current housing (rationale for high risk of losing current housing must be documented and kept in the client file); **AND**
- Lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing (must be evidenced by documentation in the client file).

(D) Income

Income includes the current gross income of all adult household members. Income earned by household members who are minors or full-time students **and** are not considered heads of household is excluded. Subgrantee's process for determining income eligibility and the documentation required must be consistent with OHCS requirements.

Subgrantees' policies and procedures must identify what method they will use to calculate income eligibility and income eligibility must be calculated consistently between applicants of the same program. Subgrantees must ensure that subrecipients

have policies that align with OHCS requirements and are consistent with the intent of such a policy as outlined by OHCS. OHCS retains the right to require modification of any policy that in its determination does not meet basic principles or requirements of such a policy.

Documentation methods may include:

- Previous 12 months of income;
- Year-to-date income divided the number of months included in the year-to-date income; or
- Previous 30 days (or the previous 60 days or other specified period of days) of income.

Convert periodic wages to annual income by multiplying:

1. *Hourly wages by the number of hours worked per year (2,080 hours for full-time employment with a 40-hour week and no overtime);*
2. *Weekly wages by 52;*
3. *Bi-weekly wages (paid every other week) by 26;*
4. *Semi-monthly wages (paid twice each month) by 24; and*
5. *Monthly wages by 12.*

To annualize other than full-time income, multiply the wages by the actual number of hours or weeks the person is expected to work.

A “Snapshot” of current income can be used as an exception to subgrantee’s/subrecipient’s policies and procedures, when warranted and documented in the client file. **“Snapshot” Method** means the process of determining the estimated annual income that uses a “snapshot” of the household income at the time of application. It does not rely on a specific period in the past to determine the annual income amount. The method must be used only when a household’s income has recently changed drastically and is not expected to change from the time of the snapshot (such as in a recent job loss) or when income tends to be very volatile. The snapshot method cannot be used as a means to avoid accounting for income.

- (1) **Standardization:** Subgrantees/subrecipients have the discretion to calculate income standards in a manner best suited for the organization, based on their own policies. Example policies include using a year-to-date amount divided by the number of months in the year-to-date amount, using the last 30 days of paystubs or the last 60 days of paystubs. The main requirement is that the way income is calculated is consistent between clients. Exceptions to the standard way of calculating income must be identified in policy (such as circumstances in which a snapshot method is used).
- (2) **Consistency:** Subgrantee/subrecipient must be consistent in how income calculation standards are applied, even if that means it excludes someone from being able to be assisted. Subgrantee/subrecipient cannot use the most current paystub for one person, the last 30 days for another, and a year-to-date for someone else, especially if the fluctuating use shows that it is being done to under-calculate income. Income

calculation standards must be documented in policy and such policy will be subject to OHCS monitoring.

- (3) Income Limits: Count the income of every person in the eligibility group, except SSI income, to calculate financial eligibility for HSP. The countable income limit for HSP and MOE is at or below **250%** of the Federal Poverty Level. Find Federal Poverty Guidelines at <http://aspe.s.gov/poverty/>. In cases where there is ODHS documentation of TANF or a written ODHS referral for HSP assistance of TANF participation, no additional income documentation in the file is required.
- (4) TANF Grant as Unearned Income: TANF grants (EBT cash benefits) received in the month of application are considered unearned income for HSP applicants and are included in the income calculation.
- (5) SSI Benefits as Unearned Income: For the purpose of eligibility, exclude SSI monthly income when calculating income. However, if the household income is within the HSP income guidelines, any available income or resources regardless of their source (such as SSI), will be used to establish the amount of HSP benefits offered.
- (6) Client quit a job: If an applicant quit their job within the past 30 days and meets other eligibility, assistance may still be provided; however, the income can be calculated on the “snapshot” method. The snapshot method is an exception to a standardization of income calculation and must be identified in the subgrantee/subrecipient policy as well as documented in the client file as to why the exception was granted.
- (7) Overtime and Bonuses cannot be excluded from income calculations. Income cannot be excluded just because it would put the applicant/participant over the income limit. Year-to-date income methodology is an effective way to calculate income when income is varied and includes overtime or bonuses.
- (8) Self-employment: When calculating self-employment, use the previous year’s tax information, if available. Use the gross income and subtract out the deductions claimed on Schedule C to get a net income. Schedule C is the Profit and Loss form used for a Business, which deducts expenses, such as their vehicle, supplies, offices expenses, travel, utilities, etc. The net income is then divided by 12 and the result is used for the household’s monthly income. More information is available in the ODHS Oregon Programs Eligibility Notebook Chapter 2 Section 5: <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/ssp/fsm/pages/index.aspx>.
- (9) Calculating Household Need in Situations of Roommates: Those applying for HSP must meet eligibility requirements or be categorically eligible, however, in situations of a roommate, the HSP assistance must be based on the applying household’s “need” to account for the roommate supplying a part of that need. If the applying household cannot provide documented evidence of their rental obligation, their income must be included as part of the household’s income. See the Household Composition section in this manual for clarifying who meets the requirement of roommate status.

The household's need must be prorated based on the income and expenses that each roommate is receiving and paying. HSP can only be provided for the portion of the applying household's "need". For example, if the applying household provides proof of a total unpaid rent of \$700, but has a roommate agreement identifying that the roommate pays half of the rent, then HSP can only pay \$350 of the rent, regardless of whether the notice identifies the entire amount of rent being due. This "need" requirement only applies to HSP, while it does not apply to other OHCS-funded programs due to TANF requirements.

(E) Resource Limitation

HSP includes a resource limitation. The resource limit is \$10,000 for all eligibility groups. In cases where there is ODHS documentation of TANF or a written ODHS referral for HSP assistance of a TANF client, no additional resource limit documentation in the file is required. Resources can be verified through applicant self-certification.

For the purposes of HSP, do not consider someone's primary home as an asset for HSP when the primary home is the only home the applicant owns. HSP can pay for mortgage payments and property taxes, so do not count their primary home as an asset.

Types of assets that are included in the resource limit are a second home, boats, ATVs, cash on hand, money in the bank, certificates of deposits or stocks, cryptocurrency, etc. These are items that can be converted to cash to cover the needs of the household.

If you have a significant immigrant population, those households may own homes in their country of origin – this would not be considered an asset for the purposes of HSP as this asset is not readily available to them.

Documenting assets can be completed through an application or an intake document that the household must sign in which they are asked if they do/do not have assets valued at over \$10,000. Self-certification is sufficient for documenting zero assets, but if a household identifies an asset and/or identifies it as over \$10,000, such as a second home, checking/saving account, or a boat – subgrantee must document the value of that asset through tax records, statements, blue book values or some other source of documentation. If the value exceeds \$10,000, the household does not qualify for HSP. A self-certification form is available on the OHCS website.

(F) Citizenship

- (1) Citizen/Qualified Non-Citizen Status: At a minimum, the eligible, dependent child must be a US citizen or Qualified Non-Citizen (see #4 & #5 below) and documentation attesting to citizenship or qualified non-citizen status must be in the file. In cases where there is ODHS documentation of TANF or a written ODHS referral for HSP assistance of a TANF client, no additional citizenship documentation in the file is required. If needed, a self-certification of citizenship form is available on the OHCS website.
- (2) Social Security Number: At a minimum, the eligible, dependent child must have, or be applying for, a SSN. In cases where there is ODHS documentation of TANF or a written ODHS referral for HSP assistance of a TANF client, no additional SSN

documentation in the file is required. The possession of a SSN does not in, and of itself, meet citizenship requirements. A SSN is required, minimally on the eligible, dependent child, but this does not provide citizenship documentation (if needed, a self-certification of citizenship form is available on the OHCS website).

- (3) Non-Applicants: Members of the eligibility group who do not wish to provide their citizenship or immigration status or SSN can elect to be a non-applicant. Exclude non-applicants from the eligibility group as an ineligible household member and do not require them to disclose information about their citizenship or immigration status or SSN as a condition of HSP eligibility. His or her failure to disclose this information will not affect the potential eligibility of other family members; however, you **must** consider any income or resources provided by the non-applicant available to the eligibility group and include them in the financial eligibility calculation. As long as the minimum requirements of citizenship and social security number is documented on the eligible, dependent child, applications must not be delayed, discontinued or denied if the non-applicant household member does not provide their citizenship, immigration status or SSN; however, delay or denial can occur if the non-applicant's **income** documentation is not provided. Additionally, no assistance, such as auxiliary services, can be provided to non-applicants.

(4) U.S. Citizen

A U.S. citizen includes the following people:

- (a) A person born in the U.S.;
- (b) A naturalized citizen;
- (c) A person born outside of the U.S., but whose parents (both mother and father) are U.S. citizens;
- (d) A person born outside of the U.S., who is over 18 years of age, but who has at least one parent who is a U.S. citizen. The person must either have a certificate of U.S. citizenship or meet one of the following criteria:
 - (i) Born on or after December 24, 1952, and prior to November 14, 1986, and their citizen parent was physically present in the U.S. or its outlying possessions for 10 years or more, at least five of which were after age 14;
 - (ii) Born on or after November 14, 1986, and their citizen parent was physically present in the U.S. or its outlying possessions five years or more, at least two of which were after age 14.
- (e) A child born outside of the U.S., who is under 18 years of age and has at least one parent who is a U.S. citizen. The child is residing in the U.S. in the legal and physical custody of the citizen parent pursuant to a lawful admission for permanent residence;
- (f) A person lawfully adopted by U.S. citizens; or
- (g) A citizen of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands (Saipan, Tinian, Rota and Pagan), American Samoa and the Swains Islands.

(5) Qualified Non-Citizen

Qualified non-citizens are individuals who are admitted to the United States with a lawful immigrant status. The person who is granted that status either enters the United States as a lawful permanent resident or will be eligible to become a lawful permanent resident in the future. A lawful permanent resident is eligible to be naturalized as a U.S. citizen usually after five years of lawful permanent residency in the U.S.

A qualified non-citizen includes the following people:

- (a) A person who is lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA);
- (b) A person who is admitted to the United States as a refugee under section 207 of the INA;
- (c) A person admitted to the United States under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000;
- (d) A person who is granted political asylum under section 208 of the INA;
- (e) A person whose deportation is being withheld under section 243(h) of the INA;
- (f) A person who is paroled into the United States under section 212(d)(5) of the INA;
- (g) A person who is granted conditional entry pursuant to section 203(a)(7) of the INA as in effect prior to April 1, 1980;
- (h) Battered immigrant spouse, battered immigrant child, immigrant parent of a battered child or an immigrant child of a battered parent, with a petition under 204(a)(1)(A) or (B) or 244(a)(3) of the INA;
- (i) Cuban/Haitian persons who are either public interest or humanitarian parolees; or
- (j) A person granted immigration status according to the Amerasian Homecoming Act, section 584(a) of the INA.

(6) Additional Qualified Non-Citizens

The following people also meet qualified non-citizen status requirements for HSP:

- (a) American Indians born in Canada; or
- (b) Non-citizens (regardless of INS status) who are currently victims of domestic violence or are at risk of victimization by domestic violence.

(7) Non-Qualified, Non-Citizen

Non-qualified non-citizens are:

Individuals who are admitted lawfully into the United States but do not have immigrant status (i.e., they are residents for a specific period, but cannot stay in the country for longer than their travel visa allows them). Foreign students, tourists, diplomats, performers, artists, entertainers, certain private company employers, etc., are included in this category.

If there any further questions on non-citizens, find the information at the following link of the ODHS Oregon Programs Eligibility Notebook:
<https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/ssp/fsm/pages/index.aspx>, Chapter 2 Section 3.

(G) Oregon Residency

To be eligible for HSP, a household must be a resident of Oregon. A household is a resident of Oregon if the household lives in Oregon. There is no minimum amount of time a household must live in Oregon to be a resident; however, the household must intend to remain in Oregon, except in the following situations:

- (1) Assistance may be issued to help a household return to a former state of residence; or
- (2) If the household as victims of domestic violence needs to flee from their current housing situation.

If a household's documented housing status is Category 4, Fleeing Domestic Violence, HSP can be used for eligible categorical costs associated with moving out of Oregon to a safe location, providing that there is documentation in the client's service/housing plan, indicating that the client's destination has been confirmed as an available safe, housing option and that no funds are used for rent, hotel/motel, utilities or other services in a state other than Oregon. Such allowable costs are restricted to moving costs.

If a household is returning to a former state of residence, there must be documentation in the client's service/housing plan that documents the previous resident state.

5. Eligibility Documentation

- (1) Documentation of all participant/applicant eligibility information must be available in participant/applicant files or if kept electronically, available upon request in the format requested. Documentation of all efforts to obtain higher preference of verification (Third-party and Intake Worker/Case Manager Observation) when lower forms of preference are used, must be in writing and kept in the participant/applicant file. Third party documentation is a requirement for payment of mortgage assistance/property taxes.
- (2) Verification and related documentation must be maintained within the following specific areas:
 - Homeless/Housing status (or ODHS Referral form for HSP services for a TANF client indicating housing status);
 - Citizenship/Qualified Non-Citizen Status (or ODHS documentation of TANF status or ODHS Referral form for HSP services of a TANF client);
 - Social Security Number (SSN) or application for a SSN (or ODHS documentation of TANF status or ODHS Referral form for HSP services of a TANF client);

- Pregnancy status, if using pregnancy to meet eligibility requirements. The client's written statement that a medical practitioner, health department, clinic crisis pregnancy center or like facility verified the pregnancy is adequate for verification;
- Reasonable return (typically, of less than 30 days) for a minor child from foster care, where applicable;
- Income, resources and/or TANF benefit (or ODHS documentation of TANF status or ODHS Referral form for HSP services of a TANF client);
- Dependent child eligibility (birth/hospital certificate) (or ODHS documentation of TANF status or ODHS Referral form for HSP services of a TANF client);
- Oregon residency status; and
- Caretaker/relative status to Eligible Dependent Child (identity documents, or ODHS documentation of TANF status, ODHS Referral form for HSP services of a TANF client or self-certification either by caretaker relative or by case notes, unless questionable, then by 3rd party documentation).

(3) Remote Application and Documentation

The standard preference is for applicants/participants to apply for assistance in person or to have in-person contact with the subgrantee or subrecipient throughout the application and service delivery process. A remote application and documentation process can be used when necessitated; however, the identity of the applicant/participant must be verified. Client file must reflect what method of identity verification was used.

Applicants/participants who apply for assistance and provide eligibility or other documentation remotely can do so via electronic and other communication; e.g., phone, email, text, electronic messaging, mail and other electronic or remote means. Eligibility and other documentation must be kept in each applicant/participant file to meet eligibility and monitoring requirements.

Subgrantees must have a stand-alone policy for the use of a remote application and eligibility documentation process. Subgrantees must ensure that subrecipients have policies that align with OHCS requirements and are consistent with the intent of such a policy as outlined by OHCS. Such policy must be applied equitably across services that use or are supported by OHCS funding and where allowed by the funding source. OHCS retains the right to require modification of any policy that in its determination does not meet the basic principles or requirements of such a policy.

The subgrantee's Remote Application and Documentation policy must address the following elements:

- a) In what circumstances a remote application and documentation process will be used;
- b) How the verification of the identity of the applicant is ascertained;
- c) How the verification and documentation of qualification for assistance in relation to program eligibility criteria are ascertained;
- d) When remote verification and documentation is appropriate for ongoing demonstration of eligibility; and

- e) How notifications are provide to applicant/participant, inclusive of privacy notification and grievance/appeal notification.

(4) Order of Preference

OHCS requires program staff to comply with the following general documentation standards listed in order of preference:

- **Third-Party documentation**, source documents by an outside source, is the preferable form of documentation. Third-party documentation includes a written statement or document from an employer, landlord, public benefit worker, agency service provider, etc. Written verification directly to program staff or via the applicant/participant is preferred.
- **Intake Worker/Case Manager Observation** documented by subgrantee/subrecipient staff includes oral statements made by a social worker, case manager, or other appropriate official at an institution, shelter, or other facility and documented by the intake worker/case manager. When the intake worker/case manager is unable to obtain a written or oral statement from a shelter, institution or facility staff, the intake worker/case management must document, in writing, their efforts to obtain eligibility documentation and must place their documentation in the applicant/participant's file.
- **Applicant/Participant Self-Certification** applicant/participant signed document certifying eligibility requires a written and signed document by the individual or head of household seeking assistance attesting to the eligibility facts for which they are certifying. A third-party can be designated by an applicant/participant to sign documents on their behalf when they are unable to do so. It is the responsibility of the subgrantee and subrecipient to provide access to language interpretation services and assistive devices necessary for applicants/participants to understand the documents they are certifying. Self-certification documentation is only used when documented staff efforts verify that third-party or intake worker/case manager observation documentation is not available.

(5) Simplified Documentation Option

When a subgrantee or subrecipient moves an active client from HSP to Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHA/DRF/DRV VET), Shelter Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP) or Elderly Rental Assistance (ERA) programs or an active client moves between state funds (EHA, SHAP, ERA), they can choose to use a simplified documentation process for the client's homeless status and income; whereby the subgrantee or subrecipient case manager verifies that the client meets the homeless status and income of the funding source at the time of entry and that the client is eligible for the funding source to which they are moving, without requiring additional documentation. Eligibility requirements specific to a funding source (such as Veteran status and household composition) will still remain requirements that must be documented when using a simplified documentation option for housing status and income. Documentation from the original source of funding must be readily accessible for monitoring purposes. To use the Simplified Documentation Option, there can be no lapse in service from one program to the other.

Subgrantee and subrecipient can use the sample form provided on the OHCS website to document the client file using this simplified documentation option.

Emergency Solution Grant (ESG) and HOME Tenant-Based Assistance (HTBA) funds still require separate documentation and are not subject to a simplified documentation option.

6. Allowable Client Expenditures

(A) General Requirements

Where state guidance is silent or absent, OHCS-funded programs comply with OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements at [2 CFR 200](#).

- 1) Eligible participants can receive HSP assistance for one or more of the following expenditures/services:
 - Housing Assistance
 - Auxiliary Services
 - Case Management
 - Data System Expenses

Client Expenditure	TANF Household and eligible for JOBS Support Payments	TANF Household NOT eligible for JOBS Support Payments	Not Receiving TANF
Housing Asst	Yes	Yes	Yes
Auxiliary Services	No	Yes	Yes
Case Management	Yes	Yes	Yes
Data System	Allowable general program cost		

- 2) HSP funds shall be provided only for reimbursement of allowable costs incurred by subgrantee/subrecipient. HSP assistance cannot be paid directly to clients, but must be paid to the vendor (e.g., landlord, utility company, etc.). Documentation of client expenditures must be included in the client case file.
- 3) There must be documented evidence of the need to make a financial assistance payment, such as an eviction or late rent notice from the landlord, past due bill from a utility company or other such documentation that a payment must be made in which to stabilize the household. Need can also be documented by joint case management plans with ODHS or by client assessments that indicate a need for auxiliary services.
- 4) As pursuant to 45 CFR 260.31, allowable expenses are to be Non-Recurrent, Short-Term Benefits that:
 - Deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need; **AND**
 - Are not intended to meet recurrent or ongoing needs; **AND**

- Are paid within 120 days from the date of the first HSP assistance payment (see #8 below for further guidance).
- 5) Households can receive up to \$8,000 of total financial assistance during a 120-day period.
 - 6) Households must comply with their client service/housing stability plan during the 120 days of assistance payments, if receiving more than one-time only assistance.
 - 7) The 120-day limitation is a TANF requirement. If a client was to receive HSP benefits for longer than 120 days from the date of the first HSP assistance payment, they would be required to be enrolled in the JOBS program and the state must pursue child support collection, for which OHCS, nor subgrantees, are equipped to administer. The 120-day limitation cannot be altered.
 - 8) The 120-day period begins on the date of the first assistance payment. There is no limit to the number of payments during the 120-day period as long as all payments are equal to or less than the maximum amount of \$8,000 and as long as all payments are for eligible costs. This is NOT equal to a number of months for which a household can receive rent/mortgage assistance. For example, a household can receive rent assistance for 6 months of arrears and 6 months of current and future rent for a total of 12 months of rent; however, the payments must all be made within the 120-day period in which a client can receive HSP assistance. If a cost is incurred and approved during the 120-day period, the actual payment could still be made within a reasonable period of time after the 120-day period; however, there **MUST** be documented evidence that the cost was incurred and approved prior to the end of the 120-day period.
 - 9) If any member in the eligibility group received HSP benefits in the past 12 months, from the date of the last financial assistance payment, consider the entire eligibility group as having received benefits and they do not meet eligibility requirements. Verify previous payments with HMIS, other systems or case records. **Agencies must perform due diligence to ensure compliance with this requirement and document in the client file that this due diligence was performed.** Organizations that are contacted to meet this requirement must be included in the client's Release of Information. This is not expected to be administratively burdensome; however, be sure to document that the household did not receive HSP in the 12 months prior to providing benefits.
 - 10) Case management activities, including housing navigation services, can occur before and after the 120-day limitation of financial assistance payments.
 - 11) Use of other OHCS resources (such as EHA) is encouraged to continue assisting HSP clients past the 120-day limitation of HSP funds. Many participants' barriers to housing stability cannot be fully addressed in 120 days. Continued case

management and collaboration with ODHS can help to ensure long-term housing stability and produce more effective participant outcomes.

- 12) Extension beyond a 120-day period is not allowed; however, if the household exits HSP, but returns for additional assistance before their 120-day period of assistance would have ended, the case manager can issue additional payments up to the assistance limit and all payments must be made within the 120-day period. The eligibility group must continue to meet all program eligibility requirements. For example, a client receives a one-time rent assistance payment on January 5th and is exited from the program. In March, the client returns and is need of further assistance. Further assistance payments could be issued through May 4th.
- 13) In situations where there is a roommate in the household, the “need” must be calculated to determine how much assistance would be allowable for the household. This “need” applies to HSP, while it does not apply in other OHCS-funded programs. Additionally, such situation must be documented through evidence of a lease/rental agreement that identifies the other member of the household as a roommate or other written agreement that identifies the roommate situation. More information on this type of household composition can be found in the Household Composition and Income sections of this manual.
- 14) “Roommate” situations are areas of high fraud probability and due diligence is needed to ensure that such situations are adequately documented. Self-certifications or dependence on a client’s statement are not valid methods of meeting documentation requirements for roommate situations. Clear documentation of a roommate arrangement includes both a lease agreement with wet signatures demonstrating the tenant/landlord relationship between the two parties **AND** documented financial records showing a pattern of financial transactions (bank statements, money order receipts, Paypal/Venmo statements, etc.) are needed. Hand-written receipts are not allowed for this purpose due to the high risk of fraud.

(B) Housing Assistance

Requirements to Housing Assistance (adhere to General Requirements as identified)

- 1) Housing Assistance can be paid for those households NOT receiving TANF and Housing Assistance can be provided to those receiving TANF, whether or not they have been determined to be ineligible for JOBS Support Service payments by ODHS. Housing assistance is meant to provide funds to move a homeless client into permanent housing or to keep a client from losing their permanent housing. Housing assistance is not meant for emergency shelter purposes, except as identified in **Room and Board** (see #4 below for more guidance).
- 2) **Rent** means the payment of a current rental obligation. Clients must meet all HSP eligibility requirements (including housing status) and must provide proof of need for the payment of rent; however, rent can be paid for future months, if allowed by landlord. Total assistance cannot exceed the maximum assistance amount of \$8,000

whether for current rental obligation, rent arrearage, future rent or any combination of HSP assistance, including auxiliary services. Rent can include first and last month's rent. See #14 in General Requirements for more information.

- 3) **Rent arrearage** means past due rent owed to a current landlord. Payment of arrears is restricted to 6 month's past due rent, once per period of assistance payments. Subgrantees and subrecipients have the discretion to further limit payments for rent arrearage with a policy that details such further restrictions, their purpose and identification of how those restrictions are communicated to the participants. Such policy must be made available to OHCS upon request Subgrantees must ensure that subrecipients have policies that align with OHCS requirements and are consistent with the intent of such a policy as outlined by OHCS.

Arrears can also include other rental-related expenses incurred such as filing fees, court fees, property damage or lease break fees to a previous landlord (or collection agency) when being **required by a prospective landlord**, with a case manager's supervisor's approval. Funds cannot be used for debt payment. There must be **documented evidence** from the prospective landlord that payment of the arrears is necessary for the participant to obtain permanent housing and maintain stability in that housing and a unit must be lined up and available for the client's occupancy if such arrears are to be paid.

- 4) **Room and Board:** A prorated cost of room and board (percentage of cost related to a HSP client), is an allowable expense. While general administrative or operation costs of a shelter are not allowable, costs directly attributable to a HSP client could be, such as lodging, utilities and food when such payment of these expenses is required of all residents and as an expected "tenant share". Subgrantees and subrecipients must document how they calculate the expense attributable to clients and such documentation must be kept in the client's file. HSP clients residing in such housing must continue to meet all HSP eligibility requirements and must be entered into HMIS and reported on the quarterly report. Room and board is not meant to cover a roommate situation.
- 5) Use of **hotel/motel voucher** must only be for a period of time in which a client is awaiting the readiness of a designated rental unit availability and not a means of emergency shelter costs.
- 6) **Utility assistance** programs must be deferred to first, utility assistance is only eligible when other utility assistance cannot be obtained and payment of utility assistance is in the context of, and documented in, an action plan or goal designed to increase housing stability, along with documentation of the steps taken to defer to other utility assistance first. There must be documented evidence of a utility bill in the participant's name.
- 7) **Utility arrearage** assistance is past due utilities and can only be provided when there is documented evidence of a utility bill in the participant's name. If arrears are owed to a previous utility company or to a collection agency, these arrears can be paid, but only when there is documented evidence that payment of the arrears is necessary for the participant to obtain or retain utility service. Payment of utility arrears to a

previous utility company or to a collection agency must result in the utilities remaining on or the connection/reconnection of utility service. Documentation in the client file must show the steps taken to defer to other utility assistance first.

- 8) **Utilities** are only water, sewer, garbage, gas, electricity, or other fuel source when required to be paid by the tenant to pay through a rental/lease agreement. There must be documented evidence of a utility bill in the participant's name. Utilities does not include phone or internet services for the purposes of HSP, unless the need is documented in the client service/housing stability plan and identified as a means of obtaining/maintaining permanent housing.
- 9) **Phone services** must be in the client's name and must only be provided for one line of service (either landline or cellular line) per household and only when such billing statement clearly identifies the costs of a single line of service or such cost can be ascertained from the phone service provider. Arrearages are allowed in alignment with the limitation of a single line of service. Purchases of phones are unallowable and clients can be connected to the Affordable Connectivity Program (<https://www.affordableconnectivity.gov>) or through Oregon LifeLine (<https://www.oregon.gov/puc/pages/oregon-lifeline.aspx>) to meet the need.
- 10) **Internet-related fees and taxes, equipment** (modem/router) rental fees are allowed and must be capped at no more than \$300 per biennium and must be in the client's name. Subgrantees and subrecipients must attempt to obtain a client's documentation or perform outreach to the internet provider to acquire monthly internet service costs; however, if either of these options are unduly burdensome, the subgrantee and subrecipient must have a policy that applies a reasonable process to determine the amount of the bill that is applicable to the internet costs; however, total internet assistance cannot exceed \$300 per funding biennium. Such policy must be available to OHCS upon request. Subgrantees must ensure that subrecipients have policies that align with OHCS requirements and are consistent with the intent of such a policy as outlined by OHCS.

Internet providers retain a "price list" which can be requested to determine the separate costs for each type of service which will provide subgrantees/subrecipients a reasonable process to determine the amount to be paid. In addition, the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program that helps low-income households pay for internet service and connected devices. If eligible, a household can receive up to \$30/month discount on internet service; up to a \$75/month discount if the household is on qualifying tribal lands; and a one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, tablet, or desktop computer (with a co-payment of more than \$10, but less than \$50. More information can be found at: <https://acpbenefit.org/>.

For HSP, the costs of internet-related fees and taxes, equipment rental fees can only be provided when there is documented evidence in a client service/housing stability plan that such payment of the expense is needed for the purpose of obtaining/retaining permanent housing as a means of accessing needed services, attending required appointments or needed as part of job search.

- 11) **Home repairs** can be covered when necessary to make the applicant's housing habitable and if less costly than moving to other housing. Documentation in client's file must show that such costs are less costly than moving the client to other housing (or that client is restricted from moving to another housing option) and must be made on a client-owned property. Home repairs must be minimal to meet habitability standards and not as a means of major repair or rehabilitation. Documentation must include a Habitability Standards Inspection identifying the deficiencies and costs must be documented and reasonable to assist a unit meet the requirements of health and safety identified in the Habitability Standards Inspection (a Habitability Standards Inspection form can be found on the OHCS website).
- 12) **Pet Deposit** means a security deposit required by a landlord in order to house an individual or family. This may be referred to as a one-time pet fee at move in or a non-refundable pet deposit. This does not include a pet deposit for clients during an existing rental/lease agreement. Pet deposits are limited to one pet. Pet deposit does not include repayment of any damages caused by a pet. Other sources of non-OHCS funding must be deferred to first and pet deposit assistance is only eligible when other sources of non-OHCS funds cannot be obtained and providing a pet deposit is necessary, and documented in the participant file, to ensure stability in housing.
- 13) **Pet Rent** means a monthly rent charged for a pet and required by the landlord through a rental/lease agreement, which must be included in the client file for purposes of documentation.
- 14) **Moving costs** can be provided to secure the rental of a moving van/truck and could include a transportation payment in alignment with transportation guidelines. In cases where need is demonstrated, moving costs can cover the professional expenses of a contracted moving company. Moving costs do not include cash or gift cards, except as provided in the transportation guidelines. In circumstances in which a client meets the definition of fleeing domestic violence and there are safety concerns with remaining in Oregon, moving costs can be used to assist the client to safely move to another state; however, the client file must have written documentation that a safe place is available in the destination state and such allowability must be in alignment with the client's service/housing plan. This allowability does not extend to paying an out-of-state landlord for rent, security deposit, application fees, etc., and only encompasses moving costs.
- 15) **Storage Fees:** Storage fees can be allowed for clients who meet the housing status of Category 1, Category 3 or Category 4 (literally homeless statuses). Storage fees are not allowable for client who meet the housing status of Category 2 or Category 5 (unstably housed statuses). These costs are allowed if using funds for storage fees of personal items, such use of funds must be not more than three months of storage rent and provided as a means of securing a homeless person's belonging while obtaining permanent housing for the purpose of rapid re-housing only. Costs can include arrears, current or future costs or any combination of those costs for the maximum total assistance of 3 months. Such households must be actively in the process of obtaining permanent housing and are awaiting placement in their home.

- 16) **Food** costs as a one-time benefit, emergency basis, when other resources are not available for this service and at a maximum amount of the standard for SNAP benefit (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility>) for one month, based on household size, inclusive of any grocery delivery fees. Clients receiving this service must be connected to SNAP benefits and if needed, assistance must be given to help a client apply for SNAP benefits. Client file must document steps taken to ascertain that other food resources were not available to meet the emergent need. Gift cards can only be used when a gift card policy has been pre-approved by OHCS and the limitation for food costs are identified in such policy and cannot exceed the limitation stated above.

Allowable Costs for Housing include:

- (1) rent and rent arrears (inclusive of first, last, pet rent, and if accepted by landlord as an incentive, forward rent);
- (2) mortgage (mortgage arrears up to three months);
- (3) costs for shelter room and board;
- (4) property taxes, for up to one year, if necessary to avoid foreclosure (evidence of foreclosure notification must be kept in the client's file);
- (5) late fees;
- (6) move-in fees;
- (7) security deposit (inclusive of pet deposit as identified in requirements above);
- (8) application fee;
- (9) utility payments/deposits/arrearages (inclusive of water, sewer, garbage, phone, internet, gas and electricity);
- (10) moving costs (van/truck rental);
- (11) storage fees;
- (12) food;
- (13) hotel/motel voucher until rental unit available; and
- (14) costs of home repairs necessary to make the applicant's housing habitable and if less costly than moving to other housing.

Unallowable Housing Assistance

- (1) Cash;
- (2) Cash-equivalent funds provided to applicants/participants, except through an OHCS-approved gift card policy; and
- (3) Participant debt payment.

(C) Auxiliary Services

Requirements to Auxiliary Services (adhere to General Requirements as identified)

- 1) Eligible households not receiving TANF are eligible to receive Auxiliary Services.
- 2) Eligible households who are TANF clients and determined to be ineligible for JOBS Support Service payments by ODHS are eligible to receive Auxiliary Services.
- 3) Eligible households who are TANF client and **are eligible** to receive JOBS Support Service payments by ODHS CANNOT receive Auxiliary Services.

- 4) Auxiliary Services can be provided in order for the client to obtain or maintain affordable, stable, long-term housing.
- 5) All Auxiliary Services (employment-related, transportation-related or self-sufficiency-related) must be provided **only** to those clients receiving more than one-time only assistance and with a client service/housing stability plan that supports such payments.

Unallowable Auxiliary Services

- 1) Food;
- 2) Cash or cash-equivalent funds provided to applicants/participants (with the exception of gift/gas card for transportation expenses (see Transportation Section); and
- 3) Participant debt payment.

Allowable Costs for Auxiliary Services include:

1) EMPLOYMENT RELATED

Requirements to Employment Related Auxiliary Services

- 1) Employment related expenses can be items such as clothing-related expenses like rain gear or work boots, supplies such as a tool belt or childcare while the adult is looking for work or is at work. The needs addressed must be non-recurrent and short-term. For an example of childcare, a client's regular babysitter cancelled for a week because she was sick or was going on vacation and the family found a different provider, but they charged twice as much and the family can't afford it. HSP could pay for that day care so that they can continue to work as it is a non-recurrent, short-term need. Established and ongoing childcare costs are not an eligible expense.

Employment related costs include:

- 1) job readiness classes;
- 2) fees for identification/birth certificate/transcripts;
- 3) clothing-related expenses required as a part of job-readiness;
- 4) supplies (i.e. tool belt, work boots, rain gear, etc.), and
- 5) childcare for the purposes of job search or attending other employment-related meetings, interview or education (such as job readiness classes)

2) TRANSPORTATION

Requirements to Transportation Related Auxiliary Services

- a) Transportation: costs, such as bus/train passes, gas vouchers, Uber/Lift/Cab fares, car repairs/insurance are allowable. Payments that allow participants to use public transportation are the highest priority and must be considered first for the purpose of attending required appointments, job search or other critical services. Case managers have the discretion to provide repairs/gas/insurance for a client's personal vehicle. Case managers must document why a client's personal vehicle option is preferred over public transportation options and that the expense will lead to the stabilization of housing. Costs associated with a

vehicle not owned by the client are not allowed. Client must have a valid driver's license.

OHCS funds cannot be used to build assets, such as the purchase of a vehicle or loan payments and cannot be used for debt payments, such as traffic violations/fines in order to obtain a license. Private transportation options can include minor vehicle repair, car insurance, and the least costly option for vehicle registration, with written subgrantee policy on use of funds for these services and such policy must be available to OHCS upon request. Subgrantees must ensure that subrecipients have policies that align with OHCS requirements and are consistent with the intent of such a policy as outlined by OHCS. For example, repair to a vehicle might be preferable to a bus pass if the community does not have public transportation or if the client works at night when public transportation is not operational.

Transportation does not include insurance to pay for roadside assistance (such as a membership to AAA) or traffic violations or any collection costs associated with these fines. Insurance includes only general liability insurance as required by the State of Oregon; however, comprehensive/collision coverage, can be allowed, but only when there is documented evidence that such coverage is a requirement of a vehicle loan. Insurance is paid before the period of service and vehicle owners have 10 days in which to make payment; therefore, insurance arrears is not a factual cost and is unallowable.

A Private Vehicle Costs policy must include:

- I. Dollar limitation per participant and frequency of such limitation (e.g., once per biennium);
 - II. Number of months limitation per participant for insurance costs;
 - III. Identification on what factors are used to determine whether such costs are preferable to public transportation; and
 - IV. Identification of how justification of expense and documentation of that justification is performed. Participant files must include such documentation.
- 1) If gift cards are used for transportation costs, they must be used **ONLY** as a gas payment and the expense must have a receipt in the file. **If there is no receipt of purchase using the gift card, the cost will be disallowed.**
 - 2) Subgrantees must have a gift card policy prior approved by OHCS to use gift cards for this purpose. Subrecipients **must** follow the subgrantee's policy for the use of gift cards.

Transportation Costs include:

- 1) bus passes;
- 2) other public transportation costs;
- 3) fuel;
- 4) car repairs;

- 5) auto insurance within limitations; and
- 6) licensing/registration fees.

3) SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Requirements to Self-Sufficiency Related Auxiliary Services

- 1) Household items, such as dishes, pots, pans, and silverware; basic furniture, such as beds, bedding, desks, table, chairs are all allowable expenses, **IF** donation items are not available and the household needs these items to become stabilized. You must document the reason why such donation items are not available, and these items cannot be purchased using a gift card. Examples for when to use HSP funds for household items include situations of a client having fled domestic violence and has no means of obtaining these necessary items or if a household has just brought a baby home and does not have the basic necessities to care for it. The need for such items would have to address a non-recurrent, short-term, specific episode of need and be documented in the client service/housing stability plan.
- 2) HSP can also pay for education-related expenses, such as books and even tuition or fees to attend a certification class, such as for a massage technician or tattoo artist, however, subgrantee must determine if this is the best use of HSP dollars in the limited 120-day time frame available for HSP and the cost must address a non-recurrent, short-term, specific episode of need. Households still must meet housing status and income requirements, but this could be a way for the client to obtain a 6- or 8-week certification course and assist a client in becoming gainfully employed. Education can also apply to tenant readiness education or budget counseling classes.

Self-Sufficiency Costs include:

- 1) certification/tuition to obtain gainful employment;
- 2) energy education;
- 3) budgeting education (includes SOAR);
- 4) tenant readiness education (such as RentWell);
- 5) health and safety education (such as nutrition classes); and
- 6) basic home furnishings, when documented as unavailable through other sources and documented in the client service/housing stability plan.

(D) *Case Management*

Case management is one of the primary services offered to individuals and families who face multiple challenges, including severe mental illness, addiction, and homelessness. Effective case management includes **assessment, planning, implementation, coordination and evaluation**. Best practices in case management skills are available on the OHCS Homeless Services Section dashboard. See also the Client Service/Housing Stability Plan section in this manual for more information.

Requirements to Case Management

- (1) Case management costs are allowable for all recipients of HSP (whether TANF recipient or not)
- (2) **Case management DOES NOT include time spent for eligibility determinations.** Per TANF rules and regulations time expended on eligibility determinations cannot be included in case management expenses but must be attributed to administration costs.
- (3) Case management cannot exceed more than 20% of a subgrantee's total fiscal year allocation.
- (4) Case management is time spent to support clients in obtaining and maintaining permanent housing and achieving housing stabilization as well as helping them to make connection with other services that support housing stabilization and can occur before and/or after client assistance payments begin.
- (5) Case management is not required for one-time only assistance; however, subgrantees are encouraged to include case management planning in their ODHS Collaboration Plans
- (6) If providing case management, the client must have a client service/housing stability plan and case management must be used to assist clients in meeting their goals identified in such plan.

Allowable Costs for Case Management include:

- (1) Providing diversion benefits and services;
- (2) Providing program information to clients;
- (3) Screening and assessing a household's needs (**excludes eligibility determination, which is a part of admin**);
- (4) Development of a Housing Stability Plan, which may include employability plans, work activities, post-employment services and work supports;
- (5) Salaries and benefits costs for staff providing program services;
- (6) Building relationships with landlords, property managers, shelters, transitional housing providers and other housing service providers;
- (7) Monitoring and evaluating household progress, identifying creative and immediate housing solutions outside of the traditional homeless service system (diversion), and ensuring that households' rights are protected;
- (8) Services that increase access to the income supports of disability benefits programs administered by the Social Security Administration for eligible adults and have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder (i.e., SOAR or similar style services);
- (9) Identifying available housing units and providing housing navigation to assist a household navigate the housing market, which can include referrals to available housing or housing search assistance, assistance with completing applications for available housing or for other state or federal on-going rent assistance program, such as Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8);
- (10) Tenant counseling, assisting households to understand leases, inspections, securing utilities, making moving arrangements, and representative payee services concerning rent and utilities;

- (11) Mediation and outreach to property owners/landlords related to assist a client in managing their housing stability;
- (12) Connecting clients to resources available in the community, such as state or federal benefits that provide income to the household, employment assistance; health and mental health or behavioral health referrals or substance abuse referrals, domestic violence intervention, legal referrals or tenant education referral; and
- (13) Costs associated with data entry into HMIS.

(E) Data System Expenses

HSP funding can be used to support data system related costs necessary to collect and report participant services, participant demographic data, performance outcomes and other reporting requirements. Eligible data system expenses include:

- (1) HMIS user licenses;
- (2) Equipment upgrade for the purpose of HMIS needs;
- (3) Network systems upgrade (it is recommended that systems be networked) for the purpose of HMIS needs; and
- (4) HMIS training and technical assistance support for partner organizations to maximize effective use of HMIS system for data entry, reporting and program management. Such as:
 - a) staffing to conduct trainings related to HMIS;
 - b) develop and manage program specific workflows and on-boarding training related to HMIS;
 - c) develop and manage data quality plans related to HMIS; and
 - d) provide end user support, ad hoc reporting support and troubleshooting related to HMIS.

(F) Gift Cards

Use of gift cards must be rare; however, gift cards can be allowable when given to eligible HSP clients only for food and transportation costs as identified in this manual, within the limitations specified, and must be in support of the client's written housing goals and only allowable when adequate documentation exists to support the purpose and the expense. Subgrantees must have an OHCS-approved Gift Card Policy with established policies and procedure in place to address the process prior to any use of funds for this purpose.

Gift Card Requirements:

- 1) Subgrantees must document in their Gift Card Policy the justification as to why they must use gifts cards rather than providing assistance through conventional means, such as partnerships with service providers, checks for goods/services to providers, or voucher options.
- 2) Gift cards cannot be used in HSP for anything except for the specific costs identified in this manual and in support of a client's written housing goals

- 3) Documentation will be reviewed during monitoring and costs will be disallowed without sufficient documentation.
- 4) The cost must be allocable, within program guidelines and must adhere to internal controls (OMB 200.403, 200.303) and must clearly meet the intent of ORS 458.650(1), showing a connection to housing stabilization.
- 5) Gift cards for the purchase of food must follow OHCS guidance for limitation
- 6) Subgrantee procurement policies must be followed when purchasing gift cards.
- 7) Gift cards must be purchased and issued to clients within the same grant period. For any gift cards that are not issued within the same grant period in which they were purchased, subgrantees must submit a negative request for funds for the grant period in which the gift cards were purchased totaling the amount of the unissued gift cards.
- 8) Subgrantee must have prior approval of a stand-alone gift card policy by OHCS **before incurring costs for gift cards**. The gift card policy must be prior-approved each biennium with the subgrantee's Implementation Report. OHCS retains the right to require modification of any policy that in its determination does not meet basic principles or requirements of such a policy.
- 9) Subrecipients of a subgrantee **must** follow the provision of the subgrantee's approved gift card policy and all OHCS requirements for the use of gift cards.
- 10) Costs will be disallowed without a prior OHCS-approved Gift Card Policy.
- 11) Subgrantee must identify the dollar limitation for gift cards per client and the frequency limitation for a client's receipt of gift cards and such limitations must be reasonable as determined by OHCS.
- 12) Subgrantee must maintain complete record of gift card purchases and issuance and gift cards must be kept in a secure location.
- 13) Client must receive documentation that identifies the purpose and intent of the gift card and must acknowledge, by written, legible, wet signature, the same, and such documentation must be kept in the client's file.
- 14) Subgrantee is **required to provide proof of an eligible expense**. Receipts of transportation-related items purchased with a gift card **must** be kept in the client file. **As these are federal funds they carry more stringent requirements for proving eligible expenses and if there is no receipt of purchase using the gift card, the cost will be disallowed.**
- 15) Issuance of a gift card must be in the context of an action plan or goal designed to increase housing stability and such plan/goal clearly documents, in writing, how the purpose of the gift card is helping the client obtain or maintain housing stability.

Gift Card Policy must include the following:

- 1) Justification as to why they must use gifts cards rather than providing assistance through conventional means, such as partnerships with service providers, checks for goods/services to providers, or voucher options (i.e., why are other options of providing assistance not available?);

- 2) If gift cards will be used for food purchases, policy must clearly identify the limitations as stated in this manual;
- 3) Identifies internal controls on how gift cards are purchased and issued to clients within the same grant period;
- 4) Identifies internal controls on how gift cards are securely maintained, who has access to gift cards, and how the issuance of gift cards is tracked;
- 5) Identifies, per client, dollar limitation for gift cards and frequency limitation for how often a client can receive a gift card. Additionally, policy must identify internal controls on how these limitations are tracked to ensure compliance with the limitation;
- 6) Requirement that issuance of gift card is in context to a client's action plan or goal designed to increase housing stability and that such plan is included in the client file; and
- 7) Written, legible, wet signature statement from client that identifies purpose and intent of gift card and acknowledging and agreeing to the receipt of the gift card under the intended purpose.

7. Maintenance of Effort (MOE)

Subgrantees shall make Maintenance of Effort (MOE) contributions in compliance with 45 CFR 92.24, 92.3, 263.2 through 263.6 to supplement the program in an amount required by OHCS each fiscal year, unless otherwise directed by OHCS. Subgrantees will be notified of the required MOE obligation for each subgrantee in the subgrantee's grant agreement/contract Funding Application (subgrantee's grant agreement/contract IR Process)

Allowable MOE expenditures that are made on behalf of an eligible needy household, must comply with HSP allowable client expenditures within the 120-day HSP expenditure limitation as detailed in this manual.

MOE funds can serve families whose income is at or below 250% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), when the allowable MOE requirements are met. MOE requirements are:

- (1) Eligible families with income up to 250% of FPL, must also have a
- (2) Qualifying child, be a
- (3) Citizen or have Qualified Non-Citizen Status (see Section 2 for eligibility); be a
- (4) Resident of Oregon, and have a
- (5) SSN (see Section 2 for eligibility); and
- (6) Meets the TANF requirement for funding that MOE be provided for one of the following four purposes:
 - a) assisting needy families, so that children can be cared for in their own homes (HSP MOE typically meets this purpose);
 - b) reducing the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage;
 - c) preventing out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and
 - d) encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Countable TANF MOE funds are other state, county, local governments, and other such public or private funds. MOE can be:

- (1) Cash, or
- (2) Third party in-kind contributions, such as volunteer services, or professional services. In-kind services must be identified through a MOU with partner organizations. **OHCS must approve the methodology used for valuation prior to including the value on the quarterly report.**

MOE funds must not be otherwise counted towards a federal cost-sharing or matching requirement. Examples of cash and in-kind MOE funds can be found on the HSS dashboard.

Expenditures counted towards MOE cannot exceed the limitation of assistance as identified for HSP.

The following does NOT count as MOE:

- Any funds that originated with the Federal government;
- State funds expended under the Medicaid program;
- State funds from a prior fiscal year; and
- Any funds used as MOE for a previous HSP grant.

If subgrantee/subrecipient wish to use other state funds, they **must** make sure that they do not originate from TANF funding. If using an ODHS source for MOE, you **must document** your due diligence that such funds are not otherwise counted for the purposes of MOE and that the funding source does not originate from TANF federal funds, but are actually state dollars and not Medicaid state dollars. Be sure to connect with your ODHS office before trying to use their funding source as MOE.

In addition, when using state funds that pay for child support collection services, childcare services, alcohol or drug abuse treatment, or educational services, there are a few other guidelines that apply. These are not common sources, but more information is available. Be sure you know how and when you can count them for MOE. Use the Appendix in this manual for additional guidance.

8. Financial Management

(A) **Administration**

Subgrantees are allowed to use up to fifteen percent (15%) of their total allocation for administrative costs, including administrative costs for subrecipient organizations with whom the subgrantee contracts. There is an expectation that administrative funds will be shared with subrecipients (partners and culturally specific organizations) commensurate to the services provided through the program by subrecipients.

Allowable administrative costs benefit the organization as a whole and cannot be attributed specifically to a particular program. For HSP, eligibility determinations must also be included as part of administrative costs per TANF rules and regulations and **cannot be considered as part of case management costs**. All amounts billed to administration must be supported by actual costs.

Per 45 CFR 263 the term “administrative costs” means costs necessary for the proper administration of the program.

- (1) It excludes direct costs of providing program services.
 - (a) For example, it excludes costs of providing diversion benefits and services, providing program information to clients, screening and assessments, development of employability plans, work activities, post-employment services, work supports, and case management. It also excludes costs for contracts devoted entirely to such activities (see Case Management section of this manual).
 - (b) It excludes the salaries and benefits costs for staff providing program services and the direct administrative costs associated with providing the services, such as the costs for supplies, equipment, travel, postage, utilities, rental of office space and maintenance of office space.
- (2) It includes costs for general administration and coordination of these programs, including contract costs and all indirect (or overhead) costs. Examples of administrative costs include:
 - (a) Salaries and benefits of staff performing administrative and coordination functions;
 - (b) Activities, staff costs related to eligibility determinations;
 - (c) Preparation of program plans, budgets, and schedules;
 - (d) Monitoring of programs and projects;
 - (e) Fraud and abuse units;
 - (f) Procurement activities;
 - (g) Public relations;
 - (h) Services related to accounting, litigation, audits, management of property, payroll, and personnel;
 - (i) Costs for the goods and services required for administration of the program such as the costs for supplies, equipment, travel, postage, utilities, and rental of office space and maintenance of office space, provided that such costs are not excluded as a direct administrative cost for providing program services under Case Management in this manual;
 - (j) Travel costs incurred for official business and not excluded as a direct administrative cost for providing program services under Case Management in this manual;
 - (k) Management information systems not related to the tracking and monitoring of requirements (e.g., for a personnel and payroll system); and
 - (l) Preparing reports and other documents.

(B) Advance Requests for Funds

Subgrantee can request and be paid in advance, provided it maintains or demonstrates the willingness to maintain both written procedures that minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds and disbursement, and financial management systems that meet the standards for fund control and accountability. See the subgrantee’s grant agreement/contract for all identified requirements and allowability.

Advance payments to a subgrantee must be limited to the minimum amounts needed and be timed to be in accordance with the actual, immediate cash requirements of the subgrantee in carrying out the purpose of the approved program or project. The timing and amount of advance payments must be as close as is administratively feasible to the actual disbursements by the subgrantee for direct program or project costs and the proportionate share of any allowable indirect costs.

An advance can be requested using the field labeled “Projected” in OPUS on the AGR screen.

The need for an advance must be justified by a short comment in the AGR “Comment” field, or comment can advise to “see attached”. The comment and/or the attachment needs to provide enough detail to justify your request and demonstrate the impact to the subgrantee’s operations and cash flow. Below are some acceptable methods that can be used to justify an advance request:

- Wait list total, or expected demand, plus additional funds to serve participants over a specified time period. Analysis must be provided on how any additional funds were calculated, expected number of households and amount per household.
- Amount needed to provide to one or more subrecipients, with an analysis of the calculated amount (projected volume or demand for subrecipient, number of households, etc.), while factoring in timelines for invoicing and processing
- Funds to meet subgrantee’s upcoming payroll
- Participant intake completed in another system, or applications in process of approval

OHCS is mindful of subgrantee’s operational needs and cash flow as they work to deliver critical programs. If there are additional questions or if a subgrantee would like to talk through the operational and cash flow needs they are experiencing, they can contact Carol Wagner, Carol.Wagner@hcs.oregon.gov or by phone at 971-273-9235.

(C) Use of OPUS

The OPUS System is a web-based centralized data system designed to meet business-processing needs. Subgrantee staff must complete training before being authorized to use the fiscal operations program of OPUS. Training is provided by the Fiscal Grant Specialist at OHCS. A Zoom Replay of OPUS Fiscal Training can be found on the HSS Dashboard

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/publish?EQBCT=c6e839a87fea4020acddb2902115019>).

OHCS maintains an OPUS Manual and OPUS Help Desk. View the OPUS User Manual from the landing page, under the Help tab, after logging into OPUS. OPUS Help Desk can be reached at:

Email: opushelp@hcs.oregon.gov

Ph: (503) 986-2099

Toll Free: (800) 453-5511 Option 6

(D) *Request for Funding Documentation*

Subgrantees/subrecipients must retain supporting documentation of all costs charged to the applicable grant and be able to provide evidence that grant funds were spent on allowable costs. When subgrantee submits an Agency Grant Request (AGR)/Request for Funds (RFF) in OPUS, they are required to upload documentation of the costs for which they are requesting payment. Any AGR/RFF submitted without accompanying documentation or with insufficient documentation will be returned to the subgrantee with instructions to provide additional information. Subgrantee are required to **frequently and regularly** submit AGR/RFFs to appropriately expend their funds within their identified spending targets. An AGR/RFF can be denied/voided if documentation is insufficient, if unallowable costs are included or if submitted after the grant period has closed.

Timely submission of AGRs/RFFs are crucial for HSP. Submit AGRs/RFFs frequently. All HSP funds **MUST** be expended and all funds drawn from OPUS by the 20th day following the end of the fiscal year. The final FSR (Financial Status Report) must be submitted in OPUS within 60 days of the end of the fiscal year, per subgrantee's grant agreement/contract requirements or funds will be subject to recapture/deallocation by OHCS.

(E) *Budget Change Requests and Implementation Report Amendments*

Changes in a subgrantee's scope of work can necessitate the submission of a budget change request. All budget changes require OHCS approval by submitting a Budget Change Request form electronically to: mga.fiscal@hcs.oregon.gov.

At the discretion of OHCS, additional information can be required for a budget change request, in form and format required by OHCS.

Implementation Report Amendments can be required when there is a shift in the Collaboration Plan. All Implementation Report Amendments require OHCS approval by submitting an Implementation Report Amendment Request through the appropriate Smartsheet form.

Subgrantees must identify, and receive OHCS approval, of all subrecipients through the funding application. For any additional subrecipients, changes to subrecipients or deletion of subrecipients, identified outside of the funding application, subgrantees must notify OHCS within 30 days of such amendment for OHCS' approval. by submitting an Implementation Report Amendment Request form through the appropriate Smartsheet form

(F) Funds Spend Down

Subgrantees are expected to fully obligate or expend grant funds during each funding cycle in accordance with OHCS policy and Subgrantees must meet spending targets identified in their Implementation Report spenddown plan (Standard or Time-Bound Expenditure Plan (TBEP), if applicable). OHCS will review subgrantee's grant spending in accordance with subgrantee's grant agreement/contract and OHCS policy. Subgrantee must fully expend funds or have filed a final Agency Grant Status (AGS)/Financial Status Report (FSR) on a previous fiscal period prior to OHCS approving funds in a current fiscal period.

Any spending below the minimum standard spending target or the time-bound expenditure plan is subject to rescission of grant funds. Any amount of funding greater than 10% of a funding source's total allocation or a combined total of \$100,000 that is subject to rescission will trigger Subgrantee Board notification. See Standard Terms and Condition of subgrantee's grant agreement/contract for more information.

Any funds left unexpended by 60 days following the end of the funding period, are subject to recapture/deallocation by OHCS.

(G) Funds Rollover

OHCS is required to provide \$500,000 of MOE each fiscal year. OHCS does not allow a rollover of funds within the biennium as most agencies match their HSP with MOE at the same rate of expenditure. If subgrantees expend less than their full allocation of HSP funds, then chances are that they will not meet the MOE requirement, which puts OHCS in violation of ODHS requirements. For HSP, there is no rollover allowed between fiscal years (unless specifically determined by OHCS with written notification to subgrantees) or biennia. ODHS counts on MOE to meet their requirements to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. If ODHS is unable to include MOE from OHCS, they can be subject to a loss of TANF dollars, and this program could be at risk of losing funding.

All HSP funds **MUST** be expended, and all funds drawn from OPUS by the 20th day following the end of the fiscal year. The final AGR (Agency Grant Status)/FSR (Financial Status Report) must be submitted in OPUS within 60 days of the end of the fiscal year, per subgrantee's grant agreement/contract requirements.

HSP has extremely tight timelines for reporting and AGRs/RFFs **MUST** be submitted in a timely manner in order to request reimbursement of funds from ODHS. If subgrantees do not meet these timelines, subgrantee funds are subject to recapture by OHCS.

(H) Internal Controls for Fraud

As stated in the subgrantee's OHCS agreement/contract, subgrantees are responsible for maintaining an internal controls framework, satisfactory to OHCS, which assures compliance with program requirements. Written policy and procedures must be established and outlined in local documentation (e.g. staff policy/procedure manuals).

Subgrantees must establish and maintain clear procedures for management of program applicants and participants who may have committed fraud and for dealing with public complaints regarding potential fraud, including preventing, detecting, investigating and dealing with fraud. Subgrantees must establish and maintain clear procedures for preventing, detecting and dealing with employee fraud. All incidents of fraud must be reported to OHCS. Subgrantees are responsible for repayment of funds which were provided to applicants and participants that do not meet program eligibility.

(I) Procurement

Purchases of equipment or property are subject to additional provisions and requirements as stated in the subgrantee's grant agreement/contract Standard Terms and Conditions and Special Provisions exhibits.

Fixed assets with a value greater than \$5,000, includes computer equipment, electronic equipment, photography equipment, hand tools and other items and are subject to pre-approval by OHCS. Title to all equipment as defined in 2 CFR Part 200, purchased in whole or part with OHCS funds, shall rest with the subgrantee. Disposal of any item having an original cost of more than \$5,000 or those purchases which have a current per-unit, fair market value of \$5,000 or more requires prior OHCS consent before disposal. Property and equipment purchased with OHCS grants shall not be used for collateral or to secure financing. See subgrantee's grant agreement/contract for more information.

Subgrantee can contract for services purchased in whole or in part with funds provided under this Agreement. Contractor must be of recognized professional expertise, certification, license, registration, or stature in the relevant field where required. Contractor shall further be registered to do business in the State of Oregon, as required by Oregon Law.

When OHCS approval is required, subgrantee is expected to obtain multiple bids or pricing, and if required, provide sufficient information on cost allocation principles in accordance with 2 CFR 200. Subgrantee must provide sufficient information, in OHCS' determination, to justify reasonableness of the purchase. If using a sole source contract, subgrantee must have written justification documentation to explain why they were not able to obtain more options. All purchasing must comply with subgrantee's policies and procedures and the subgrantee's grant agreement/contract.

9. Data, Submission and Reporting Requirements

(A) Data Entry

Subgrantee and subrecipient agencies are required to enter reliable, valid and accurate HSP related participant and service data into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) being operated in their geographic Continuum of Care (CoC). HMIS Data and Technical Standards have been established by the U.S. Department of Housing and

Urban Development (HUD). Subgrantees and their subrecipients must adhere to their CoC's HMIS Data Quality Plan.

HUD-defined Victim Service Providers (VSPs) must enter information into a comparable database that meets HUD HMIS standards.

(B) Data Timeliness

Timely and accurate data entry is critical to ensuring meaningful data analysis and reporting. For all project types, subgrantees and subrecipients must enter data within two business days or sooner, depending on local CoC HMIS policies.

(C) Data Entry Requirements for Program Components

All HSP program components require both an HMIS entry/exit and HMIS Service Transaction to be entered into HMIS. Each allowable service must be represented with a Service Transaction. Same-day services will have the same Service Start and End Date. Service Transactions, including all payments, arrearages, deposits, fees, etc., must include a HMIS Fund Source and Amount.

(D) Required Data Elements

Universal, program specific, and OHCS-required Data Elements must be collected in HMIS and are specific to program and project type. Refer to the [Data Collection Requirement by Program and Project Type](#) document that can be found on the HSS dashboard for applicable data elements specific to HSP.

(E) Comparable Database

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) contains strong, legally codified confidentiality provisions that limit HUD-defined Victim Service Providers (VSPs) from sharing, disclosing, or revealing victims' personally identifying information (PII), including entering information into shared databases like HMIS. To protect clients, VSPs must enter required client-level data into a comparable database that is comparable to and complies with all HUD HMIS requirements.

Subgrantees/subrecipients defined as HUD VSPs are still subject to reporting requirements to OHCS of the grant for which they are receiving OHCS funding even if using a comparable database; however, no PII will be shared, only aggregate counts.

(F) Submissions/Reporting Requirements

It is critical that subgrantees must meet deadlines for the submission of data, budgets, and reports (including, but not limited to annual, quarterly, implementation, and financial status reports, etc.) as required by OHCS. Subgrantees must submit **complete and accurate** materials requested by OHCS by the deadline provided by OHCS and in the form and format required. Any submission that is incomplete or after the deadline will be considered by OHCS to be late and out of compliance with requirements.

System Query Data

Subgrantees must directly submit or automate the export of disaggregated HMIS participant, program and service transaction data twenty (20) days following the end of each month or as directed by OHCS. System Query Data may be used in published data visualizations (e.g., Tableau dashboards) and as the HMIS annual report.

Aggregated Quarterly Reports

Subgrantees must directly submit aggregated reports using the report provided in the HMIS reporting tool, SAP Business Objects, or the provided template, twenty (20) days following the end of each quarter.

HSP Referral Tracking and Quarterly Provider Report

Subgrantees are required to submit the HSP Referral Tracking and Quarterly Provider Report, in form and format required by OHCS including subrecipient information, by the 20th of the month following the end of each quarter (Oct 20, Jan 20, Apr 20 and Jul 20). OHCS CANNOT allow extensions for HSP, so it is imperative that reports are provided by this date. Even if extensions are provided on other OHCS programs, subgrantee must submit the HSP reports by the due dates. If OHCS is unable to meet ODHS requirements for reporting, ODHS will not be able to use the MOE reported within their reporting period to HHS and this can decrease TANF funds to the state and can reduce the funds awarded to this program.

If any modifications to the HSP Referral Tracking and Quarterly Provider Report are desired, they must be prior approved by OHCS before use and during the subgrantee's grant agreement/contract Funding Application process. Subgrantees MUST NOT add any restrictions, protections, or other permissions to the HSP Referral Tracking and Quarterly Provider Report. Any report submitted that has been altered in form or format and/or includes restriction, protections or permission will be returned to the subgrantee for correction and resubmission. The deadline for submitting the report is not extended for reports submitted that do not meet OHCS requirements and submissions that occur after the deadline and are considered late by OHCS and out of compliance with program requirement. If the requirement for complete and accurate reports by the due date, in the form and format required by OHCS, are not met, the subgrantee is out of compliance with program requirements.

If an error on a previous quarter's reporting is discovered by the subgrantee, the subgrantee cannot go back and make changes to a previously submitted report; but must make corrections in the next quarter's report. For example, if MOE is reported as \$900 in Quarter 1 and it was determined that only \$800 was provided, subgrantee must reflect in Quarter 2 the deduction of \$100 – subgrantee cannot modify Quarter 1's MOE to reflect \$800. This information will have already been reported to ODHS, so corrections must be made in the quarter in which the error was discovered.

Program Delivery Annual Report

A narrative annual report must be submitted, in form and format required by OHCS, by the 60th day following the end of the fiscal year providing detail, including, but not limited

to subrecipient budgets, program services, performance, outcomes, successes, and challenges.

Fiscal

Per the Funds Rollover Section of this manual, all HSP funds **MUST** be expended, and all funds drawn from OPUS by the 20th day following the end of the fiscal year. The final Agency Grant Status (AGS)/FSR (Financial Status Report) must be submitted in OPUS within 60 days of the end of the fiscal year.

At the discretion of OHCS, other reports can be required when deemed necessary by OHCS.

Subrecipient reporting to subgrantee must occur timely, so that subgrantees can meet the required deadline for reports to OHCS. It is the subgrantee's responsibility to ensure that subrecipients provide information to the subgrantee as required so that subgrantees can meet the reporting requirements of OHCS inclusive of subrecipient information.

Failure to provide required data or reports may result in a non-monetary finding in the Monitoring Report.

10. Records Requirements

(A) Records Access

Subgrantees, their subrecipient organizations and subrecipient organization's subrecipients are required to permit OHCS, the Oregon Secretary of State's Office, the federal government, and the duly authorized representatives of such entities access to, and the right to copy, all program records, applicant/participant records and fiscal records for such purposes as research, data collection, evaluations, monitoring, and auditing. At the sole discretion of OHCS, access to records shall include the removal of records as necessitated by OHCS or their duly authorized representative.

(B) Records Retention

Subgrantees, subrecipient organizations and subrecipient organization's subrecipients shall retain all program records pertinent to applicant/participant services and expenditures incurred under HSP in a manner consistent with the requirements of state and federal law. This includes, but is not limited to, those requirements listed in Administrative Rule, Operations Manual and Special Schedules. Find the OHCS Special Schedule at the Oregon State Archives:

(https://sos.oregon.gov/archives/Pages/state_admin_schedules.aspx);

and State Agency General Records Retention Schedules, found at the Oregon State Archives:

(<https://secure.sos.state.or.us/oard/displayDivisionRules.action?selectedDivision=591>).

Records can be stored electronically; however, electronic records must be maintained securely and confidentially and be available in paper format if requested by OHCS for

monitoring, audit, or other purposes. HMIS can be used as a method of document collection and maintenance when it represents all required records and is appropriate.

Subgrantees, subrecipient organizations and subrecipient organization's subrecipients shall retain and keep accessible all such **fiscal and program records**, applicant/participant records, digital and electronic records, books, documents, papers, plans, and writings for a minimum of **(6) six years**, or such longer period as required by applicable law, whichever date is later. Destruction of records must occur timely and in compliance with applicable law and retention schedules. Retention begins from the later of the date that the final payment is made or from the termination of HSP funding, or until the conclusion of any audit, controversy or litigation arising out of, or relating to, HSP.

11. Appendix 1: Applicable Rules and Regulations

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

1. TANF Rules and Regulations: See <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/tanf/laws-regulations>.
2. Food Stamp Act: 7 USC §2020(e)(8), 7 CFR § 272.1(c); ORS 411.320 and 411.990; OAR 461-105-0010 through OAR 461-105-0140.
3. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF): 42 USC § 602(a)(1)(A)(iv); ORS 418.130 and 418.990; OAR 461-105-0010 through 461-105-0140.
4. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, as amended: Public Law 104–191—Aug. 21, 1996
5. Medicaid: Medicaid Services under the Medicaid Act, Title XIX, 42 USC § 1396 et. seq; including § 1396a(a)(27); 42 CFR § 431.107(b)(1) & (2); 42 CFR Part 1002.3(a); 42 CFR Part 455 Subpart (B); 42 USC § 1396(a)(57) and (w); 42 CFR Part 431.107(b)(4); 42 CFR Part 489 Subpart I; Section 6032 of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, 42 USC § 1396a(a)(68).; ORS 411.320 and 411.990; OAR 461-105-0010 through 461-105-0140.
6. Income Eligibility Verification System (IEVS): 5.3.1.4.1 42 USC § 1320b-7, 20 CFR § 603; ORS 411.320, 411.990, ORS 418.130, 418.990; OAR 461-105-0010 through 461-105-0140.
7. Social Security Numbers: 5 USC § 552a, 42 USC §405 and § 408, and individual programmatic confidentiality provisions; ORS 411.320, 411.990, ORS 418.130, 418.990; OAR 461-105-0010 through 461-105-0140.
8. Tax Information: 26 USC § 6103, 26 USC § 7213(a) (2); ORS 314.835, ORS 314.840 and ORS 314.991.
9. Unemployment Insurance Information: ORS 657.670; ORS 411.320, 411.990, ORS 418.130, 418.990; OAR 461-105-0010 through 461-105-0140.
10. Alcohol and Drug Information: 42 USC § 290dd-2; 42 CFR § 2.1; ORS 411.320, 411.990, ORS 418.130, 418.990; OAR 461-105-0010 through 461-105-0140.
11. Mental Health Information: 42 USC § 6041, 42 USC § 10841(1) (H); ORS 179.505 and ORS 192.515 through ORS 192.525.
12. Child Abuse Information: ORS 419B.035.
13. Support Enforcement Information: 42 USC § 654(26), ORS 25.260 and 25.990; OAR 461-200-1140.
14. Criminal Background Check Information: ORS 181.536, 181.537 and ORS 181.540; OAR 461-165-0400.; OAR 407-007-0000 through 407-007-0640.
15. School Records: ORS 192.496(4) and ORS 326.565; OAR 581-021-0330 and OAR 581-021-0350.
16. Disclosure: 42 CFR Part 455.104 and 455.434.
17. Public Records In General: ORS 192.496 through 192.530.

18. Misuse of Confidential Information: ORS 162.425.
19. Refugee Program: 45 CFR 400.27, OAR 461-105-0010 through 461-105-0140.
20. Faith-Based Organizations: 45 CFR Part 87; Federal Register, July 16, 2004, Vol. 69, #136.
21. Federal Intellectual Property Rights Notice: 37 CFR Part 401
22. Federal Whistleblower Protection: 41 USC 4712, Pilot Program for Enhancement of Employee Whistleblower Protection; Attachment 4, "Information Required by 2 CFR Subtitle B and 2 CFR 200.331(a)(1)".
23. ORS 456.515 through 456.725: [Housing and Community Services Department](#)
24. ORS 458.505 through 458.545: [Community Services Program](#)
25. OAR 166-300: [State Agency General Records Retention Schedules](#)
26. OAR 813-051: [Housing Stabilization Program](#)
27. Inter-Agency Agreement between ODHS and OHCS
28. **This manual** as guidelines for HSP, and all other references made within this manual.
29. HMIS Data Standards Manual: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3824/hmis-data-dictionary/>
30. **CFRs** cited are amended from time to time and can be found at: <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=%2Findex.tpl>
31. **ORS** cited are amended from time to time and can be found at: https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/Pages/ORS.aspx
32. **OARs** cited are amended from time to time and can be found at: <https://secure.sos.state.or.us/oard/ruleSearch.action>
33. **OMBs** cited are amended from time to time and can be found at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-for-agencies/circulars>
34. The ODHS Oregon Programs Eligibility Notebook can be found at: <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/ssp/fsm/pages/index.aspx> **Limited English Proficiency** federal interagency website can be found at: <http://www.lep.gov/> and FAQs can be found at: https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/promotingfh/lep-faq.

12. Appendix 2: Acronyms

Acronyms commonly used in this program are:

AGR	Agency Grant Request
AGS	Agency Grant Status
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
FPL	Federal Poverty Level
FSR	Financial Status Report
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HMIS	Homeless Management Information System
HSP	Housing Stabilization Program
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
MOE	Maintenance of Effort
OAR	Oregon Administrative Rule
ODHS	Oregon Department of Human Services
OHCS	Oregon Housing and Community Services
ORS	Oregon Revised Statute
OSP	Oregon State Police
RFF	Request for Funds
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly food stamps)
SSI	Social Security Income
SSN	Social Security Number
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

13. Appendix 3: Definitions

Barriers to Employment include lack of childcare, education, transportation, or work experience, lack of a high school degree or GED (General Educational Development) Certificate, illiteracy, low English proficiency, a history of incarceration or detention for criminal activity, or a history of unstable employment.

Caretaker Relative:

The Dependent Child must live with a Caretaker Relative:

Any blood relative of the dependent child's, stepfather, stepmother, stepbrother, stepsister or an individual who has legally adopted the dependent child.

Client means a household who has received an assessment of need, has been entered into an OHCS-funded program (intake) and who is receiving financial assistance. A client is someone who has developed a client services/housing plan and is not receiving one-time only assistance.

Dependent Child: *A dependent child must be one of the following:*

- (1) An individual who is living with the caretaker relative and is under the age of 18, **OR** is under 19 and a full-time student in high school or the equivalent level of vocational or technical training; **OR**
- (2) A minor parent whose parents have chosen to apply for benefits for the minor parent (this does not apply to a minor parent who is married and living with his or her spouse); **OR**
- (3) An unborn child (see client eligibility requirement for pregnancies)

Domestic Violence: This definition includes domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, attempting to cause, or intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causing or placing another in fear of imminent serious physical injury or emotional, mental or verbal abuse, and using coercive or controlling behavior. This does not include other criminal acts such as violence perpetrated by a stranger, neighbor, acquaintance or friend, unless those persons are family members, intimate partners or household members. (Note: This definitional aligns with TANF rules and regulations)

HMIS means Homeless Management Information System. Victim Service Providers must use an HMIS comparable database.

Marriage means the union of two individuals who are legally married. Legally married means a marriage uniting two individuals according to the provision of:

- (1) The statutes of the state where the marriage occurred;
- (2) The common law of the state in which the two individuals previously resided while meeting the requirements of common law marriage in that state; or
- (3) The laws of a country in which the two individuals previously resided while meeting the requirements for legal or cultural marriage in that country.

Parent means the biological mother or father of an unborn child or the biological, step, or adoptive mother or father of a child.

Participant means a household who may or may not be a client, but is receiving OHCS-funded services.

Spouse means an individual who is legally married to another individual.

Stand-Alone Policy means a written policy that includes all the requirements for such a policy and is either its own separate document or it is included in a larger document, such as a policy and procedures handbook, that can easily be separated from the larger document for the purpose of approval and review by OHCS.

Subgrantee Agency: Community Action Agencies (or other qualified entities) that receive funding from the Grantee (OHCS) and provides client assistance payments/services. Subgrantee agencies may contract client assistance payments/services to subrecipients.

Subrecipient: Subrecipients are entities that, by contract with the subgrantee agency, provide HSP client assistance payments and receive funding directly from the subgrantee agency. Through its agreements with subgrantee agency, subrecipients will comply must all requirements for the Housing Stabilization Program. Subrecipients include a subgrantee's subcontractors, contractors, vendor, subrecipients and any subcontractors, contractors, vendors or subrecipients of a subcontractor, contractor, vendor or subrecipient.

Support Network: Examples include family, friends and faith-based or other social networks.

Target Population means persons a subgrantee/subrecipient wishes to reach out to who are under-represented in their service population (such as refugees, teen parents, SSI recipients).

Temporary Living: Residing in a facility for fewer than 90 days

Unaccompanied Youth with Child/ren: A minor parent under the age of 18 or a teen parent under the age of 20 and has not completed a high school diploma or GED program.

If the Unaccompanied Youth with Child/ren is a Minor Parent (under the age of 18), to be eligible for benefits, the Minor Parent must live with his/her parent, legal guardian or another adult relative. If it is determined that it is in the best interest of the minor parent to live on their own, the minor parent must attend high school or its equivalent full-time or participate in the Department of Human Services JOBS or other training program to develop employment or self-sufficiency skills.

Operational Flexibility: Sexual abuse or other physical or emotional abuse is grounds to waive the requirement that a minor parent live with their parent(s), legal guardian or other adult relative in order to receive benefits. The decision to waive this requirement may also be based on the unavailability of the parent(s), legal guardian or other adult relative in providing the minor parent's care, control and supervision. This is true when they are not living in the same state, or when the minor parent has been living on his/her own for over 12 months before or since the birth of his/her last child.

If a Minor Parent returns to live with his/her parent, parents or legal guardian, consider the parent, parents, or legal guardian's income during application for benefits.

(End)

14. Appendix 4: MOE FAQs

1. What kinds of expenditures DO NOT count towards MOE:

- (1) Funds that originated with the Federal government;
- (2) State funds expended under the Medicaid program;
- (3) State funds from a prior fiscal year;
- (4) Any funds used as MOE for a previous HSP grant (not used again for MOE on a subsequent grant award).

2. What are some examples of Cash contributions that DO NOT count towards MOE:

- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- HOME Tenant Based Assistance (HTBA)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
- Continuum of Care (CoC)
- Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP)
- Supplemental Assistance for Facilities to Assist the Homeless Program (SAFAHP)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Women Infants & Children nutrition program (WIC)
- US Housing & Urban Development Family Unification Voucher (HUDFUV)

3. What are some examples of Cash contributions that DO count towards MOE:

- Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA)
- Elderly Rental Assistance (ERA)
- State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP)
- Private funds
- Foundation funds

- State funds (as qualified by #5 in this FAQ and not already counted by another source)
- Local government funds (as qualified by #5 in this FAQ and not already counted by another source)
- *IF YOU PLAN TO USE STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDS, THESE FUNDS MUST NOT ALREADY BE COUNTED AS MOE BY ANOTHER SOURCE. PLEASE CONTACT THE SOURCE OF THESE FUNDS TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE NOT ALREADY COUNTED AS MOE.*

4. What are some examples of In-Kind contributions that DO count towards MOE (funds not already counted by other sources, such as Oregon Food Bank, and with prior approval – see Section 4 of this manual):

- Volunteer driver hours
- Volunteer food pantry hours
- Other volunteer worker hours

5. What kinds of State expenditures count toward meeting a State's basic MOE expenditure requirement?

- (a) Expenditures of State funds in TANF MOE may count if they are made for the following types of benefits or services:
- (1) Cash assistance, including the State's share of the assigned child support collection that is distributed to the family, and disregarded in determining eligibility for, and amount of the TANF assistance payment;
 - (2) Child care assistance (see §263.3);
 - (3) Education activities designed to increase self-sufficiency, job training, and work (see §263.4);
 - (4) Any other use of funds allowable under section 404(a)(1) of the Act including:
 - (i) Nonmedical treatment services for alcohol and drug abuse and some medical treatment services (provided that the State has not commingled its MOE funds with Federal TANF funds to pay for the services), if consistent with the goals at §260.20 of this chapter [these services are not allowable with HSP]; and
 - (ii) Pro-family healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood activities enumerated in part IV-A of the Act, sections 403(a)(2)(A)(iii) and 403(a)(2)(C)(ii) that are consistent with the goals at §§260.20(c) or (d) of this chapter, but do not constitute “assistance” as defined in §260.31(a) of this chapter; and
- (5)(i) Administrative costs for activities listed in paragraphs (a)(1) through (a)(4) of this section, not to exceed 15 percent of the total amount of countable expenditures for the fiscal year.
- (ii) Costs for information technology and computerization needed for tracking or monitoring required by or under part IV-A of the Act do not count towards the limit in paragraph (5)(i) of this section, even if they fall within the definition of “administrative costs.”
 - (A) This exclusion covers the costs for salaries and benefits of staff who develop, maintain, support, or operate the portions of information technology or computer systems used for tracking and monitoring.
 - (B) It also covers the costs of contracts for the development, maintenance, support, or operation of those portions of information technology or computer systems used for tracking or monitoring.
- (b) With the exception of paragraph (a)(4)(ii) of this section, the benefits or services listed under paragraph (a) of this section count only if they have been provided to or on behalf of eligible families. An “eligible family” as defined by the State, must:

- (1) Be comprised of citizens or non-citizens who:
 - (i) Are eligible for TANF assistance;
 - (ii) Would be eligible for TANF assistance, but for the time limit on the receipt of federally funded assistance; or
 - (iii) Are lawfully present in the United States and would be eligible for assistance, but for the application of title IV of PRWORA;
 - (2) Include a child living with a custodial parent or other adult caretaker relative (or consist of a pregnant individual); and
 - (3) Be financially eligible according to the appropriate income and resource (when applicable) standards established by the State and contained in its TANF plan.
- (c) Benefits or services listed under paragraph (a) of this section provided to a family that meets the criteria under paragraphs (b)(1) through (b)(3) of this section, but who became ineligible solely due to the time limitation given under §264.1 of this chapter, may also count.
- (d) Expenditures for the benefits or services listed under paragraph (a) of this section count whether or not the benefit or service meets the definition of assistance under §260.31 of this chapter. Further, families that meet the criteria in paragraphs (b)(2) and (b)(3) of this section are considered to be eligible for TANF assistance for the purposes of paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section.
- (e) Expenditures for benefits or services listed under paragraph (a) of this section may include allowable costs borne by others in the State (e.g., local government), including cash donations from non-Federal third parties (e.g., a non-profit organization) and the value of third party in-kind contributions if:
- (1) The expenditure is verifiable and meets all applicable requirements in 45 CFR 92.3 and 92.24;
 - (2) There is an agreement between the State and the other party allowing the State to count the expenditure toward its MOE requirement; and,
 - (3) The State counts a cash donation only when it is actually spent.
- (f)(1) The expenditures for benefits or services in State-funded programs listed under paragraph (a) of this section count only if they also meet the requirements of §263.5.
- (2) Expenditures that fall within the prohibitions in §263.6 do not count.
- (g) State funds used to meet the Healthy Marriage Promotion and Responsible Fatherhood Grant match requirement may count to meet the MOE requirement in §263.1, provided the expenditure also meets all the other MOE requirements in this subpart.

6. When do child care expenditures count?

- (a) State funds expended to meet the requirements of the CCDF Matching Fund (i.e., as match or MOE amounts) may also count as basic MOE expenditures up to the State's child care MOE amount that must be expended to qualify for CCDF matching funds.
- (b) Child care expenditures that have not been used to meet the requirements of the CCDF Matching Fund (i.e., as match or MOE amounts), or any other Federal childcare program, may also count as basic MOE expenditures. The limit described in paragraph (a) of this section does not apply.
- (c) The child care expenditures described in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section must be made to, or on behalf of, eligible families, as defined in §263.2(b).

7. When do educational expenditures count?

- (a) Expenditures for educational activities or services count if:
 - (1) They are provided to eligible families (as defined in §63.2(b)) to increase self-sufficiency, job training, and work; and
 - (2) They are not generally available to other residents of the State without cost and without regard to their income.
- (b) Expenditures on behalf of eligible families for educational services or activities provided through the public education system do not count unless they meet the requirements under paragraph (a) of this section.

15.HSP REFERRAL TRACKING AND QUARTERLY PROVIDER REPORT

The HSP Referral Tracking and Quarterly Provider Report is available each biennium through the subgrantee's grant agreement/contract funding application.

If any modifications to the template HSP Referral Tracking and Quarterly Provider Report are desired, they must be prior approved by OHCS before use. Subgrantees **MUST NOT** add any restrictions, protections or other permissions to the HSP Referral Tracking and Quarterly Provider Report. Any report submitted that has been altered in form or format and/or includes restriction, protections or permission will be returned to the subgrantee for correction and resubmission. The deadline for submitting the report is not extended for reports submitted that do not meet OHCS requirements and submissions that occur after the deadline and are considered late by OHCS.