

Ramping Down HRRD



Coalition on Homelessness
and Housing in Ohio
COHHIO

Ramping Down Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Programs

Background and Introduction

The Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) was initiated through HR 1 The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. HPRP received \$1,500,000,000 in ARRA funds to provide short-term or medium-term rental assistance, housing relocation and stabilization services including housing search, mediation or outreach to property owners, credit repair, security or utility deposits, utility payments, rental assistance, moving costs, and case management for homeless persons or those at risk for homelessness. These funds are to be spent over a three-year time frame. For grantees receiving funds through the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD), these funds must be spent by August 31, 2012. The legislation further stated that grantees shall expend at least 60 percent of the funds within two years of the date that the funds became available to them. ODOD grantees are to expend at least 60% of their funds by August 31, 2011.

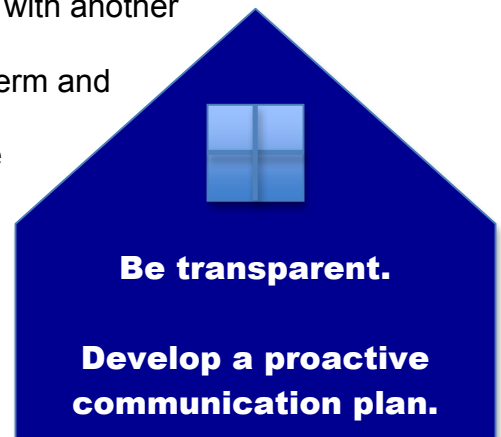
To better facilitate ODOD funded HPRP grantees closing out their programs, COHHIO has developed this Ramping Down HPRP document. It will review various aspects of how HPRP grantees need to prepare for Ramping Down their program.

Preventing and Ending Homelessness Must Be A Priority

Phase-Out and Communication Planning

- Develop a realistic phase-out plan for the grantee and sub-recipients for ramping down of HPRP.
- Develop communication strategy to inform participants, landlords, and the community about program closure.
 - Determine who will talk with them and what will be said. The execution of the communication plans should be completed in person or over the phone. Refrain from sending a generic form letter informing participants, landlords, and community about program closure.
 - Determine how to utilize the media to proactively address the end of HPRP.
- Anticipate confusion regarding why grantees and sub-recipients have different dates that they stop taking applications or providing assistance.
- Develop strategies to involve partners in referring participants to mainstream and community resources that will be available to them after HPRP concludes. Examples include: public/metropolitan housing authorities, VA service coordinators, employment agencies, other homelessness prevention providers, etc.
 - Provide ample time for partners to develop plans to meet potential demand in services.
 - Anticipate how the end of HPRP will affect any existing inter-agency agreements. Partners may need to reallocate funds.
 - Consider the need for any new inter-agency agreements for participant follow-up.
- Engage and solicit ideas from staff and current/former participants in phase-out planning.
 - Solicit ideas from current and former participants, both those that successfully exited the program and those that posed challenges.

- If possible, provide stipends to households for their input (HPRP funds cannot be used).
- Establish timeframes for how much notice the program will give each participant before services and/or rental assistance ends.
- Plan for possible interventions for participants that are not stably housed at the conclusion of HPRP.
- Articulate plan that will meet commitments made to landlords regarding the length of time that program staff will provide supportive services, respond to landlords' concerns, mediate housing disputes, etc. Determine how grantee and sub-recipients will meet those commitments or develop inter-agency agreement with another provider.
- Project dates for closing participant intake for medium-term and short-term assistance.
 - Review current HPRP data to determine average length of assistance and households served. Determine when the last household should be enrolled based upon average length of assistance, households served, and cost of current assistance.
- Estimate declining caseloads for staff roles/workload.
- Resolve how and when staff will be transitioned out of HPRP.
- Determine how active program participants will be moved to other case managers in preparation for staff obtaining other jobs or having reduced hours.
- Prepare for staff not leaving the agency but having smaller size caseloads and decide what other activities they will pick up. Ensure that these tasks are HPRP eligible. Consider developing a housing locator system, database, etc. if this was not completed previously.



Prepare Participants, Landlords and Community

Participants

- Develop a communication plan to inform current participants about program closure. Determine who will talk to them and what will be said.
- Ensure that participants understand the reason for program conclusion. Be proactive. Start informing participants about the timeframe of when you think your funding will conclude.
 - Remember that rumors will start to fly about why the program is ending. Safeguard as much as possible that all participants are notified in a condensed time period, so that participants are not wondering why someone else knows something they do not.
- Counsel participants on alternative sources of assistance.
- Develop exit plans and strategies with participants. Be as specific as possible given each household's individualized needs. Discuss with participants what their next steps might be if they have a housing crisis in the future.
- Identify outreach strategies to inform potential participants about phase-out.

- Since participants and others may be counting on these funds for the future, ensure that information is disseminated by referral agencies/consumer areas so that they are aware of program closing.
- Anticipate a negative reaction and/or confusion regarding why the program is ending. Be prepared how to properly message why the program is concluding and what resources are available to participants after the program's end.

Landlords – Property Managers

- Develop a communication plan to inform current landlords about program closure. Determine who will talk to them and what will be said.
 - Be proactive – inform and/or remind landlords that HPRP was funded through ARRA monies and that this program was funded for only three years.
- Explain to landlords who they will be able to contact if there are concerns or disputes that arise.

Community – Continuum of Care, Mainstream & Community Resources, Partners, Prospective Participants



- Develop a communication plan to inform community about program closure. Determine who will talk to them and what will be said.
- Inform and educate the community, mainstream & community resources, and prospective participants of HPRP's imminent conclusion.
- Determine as a service area which agencies will be able to provide follow-

up care to persons at risk for homelessness and persons experiencing homelessness.

- Choose to be proactive – inform and/or remind community that HPRP was funded through ARRA monies and that this program was funded for only three years.
- Compose a strategy to determine which agency will be able to continue a single point of entry if through HPRP your service area developed one.
- Identify service gaps and barriers that may exist after HPRP concludes.
- Prepare mainstream and community resources providers that they may see an increase in requests for assistance and services.

Agency Responsibilities Prior to Program Closeout

- Request that staff write a statement regarding lessons learned from HPRP to ensure that knowledge gained from the program is not lost. Provide that statement to the local Continuum of Care.

- **Consult the HPRP Documentation Checklist <http://www.cohhio.org/HPRP%20Documentation%20Checklist.doc> or similar form to ensure that all documents and files are complete.**
- **Consult with HMIS Support staff to ensure that HMIS data is clean and accurate.**
 - **Ensure that all required HPRP data has been collected and entered into HMIS (e.g., data elements, data on cash income at exit, non-cash benefits, services transactions, etc.).**
- Prepare for grant closeout process by which HUD determines that all applicable administrative actions and all required work of the award have been completed by the recipient and HUD. Follow OMB Circular A-110, 2 CFR,

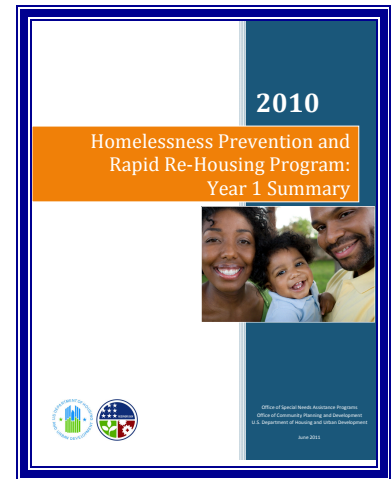
Part 215, Section 215 regarding closeout procedures.

- Refund any balances of unobligated cash that has been advanced and that is not authorized to be retained by the grantee and/or their partner organizations.
- Account for any real and personal property acquired with Federal funds or received from the Federal Government in accordance with §215.31 through §215.37.
- Preserve all HPRP records, in the event a final audit has not been performed prior to the closeout of an award, HUD shall retain the right to recovery an appropriate amount after fully considering the recommendations on disallowed costs resulting from the final audit.
- Maintain support documentation for all Annual Performance Reports, Quarterly Performance Reports, Expenditure Reports, Jobs Reports, etc. are maintained in an electronic format, and in a secure and accessible location.
- Ensure that financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other records pertinent to an award shall be retained for a period of three years from the date of submission of the final expenditure report – this includes both the grantee and any sub recipients. Exceptions include:
 - If any litigations, claim, or audit is started before the expiration of the three-year period, the records shall be retained until all litigation, claims, or audit findings involving the records have been resolved and final action taken.
 - Records for real property and equipment acquired with HUD funds shall be retained for three years after final disposition.
- Initiate closeout procedures when 1. grantee decides to end HPRP program before drawing down all funds, 2. grantee notifies OHCP (if funded through State of Ohio funds) or HUD (for those funded directly by HUD) that it will no longer comply with terms of HPRP grant agreement, 3. when all HPRP funds have been expended, or 4. at the three-year mark August 31, 2012.
- Close HPRP when 1. grantee has expended and drawn all HPRP funds, 2. participants are no longer being served with HPRP funds, 3. all reporting requirements have been met, and 4. all monitoring findings have been closed.
- Provide support to staff that are preparing to leave agency with the conclusion of HPRP.
 - Educate staff on unemployment insurance/benefits, Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) health benefits, local job placement programs, etc.

- Prepare staff for the difficult conversations. HPRP has allowed all Ohio communities the opportunity to fund homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing activities to assist those at risk for homelessness and persons experiencing homelessness, it will be hard for staff to now say no to those in need of assistance.
- Organize files and records given that HUD, OHCP, Investigator General may still monitor after close out.

Complete Year 2 & 3 Annual Performance Reports, Quarterly Performance Reports, etc.

- Exit every participant from the HPRP program in participant files and in HMIS by the end of the contract period, which is August 31, 2012.
 - Even if your agency will continue to serve participants after HPRP funds are concluded, the participants needs to be exited from the HPRP program in the participant files and in HMIS.
- Ensure that the HPRP Annual Performance Report, Expenditure Report, Quarterly Performance Report, Jobs Report, and other reports are submitted to OHCP. If grantee concludes their individual HPRP program prior to August 31, 2012 the grantee is still responsible for completing and submitting Quarterly Performance Reports.
- Contact OHCP grant manager to initiate Annual Performance Report and Quarterly Performance Report data is completed.



Continue Homelessness Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing Activities After HPRP Ends

- Prioritize that HPRP activities should continue. As we begin the third and final year of HPRP, it is important that service areas consider options for maintaining HPRP activities. We acknowledge that service areas have expended much effort and resources in developing their HPRP and as a state we want to ensure that those efforts endure post-HPRP funding.
- Prepare for HUD's Emergency Solutions Grant. It is anticipated that in either CY 2011 or 2012 that prevention and re-housing activities will be included in the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG). The level of funding from ESG will be substantially less than the funding through HPRP.
 - For Ohio Balance of State providers, it is unknown at this time how those funds will be distributed.
- Use data from HMIS to demonstrate the effectiveness of HPRP. Share data with funders that may wish to consider funding HPRP type activities.
- Examine alternative funding sources: (These alternative funding sources may not be available in some service areas given local funding priorities).
 - Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) – Prevention, Retention & Contingency Program (PRC) - <http://jfs.ohio.gov/OWF/tanf/OhioTANF2010.pdf>
 - TANF-PRC is administered through Job and Family Services. PRC provides benefits and services to TANF-eligible families who are in need

- of help with essential supports to move out of poverty and achieve self-sufficiency.
 - Emergency assistance to needy families with children provides support to eligible households that meet emergency situations including emergency family housing that can be utilized when an individual/family is homeless and has no alternative living arrangement available, to provide temporary housing or arrange permanent housing. It also includes security deposits, utility deposits, and utility assistance under certain circumstances.
- HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) - <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/programs/home/>
 - HUD allocates HOME funds to local jurisdictions. Participating Jurisdictions (PJ) may choose a broad range of eligible activities for their HOME funds, which includes tenant-based rental assistance contracts of up to two years if such an activity is consistent with the Consolidated Plan.
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) - http://portal.hud.gov:80/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs A list of Ohio CDBG contacts is available at <http://portal.hud.gov:80/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/ohio/community/cdbg>
 - CDBG is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of community development needs, which includes short-term rental assistance (three-month maximum), security deposits, utilities (three-month maximum) and utility deposits if such an activity is consistent with the Consolidated Plan.
- Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) - <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/csbg/> a list of Ohio CSBG contacts is available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/csbg/documents/caa/oh.html>.
 - CSBG are flexible funds that were established to alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty in communities.
- United Way – A list of Ohio United Way contacts is available at <http://www.ouw.org/>
- Philanthropic Organizations
- ODOD-OHCP anticipates releasing an application in the fall of 2011 for prevention and rapid re-housing activities. The date of when that application will be released or when it will be due to OHCP is unknown at this time.
 - Check ODOD's website at <http://www.development.ohio.gov/Community/ohcp/WhatsNew.htm> for updates.

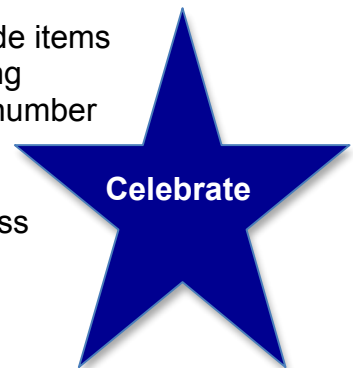
Prepare For HEARTH

- Hold focus groups with participants to discover any program improvement suggestions.
 - Review the practices utilized in administering the local HPRP. Identify the strengths and challenges of HPRP.
- Request that HPRP staff write a statement regarding lessons learned from HPRP to ensure that knowledge gained from the program is not lost. Provide that statement to the local Continuum of Care.
- Review HMIS data of participants to identify trends associated with successful outcomes.

- Hold focus groups with Continuum of Care (CoC) members to secure suggestions for more effective assistance.
 - Identify the local HPRP strengths and challenges. Possibly consider having a neutral third-party facilitate the focus group to alleviate any issues of agencies feeling they need to defend themselves.
- Determine if the HPRP has reached the intended population as a service area.
- Review and analyze HMIS data to compare participants that received HPRP assistance to those participants that entered the homeless system.
 - Consider demographics (head of household under 30, children under the age of six in the household, etc.), earned and unearned income, rent burden, population targeted by HPRP and barriers to housing, etc.
 - Is the population served consistent between HPRP and homeless system?
- Assess the percentage of participants that were assisted with HPRP that entered shelter.
- Determine if the overall admissions to the homeless system increased, declined, remained status quo during HPRP implementation.
- Re-examine existing system services and financial assistance determine if there are any system-wide gaps.
- Decide if outreach strategies need to be adapted.
- Ascertain if intake, assessment, or targeting strategies need to be modified.
- Critique the lessons learned.
 - Establish what modifications of intake, assessment, targeting, policies, procedures, and processes could/should be changed in preparation for HEARTH.
 - Evaluate what services or financial assistances might need to be altered.
 - Solicit new partnerships that might strengthen the assistance provided.
- Compile tools, procedures, forms, process documents, housing locator tool, etc. utilized for HPRP and share with Continuum of Care members.

Celebrate The Successes of HPRP

- Develop a white-page summary of your HPRP successes. Include items such as number of persons/households prevented from becoming homeless, number of persons/household diverted from shelter, number of persons/households rapidly re-housed, etc. Share report with Continuum of Care, other funders, media, etc.
- Educate non-HPRP agencies about how to prevent homelessness and how to rapidly re-house people who become homeless.
- Acknowledge partners for their collaboration in making HPRP a success.
- Recognize HPRP staff for their accomplishments.



Information for this handout was adapted from the HUD Ramping Down HPRP webinar in July 2011.

Disclaimer

This document is being provided by the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) for personal use. It is COHHIO's intent that those using this document will adapt it to meet your individual organization's needs. It is the responsibility of the organization using this document to ensure that it is revised to meet current program requirements.

The content, organization, graphics, design, compilation, and any other matters related to this sample form are not subject to copyright. COHHIO offers this document for the purpose of building capacity of homeless and affordable housing agencies to meet the requirements of various programs.