

Lakewood Community Services Center

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Applicant Narrative Addendum

1. Describe the Involvement of Homeless & Formerly Homeless Persons in the Planning, Implementation & Evaluation of ESG-Funded Programs

As it does with all other case management-intensive services, LCSC and its case managers fully involve clients who qualify for ESG-funded programs (Breathing Room emergency shelter and Homelessness Prevention case management and cash assistance) in a case plan designed to move them rapidly into appropriate housing and to engage with additional services and supports that will increase their potential to become stable for the longer term. Each client is provided with a formal Complaint/Grievance /Appeal Policy at the time of application, which directs them first to the LCSC Executive Director and then to outside agencies should they feel that they have been treated unfairly or with prejudice. Each LCSC client can complete an evaluation of services form when they exit Breathing Room or when they receive prevention services. Under a new Board Chair, the Board of Trustees is currently discussing ways to formally gather input from ESG-funded clients – either through Board membership or as a member of a Board committee.

2. Describe the Nature & Extent of the Agency's Collaboration with the Region's Continuum of Care

The Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Continuum of Care is an extensive network of agencies that plans, organizes, and delivers housing and services to prevent homelessness and to assist people while they are homeless and as they move into stable housing. The Continuum is the vehicle, at the local level, that coordinates resources to achieve the best outcomes and identifies gaps in services and undertakes necessary research and planning to eliminate the gaps. Initially, the Continuum of Care was organized in response to a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirement; today it is a dynamic force engaged in efforts to reduce and prevent homelessness, ensure delivery of comprehensive, high-quality services to persons who are homeless, and create permanent housing opportunities for very low income and long-term homeless persons.

HUD requires all jurisdictions receiving federal housing funds to submit a 5-year plan, called the Consolidated Submission for Community Planning and Development or Consolidated Plan in short. This plan combines the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Plan and Final Statement, the HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) description and the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) application.

In preparing the plan, the Cuyahoga Housing Consortium (the five members are Cleveland Heights, Euclid, Lakewood, Parma and the Urban County) examines the communities in its jurisdiction in order to create strategies to address community needs. The preparation of the plan is a collaborative process between Consortium member communities and the DOD who administers HUD's entitlement funds. Its purpose is a development of a specific course of action for revitalization achieved by providing decent housing and suitable living environments as well as expanding economic opportunities in local communities. The Consolidated Plan attempts to achieve these goals by integrating economic, physical, environmental, community and human development in a comprehensive and coordinated fashion so that families and communities can work together and thrive. The plan also sets forth program goals, specific objectives, annual goals, and benchmarks for measuring progress. As sub-grantees of the City of Lakewood Emergency Solutions Grant funds, LCSC collaborates with the CoC to meet the city's requirements as members of the Consortium.

3. Describe the Agency's Capacity to Comply with ESG HMIS Data Capture & Reporting Requirements

LCSC staff has entered client data into the County's HMIS since the agency received direct funding from HUD for the now defunct Supportive Housing Program from 2005 – 2014. All agencies that received funding through the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP) from 2010 through 2013 were mandated to enter client data into ServicePoint, which was determined to be Cuyahoga County's Homeless Management Information System software, designed to assure that funded agencies adhered to the rigorous eligibility and outcomes data tracking. The Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Office of Homeless Services recently awarded the HMIS contract to a new vendor and has recently overseen the introduction of their new software system, Clarity to all members of the CoC. LCSC now uses this new system to collect and report to both the Continuum and to the City of Lakewood for our ESG-funded activities. ESG record keeping requirements include the number of individuals served by age and by gender and subpopulation data for veterans, elderly, victims of domestic violence, clients with HIV/AIDS, the chronically homeless and those with disabilities. Additionally, race and ethnicity data is now required. This data is all recorded into Clarity and reported to the City of Lakewood monthly and to the Office of Homeless Services annually. We are also now asked to include progress notes during the period from entry to exit for clients receiving ESG assistance. Improved client outcomes during the service period improve the Continuum's overall score when applying for future funding.