

COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS, INC.

Moderator: Valencia Moss

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OPERATOR: This is Conference #GMT20201216180106COVID19R.

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Valencia Moss: Hello, everyone, and welcome to the COVID-19 Related Policies Development for HOPWA Grantees. Today is December 16th, 2020. I'm Valencia Moss, your producer for today's webinar.

If you do encounter any audio problems, or problems with today's webinar, it is being recorded and will be made available on the HUD Exchange within the next few days. If you have questions or comments – if you have questions, please put them in the Q&A box.

If you have a comment or if you have information you would like to share, we ask that you use the chat box for that. I would like to introduce to you your first speaker for today Kate Briddell.

Kate Briddell: Hello, everyone. My name is Kate Briddell, as Valencia said. Thank you, Valencia. We, at Collaborative Solutions, are pleased to welcome you to this webinar, COVID-19 related Policy Development for HOPWA Grantees.

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Today's speaker is Christine Campbell from Collaborative Solutions, and myself, Kate Briddell, will be monitoring the Q&A box with Crystal Pope and Emily Fischbein also from Collaborative Solutions. Please be sure, as Valencia said earlier, to use the Q&A box for questions that you might have.

Also, with us today are staff from HUD's Office of HIV/AIDS Housing, Rita Harcrow, the Director; Ben Ayers, the Deputy Director; and Amy Palilonis, the Senior Program Specialist.

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The purpose of today's webinar is to talk to you about developing policies and procedures. Grantees and project sponsors should develop new policies and procedures to document how they will incorporate the CARES Act funding regulatory waivers and program flexibilities into their programs.

Today's presentation will include a list of available supports, potential policies to be developed, and a sample COVID-19 related policy. And with that, I'll turn it over to Christine.

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Christine Campbell: Thanks, Kate. When this COVID began, HUD and Office of HIV/AIDS, have shared with you many notices on the CARES Act provisions. There was a Mega-Waiver 1 memo, the Mega-Waiver 2 memo, and also information about COVID-19 activity costs eligibilities.

So, there have been a lot of new elements that have been entered into our program, as well as flexibilities and things that have been waived that require us all to develop policies and procedures and how they can be effectively implemented.

Now, that we are solidly into the implementation process, we thought it would be a really good time to really talk about how we can develop those policies and procedures, and make sure that we're referencing and following the notices, the waivers, and the flexibilities in the best way possible, so that we are effectively serving our clients and providing them high quality services.

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So, let's start with the CARES Act provision. As you know, the CARES Act – CARES Act provision provided many opportunities for us to better serve our clients. This included short-term rent mortgage and utility, as we now know is called STRMU officially, assist – which assists and limits – assistance limits up to 24 months.

There was talk about hotels and motels stays, the supportive services that we can provide under the CARE Act, including transportation, supplies, such as food, medications, medical care, personal protective equipment, and information, nutrition services, educating assisted

households on ways to reduce the risk of contracting or spreading HIV, and costs related to infection control.

Please note these costs – some of these costs, especially, those under infection control, are not – can be applied to more than just supportive services. So, for instance, the facilities can charge it to their or other BLIs where you are actually providing supportive – or supplying extra control measures.

And also, the HOPWA notice, CPD-20-05, references the duplication of services. So, all of these areas, as you're looking at how you're going to implement them into your program, need appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that they're equitably applied.

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Mega-Waiver 1, which was released in April, talked about self-certification of income and credible information of HIV status, fair market rent standard for tenant-based rental assistance, property standards for tenant-based rental assistance, and HOPWA space and security. When you receive this presentation, you'll see here that the links we have made available to you.

As you probably noticed, we've also done webinars on most of these situations and provided resources on these waivers, and you can find them on the HOPWA resource page. That link too will be provided to you at the end of the presentation.

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Mega-Waiver 2 also talked about fair market rent standards, but it covers both TBRA and all rental. It covers property standards, TBRA, and all rental housing, and it also relates to initial inspections. And Mega-Waiver 2 also refers to time limits for short-term supported housing facilities and STRMU.

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And then, the Office of HIV/AIDS housing wanted to ensure that there were some flexibilities available and provided information on property standards, specifically around annual housing re-inspections, hotel and motel stays, supportive services, including transportation and gas cards, transportation and car repair as referred to in the CARES Act, nutrition and grocery cards, phones or minutes for client use and internet as referred to in the CARES Act.

As part of our response to COVID, TA providers work with OHH in developing tools. And one of the tools that we developed is the HOPWA/COVID-19 Activity/Cost Eligibility, which is a nice chart that really goes through the different levels and shows which waivers and flexibilities can be attributed to which funding source and which HOPWA you're funding that you're maybe working on, as you're working with people within the COVID epidemic.

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Do any of my teammates want to add any clarifying comments before we move on to potential policies to be developed?

Crystal Pope: I think we're good.

Christine Campbell: Great. So, as we think about the policies that need to be developed to be able to effectively implement the COVID waivers and flexibilities, we really want to focus on developing specific, written policies and procedures – I didn't mean to do that, to show how these will be implemented. These new policies and procedures can be developed as an addendum to your agency's current HOPWA program policies and procedures.

And one reason that we're recommending that this be done is that, post-COVID, they'll be able to separate back and revert back to the original HOPWA program/policies. The other thing that this will be able to do is show how effective these policies are, and we can also think about recommendations, moving forward, (which) we can improve overall assistance.

One thing we want to emphasize is that policy should be applied in a uniform, consistent and non-discriminatory fashion. With the advent of so many new waivers and flexibilities, you often become reactive in our response, and this is an opportunity for us to take a step back and really develop some proactive processes, really look at equity, and making sure that all of our policies are being applied to everyone having equal access to all of the waivers and flexibilities.

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So, when we think about what should be included in a policy, what we've done is we've developed a sample policy. We understand that each of your programs and systems have

their own way of developing their policies and procedures. So, this format is a recommendation that allows you to include all of the things that will be helpful in implementing these policies.

One of the things that I try to do when I'm developing new policies is I try to give it, what I call, "Sibling Test." One of my brothers and sisters who don't do this work, be able to pick up this policy and procedure, and actually work towards implementing it.

So, what we start with is the top with some basic demographic information. What's the policy ID number? If you are developing a series of HOPWA-CV policies, you may want to create a numbering system so that you know which ones have been developed specific for HOPWA-CV, especially, if you're including them as an addendum to your current Policies and Procedures manual, because, again, when we need to revert back to "regular HOPWA," we want to be able to do that as easily as possible.

Second, of course, a clear title, you want to understand that policies and procedures sometimes can be flexible, so that there may be multiple versions. So, determine a numbering system where you can track which is the latest version that you're working on. You want to note who it is prepared by, reviewed by, and approved by. Some of these may be the same people.

One of the things we strongly encourage is that, as we're developing policies, they're, at least, consulting with the implementers of the policy. So many times we see that administrators develop policy, and aren't as clearly grounded in what's going on in community to be able to effectively determine, well, how the policy would work.

(We), again, would like to recommend that it's dated, and the date that it was reviewed and the date that it was approved, and then also the date that it went into effect.

So, after you take care of those pieces, or, at least, setting up that format, what you want to make sure is that you have certain elements. One that the policy is stated clearly and that it's upfront as to what this policy is doing.

We also recommend that you add a purpose section, why are we implementing the policy, what condition is it addressing. We then say, recommend that you develop a scope, who the policy applies to and for how long?

With many of the waivers, there are specific dates within which you are able to use that particular waiver or flexibility. So we want to make sure that is clearly stated right there in the Policy and Procedure.

Responsibilities and procedures are who does what and when. This is a section is that it's very specific to your organization. This will be the place where you kind of track the step-by-step way that this policy will be implemented, who's responsible for which elements, who it needs to be handed off to, who it needs to be signed off by, and to ensure that there's equitable distribution in the application of the waiver or flexibility.

We recommend that you put in a reference section that cites which waiver or regulation that this policy is following and implementing, and then we're recommending that you have a definitions section. In this definitions section, what we want are unique terms that are used throughout that particular policy.

So it may only have two or three because there may not be that many unique terms. But again, if you're giving it the sibling test, with one of your siblings who doesn't do this work, be able to pick up this document and actually implement it.

Review of sample policy

So what I'd like to do now is actually show you a sample policy, and how it could – would look in practice. So here, we're looking at Housing Quality Standards in response to COVID-19, as the title. This was the first policy we've developed, and here, we have basic information that we recommended in the instruction section.

Here, what we see is the policy is the grantee will allow project sponsors to utilize available technology to conduct virtual property inspections to ensure that HOPWA eligible units meet

housing qualities – habitability standards. Physical re-inspection of unit will occur within 60 days after the health officials determine special measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are no longer – no longer necessary.

So that is what we're having people do. This particular policy is drafted at the grantee level that they will then share with their project sponsors, again, to ensure that the property inspections in which housing quality standards is implemented in an equal fashion across their jurisdiction.

You see here in the next section, we have this – what this policy does, this policy outlines emergency policy changes in response to COVID, the CARES Act legislation, and additional HOPWA funding and program flexibilities.

The policy allows – this policy allows the grantee or project sponsor to conduct visual inspections of units using available technology to ensure it meets housing qualities – (I don't know why I cannot say that word), habitability standards before any assistance is provided.

This next section is the scope. As I mentioned in the introduction section, we talked about that the waiver is in effect for one year, beginning the date of the memorandum for grantees and project sponsors, and have the following criteria, that – and that the grantee or project sponsor is able to visually inspect the unit, that the grantee or project sponsor has written policies to physically re-inspect the unit after health officials to determine special measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are no longer necessary. Here, we have the start date and the end date of a waiver.

The next section goes into the specifics of how this policy is implemented. This section is tailored specific to your community and your office. So it talks about the grantee notifying the HUD field office about the utilization of the waiver, and then project sponsor who wish to utilize the virtual inspections must notify the grantee. So these are specific set of steps that must be followed.

What the grantee is going to be looking for, for instance, in this particular policy during the monitoring, is that they have a list of units of households where there was a virtual inspection, that they maintain a copy of the results of that inspection, that the project sponsor will ensure that staff and individuals, and eligible households have the equipment necessary for virtual inspections.

Some of you may remember the very interactive video webinar that Cloudburst did that kind of walked through all of these steps. Those are the kinds of things you'd want to detail out in your policy and procedures, the specific set of steps.

This particular procedure section actually ends with "project sponsors must submit to the grantee their policies for demonstrating the use of the waiver". That reflects the understanding of what the grantee is requiring, there's probably more detail at the project sponsor level, and again, we are going to want to be looking for consistency and consistency in application.

Here, we talked about the references, so these are the regulatory references, as well as the notices that are referenced in the application of this policy. And finally, we have definitions. For this particular policy, the three areas that we've chosen for definition were the CARES Act, given that this is – well, not anymore, but that this is a relatively novel situation.

This novel situation has so far lasted 10 months, what COVID-19 means, and also, what housing quality standards/habitability standards are. So those are what would be appropriate for this policy. Do any of my colleagues have any additional comments they'd like to share for clarification purposes?

Crystal Pope: Sure. Christine, this is Crystal.

Christine Campbell: Hey.

Crystal Pope: I just want to reiterate a couple of things that Christine has said, and also, add – maybe counter intuitively, keep it simple – keep it as simple as possible, even though we're giving you tons and tons of things that need to be part of it. It really is pretty much a formula.

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And if you use the document – you know, if you use the document that we've shared, the product that talks about policies – policy development that will help you walk through these things. But I want to reiterate a couple of things.

And one is, make sure, when you're doing this, to touch on both the policy, you know, what is required time limits and things like that, as well as the procedure, which is going to be very different, the what, who, how, when of how it would be carried out.

And we really strongly encourage all grantees to work closely with their project sponsors in discussing how to set up policies and procedures on all this CARES Act information. Because the more on the ground insight and information you have about exactly how this is being implemented, the better your policies will be.

I mean, we always know, once you get into this, things may happen, things may change, and you may need to adapt some of these policies. But, you know, having everybody on the same page will be really helpful.

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Christine Campbell: Thanks, Crystal. So now, we're going to go into some of the specific policies that we're recommending need to be developed. The first one we're going to talk about is STRMU.

As you know, there are multiple conditions that came out through the CARES Act and Mega-Waiver 2 regarding the use of – uses of STRMU, as well as, some flexibilities that are – that can be used when you're applying it for – working with your clients around COVID. Crystal, can you provide a real quick summary of the different ways STRMU can be applied?

Crystal Pope: Sure. And for reference, people can also, on the HUD Exchange, go back and look at some of the presentations that were done on, specifically, on STRMU before, and there are some written products that will help with that too.

But basically, most all of you have, right, your regular STRMU using regular HOPWA allocations that follows all of the usual STRMU rules, 21 weeks of assistance within a 12-month period. The second stream, if you will, of funding for STRMU is your regular STRMU funding using the waiver. The waiver that allows you to provide up to 12 months of assistance in a 12-month period, as long as that's decided on a case-by-case or household-by-household basis. So there – and there are time limits to that. And both of those have that 12-month eligibility period that applied to them.

And then, the third one is the CARES Act, which allows up to 24 months of STRMU that is not tied to your 12-month eligibility period. So it's completely separate and extra, and people can also put limits on that of less than 24 months, if that's necessary.

So I think, as people are developing their policies, it'll be important to consider throughout how much funding you have, what the relative need is within the community, and so, you know, how you want to work on switching back and forth between those streams of funding.

Christine Campbell: Thanks, Crystal. So this is one of those areas where you'll want to think about, what is your STRMU program design, what waivers are you going to be using, what flexibilities are you going to be using in developing one STRMU policy. So, even though you may be pulling from multiple areas like the CARES Act funding or the Mega-Waiver 2, you'd still want one program design.

The other thing that we want to stress is that, your use of the multiple waivers and flexibilities should not show to the client. They've got enough stressors – so some of it where you are charging a certain client who should not necessarily be visible to the client. So we want to stress that it should be one STRMU program that incorporates all the elements that you choose to use, and that it should be invisible to the client.

Client only needs to work – be worried about, well, do they have the support they need to be able to survive to this epidemic? They don't need to be worried about whether or not they are part of Mega-Waiver 1 or Mega-Waiver – or, the CARES Act, or part of the 24, or the 52. What they're concerned about is that, right now, they've got a crisis situation and that there's a system in place for them to be able to be supported through that.

Are there any questions that have come up?

Crystal Pope: No, we are not seeing any yet.

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Christine Campbell: Great. So, there's – in Mega-Waiver 2, there was another reference to STRMU under time limits for short-term supportive housing facilities in STRMU. So this is one of those situations where the same activity was referred to in multiple places. So we just wanted to make sure that when you saw the connection, and again, when you are developing your policy that you're consistent across the board.

So for instance, if you are developing a policy regarding time limits and you referenced your STRMU program, ensure that it is consistent with the STRMU policy that you have developed. So one of the things we want to ensure that you're doing is making consistency across the board, and that your program is implemented in a seamless fashion as possible.

When thinking about the time limits, the policy should outline how the grantee and project sponsors will assist households with short-term housing facility, which may be provided residence to any individual for a period of 120 days in a six-month period, as well as, again, the changes in the STRMU waiver, and then, the efforts to regularly assess the needs of assisted households as a process for granting extensions, or individual basis based on documented financial aid or health concerns.

One of the things that we're recommending is that these assessments not be a do-over. You don't start over and have to readmit the client to the program and do a full intake. But that you're just periodically reassessing and the continuity of services continue throughout.

Any clarifying remarks from my partners?

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Kate Briddell: No clarifying remarks, but I have a couple of questions that have come in. Do you want to take those now?

Christine Campbell: Absolutely.

Kate Briddell: OK. So the first question is, should policies be available for assisted households to read and review?

Christine Campbell: So, assisted household should understand what the policies are; any documentation that you use to be consistent with the policy, but it's not necessary for households to actually hand over their Policies and Procedures manual. But the information that the assisted households receive should be consistent with the policies that you – policies and procedures that you develop.

Ben Ayers: Sorry, this is Ben from the Office of HIV/AIDS Housing. Many – and this is because many times clients can misinterpret those policies and procedures, and try to use them kind of against the organization, not realizing what it was really talking about. So your internal business operational procedures should stay internal to your organization.

Kate Briddell: Thanks for that clarification, Ben.

Christine Campbell: Thanks, Ben.

Kate Briddell: We have a couple more questions that have come through the queue – the chat box. So please, as a reminder, use the Q&A box when you're asking your questions. But, we will ask these questions now because we have them. So, also, someone wants to know if HUD is required to formalize your policies and procedures. Does HUD have to approve them?

Christine Campbell: Amy or Ben, do you want to take that one?

Amy Palilonis: I can take a stab at that, and then Ben can jump in, if needed. So, no, it doesn't specifically need to approve your policies and procedures. I would say though, that if you do – as you're developing policies and procedures and you have any questions about, you know, specific things that you are looking to put in place, to absolutely reach out, either to the field office or your desk officer to ask questions about those.

And I don't know if, Ben, you have anything else to add.

Ben Ayers: Yes. I would reach out to your field office reps and your TA providers - just reiterating that. Because you don't want to put a policy and procedure in place that you think might be a good idea but is really against HOPWA statute.

And how field offices really kind of take a look at this is during oversight is if there's a policy and procedure that's kind of lacking that's led to an oversight issue, they'll ask you, you know, to kind of beef that up a little bit, or if there's something that violates HOPWA statute, they'll identify that for you as well.

Christine Campbell: Thanks, Ben and Amy.

Emily Fischbein: Christine?

Christine Campbell: Were there other questions? Yes.

Emily Fischbein: We have one question if you would take another one.

Christine Campbell: Absolutely.

Emily Fischbein: OK. Is it enough for grantees to secure copies of the updated policies and procedures put together by their project sponsors and provide feedback as needed, or do the grantees need to do anything more?

Christine Campbell: Well, when you've got multiple project sponsors providing a similar activity – the same activity, like if you've got three project sponsors, for instance, providing STRMU, you'd want to make sure that there's an overlaying set of policies that are consistent for all of your project sponsors to grant – to make sure that it's equitably applied.

You want the application processes to be similar, you want the timeframes to be similar, with something like STRMU, you don't want your clients to be project sponsor-hopping to see where they can get the “best deal.”

So you'll want – so there's – recommended that you may have the grantee level, a set of standard, the policies that are applicable to all of your project sponsors, the procedures are where it's going to get different in terms of the internal workings of the organization, how that activity will actually get applied within that – within their system.

Emily Fischbein: Great. Thank you.

Christine Campbell: OK. So the next provision we're going to look at is the provision of lodging, hotels, motels, and other locations to quarantine HOPWA eligible persons or their household members.

This policy should clearly indicate that funds may be used for the isolation of both persons living with HIV and household members not living with HIV, that we should indicate whether the payment of damages will be allowed, describe the circumstances, criteria for the use of hotel/motel stay for non-HIV positive family members, and define the terms of hotel/motel stay beyond 60 days in a six-month period. And you would also want to detail the process for granting extensions, based on documented household need.

Here, again, the reference is the CARES Act and OHH guidance, particularly the one on the HOPWA/COVID-19 Activity/Cost Eligibility. This document, again, is linked here in this presentation that you'll have after the webinar.

Crystal Pope: Christine, I have another question, if we could bring it up now because this relates to STRMU and it's fine. I think lots of questions come up around that because of the complexity.

And this question is, for STRMU, if there's only one application use for both types of STRMU, meaning, CARES Act and regular STRMU, how do you recommend we keep track of which funding stream is to be billed?

And I think that's a – that's a very good question. It's come up on past webinars. And I think what we have said is that that you will – each individual agency, because you have different streams of funding from your grantee, both CARES Act and regular, are going to have to be able to track that internally.

And what we recommend is that you do have, at least, one person who has an eye on where those balances are to help case managers make a decision. You don't want your case managers to have to decide which stream of funding this client A or client B will be getting.

You want them to be able to focus on what are the needs, you know, we're recommending that this person, for the next three months, get this level of assistance, but then they need to be able to go to someone within the agency and say, you know, how can this be paid for? And so I think people will have to look back at those balances.

And depending on the size of your agency, it might be the CEO, it might be a case management supervisor, it might be a financial person, it might be anyone who is able to touch that information, but it will be different for every agency.

Christine Campbell: Right. Thanks, Crystal.

Ben Ayers: This is Ben. I just want to add as well. You know, all formula grantees are under – sorry, grants-based-accounting, otherwise known as GBRA and should be tracking direct expenses to direct grants and drawing down appropriately like that.

So if there is an issue there where you don't have something in place in order to track GBA grants-based-accounting locally, you'll definitely want to reach out to your TA providers and see if you can get assistance and thinking through what that system might need to look like for you.

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Christine Campbell: Thanks, Ben. Next policy we're going to take a look at is the use of supportive funds to pay for services and items that we were going to describe below.

So, this policy should outline the scope of essential services and supplies that are covered under this category, specifically, protective supplies, nutrition services, transportation, and purchase of cell phones, minutes, and phone cards.

In this one, you're going to really identify the eligible items needed for a client protection from COVID-19, such as masks and disinfectants due to no other sorts of available funding. Staff protective items should be purchased under the budget line item for which they're used. So if they're under the facilities, it's charged to the facilities. If it's under operations, they'll be charged in that fashion.

Nutrition services describe what services and activities can be used and how they need to be documented. Transportation, inclusive of public and private transportation, use of funds for car repairs, noting that car repairs can only be funded with CARES Act funds. And the purchase of cell phones, minutes, phone cards, responsibility for documentation and the use and disposal after health officials determine special measures are no longer necessary.

Again, we have provided the HOPWA/COVID-19 Activity/Cost Eligibility document that has – again, this has a nice chart, it talks about which – how some of these things can be charged and what is the extent and scope of which they can be used.

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Next policy that we are going – go ahead, Crystal.

Crystal Pope: Yes, I just – we have another question that's come up that I think OHH will handle probably. This is about the virtual housing inspection waiver. And to be clear, that waiver is for initial housing inspections for lease-up that waives – and allows it to be done virtually. And they're saying that that waiver flexibility and the FMR (too) is set to expire on March 31st, 2021, how should agencies set up their policies when the expiration date is fast approaching?

Amy Palilonis: This is Amy, and I can take this one. First of all, and I hope not to confuse things, but I would definitely recommend just taking advantage of the May waiver for those things instead.

So, what happened was the first waiver for the FMR and the habitability was just specific to tenant-based rental assistance. But the second member waiver that was issued at the end of May expanded that to be for all housing types that habitability and the FMR are applicable to.

So I would suggest, you know, if you are using the – if you're using the March waiver, I would suggest just notifying your field office that you are using the – you're using the May waiver, so that'll give you two additional months.

I would also say that we are constantly monitoring the situations and keeping track of this issue, and if there is still a need for waivers beyond that date, we will absolutely explore extending them or putting new waivers in place. And so, that's really my recommendation. I don't know if anybody else has anything else to add.

Christine Campbell: Thanks, Amy. Are there any other questions at this time?

Emily Fischbein: Yes, Christine, we just got an interesting question, which is: as the grantee, I can list in my policy what would be eligible expenses under CARES Act HOPWA, but can project sponsors further limit that if they would like to? For example, car repairs are allowable with CARES Act funds, but can individual project sponsors choose not to fund that?

Christine Campbell: I think this is a – this would be a conversation between the grantee and the project sponsor, and find out what – how it is that a grantee is allowing an expense that its project sponsor is not prepared to implement. Is it a budgetary concern? Is that a capacity concern? And if it's a need in the community, then the grantee needs to ensure that if that project sponsor is not able to provide that particular activity, where in the community can the clients access that activity.

So there's not an easy, yes or no, answer to that, because part of it is the capacity of the – of the organization, as well as, what the need in the community is. And there would need to be some meeting of the minds on how that activity would actually be implemented, if it's a needed service in the community.

Would anyone like to add to that?

Ben Ayers: Yes, this is Ben. Thank you for that. Christine is absolutely correct. If there's a need in the community that needs to be met, and you have resources – [dog barking in background] – I apologize for my dog, if you have resources available in your CARES Act grant to pay for it, you should absolutely think through how and how you are awarding to implement that activity.

I'm going to have to put myself on mute. I am so sorry. But, generally speaking, you should have project sponsor agreements that outline project sponsor budgets and what activities they're approved to do and not do.

But again, as Christine said, with CARES Act, you should be really having these conversations with your project sponsors, really identifying what the needs are in the community, the amount of funding the project sponsor is getting, and what activities they can participate in based on all of those things.

Crystal Pope: Thanks, Ben. Christine, before we continue, there are a couple of follow-ups related to FMR in particular. Amy and Rita, I don't know if you wanted to say anything about the lease

terms on (which) people are concerned about ending the end of the waiver timeline for – if you've increased FMR, and then we have a follow-up question about that.

Rita Harcrow: This is Rita. I can try to answer that one. So, once you've calculated rent above FMR, utilizing that waiver, that would be applicable for the length of the lease term that you're working under. So we would not expect you to go back and recalculate later or move that household later based on an FMR restriction.

Was there another question, Crystal, or ...

Crystal Pope: Yes, there is actually – there's actually another question that we, pretty much, anticipated, and I think this has come up before, is – how should people prepare for when the FMR waiver expires? How will they handle those households that are over FMR at that time?

And I think we can put some more information out about that, and certainly, if you've got individual questions, put them in the AAQ. But we should remind people that when there are FMR changes, like it has decreased, it is not – it is never a situation where you'd have to end someone's tenancy in that house at that level right away.

There's a lot of flexibility that grantees have in how you adapt to a reduced or changed FMR that can wait until – up until the second anniversary of their lease date. So we can certainly push more information out about that later. But it will not be an instant one day, this amount is OK, and the next day, you have to change everything.

Rita Harcrow: Yes, thanks for that, Crystal. And I appreciate these questions coming in. I do think, as Crystal said, we can get more information out, and it's important to begin planning, looking at the number of households that are benefiting from those waiver flexibilities, and start looking at what that need might be at some point in the future when we do see the – things begin to return to normal for our country.

Christine Campbell: Thanks, Rita and Crystal. I appreciate them. Are there other questions? All right, so let's take a quick look at infection measures and controls. So this is the policy that should really

needs to outline your sanitation measures. How project sponsors are expected to take – what measures project sponsors are expected to take inclusive of contact with client’s infection control, sanitation in residential settings, work from home policy, work in the office, and measures to ensure safety in return to the office.

So this is going to be one of those policies that is very tailored to your specific organization in terms of your workspaces, in terms of how you're working with your clients to ensure that this – that there is not a spread of COVID, what infection control and sanitation measures that you're taking in residential settings.

And this is one that is affecting all, not - both our clients and our staffs, to ensure that we can effectively move forward as we're both dealing with the epidemic. But as you can see here, it even talks about how we return to the office, and how we return to increased contact with our clients.

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Kate Briddell: Before we move on, Christine, we have a question about cleaning. The question is clarifying question on the purchase of cleaning supplies or paying for cleaning of office – staff offices.

Christine Campbell: Yes.

Kate Briddell: A previous webinar said that these costs could be billed to supportive services or individual program lines. When you have staff that are providing services under multiple programs, like TBRA or STRMU, or PHP, do they need to split all their cleaning supplies across all these lines? That's actually probably a really good question for OHH.

Ben Ayers: So, I mean, I know Amy has given some information on this before. So please, Amy, correct me or redirect after my statement. But this is Ben from the OHH. But generally speaking, it's the line item that those activities are eligible for in which you are funded under.

So for instance, if you are a facility-based housing program and you are funding operating costs, then that PPE would go under that operating cost line item. If you are utilizing – if

you're not funded as a facility-based housing or an operating costs, then you have supportive services, you could (do) that particular line item.

Amy, can you – do you have any follow up on that, or ...

Amy Palilonis: I mean, that sounds about right. It really just depends on the line items you're funding for and how it's being used.

Ben Ayers: If you have both line items, I would say, you know, utilize the best option that make sense for which particular line item you're utilizing, and probably be consistent from there on out in billing it.

Christine Campbell: The bottom line is to remember that OHH wants to make sure that the supplies are in the community where they need to be. So, using your best judgment and documenting how you're using those funds, and then, as Ben said, being consistent across the board, so you're not flipping and flopping, is going to be your best bet moving forward.

The goal is to make sure that regardless of where your clients are or your staff is working, that they're safe and they have the PPEs that they need. And then you are developing a system that can be justified and consistently applied across the board.

Are there other questions?

Kate Briddell: There is another one. So, they say, so if we're going to use the CARES Act funds to pay for cleaning supplies, do we need a policy about what our sanitation measures are in general?

Christine Campbell: Yes. Because those are kind of two different things, what is the supplies you're going to use to maintain the sanitation, and two, is the process for how you're going to maintain the sanitation. Would anyone like to add? Is that – does that make sense to folks? I am used to having an audience and some feedback, so.

All right. So we're going to move to self-certification of income and credible information on HIV status. This is waiver from [24] CFR 574.530 under record keeping, and the policy should outline how the grantee will collect and maintain records to document the eligible households' HIV status, how credible information and verbal attestation will be documented, and how the program will obtain information after health officials determine special measures are no longer necessary.

Policy should outline how information regarding income will be received and documented, and how the program will obtain information after health officials determine special measures are no longer necessary. And this is part of the Mega-Wavier 1 terms of use.

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So the next policy we're going to take a look at our HOPWA FMR Rent Standards for HOPWA Rental Assistance. So, this is the waiver from – regarding the rent standard, and really should outline rent standards being applied outside the FMR and how that will be equitably and consistently applied.

This goes to some of the questions we've had earlier in the webinar. But it also talks about how reasonableness is continued to be applied as outlined in reference in the regulation. You have to outline the timeframe. The units may be leased outside the FMR during the one year following the date of the applicable memo.

And these are the two memos, Mega-Waiver 1 use of – terms of use, and Mega-Waiver 2. This is the one that Amy was referring to, is that you may want to use, especially, in terms of terms of use, is the Mega-Waiver 2 because that has the longer – it's got the later deadline date.

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And here, we're going to take a look at HOPWA property standards requirement and this waiver. This policy should outline the use of the virtual inspections options, and this is the one that we actually used as our sample policy.

Though, you see, as we saw – as we used an example that it outlined the use of virtual inspections and described the process for conducting the onsite physical inspections. We also had a fabulous webinar from Cloudburst. Here, again, is really referencing the dates, making sure that is referenced in your policy.

Slide 19

And here, taking a look at HOPWA's space and security waiver. This is the policy – the flexibility that allows us to use alternative sites and how they will be identified in the criteria for determining when households will be able – eligible to use such alternative spaces within a building.

So this is when, for instance, if you need to use different spaces within your site (inadudible) for better social distancing or isolation, that you can use that. But again, we need to make sure that we are identifying what those criteria are and what those space requirements will be in those particular settings.

So for instance, if you're using your dining room as a place for isolation, how will that space – be protected, making sure that it is furnished in such a way that it could be still used for a bedroom for that space, even though it's being used for a different purpose.

Slide 20

And finally, what we're going to take a look at is ensuring non-duplication of benefits. As you know, it is very important – it is a requirement of Section 312 of the Disaster Relief and Emergency Act that this policy should describe how clients will be prevented from receiving financial assistance with the same costs from any other source, including insurance from the CARES Act fund.

So really having a policy in place on how you are at least going to check for that and document that to ensure that there is not a duplication of benefits from multiple sources for the same client and the same activities. And this is from – the reference here would be the CARES Act provision.

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Let's see, do we have any questions in the queue?

Crystal Pope: We do have some.

Christine Campbell: Great.

Crystal Pope: And now, I had it in front of me, and then I didn't. OK. This is a question related to the COVID-19 Activity/Cost Eligibility table, which, I would say – you know, another shout out to, that's a good reference document for everybody to keep on hand, that tells you what can be paid for under CARES Act only versus all sources or regular HOPWA, and so forth.

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And this question is: there's a note in that form stating that the use of grocery cards requires careful documentation, can you provide an explanation as to what – as to what that means and what kind of documentation would be required?

Christine Campbell: So the – when you think about what it is that you're trying to prove, you're trying to prove that your client is using their grocery card for the intent it was designed, which is groceries for their household.

So, receipts showing the purchase of things that were meant for that household, for either PPE purposes or food and nutrition purposes, would be one way of being able to document it. We know that this is a real challenging one, and that you're giving the card to a client and they're going to use it to spend.

So in an ideal world, yes, you would have a note with the card, that was given to this client, and this date for this purpose, and then follow-up with a receipt. In lieu of that, if you are able to document that this was the purpose, the need that you are addressing, and what you believe to (be) or what's been reported to you is what the card would be used for.

But if you keep in mind what the purpose is, is to make sure that we are providing an opportunity for our clients to get the groceries and the PPEs they need for their household.

Would anyone like to add to that?

Crystal Pope: OK. So someone has also made a suggestion that part of the policy for grocery cards could include a reference on how they were – how they're secured within a site, which I think is a very good idea, how they're treated as cash.

And you know, we've seen that in the past is – you know, back when we could actually use them, and now, we can use them again, is making sure that that security is in place, and they have good inventory control internally, as well as some of the follow-up that – Christine, that you mentioned related to how this is dealt with with clients.

As well as, sub-grantees have been able to work out grocery cards, in particular, that cannot be used for anything but groceries, and that's a good idea when that can happen. We know it can't always be the case.

Christine Campbell: Right.

Emily Fischbein: Christine, we have another question.

Christine Campbell: Sure.

Emily Fischbein: We are now having participants coming up on their first annual review. I suppose their annual recertification. Is there a waiver of flexibility for income for current participants coming up on their annual or only for applicants? We wrote our policy only for applicants, but staff wanted additional clarification for current participants.

Amy Palilonis: I can answer this. So the waiver is in effect for participants as well, you know, for establishing their ongoing eligibility. So the waiver just essentially allows for self-certification of income and HIV status.

Obviously, if you are recertifying someone's eligibility, you won't need to certify that they're – or, prove that they're HIV positive again. But for the income piece, that waiver is in effect for current participants as well as applicants.

Christine Campbell: Thanks, Amy. Are there any other questions?

Emily Fischbein: We do have one: My understanding is that, if we were to buy phones for clients, the policy is that they must be returned. But if phones are broken, lost or stolen, how should we account for that?

Christine Campbell: The requirement is that, yes, that they are – that they need to be returned. The reality is – reality, as we know, that they are lost, stolen and broken frequently. If some – if for some reason that phone cannot be returned, you need to be able to document that you checked and requested it, and there's some documentation of what happened to that phone if it was reported stolen, it was reported broken, that there was some attempt to, at least, retrieve it in some form.

Emily Fischbein: Thanks, Christine.

Kate Briddell: We have a number of questions coming in now, Christine. One of them is actually for OHH, if there's specific guidance on how agencies can apply policies and procedures to prevent duplication of benefits would be helpful. Are there any concrete strategies that HUD can share about those?

Amy Palilonis: This is Amy. I can take a stab at this. Although, I will say that our guidance is still in development and is forthcoming on this. I mean, really, it's just setting policies in place to make sure that folks aren't receiving the same exact benefit for – from multiple resources. We have been working with some of the other programs within CPD to develop some guidance on this that is forthcoming and we will be pushing out. And if you have any questions in the meantime, you know, specific questions about your policies and procedures, definitely reach out to your field office or the AAQ.

Rita Harcrow: I think there have been – oh, sorry. I think there have been some CPD-wide webinars on this or, at least, one. And apologies, I don't think that is listed here, but we can follow-up on that with a link to this person that might be helpful for them.

Christine Campbell: That webinar is on our HOPWA/ COVID-19 resources page and that link is here as well.

Ben Ayers: And we can also get you some TA to help you think through some of this, because some of this can be very grantee-specific depending on your specific policies and procedures around communication and coordination of assistance.

Christine Campbell: Are there any other questions? Well, I would like to thank you for your participation in this webinar today. Here in front of you, you have some additional resources that are always available to you.

One is our HOPWA Ask A Question Help Desk; two is our TA portal; three, if you are not part of the HUD.gov listserv, we strongly recommend you become part of it; and four, we have our HOPWA/COVID-19 resources page where all of the products that have been developed since the onset of - COVID-19 back in March are posted, the memos, the CARES Act, the waivers and flexibilities are all posted there, and all of the products that have been developed to help you with specific elements of running your HOPWA program during this time.

We'd like to thank everybody for the tremendous work you have been doing through this epidemic. This has been hard on everybody and our HOPWA providers have been extremely diligent in trying to make sure that our people living with HIV have the best care possible, and we are very appreciative of all of the work that you're doing. Have a great afternoon.

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