

**COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS, INC.**

**Moderator: Valencia Moss  
June 8, 2020  
1:23 p.m. EST**

**SLIDE 1**

Valencia Moss: Hello and thank you for joining us for the HOPWA COVID-19: The 5/22/20 Mega-Waiver and Current Questions-and-Answers for HOPWA Grantees and Sponsors.

Today is June the 8, 2020, and today's webinar is being recorded. If you like to download a copy of today's presentation or any other products that we will talk about, you may do so by locating the link box located in the left-hand corner of your screen. We will review the HOPWA IDIS Set-Up, that is number one.

We will review HOPWA Program CARES Act Eviction, that is number two, and Additional Waivers for CPD Grant Programs to Prevent COVID is option three. Select one, two or three, and then Open, and those documents will download automatically to your desktop. We will also send out a reminder with these documents attached and instructions on how to watch the on-demand version of today's webinar.

If you have questions and you would like them answered, please submit them via the chat box. Questions will not be asked live during today's webinar. Questions will be answered as time permits, and we will answer them on a case by case basis after today's webinar.

I would like to introduce to you your first speaker, Kate Briddell.

Kate Briddell: Thank you, Valencia.

Collaborative Solutions is pleased to welcome you to this webinar. I am one of the speakers today - my name is Kate Briddell, and my other co-speaker is Crystal Pope. We both work with Collaborative Solutions. Also on the line today are staff from the Office of HIV/AIDS Housing at HUD, Rita Harcrow,

the Director; Ben Ayers, Deputy Director; Amy Palilonis, Senior Program Specialist and Jeff Kiemen, Management Analyst.

Monitoring the Chat box today are Emily Fischbein and Christine Campbell from Collaborative Solutions. And I do that every time.

## SLIDE 2

## SLIDE 3

So today's webinar objectives are to review the HOPWA provision in the 5/22 Mega-Waiver; provide an update of frequently asked questions from HOPWA grantees and sponsors in response to COVID-19 waivers, the CARES Act, including new guidance items; to provide some additional guidance on how to operationalize waiver and CARES Act provisions; identify where webinar participants can go for additional information and assistance; and answer your questions.

As Valencia said, we encourage you to put your questions in the Chat box. We know we're not going to be able to answer all the questions during the webinar, but it helps to know what kind of questions grantees and sponsors have or are struggling with.

First, we'll incorporate the answers to those future webinars or postings as much as possible. And second, you should also put any questions you cannot find answers for into the AAQ.

## SLIDE 4

Some webinar reminders. Remember that the waivers and program guidance issued for other programs such as CoC and ESG, in most cases, do not apply to HOPWA. Make sure you are applying HUD guidance to the proper program. And as communities are deciding how to respond to specific COVID-19-related needs among people living with HIV and AIDS, it is important for HOPWA grantees and project sponsors to work closely together to develop a response plan.

Grantees are responsible for waiver notifications and development of new procedures. The project sponsors are reminded to follow the plan outlined by their grantees.

## SLIDE 5

Another reminder is that guidance related to funding and implementation of COVID-19 activities is evolving as new information and requirements emerge. HOPWA grantees and project sponsors should stay tuned to the HOPWA listserv and the HOPWA guidance for COVID-19 page on the HUD Exchange.

## SLIDE 6

So let's get to the meat of today's issue: HOPWA waiver memo issued on May 22, 2020. The actual title is "Availability of Additional Waiver for CPD Grant Programs to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 and Mitigate Economic Impact Caused by COVID-19."

## SLIDE 7

So what's included for HOPWA are time limits for short-term housing facilities and STRMU, property standards for HOPWA for all housing and FMR rent standard for all housing.

## SLIDE 8

The time limits for short-term housing facilities and STRMU waiver allows an extension of time limits only to be approved on a individual household basis. This waiver is in effect for one year beginning May 22, 2020 for grantees and sponsors that are able to meet the following criteria.

They need to document a good faith effort has been made for individuals – on an individual household basis to assist the household to achieve permanent housing within the time limit specified in the Regs, but that financial needs and/or health and safety concerns prevented that.

And the grantee and sponsor have to have written policies and procedures outlining efforts to regularly reassess the need of assisted households and

processes that you use for granting extensions based on those documented concerns.

## SLIDE 9

Further, short-term limited – sorry, short-term supported housing facilities - the waiver allows on an individual household basis for grantees and project sponsors to extend these time limits. If the waiver is utilized, a short-term supported housing facility may provide a residence to any individual for a period of up to 120 days in a six-month period.

The waiver conditions are as follows. The waiver is in effect for one year beginning on May 22, 2020 for grantees and project sponsors that are able to meet the specific documentation and policy and procedure requirements that are outlined in the waiver. Those would be what we mentioned in the last slide.

## SLIDE 10

So short-term rent, mortgage and utility assistance. The regulatory limit currently is that a household can be served for no more than 21 weeks in any 52-week period. The waiver allows that on an individual household basis STRMU payments can be used to prevent the homelessness of a tenant or mortgager by providing for costs for up to 52 weeks in a 52-week period. Let me say that again, I'm sorry, I stumbled.

On an individual household basis, STRMU payments can be used to prevent the homelessness of a tenant or mortgager for costs for up to 52 weeks in a 52-week period. The waiver conditions that are in effect began 05/22/2020 for grantees and sponsors that are able to meet the specific documentation and policy and procedures requirements outlined in the waiver.

## SLIDE 11

HOPWA property standards. This follows closely to what was in the April 1st waiver. It allows programs to delay in-person onsite inspection of units for housing quality standards normally required prior to providing rental assistance. In order to utilize this waiver, programs must meet the conditions described below.

The conditions that must be met is the grantee or project sponsor is able to visually inspect the unit using technology such as video streaming to ensure that the unit meets HQS before any assistance is provided, and the grantee or project sponsor has written policies to physically re-inspect the unit after health officials determine special measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are no longer necessary.

## SLIDE 12

Here's a side-by-side comparison of the Mega-Waiver provisions. You can see on the left side the standards from April 1st apply only to Tenant-Based Rental Assistance. And the main difference between the two is that the second Mega-Waiver from 05/22/20 applies to all housing assistance through HOPWA.

## SLIDE 13

Next (inaudible) to the FMR rent standard. The justification for this is the waiver is to expedite identification of suitable housing units for HOPWA-eligible households affected by COVID-19 and to provide assistance to households that must rent units at rates that exceed the grantee's normal rent standard as calculated in accordance with the regulations.

What the waiver allows is HOPWA grantees may establish rent standards by unit size that are reasonable and based upon rent being charged for comparable unassisted units in the area, taking into account the location, size, type, quality, amenities, facilities, management and maintenance of each unit. This waiver is in effect for one year beginning on 05/22/2020, and grantees are still required to ensure the reasonableness of rent charged per unit.

## SLIDE 14

Again, here is a side-by-side comparison of the Mega-Waiver. On the left is April 1st Mega-Waiver, which as you can see applies only to Tenant-Based Rental Assistance. It also is – I want to point out that the April 1st mega-waiver is in effect for one year beginning on the date of that memorandum. And the Mega-Waiver 2 on the right side of your screen is in effect for one year beginning on the date of that memorandum, and it applies to all HOPWA rental housing.

## SLIDE 15

So I have a question here. When the FMR rent standard waiver period ends, must all units immediately be returned to the normal rent standard? The answer is, at the end of the waiver period, programs must cease applying the higher rent standard to newly leased units and return to using the normal local rent standard. Any units for which leases were signed during the waiver period should be returned to the normal rent standard at the time of HOPWA-eligible household's lease renewal.

## SLIDE 16

Please be reminded that you need to exercise these documents, you need to submit and document that you're going to be utilizing them. So the memo includes a simplified notification process to expedite the delivery of assistance. The grantees who wish to utilize any of the waivers should notify their local CPD director by email of their intent to utilize a specific waiver two days before they anticipate using that flexibility.

HUD established email addresses for CPD field offices that grantees should use to direct all waiver notification. Grantees must update their program records to include written documentation of the specific conditions that justify their use of each waiver.

We have included the links for the CPD Director emails in the Resources slide at the end of the presentation, if you don't already have them.

## SLIDE 17

Now on the eviction moratorium and HOPWA households. So there's an update. CARES Act contains a moratorium on evictions for assisted household, as you know. The update is the ending date, so assisted households cannot be evicted for 120 days from March 27th, the date the CARES Act was signed into law, through July 24th, specifically for nonpayment of rent.

The moratorium only applies to HOPWA assisted households that receive ongoing rental assistance in either Tenant or Project-Based Rental Assistance, transitional housing and short-term rental assistance under STRMU.

During the 120-day moratorium, a landlord cannot require a protected tenant to vacate a unit, issue a notice to vacate to a protected tenant, file to evict a protected tenant or cause an eviction to be filed for that tenant for nonpayment of rent or for nonpayment of other fees or charges, or accrued fees as other charges on the protected tenant for nonpayment of rent.

## SLIDE 18

The eviction moratorium found in the CARES Act only applies with respect to nonpayment of rent or nonpayment of other charges. Therefore, landlords may still undertake an eviction action against the tenant based on the terms of that tenant's lease as long as the eviction is unrelated to nonpayment of rent.

After the 120-day moratorium ends on July 24th, a landlord cannot require a protected tenant to vacate a tenant unit without providing a notice to vacate at least 30 days in advance. Please note that tenants are still responsible for their portion of the rent during the eviction moratorium. For any unpaid rent during the moratorium, the household must repay the landlord or sign a repayment agreement to pay any amount owed after the moratorium has ended. If the amount owed is not repaid, the landlord may terminate the household and proceed with legal action to evict after the 120-day period.

If a tenant is evicted from their unit for nonpayment of rent, the household is not terminated from the HOPWA program. Grantees and project sponsors must follow due process in determining the termination of a household from the HOPWA program.

## SLIDE 19

Question, does the eviction moratorium apply to households who receive STRMU? Does the level of timing of STRMU assistance make a difference in eligibility? The answer – and this is new guidance – is that households must be receiving ongoing STRMU assistance to be eligible for the eviction moratorium. This means they must be receiving assistance currently as part of their housing plan. Households that have received STRMU assistance in the past are not – do not qualify since the assistance has stopped and now the household is not assisted and required to pay their own full rent.

## SLIDE 20

So here is a break out of that information. So around the STRMU and eviction moratorium, households must be receiving ongoing STRMU to be eligible for the eviction moratorium. The justification for that is the landlord is currently being paid HOPWA rental assistance for the tenant, therefore, the tenant does not have the right to evict for nonpayment of rent. Households that received prior STRMU assistance are not eligible because the assistance has stopped and now the household is not assisted, and they are required to pay their own full rent.

Please note that households receiving only utilities or mortgage assistance under the STRMU budget line item do not qualify. The moratorium relates to rental assistance only.

## SLIDE 21

So some reminders about the eviction moratorium, grantees and project sponsors should work with HOPWA-eligible households to develop a housing plan to ensure long-term housing stability. Grantees and project sponsors should complete a recalculation of income on all HOPWA-eligible households that experience a loss or reduction of income to ensure rental payments are paid in full.

Here are two new resources about the eviction moratorium that are available on the HUD Exchange. The top one is an – list of FAQs - fact sheet, and the second one is a participant flyer that programs can use and modify to add their name to the top that they can provide to their tenant.

And with that, my portion is complete.

## SLIDE 22

Crystal, would you like to carry us forward?

Crystal Pope: Absolutely. Thank you, Kate.

Now we're going to provide some recently updated HOPWA guidance, look at the major guidance sources you should be aware of, and review recent questions that we've received asking for things like clarification on issues or



for new information and examples. So we hope that this will be helpful to you as you're working on designing and carrying out your COVID-19 responses.

## SLIDE 23

So as new pieces of guidance have rolled out over the last couple of months, it's sometimes been difficult for all of us, I think, to keep up with the changes. So we wanted to review the major sources of guidance to help clarify that for you. It may also help you to locate the full text of waivers and notices that impact your program whenever you need that.

And so to date, two Mega-Waivers containing HOPWA provisions have been published, and those are both shown in this chart, along with a Notice on HOPWA-related CARES Act provisions. There have been additional memos that I'm sure you've seen related to reporting, to IDIS setup, the eviction moratorium and other topics, all of which can be found on the HUD Exchange. But the three shown here have been the source of the majority of program guidance changes for HOPWA related to COVID-19, so we want you to be aware of those.

The first Mega-Waiver, which was published on four – on April 1, 2020 provided the HOPWA waivers shown here: the self-certification of income, rent standard specifically for TBRA, property standards for TBRA, HOPWA space and security, as well as CPD Con Plan requirements.

The HOPWA Notice CPD 20-05 was published on May 8, 2020 and provides detailed information for how grantees and sponsors should proceed with the provisions of the CARES Act and how they should be implemented. It's really kind of an instructional how-to on CARES Act.

And as you've heard today in the first part of our webinar, the second Mega-Waiver was released on 05/22, which contained three additional program – HOPWA program waivers related to STRMU and an extension of that, as well as the property standards and rent standards, which took those waivers – those original waivers beyond TBRA and made them applicable to other kinds of programs, for rental programs.

Each of these documents is listed on the Resource slide at the end of the presentation and also available on the HOPWA COVID-19 page for the HUD Exchange. We recommend that grantees keep these on hand for reference.

## SLIDE 24

Another significant source of guidance related to COVID-19 is information and program flexibilities issued by HUD's Office of HIV/AIDS Housing on non-regulatory activities. While the formal waivers are required when it comes to changing, even temporarily, things in the regulation, OHH is able to immediately provide programs with flexibility on issues that have been standard practice, but not regulatory. And that includes things like increasing the nights of hotel stays and – and other things that we're going to talk about as we go through this presentation.

## SLIDE 25

Also, in response to hearing from some grantees that some grantees have decided that CARES Act funding is not needed in their community to prevent, prepare for and respond to COVID-19 for HOPWA-eligible households, OHH has developed a process that should be used to decline the award if that's necessary. As shown here, if grantees elect to decline the CARES Act award, the authorized representative for the grantee should send a statement to that effect to [HOPWA@hud.gov](mailto:HOPWA@hud.gov).

## SLIDE 26

Recent questions have also come up about whether grantees are required to conduct onsite monitoring of project sponsors during the COVID-19 emergency or whether there is flexibility that's similar to what's being provided for onsite housing unit inspections.

First, as the answer here points out, onsite monitoring is not a requirement specified in the HOPWA regulations. Under normal conditions, onsite monitoring is highly recommended as part of your overall oversight plan but, because it's not a regulatory requirement, grantees may make adjustments if they need to for safety reasons.

You may need to temporarily use primarily remote methods during this time and adjust your procedures accordingly in order to make sure that you're monitoring compliance with all of the streams of funding, including your regular HOPWA allocation in the CARES Act and waiver requirements.

As a reminder also, when making changes in monitoring procedures, be sure that measures are in place to protect your client confidentiality.

## SLIDE 27

So not surprisingly, STRMU is an area that's generated a lot of questions, especially with the new rules for STRMU provided under the CARES Act allowing up to 24 months of assistance and now with the addition of the 05/22 STRMU waiver allowing up to 12 months of assistance on an individual household basis.

Putting those changes into the mix with ongoing STRMU program rules understandably may cause some confusion. So today we're going to give you some context for how those pieces should fit together.

## SLIDE 28

Looking at it this way, there are three basic categories of STRMU. The first is your existing – your existing STRMU program, if you have one, funded through regular HOPWA allocations. In this program, a client may receive 21 weeks of assistance in a 52-week period, right, or you may have caps in place that allow fewer weeks or a cap on the total amount that could be received, depending on how you're running that locally. All of the normal STRMU rules apply related to eligibility, legal residency, and the unit, and need and those kinds of things.

The second is that same existing STRMU program that you're running now in which you're utilizing the 05/22 waiver option that can be applied on an individual household basis. Approved households under that can receive up to 12 months of STRMU assistance when using the waiver.

And the third category here is STRMU that's provided using CARES Act funds or using FY20 funds that the grantee has designated for COVID-19. Remember that all CARES Act funding has to be depleted before the FY20

set-aside funds are used. In this CARES Act STRMU program, a client household can receive up to 24 months of STRMU assistance.

## SLIDE 29

So let's try to pull apart the categories and how they work. This shows your existing or regular HOPWA program on the left and a program's use of the 12-month waiver option on the right. Both of these are funded with your regular HOPWA allocations and follow the same normal STRMU rules and limitations with one exception. When you utilize the waiver option, you may increase STRMU up to 12 months in a 12-month period as determined on an individual household basis.

The normal rules apply for 21 weeks of assistance in a 52-week period. You would have a policy in place and documentation for determining when a household needs more than the 21 weeks in the 52-week period, and then those households can be approved for up to 12 months of assistance within that same period.

We want to also clarify that client households receiving STRMU through this category may, may be moved to CARES Act STRMU at any time based on your local assessment of the client's needs and your local policies. There is no requirement that you have to wait until a household has used 21 weeks or 52 weeks of regular STRMU before you move them to CARES Act STRMU. It is completely separate. And also remember that you have to document the use of the waiver option in this category of STRMU.

## SLIDE 30

So this shows you STRMU funded through CARES Act funds, as well as STRMU funded by the FY funds designated for COVID-19 response. Both of those will operate under the CARES Act rules, and households can receive up to 24 months of assistance.

This category of STRMU requires the same basic program rules related to eligibility, residency and need, but beyond that it's really easier if you look at CARES Act STRMU as a completely separate program. As noted here, the 52-week eligibility period established for your regular STRMU program has

no bearing at all on the up to 24 months of STRMU that can be provided under the CARES Act.

So if you identify clients using whatever assessment process is developed locally, if you need extended STRMU for up to 24 months, you can move them to this program category. It doesn't matter if they've already received STRMU assistance through your regular HOPWA program. When you move them to CARES Act STRMU, basically the clock starts at zero, and you can provide assistance up to the maximum if that's what you determine is needed.

And because some people have asked, looking forward to the future, when the CARES Act program and funding ends, a client household who has received this extended STRMU could potentially move back to your regular HOPWA STRMU program without a wait period. Again, look at them as separate. Your reference on the 12-month eligibility period would go back to the timing of any regular STRMU that the client household received in the past.

So I know I'm not looking at the Chat box, but I'm sure lots of questions are coming in about this because it is confusing. So I want to point out that there will be much more written guidance on how these program pieces fit together in the near future, and definitely put your questions into the HOPWA AAQ. We expect – and I know at the end, I believe, folks from OHH can tell you more about this, but we will be looking at things coming out and probably other presentations that will help you answer how to – how to fit the jigsaw puzzle of STRMU together.

## SLIDE 31

So a couple of follow-up questions on STRMU. Grantees and sponsors have asked whether it's necessary to wait for the CARES Act funds to be available before extending STRMU assistance beyond the 21 weeks. I know a lot of people are anxious about that because you've got local situations and looking at how you might do that.

And there are basically two options for this. You can go ahead and extend STRMU assistance beyond the 21 weeks up to 24 months now using your

regular formula funds, but have a plan in place to reconcile that funding once the CARES Act funding is received.

That could be done or you can make use of the 05/22 waiver that we talked about today- that flexibility that programs can extend STRMU assistance on an individual basis up to 52 weeks in a – in a 52-week period. So that flexibility can be used for any HOPWA award where you already have a STRMU budget line item.

## SLIDE 32

So let's also clarify once again that whether it's funded through your regular HOPWA allocations or through CARES Act funding, it may not be used to assist households that are already receiving ongoing rental assistance, such as HOPWA TBRA, Section 8 vouchers or any other kind of long-term rental assistance for the same period of time.

So you cannot use STRMU to pay for client rent portions that were not paid, for past due utilities or for any household that is actually now receiving ongoing rental assistance. That would be considered an overlap in assistance, and programs will need to look at other non-HOPWA sources for those kinds of arrearages.

The only real overlap that's allowed related to COVID-19 and the CARES Act is that clients who are currently receiving TBRA or STRMU can also receive help through hotel/motel vouchers for affected family members to allow for isolation when needed due to COVID-19 infection.

## SLIDE 33

So we will have also some more information coming out about hotel/motel guidance and how to operationalize those programs. That will be coming in the near future, but these are just a few quick facts and basics that we wanted to review very quickly.

## SLIDE 34

The first is what kind of activities are allowed. And I think as we have talked about before, this is really for relocation services that include lodging at hotels, motels or other locations when people need that that kind of – to temporarily isolate from other members.

And this language in the first - bullet comes from the CARES Act and mentions other locations. And I know that some people have asked, does that mean other kinds of units could possibly be covered when you're using CARES Act funding? And we have said that other units such as Airbnb or similar kinds of units that can be rented on a nightly or weekly basis could be covered if that's what's available, and that is financially a good option within your community.

## SLIDE 35

On time limits, OHH has given flexibility to go beyond the normal 60-day limit whenever needed for health and safety reasons. And those – so there's not an upward limit that is set, but you can go above 60 days. And those should be based on the documented client or household need for extended temporary housing or isolation. And grantees and sponsors should have policies on those extensions that can be applied fairly across all of your households in need of that service.

## SLIDE 36

This is a new question and a new piece of guidance. We have received questions about whether HOPWA funds can be used to cover damages to hotel/motel rooms. There's some concern on the part of providers about the liability that agencies may have when they place people in hotel and motel rooms.

So what HUD has said is that any damages incurred may be covered by the same budget line item that you're using, which would be leasing, in this case for the hotel/motel activity. And the grantee should have policies and procedures in place to support the use of leasing funds for damages.

So you would be really identifying part of that stream of funding to go for possible damages so that that could be covered, but it would all be under the same line item. And note also that, that this guidance that damages can be covered only applies to funding through the CARES Act and the FY20 allocation COVID-19 set-aside funds.

With that, I think we'll act to give a little more flexibility and comfort level to people who are doing hotel/motel vouchers.

### SLIDE 37

And this is just a review how are hotel/motel rooms through HOPWA because this question has come up repeatedly. It can only be paid through the Project-Based Leased Unit line item and cannot be paid for through any other activities such as STRMU or PHP. It is a specific kind of short-term emergency housing. And in order to use that housing option, you must include it in your Con and Action plan for your community as a planned HOPWA service.

So if your plan does not currently include the provision of hotel/motel vouchers, you must amend the plan prior to implementing this new activity. And I think there are a lot of programs who are in the process right now of doing that.

### SLIDE 38

Last Friday, there was a webinar related to IDIS set-up that spoke to motel – hotel/motel activities. So I just want to point out without going into detail with this that adjustments have been made to that activity – to the activity set-up for hotel/motel vouchers in IDIS.

And excuse me, there's a link here to the instructions for IDIS, and they have added some very specific language for hotel/motel response. So if people have any kind of questions about this, there is – you can put questions into the AAQ and be very quickly connected with some more in-depth IDIS T.A. that will help you walk through that system.



## SLIDE 39

OK. So just a couple more things, and then we will get to some questions. We want to just review a couple of pieces of past guidance and add one new thing that has been – that has been added.

## SLIDE 40

So on nutrition services, the – from what we have seen, the provision of food and nutrition services really remains a very major concern on the part of programs, especially for our vulnerable population. And so it's very – grantees have a lot of flexibility in how to move forward in providing food in the form of food banks or groceries, food boxes, meal or grocery delivers – deliveries and so forth, most programs I think have a combination of those kinds of things.

And during one of our last webinars we talked about the fact that grocery store cards or other cards such as that for food purchases could be carried out. That is something that you can do, and it is – that it's normally not something that's allowed. But during this COVID-19 pandemic, this is one of the program flexibilities that's being provided.

But we do caution you to be very careful about how that's set-up and used – encourage programs to do their best based on whatever your local situation is to set-up a system that restricts such cards to the purchase of food items whenever possible and to put documentation in place that tracks the dispensing of any of those cards.

## SLIDE 41

The same thing is true on the transportation side. The newest guidance reflects that gas cards can be used to help with transportation for eligible households, but the same cautions would apply here as the – what we just mentioned related to grocery cards.

## SLIDE 42

Valencia Moss: Crystal, I think we've lost connection.

Crystal Pope: No, I'm sorry. Here we go.

Valencia Moss: OK.

Crystal Pope: Can you hear me now?

Valencia Moss: We can.

Crystal Pope: OK, sorry. So the very last one is a new piece of guidance related to transportation services and car repair. Many grantees have asked about whether car repair costs would be an eligible activity because it has not in the past. So what HUD has provided now is that car repairs - that transportation under Supportive Services may also cover car repairs when deemed necessary, and that grantees should have policies and procedures in place related to the use for that purpose, all of the documentation that you would need for that.

And HUD has also suggested that, alternately, if an assisted household has paid for necessary car repairs and is therefore unable to afford rent mortgage or utilities, that STRMU could be considered as part of their housing stability plan. So again, that's something very new.

## SLIDE 43

So we encourage everybody, as always, to stay informed, be on the HOPWA mailing list, look for updates that are on the HOPWA and COVID-19 page. There are – there are links here to all of the resources that we talked about today: the notices, the waivers, HOPWA IDIS Set-up and so forth.

## SLIDE 44

And as always, we encourage folks to look for the answers to their questions through the AAQ. Use that as a good resource for you, as well as grantees can make requests for technical assistance for additional information and help in what's happening in your community.

## SLIDE 45

And with that, I'm going to turn it over to Christine and Emily for questions.

Christine Campbell: Thank you, Kate and Crystal, for that very informative session- we do have several questions that we'd like to pose. One of the questions we

received was, “We don’t currently have a STRMU program, but we see the value in providing that type of assistance. Is there a how-to guide available?”

Rita Harcrow: Hey, Christine, this is – this is Rita. First of all, I’m glad that you’re looking at what’s needed in the community and they’re willing to take on something new to meet that – to meet that need.

There is a STRMU guidebook on the HUD Exchange, and I think that will be a really great place to get started. It’s the – it’s under Documents-HOPWA-STRMU-Assistance. It might be easier to just Google that or if you are having trouble locating that particular guidebook, please send a AAQ. We’ll make sure that you get the correct link right away to that. Thank you.

Emily Fischbein: Thanks, Rita. Another question that came up is, “When you said CARES Act funding can be used to pay for relocation services, what exactly did you mean? Can we provide clients with a moving truck?”

Amy Palilonis: So this is Amy. I can take that one. So the answer is no, so moving costs such as paying for movers or a moving truck are still ineligible costs under HOPWA. When the CARES Act referred to relocation, it was as it relates to the provision of alternate housing when needed to help household members isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19, such as by helping them move temporarily to a hotel or motel room.

Christine Campbell: Thanks, Amy. We have another question, “If I have informed the field office of our intent to use the FMR waiver listed in the April 1st memo, do I need to notify them again that we want to use the FMR waiver in the 05/22 memo in order for the extended waiver period through May for our TBRA program?”

Amy Palilonis: So this is Amy again and I’ll take this one. So the answer is yes. So if you have already contacted your field office notifying them that you are going to use the FMR waiver for Tenant-Based Rental Assistance under the first mega-waiver memo, but you’d like to use the FMR waiver provided through the second waiver memo, that’s available through May of next year, then you would – you would need to notify the field office again that you’re going to exercise that specific waiver from the second waiver memo.

Emily Fischbein: Thanks for clarifying that, Amy. We have another question about FMR, a couple of questions related to this, actually. And the question is around whether at the end of the year of the FMR waiver period, grantees are saying it would be better for their clients to not have to move again. So if housing is tight in their area, they don't want the clients to have to move. Can you suggest incentives they could offer to the landlord in exchange for lowering the rent down to FMR?"

Ben Ayers: Hi, this is Ben. I can take this one. So, unfortunately, no, we can't offer any incentives to the landlord. But by the time the client's ending their lease, you should have really worked toward establishing a good working relationship with that landlord, and so they'll know they'll have someone they can call if there are any issues that arise. They'll hopefully have experience in working with your agency as a good partner, paying your rents on time, taking care of issues that arise with the tenant. And so whatever those tools are that you guys use for landlord outreach should also help you with negotiations with the landlord to keep rents at this level.

Also, don't forget that there are some options to you for when a client is in a unit above the FMR or the rent standard, so you can increase your rent standard by up to 10 percent for up to 20 percent of your units. So at the end of the waiver period, programs should take a look at like multiple ways that they can help households stay in their current units whenever possible.

I know this increase also if you – for instance, if you're using the PHA standard and you're already at 110 percent FMR, then you could apply this option on top of that so you can go up to 120 percent of FMR on 20 percent of your units.

And we have a whole FAQ that has other options that you can try to use as well. Those are very nuanced, so if you'd like access to that, just email us at [HOPWA@hud.gov](mailto:HOPWA@hud.gov) and we'll make sure we get you that material.

Christine Campbell: Thanks, Ben. We have a few questions here around coordination with ESG. First (inaudible) we can coordinate with our ESG program to determine

whether to use HOPWA or ESG funds to temporarily house people in hotels or motel?

Rita Harcrow: This is Rita. That's a really good question and something that we are working on internally as well, not just for ESG, but all the other federal programs that have received funding who are jumping in to try to assist communities with the COVID-19 response. And because this is a federally declared disaster, we have to observe a prohibition on duplication of benefits. So that's why we've been saying from the beginning to try and work with your partners locally and have policies in place.

So a duplication of benefit occurs when a program is providing assistance to a person when that person has already received or they will receive by some action, the same exact coverage, the same exact type of financial assistance; so there should be some kind of hierarchy or order of coordination that you're carrying out locally with ESG so that you can say ESG is going to pay for that first, or pay for this much of it first and then HOPWA will pick up. Make a plan of how that will be carried out locally.

So it's really important, again reach out to your ESG partners, also your HOPWA – I mean, your Ryan White partners, FEMA if it's in your community- if you can find out what's happening there, and find ways to maximize those benefits that are happening locally. So ultimately, it's up to you to develop that plan of the policy and procedure for that.

Emily Fischbein: Thank you, Rita. The next question is about STRMU, and since there are so many different categories of STRMU, as Crystal described. "The new waiver from May 22nd allows longer time limits for STRMU and short-term housing and they've quoted 'on an individual household basis'. Shouldn't we always be looking at individual household needs even when we're applying the CARES Act funds that can be used for the 24 months?"

We don't want to extend time limits to anyone who doesn't need it with our funds. Is there a nuanced difference that we're not seeing?" I think they mean between the individual household needs and a more categorical approach.

Amy Palilonis: This is Amy. I can talk about this a little bit. So the difference is pretty subtle, as you suggested. Regular STRMU programs have, as their basis, 21 weeks of assistance in any 52-week period.

The CARES Act allows all STRMU assistance funded under the CARES Act and the portion of a grantee's FY20 formula funded designated for COVID-19 response be used for up to two years. And then separate from that, the new waiver allows for you to extend assistance provided under your regular STRMU program to up to one year as needed on an individual basis.

We do recommend that you set-up policies and procedures for determining when and under what circumstances clients would be moved to the extended STRMU, either the 12-month waiver option or the CARES Act, and this would be in addition to your normal assessment process for STRMU.

As mentioned earlier, we definitely realize that the flexibilities that have been granted through the CARES Act and through the regulatory waivers have created some complexities in implementation and tracking. We are working on additional STRMU-specific guidance now that we should be rolling out in the – in the coming weeks or the near future to assist you in taking advantage of these flexibilities.

Christine Campbell: Thanks Amy. We have a few questions regarding a concern that some of – some clients could be threatened with eviction after the moratorium ends in July. How can they prevent this from happening?

Jeff Kiemen: Hey, this is Jeff. I can take this question. The best to prevent your client from being evicted for nonpayment of rent is to ensure they have access to homelessness prevention assistance such as extending the length of time you provide the household with STRMU assistance or that you have recalculated their – the client rent portion based on their new reduced income.

Emily Fischbein: Thanks, Jeff. Here's a question, "If we decline our CARES Act funds and then find later on that we need them, can we let HUD know later that we would like to accept them?"

Rita Harcrow: No. This is Rita. And the answer is no. So once an award is declined, it will go back into the account. And we – the department will advise later on what needs to happen with any of those funds that are not allocated from the start.

It's my understanding that they will be used for COVID-19 response, but the system that we have in place, now the allocation method we have in place now, once it's declined, it can't be used again. So there would potentially be another way to access funds later. You suddenly exhibit a need in your community, but we do not know yet what that might look like.

Christine Campbell: Thanks, Rita. I have a question about car repairs. Our clients always have car repair cost and we have not been able to help them with this until now, so this is great. Do we have to wait for our CARES Act funds or can we use current funding and then do an expenditure adjustment to transfer the cost to our CARES Act funds?

Ben Ayers: Sorry, this is Ben, I'll take this one. So the car repair isn't specifically addressed in the CARES Act, this is just a – so the ability to cover the car repair in certain situations. This actually is an administrative flexibility we're offering through, from the Office of HIV/AIDS Housing for the time period during this pandemic.

It can be an approved expense under the CARES Act or your regular HOPWA allocations as a means in order to provide safer transportation for clients than public transportation possibilities or other shared transport.

And no, you do not have to wait. So as with other COVID-related expenses that occurred prior to receiving your CARES Act award, if you want to bill this to your CARES Act award, you can use your current funding and then transfer those costs and expenses over to the CARES Act line of credit.

So when you guys are ready to do this, just reach out, let us know at [HOPWA@hud.gov](mailto:HOPWA@hud.gov) and we'll get you some T.A. to make sure – make sure it's being processed correctly.

Emily Fischbein: Great. Thank you, Ben. Do we have time for one more question, Crystal and Kate?

Kate Briddell: Sure.

Emily Fischbein: OK, great. We don't have a designated person to do our IDIS Set-up right now. We watched the webinar last week and have a copy of the instructions, but we still find it a little confusing. Can we get help setting up IDIS for HOPWA CARES Act funds, as well as for regular HOPWA funds we've already drawn for CARES Act eligible expenses?

Amy Palilonis: This is Amy. I'll take that one. So yes, you can request technical assistance specifically for IDIS or just for implementing CARES Act in general by going to the HUD Exchange and going to the Request Assistance page and putting in your request there.

So I believe there were instructions or further detail about that on the second to last slide in the slide deck. So yes, if you are a grantee and you feel like you're in need of technical assistance related to IDIS Set-up or just anything related to implementing the CARES Act funding and flexibilities, definitely put a technical assistance requesting to that exchange.

Christine Campbell: Thanks, Amy. Just a quick reminder that copies of today's slides will be emailed to you after our live webinar broadcast.

And with that, we're going to toss it back to you, Kate.

Kate Briddell: Great. Thanks, Christine. Thank you, Christine and Emily for fielding those questions, and thank you to the staff at OHH for answering those questions, and thank you to Crystal for co-presenting with me.

And more importantly, thank you all for joining us today. We really hope you got benefit out of it. Stay tuned for more guidance in the future, and stay well. We look forward to working with you. Bye.



Valencia Moss: A copy of today's webinar and slides and the on-demand recording will be made available. You will receive an email within the next hour. Thank you all for joining us. Have a great Monday.

END